

A firewall against the Dragon

Within the next 6 months, the Centre may implement new security directives in the telecom sector to counter any cyber attack

WHY THE NEED

■ Last year, India lost Rs1.24 lakh crore to cyber-criminals
 ■ With increasing use of IoT devices, the risk seems to increase manifold and advent of 5G tech will further increase the security concerns resulting from telecom networks
 ■ Chinese tech giants Huawei and ZTE have been under global scrutiny for allegedly installing 'backdoor' vulnerabilities to indulge in spying for the Chinese govt

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 23: In a bid to counter cyber-attacks and data theft, primarily perpetrated from China, the Centre seems determined to implement the new security directives in the telecom sector, cleared by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), within the next six months.

Underlining the need of such directive, a confidential report of National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) says that India is among top three countries in the world facing cyber-attacks sources said. "A sum of ₹1.24



lakh crore was lost due to cyber-crime in India last year," the report reveals.

The NSCS report reviewed by IANS says that these cyber-attacks are usually committed through compromised hardware and software components of tele-



com networks. With increasing use of Internet of Things (IoT) devices, the risk seems to increase manifold and advent of 5G technologies will further increase the security concerns resulting from telecom networks. There is an urgent need to "main-

tain integrity of supply chain including electronic components for ensuring security against malware infection," the report adds.

In recent years, cross border hackers including Chinese agents have reportedly targeted important sectors including banking and finance with an aim to hurt India's financial operations. The report says that telecom is the critical underlying infrastructure for all sectoral information infrastructure of the country such as power, banking and finance, transport, governance and the strategic sector.

9th round of talks

NEW DELHI: Indian and Chinese militaries will hold a ninth round of talks aimed at resolving the border disputes in Eastern Ladakh after a deadlock prevailed since the last negotiations in November 2020, sources said. The latest "Corps Commander level meet is likely to take place in the next few days, probably in a day or two," the sources said, adding contours of the dialogue were being worked out and some changes are expected. A Ministry of External Affairs representative is likely to be part of the dialogue. **MORE 99**

Petrol, diesel dearer again

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 23: Petrol and diesel prices rose sharply again Saturday reaching new all-time highs as OMCs decided to break the pause in revision of auto fuel prices to bridge the widening under recovery. Accordingly, the pump

PRICES IN BHUB

Petrol - ₹86.36/LTR (+₹0.26)
Diesel - ₹82.66/LTR (+₹0.27)

price of petrol increased between 22-25 paise per litre across all major metros on the day while diesel prices increased in the range of 24-26 paise per litre.

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MIN		17.6°C	15.2°C
Humidity		96%	91%
Rainfall		Nil	Nil

Forecast: Dense fog, clear sky later

'Insulted' Didi says no speech after slogans of 'Jai Shri Ram'

AGENCIES

Kolkata, Jan 23: West Bengal's ruling Trinamool Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led Centre are engaged in a tussle over the celebration of Netaji's 125th birth anniversary that took place in Kolkata, Saturday.

But at Kolkata's Victoria Memorial, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee came together along with Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar to attend the programme. Everything was going fine till Mamata was requested to deliver her speech on the podium and a section of people from the audience shouted



PM Narendra Modi with West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee during 125th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, at Victoria Memorial in Kolkata, Saturday

'Jai Shri Ram' slogans which clearly made the West Bengal CM angry.

"This is not a political programme. I think there should be some dignity in a government programme," the CM said, adding that as a protest she will not speak on the occasion.

Banerjee said that it doesn't suit to invite someone and then insult her at the event. She also thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Culture Ministry for inviting her to the government event.

Protesting the incident, Trinamool Congress' Lok Sabha MP from Basirhat Nusrat Jahan strongly condemned shouting of political and religious slogans at government functions.

NETAJI BUS TERMINAL

Naveen lays foundation stone

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Jan 23: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Saturday laid foundation stone for the Netaji Bus Terminal at Khannagar here on the occasion of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's birth anniversary.

"I greet the people of Cuttack in the New Year. Today, I am very much happy by laying the foundation for Netaji Bus Terminal. The state-of-the-art terminal would be beneficial for the people of Odisha and neighbouring states," said the Chief Minister.

The CM claimed that the new bus terminal would remind people of the valour and patriotism of Netaji. "Today, the whole world is celebrating the birth anniversary of Netaji. On this special occasion, I have laid foundation stone for Netaji Bus



CM Naveen Patnaik delivers his speech during the foundation stone laying ceremony at Khannagar in Cuttack, Saturday

Terminal at Cuttack, which is also the birthplace of the legendary freedom fighter," Patnaik said.

The CM added that the people of Odisha and also India will never forget the sacrifice of Netaji, who had played an important role in the free-

dom struggle of the country. "Netaji is the son of Cuttack city. This city had taught him the lessons on patriotism and service to the people. The state government would organise various programmes to celebrate the 125th birth anniversary of Netaji," Patnaik added. "The terminal would depict the life and activities of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. The bus terminal would add to the glorious history of Cuttack," Patnaik said.

Among others, 5T Secretary VK Pandian, Urban Development Minister Pratap Jena, Food Supply Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain, Tourism and Culture Minister Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi, MLA and BJD general secretary (organisation) Pranab Prakash Das, MPs Bhartruhari Mahtab and Subhas Singh, and police commissioner Sudhanshu Sarangi were present at the event.



HALSEY CANCELS TOUR, SAYS SAFETY IS PRIORITY

Singer Halsey has cancelled her tour, which was originally scheduled to take place in 2020. She announced her decision on Twitter. "Safety is the priority. I wish things were different. I love you. Dreaming of seeing your faces again," the singer tweeted.

LARSON BAGS DRAMA SERIES LESSONS IN CHEMISTRY

Actress Brie Larson will reportedly star in and executive produce the drama series *Lessons In Chemistry*. Susannah Grant, who was previously nominated for an Academy Award for writing the screenplay for *Erin Brockovich*, will write and executive produce the series for Apple, reports *variety.com*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You are feeling very excited and are all geared up to do what you want. Put all that energy to productive use. Ganesha says this is the time to work and not to make plans as today you can accomplish very difficult tasks.

TAURUS
This day promises to be like any other. You will, as usual, begin by attending to home chores and then get caught up in your hectic office schedule. Later in the day you will, says Ganesha, feel an urge to take time off and indulge in some socializing.

GEMINI
An auspicious and progressive day awaits you. You will reflect on the problems at the work-place as well as on the home-front. You will try to understand the emotions that lie behind the troubles brewing at home and will try to resolve them.

CANCER
The day begins with worship and havan. In the evening, guests will throw your house for a celebration. You will feel sad as your trusted ones will not give you a vital clue or some important information promptly. Ganesha advises you keep away from other's affairs.

LEO
You are facing turbulent times, inspite of your hard work. Obstacles to progress are commonplace and should not tie you down. You need to keep working hard and sooner rather than later, the fruits of your labour will fall into your lap, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
Good luck will put you up against some friendly ghosts from some bygone era. The afternoon brings with it some wonderful marriage prospects and you will consider them with an open mind. However, Ganesha warns you to be extra careful when making decisions regarding advanced education.

LIBRA
Ganesha says those of you in the field of art will find immense success. You will be able to please your beloved with your presence and also shower them with gifts. You may buy something expensive as a gift today. You will also focus on a long-term goal today. Ganesha showers you with his blessings always.

SCORPIO
Everything is fair in love and war, however, make sure your love story does not turn into a cold-war. It may happen that romance may make you altogether a different person. By the end of the day, you may solve the differences that lead to a cold-war between you and your beloved, says Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS
You seem to be impressed by the handicrafts and plan to take it up as your business. You are a family person and give much attention to your loved ones. You may be smitten by love-bug as passion and intimacy give rise to romance.

CAPRICORN
You are practical and wise. With your worldly wisdom and intellect at display, you will be able to guide your near and dear today, says Ganesha. Your belief of working in a harmonious environment will inspire you to spread the message of love, peace, and joy.

AQUARIUS
You possess a nice quality of eloquence. Today, you will make a speech/presentation or conduct a discussion forum where everyone will love to hear your opinions. Your communication skill will help you get through the heart of someone you like.

PISCES
The day will start off on a sour note for you. But as the day progresses you will find your mood elevated. If you wish to progress in life, you need to stop minor setbacks from upsetting you disproportionately.

NORA SLAYS IT WITH A FRENCH WHIFF

Mumbai: Actress-dancer Nora Fatehi is quite the French diva in her latest post on social media.

In a picture she posted on Instagram, Nora poses in a velvet black dress with a high high slit, next to luxury car.

She wrote the caption in French: "Les rageux nous pistent... Longue est la liste."

Coming up for Nora is the Ajay Devgn-starrer *Bhuj: The Pride Of India*. The film tells

the tale of Indian Air Force pilot Vijay Karnik.

The period drama looks back at the story of 300 women of Madhapar village in Gujarat's Kutch district, who played a pivotal role in helping India win the 1971 Indo-Pak war.

Earlier, she rode a camel for the first time in life to celebrate her Instagram follower count touching

20 million carrying a '20M' shaped balloons. IANS



Akshay proud of Tapsee's journey

Mumbai: Action star Akshay Kumar is proud of actress Tapsee Pannu's growth in career.

The compliment from the *Khiladi* actor came after Tapsee tweeted posters of *Baby* Saturday and wrote: "Dear actors, Number of minutes don't

matter, the impact u leave with

what u do in those minutes matters. 7 minutes that changed the direction of tide for me FOR GOOD. Yours truly *Naam Shabana* (Winking face emoji)."

Akshay replied to her tweet saying: "Absolutely! Always make the most of what you have... proud of you and your onwards and upwards journey."

Neeraj Pandey's action thriller *Baby* released on this day in 2015. Starring Akshay with Rana Daggubati, Danny Denzongpa, Anupam Kher and Tapsee, the film cast the actress as undercover agent

Shabana Khan. She reprised her role in the 2017 film *Naam Shabana*, a prequel to *Baby*.

Taapsee's upcoming projects are *Rashmi Rocket* and *Loop Lapeta*. IANS



D Company to be mother of all gangster films



name is DAWOOD IBRAHIM," he tweeted.

Sharing the film's first look, he wrote: "Here's A PEEK into D COMPANY First Look TEASER : The MAHABHARAT OF UNDERWORLD .Produced by SPARK @SparkSagar1 it is going to tell the story of how DA-

WOOD IBRAHIM with his BILL GATES like vision, turned a street gang into an INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION."

Actor Riteish Deshmukh commented: "You are truly the master of this genre!!! Can't wait Sir!!!!"

Following his previous film *Company*, which released in 2002,

RGV has titled the upcoming movie *D Company*, which is based on the Mumbai based-D Company, headed by Dawood Ibrahim Kaskar.

Along with Dawood, the film will also tell the tales of other gangsters who lived and died under the roof of D-Company.

The film will release in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada. IANS

The White Tiger. Witty, wicked and well made

Iranian-American filmmaker Ramin Bahrani has managed to maintain the undertone of Aravind Adiga's book of the same name that won the 40th Man Booker Prize in 2008

Don't believe for a second there's a million-rupee game show one can win to get out of poverty, believes Balaram Halwai, a 'dehati' driver devoted to a wealthy upper caste 'master'. *The White Tiger* sets its tone bluntly with that line, somewhere in the early portion of a two hour-odd runtime.

But if you are Balram, and at the wrong end of the social stratum, getting at the wrong end of the law might just help. From the gutters of Laxmangarh village in backwater Bihar, where Balram hails from, to the world of super-swanky Gurgaon condos, where he ends up a driver for his morally malleable, ultra-rich

employers, it's interesting how the film captures the reality about both milieus with discomfiting precision.

It leaves you intrigued all the more because the man who gets it so right - Iranian-American filmmaker Ramin Bahrani - has never lived in either India.

It is easy, of course, to root for *The White Tiger* for its performance, because the cast is what primarily draws your attention. Adarsh Gourav as Balram Halwai, rises from the fringes to deliver a defining performance. Balram's is a journey from lower-class ignominy to what he hopes will one day be a tale

of successful entrepreneurship.

The grey story of ambition gets a twist of colour when he meets Pinky madam (Priyanka Chopra Jonas), drop-dead wife of his employer Ashok (Rajkummar Rao). Indeed, the plush world of Ashok is an awakening of sorts for Balram. Sly and ambitious that he always was, Balram manages to penetrate Ashok's world in a way he becomes increasingly indispensable to his master.

Balram understands the only way to buck the class divide, which is wholly loaded against him, it is to

break all master-servant rules that have been drilled into his mind since childhood.

Priyanka has delivered her most assured performance in years while Rajkummar is awkwardly out of sync with forced accent.

Maintaining the narrative tone of Aravind Adiga's Man Booker Prize-winning book of the same name, Bahrani's screenplay unfolds as a letter Balram writes to erstwhile Chinese premier Wen Jiabao, around his India visit of 2010. Witty in tone, heart-rending in its impact and entertaining overall, *The White Tiger* is the best thing Netflix has dropped in a long time. AGENCIES

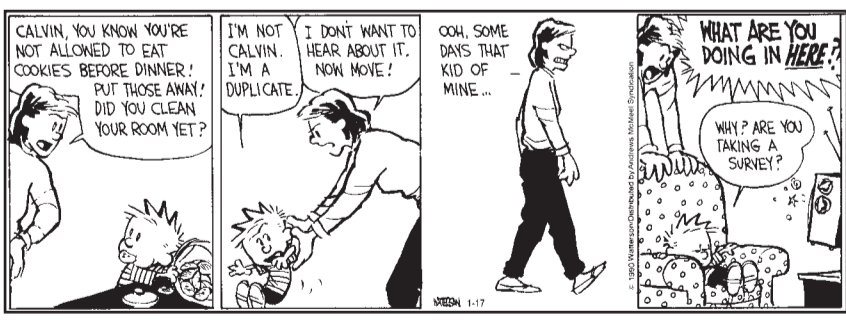


FILM REVIEW

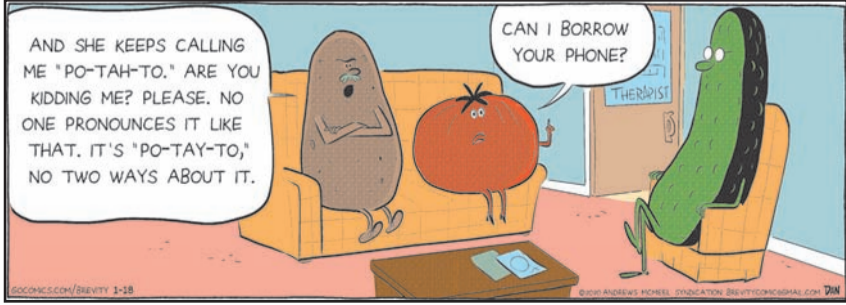
PEANUTS



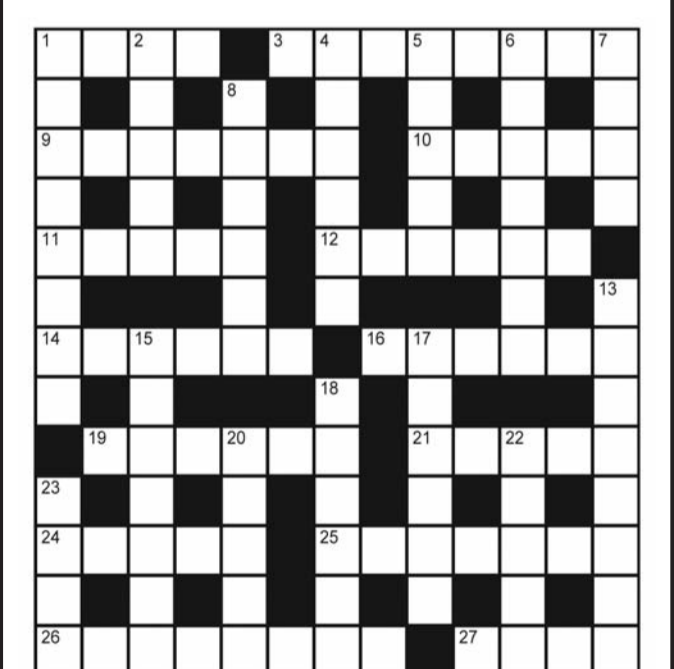
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



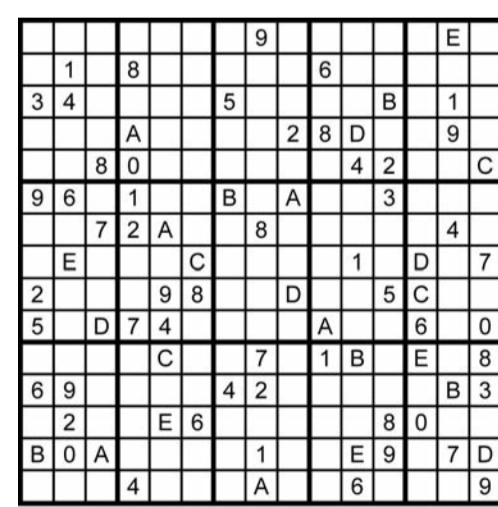
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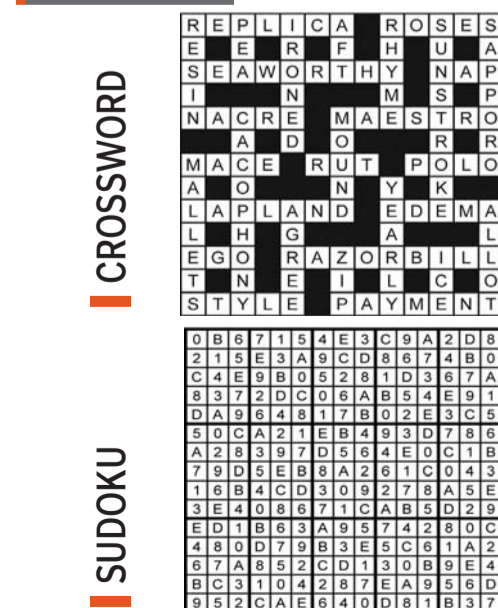
- Across**
1 Mountain lion
3 King or queen, e.g. (4,4)
9 Danger sign (3,4)
10 Scruffs
11 Sachet scent
12 Faucet
14 Merges
16 Ebb
19 Sheep originating in Spain
- Down**
21 Embrocated
24 Aquarium fish
25 Copy
26 Italian almond liqueur
27 Widespread
6 Say yes
7 Work station
8 Trite platitude
13 Draw (4,4)
15 Resistance to change
17 Leon Uris novel
18 Chinchilla
20 Furious
22 Tropical vine
23 Sicilian rumber

SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, each row, column and box must contain the numbers 0 to 9 and the letters A to E.



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

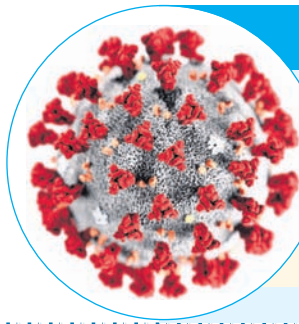
MUSEUM VISIT

People visit Netaji Museum in Puri on the occasion of the birth anniversary of the legendary freedom fighter, Saturday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	9,89,68,690	7,11,12,802	21,21,871
India	1,06,39,684	1,03,00,838	1,53,184
Odisha	3,34,150	3,30,962	1,904



1,50,760 Covaxin doses reach state

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: The second consignment of Covaxin reached the state capital Saturday through a special aircraft from New Delhi. Briefing the media, state Health and Family Welfare director Bijay Panigrahy said, "The state government has received the second consignment of Covaxin through a special flight. We have received the consignment at 8:17am Saturday which has 1,50,760 doses of the vaccine."

The official said that the doses had reached the state vaccine centre. "We will start dispatching the same to the regional vaccine centres today. Our insulated vaccine vehicles will ensure the same," he said.

The Health department official said that the use of Covaxin would be confined to Bhubaneswar alone. "We are giving the Covaxin only in Bhubaneswar and it will continue to be so as the norms say that the same vaccine should be given to the persons in the next rounds. So, we cannot change the jab. Those who had taken the first dose of Covaxin have to take the same vaccine in the next round," he said.

Panigrahy said that the health workers have gained more confidence on the vaccines and assured that all health workers would be covered with the vaccines very soon.

"We have vaccinated most of the health workers who were in the first list of 1.92 lakh. With the cur-

SECOND CONSIGNMENT



The second consignment of Covaxin doses reached Bhubaneswar around 8:17am Saturday

Covaxin is administered to health workers of Bhubaneswar and it will continue to be so as the norms say that the same vaccine should be given to the persons in the next rounds

Odisha has ranked third in the country when it comes to the reach of the Covid vaccine

rent supply of the vaccines, we are now confident of covering all our health workers. We have also noticed that slowly the health workers have started accepting the vaccine and the initial hesitations have declined," he said.

The state government claims that by the end of January 25, the government would be ready with its second list of frontline workers who would be vaccinated in the second round of inoculation drive after covering the health workers.

"By that day, we will be able to see how many frontline workers we need to cover in the vaccination drive," Panigrahy added.

The official said that as per the report till January 22, the state has ranked third when it comes to the reach of the Covid vaccine. "We will try to ensure timely delivery of

State achieves 105% vaccination target

BHUBANESWAR: The state Saturday achieved 105 percent of their vaccination target in the inoculation drive taken across the state. The government had planned 224 sessions where a total of 21304 persons were targeted to receive the vaccines while a total of 22364 persons got vaccinated, showing a total of 105 percent coverage. Unlike earlier few days, the state reported not even a single case of post vaccination adverse reaction among the vaccine takers.

vaccines for health workers," Panigrahy said.

Odisha pays tributes to Netaji, Sai



Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik pays tributes to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on the birth anniversary of the legendary freedom fighter at Netaji Birthplace Museum in Cuttack, Saturday

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: Odisha paid rich tributes to legendary freedom fighters Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on his 125th birth anniversary and Veer Surendra Sai on his 213th birth anniversary, Saturday.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik paid floral tribute to Netaji at his statue in Cuttack, the birthplace of the legendary leader.

Several paintings depicting Netaji's life and his journey through

the freedom struggle have been put on display at the Netaji Birthplace Museum.

"Tribute to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, a great son of Odisha. His strong self-confidence, unique ideas and dedication to the country have always been inspiring," tweeted the Chief Minister.

He also paid tribute to Veer Surendra Sai saying that his heroism and sacrifice in the fight against the British in Sambalpur to protect the interests of the tribals and

Several paintings depicting Netaji's life and his journey through the freedom struggle have been put on display at the Netaji Birthplace Museum

the general public will always be remembered. Governor Prof Ganeshi Lal also paid tributes to both the freedom fighters.

"Netaji was a champion of unity and equality who dedicated his life

for India's freedom," remembered the Governor.

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan visited the birthplace of Netaji and paid floral tribute.

"Paid tribute to one of India's greatest patriot Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose at Jankinath Bhawan, his birthplace in Cuttack. Celebrating this day as #ParakramDivas is a befitting tribute to Netaji and a just honour for his stellar contribution in the freedom struggle of our nation," tweeted Pradhan.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister laid the foundation stone of Netaji Bus Terminal (CNBT) in Cuttack.



Speaker Surya Narayan Patro, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Bikram Keshari Arukha and other dignitaries pay homage to freedom fighter Veer Surendra Sai on his birth anniversary at Odisha Assembly, Saturday

Int'l conference kicks off on gastroenterology

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: An international conference on gastroenterology has started here to brainstorm on some of the important issues related to gastroenterology including some of the latest advancements in this sphere.

The session has been organised in a hybrid mode where physical sessions as well as online sessions were seen with participation from reputed doctors and associations from across the world.

The event was inaugurated by Padmashri Dr Nageswar Reddy and others. Dr Manoj Sahu, the organising secretary of the conference named Mid Term Endocon 2021, said that the sessions had been planned to discuss important issues of the sector, the latest advancements, live surgery sessions and others to ensure that several doctors from across the country and share their learnings and learn from others and from experts from across the world.

Knowledge in forensic science key to justice delivery: CM

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: Sophisticated knowledge in forensic science is crucial to find out the real perpetrators of crime and dispensation of justice, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said here, Saturday.

While inaugurating the Annual National Conference of the Indian Academy of Forensic Medicine, 2021 through virtual mode, Naveen said, the forensic interpretation of an event, involving human body, and mind, is a vital component of criminal justice system.

"The legal proceedings require evidence to find out the real perpetrators of crime. Here, forensic science comes handy in providing concrete evidence. Therefore, sophisticated knowledge in forensic science is crucial to dispensation of justice," he said.

SCB Medical College and Hospital, where the event was organised, has been the backbone of healthcare in Odisha for almost a century now. The institution has a glorious history of academic excellence.

Forensic interpretation of an event, involving human body, and mind, is a vital component of criminal justice system

NAVEEN PATNAIK | CHIEF MINISTER

Now, the state government has started the process of transforming this great institute into a world-class healthcare institution with all the modern amenities, the Chief Minister said.

Stating that Odisha is known for its rich cultural heritage and a great place to unwind and experience the serene beauty of nature, Patnaik appealed to the delegates, who have visited Odisha, to enjoy the beautiful locales.

He further said that the scientific deliberations on issues in forensic medicine will shed lights on emerging techniques, advanced knowledge and newer tools.

DAV, Kalinga Nagar celebrates Parakram Diwas

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: DAV Public School, Kalinga Nagar here observed Parakram Diwas - the 125th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose - on its premises in compliance with Covid-19 protocol.

School principal Bipin Kumar Sahoo, supervisors and teachers offered floral tribute to the great patriot of India's freedom struggle. In his address to the gathering Sahoo underlined the exemplary valour and courage



of Netaji and his contribution to the freedom struggle of India. He further said that Netaji's intense love for his motherland and his radical ideologies shall continue to rule the hearts of millions of people all over the world for eternity.

On the occasion, the teachers of the school presented a beautiful chorus portraying the commanding personality of Netaji. Among other cultural programmes performed by the teachers to mark the occasion, the beautiful dance and short skit on Netaji's fight against the English touched everybody's heart. The entire programme was made live in YouTube for the students. The programme was arranged successfully by the school's English department.

Chorus for withdrawal of farm laws gets shriller



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: Extending solidarity with the farmers on protest in New Delhi, farmers under the banner of All India Kisan Sangharsha Coordination Committee, Odisha staged a demonstration before the Raj Bhawan, here Saturday.

The farmers demanded immediate repeal of three farm laws brought by the Centre and law to ensure minimum support price (MSP) for all agricultural produces.

"The Centre has forcibly implemented three black farm laws which are against the farmers. Though the farmers are protesting in New Delhi for a long time, the Modi government has not repealed laws. Therefore, on the occasion of 125th birth

anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, we have launched Azad Kishan Abhiyan to protect farmers from the capitalists," said Suresh Panigrahi, a leader from the Committee.

The Union government should immediately repeal the three laws without holding any further discussion, he demanded.

Similarly, the state government should also provide bonus of ₹750 per quintal of paddy to the farmers in addition to the MSP. Besides, a law should be passed to provide all kind of benefits like farm land owners to the sharecroppers, he added.

The Committee has decided to hold a convention of farmers from all across the state February 15 to put pressure on the governments.

Patia crematorium to be ready by Feb

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Commissioner, Saturday, took stock of development projects including the progress of the second crematorium in Patia.

BMC Commissioner Prem Chandra Caudhary visited different places of ward no 3 including that of Patia Village, Kanan Vihar (Both Ph-I & II), Shree Vihar and Damana Village.

In October last year, the BMC had stated that the Capital city will have two new crematoriums. While one LPG crematorium was proposed to be installed at Patia, an electric crematorium will come up at Khandagiri. The crematoriums were proposed when city was witnessing large number of Covid deaths.

"We have discussed to accelerate the works on crematorium. The proposed project is likely to come up by mid Feb. Moreover, discussions were also held with two Self Help Groups (SHGs). The Zonal District Commissioner, North, was asked to involve SHGs in some development works of the ward so that SHGs will be encouraged to take up other development activities in future," the Commissioner said.

Annual flower show kicks off to attract tourists



Youngsters visit the annual flower show at Ekamrakanan in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: A two-day annual flower show organised by Regional Plant Resource Centre (RPRC) in collaboration with Plant Lovers' Association (PLA) went off to a colourful start at Ekamrakanan here Saturday.

The show is supported by Odisha Mining Corporation Ltd and Directorate of Horticulture, Odisha.

On the occasion, additional secretary to Forest and Environment department Mona Sharma inaugurated the show as chief guest who released the

research and activity report 2019-20 and other two books by the institute. Interacting with Orissa POST, Sharma said, "Keeping Covid-19 in mind, we have organised this show on a small scale, but pretty successfully. Permissible number of visitors can visit the show while adhering to Covid guidelines."

The place has great importance in conserving bio-diversity, she said adding, "We are planning to organise curated events."

The show is organised to attract more tourists to this place. This cen-

Additional secretary to Forest and Environment department Mona Sharma inaugurated the show as the chief guest who released the research and activity report 2019-20 and other two books by the institute

Adani group of Dhamra Port Horticulture centre secured the first position for displaying prayer before Lord Jagannath and representing Covid-19 vaccination drive



tre will be a place of excellence to offer livelihood to people and more research is going on, Sharma said.

"We are also planning to add edible flower cultivation at this place in near future," she further said.

The flower show has been arranged by 12 institutions like Tata Steel, Adani Dhamra Port, OMC, Xaviers university Bhubaneswar, XIMB, CV Raman Global

University, Raj Bhawan and Khuntia Niwas who have participated in the grand display of potted flowering and foliage plants.

Adani group of Dhamra Port horticulture centre secured the first position for displaying prayer before Lord Jagannath and representing Covid-19 vaccination drive. Vachaspati Mishra of Dhamra Port Horticulture centre said, "This message shows a serum and injection with Lord Jagannath's blessing. We are pretty proud of our achievement. From dalia to marigold and French marigold, around 20 types of flowers have been used to project this theme."

Altogether 10 organisations participated and exhibited ornamental plants for display. The Orchid section allured many, while the colourful floral gate at the entrance made many take selfies for a memory.

The PLA also organised garden competition to encourage the residents for raising and growing plants to add to the beauty of the city. The winners will be awarded in the valedictory function to be held on January 24. The scientists, staff, students and workers of RPRC and members of PLA had put their best efforts to make this show a grand success. However, no private entries have been allowed this year keeping pandemic in mind.

Principal chief conservator of forest and HoFF Sandeep Tripathy was the guest of honour at the show.

There are people in your life that you just can not live without, they are the ones that are constant the ones that you believe will be there with you forever.

OBITUARY

With profound grief and sorrow we regret to inform the sad demise of our beloved mother on the 23rd of January 2021.

S. Inderjit Kaur Arora
27th March 1936 - 23rd January 2021

In Grief

Son & Daughter in Law: Rana Singh & Ruchika Arora
Daughter & Son in Law: Tina Nobis & Babi Nobis, Indu Sharma & Kishen Sharma

Contact: 9437005060
Grandchildren: Jassika, Deepuk & Riya

BJP attacks govt for shifting bus terminus in Cuttack

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: The Cuttack unit of the BJP Saturday attacked the state government for shifting the bus terminal at Khan Nagar in the city. The unit posed questions why the earlier proposed area was not used despite earlier demarcation of the area and announcements.

"The Chief Minister today visited Cuttack to pay tribute to Netaji. The CM went to old jail area. The same area had been talked about 10 years back making it significant in terms of independence struggle with the state government funding but nothing has happened to those areas," the BJP said.

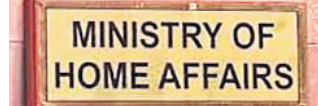
"The government has planned a bus station at Khan Nagar. The government had talked about a bus terminal at Gopalpur area where 40 acres were demarcated. But suddenly the government has chosen some other area. Why the government has taken the decision. There must be clarification from the government on the decision," it said.

MHA asks state govt to protect, rehab third gender

New Delhi, Jan 23: Following a notification of Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules 2020, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has asked Odisha and other states to sensitise police and prison officials for protection of the rights of transgender persons.

In a letter to the chief secretaries, the MHA has also asked the state governments to take steps for the rehabilitation of transgenders.

"The law mandates adequate steps to be taken by the State Governments/Union Territories for not only providing for welfare measures to be taken but steps to be taken for rescue, protection and rehabilitation of a transgender person," said the MHA.



Section 18 of Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, makes it a punishable offence in case anyone compels or entices a transgender person to indulge in the act of forced or bonded labour other than any compulsory service for public purposes imposed by the government, the ministry said.

The Union Home Ministry also said that endangering the life, safety or health, whether mental or physical, of a transgender person or tending to do acts including causing physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal and emotional abuse and economic abuse is also a punishable offence.

"Rule 11 provides for adequate measures to be taken to prevent non-discrimination of transgender persons, including setting up of a Transgender Protection Cell under the charge of District Magistrate in each District and a State Level Cell under the Director General of Police, to monitor cases of offences against transgender persons and ensure timely registration, investigation and prosecution of such offences," the ministry stated in the letter.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit (No. 13AA254786) at Notary, Puri, I, Prasanta Samantaray, S/o. Padmacharan Samantaray, At/P.O.- Badal, Via- Nirakarapur, Dist.- Puri changed my name to Prasanta Samanta Mishra for all future purpose.

R-DAY PREP



Security personnel during a full dress rehearsal for the Republic Day parade at Barabati Stadium in Cuttack, Saturday

OP PHOTO

Police take kidney fraudster on 2-day remand

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: The commissionerate police Saturday took Himanshu Bhushan Nanda on a two-day remand for a further probe into the kidney fraud. Several persons have lodged complaints at different police stations accusing Nanda and his associate of duping over Rs 30 lakhs on the pretext of arranging donors for kidney transplantations.

Earlier, the court had allowed Nayapalli police to take Nanda on a three-day remand for further probe into a case lodged by Pratap Chandra Mishra for allegedly duping him on the same pretext.

According to sources, mother of one Diptimayi Sahoo, who was staying at Laxmisagar area here, had been suffering from kidney ailment. She had been undergoing treatment at a private hospital here.

The doctor recently informed Diptimayi that her mother needs immediate transplantation of her non-performing kidney. Meanwhile, she was informed by another patient at the hospital to contact the accused for kidney transplantation.

Subsequently, she contacted Himanshu who assured Diptimayi to arrange a donor for the transplantation. He took more than Rs

3 lakh to arrange the same. However, he started avoiding Diptimayi after receiving the money. She later registered a case against Nanda at Laxmisagar police station in this regard.

Laxmisagar police will try to

elicite information related to the whole network including various hospital staff involved in the donor fraud during the interrogation of Himanshu.

Meanwhile, another victim, Alok Ranjan Chained of Marshghai in Kendrapara also lodged a complaint with Saheed Nagar police against Himanshu and his associate, Sanjay Palei of defrauding him of Rs 8 lakhs for arranging a kidney donor. Nanda also cheated Ashok Kumar Nayak from Rangamatia under Mancheswar police limits. Nanda had reportedly taken around Rs 18 lakhs from Nayak to arrange a kidney donor.

KSOM holds online faculty development program

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: The KIIT School of Management (KSOM) organized a five-day online faculty development program (FDP) on leadership – gen next: exerting influence not authority. The event was held under a mandate from ATAL, AICTE, Gol and it was conceptualized and coordinated by Shikta Singh, Associate Professor, KSOM-KIIT University.

The program received overwhelming response from more than 200 registrations from across India from the fields of pharmacy, medicines, biotech, engineering, management, and corporate too. The program had 15 sessions.

The FDP gave opportunities to participants to learn models and methodologies of leadership relevant to a wide spectrum while also learning the recent developments in leadership styles & strategies. It aimed to equip teachers, corporates with managerial skills across a range of competencies in various areas. Eminent academicians, in-



dustrial leaders, doctors, therapists were an important part and parcel of the workshop.

VC Hrushikesh Mohanty, registrar Jyanaranjan Mohanty, director of KSOM Saroj Mahapatra and Dean of KSOM SN Misra were present at the inaugural ceremony.

Dr Saroj Mahapatra Director, KSOM, Gourav Das (laparoscopic & bariatric surgeon), Shwetaleena Bidyadhar (SVP & global Head, MPS interactive), Debjeni Roy (chief HR officer at mind your fleet, Raiguru Mangesh (corporate guru founder) Twaran-Mumbai and others were present.

BJP stir for farmers a tactic to divert attention: Nirranjan

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) President Nirranjan Patnaik Saturday fired salvoes at the BJP party workers for organising an agitation for farmers in western Odisha on farm issues.

Patnaik, in his interaction with the media, said the events had been organised to divert the attention of the people from the anti-farm laws framed by the BJP-led government.

"This is nothing but a tactic to divert the attention of the people from the wrath of farmers against the party and the laws. Do they have the solutions for the farmers. We'll go to the people and make them understand the reality. We are committed to the welfare of farmers. Neither the Modi government nor the Naveen government is interested in the welfare of farmers," he said.

"The BJP is doing drama on the



“This is nothing but a tactic to divert the attention of the people from the wrath of farmers against BJP and the new farm laws. Do they have the solutions for the farmers? We'll go to the people and make them understand the reality”

NIRANJAN PATNAIK | OPCC CHIEF

issue of farmers. The Union government is still hesitant to make MSP assurance as part of a legislation. The MSP is a surety of prices for the farmers. I want that the legislation should have a provision that those who buy the farm produce from farmers below MSP should be punished," he said.

Patnaik said the Centre despite several rounds of talks is still reluctant to make MSP a written assurance because this would allegedly lead to disruption of the party's vested interests with the

corporate houses. The Union government has framed the legislation without taking the views of states, he alleged.

"The government has not taken into confidence farmers before forming the law who on the other side are more than 60 per cent of the country. The Naveen Patnaik government which passed a resolution for hiking the MSP for farmers in Odisha Assembly is yet to ensure the welfare of the farmers in the state," the OPCC chief said.

10 Collectors asked to push Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: The state government has asked Collectors of 10 districts to take up activities under the Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan.

The Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment had launched the Abhiyaan in August last year. The programme was launched in 272 most affected districts of which 10 are from Odisha. The districts are Angul, Boudh, Cuttack, Deogarh, Gajapati, Kandhamal, Malkangiri, Puri, Rayagada and Sambalpur.

The main objectives of the Abhiyaan was to create awareness in higher educational institutions, university campuses and schools; community outreach and identification of dependent population; focus on treatment facilities in hospital settings; and capacity building programmes for service provider.

As the districts from Odisha have not conducted major activities, the state government has asked the Collectors of 10 districts to conduct the above said activities and submit an action taken report with a spirit to take a step forward and represent the active participation of Odisha.

Under the programme, the government provides community-based services for the identification, treatment and rehabilitation of addicts through voluntary or-

DRIVE AGAINST DRUG ABUSE



Under the programme, the government provides community-based services for the identification, treatment and rehabilitation of addicts through voluntary organizations

It provides financial assistance to NGOs across the country for running de-addiction centres

Besides, a 24x7 toll free drug de-addiction helpline number 1800110031 has been opened to help the victims of drug abuse, their families and society at large

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It provides financial assistance to NGOs across the country for running de-addiction centres. Besides, a 24x7 toll free drug de-addiction helpline number 1800110031 has been opened to help the victims of drug abuse, their families and society at large.

Dense fog warning for nine districts

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: Forecasting dense fog for Monday morning, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued yellow warning to nine districts of Odisha.

A few places in Cuttack, Bhadrak, Jagatsinghpur, Khurda, Kandhamal, Balasore, Angul, Dhenkanal and Kendrapara districts will witness dense fog Monday morning. Similarly, shallow to moderate fog would likely to occur at one or two places of north coastal Odisha, Angul, Dhenkanal, Khurda, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj and Kandhamal districts, the Met department said.

Phulbani was the coldest place of Odisha with recording a minimum temperature of 6.5 degrees Celsius while the temperature was 8 degrees Celsius at Daringbadi and 9.6 degrees at Jharsuguda.

Similarly, Keonjhar, Bolangir and Sonepur have recorded a night temperature of 10.2, 10.4 and 10.6 degrees Celsius, respectively. Twin city of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack recorded a minimum temperature of 17.6 and 15.2 degrees Celsius.

Covid-19 tally mounts to 3,34,150

PNN/AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: State's Covid-19 caseload, Saturday, mounted to 3, 34, 150 after 130 more people tested positive for the infection, while a fresh fatality pushed the state's coronavirus death toll to 1,904, a Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department official said.

The new cases were detected in 23 of the state's 30 districts, 76 were reported from different quarantine centres, while the remaining 54 were from local contacts.

Sundargarh district reported the highest of 14 new cases followed by Bargarh (13) and Angul (12).

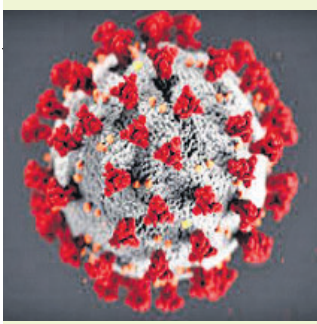
Seven districts – Boudh, Bolangir, Gajapati, Kandhamal, Malkangiri, Rayagada and Sonepur – did not register any new case since Friday.

As many as 1, 30, 007 frontline health workers have already received the Covid-19 vaccine jabs in the state since the launch of the nationwide vaccination programme January 16, the official said, adding that the government has set a target to complete inoculation of all the 3.28 lakh frontline workers by January 25.

Meanwhile, the state government Saturday received the second consignment of COVAXIN.

Odisha now has 1,436 active Covid-19 cases, while 3, 30, 757 patients have so far recovered from the highly infectious disease.

The state reported one death from Khurda district, taking the total fatalities to 1,904. Fifty-three



The state has so far conducted over 75.25 lakh sample tests for Covid-19, including 24,012 Friday

IN BRIEF

Sundargarh district reported the highest of 14 new cases followed by Bargarh (13) and Angul (12)

7 districts – Boudh, Bolangir, Gajapati, Kandhamal, Malkangiri, Rayagada and Sonepur – did not register any new case

The state reported one death from Khurda district, taking the total fatalities to 1,904

other Covid-19 patients have also died due to the comorbidities, he said.

Of the 1,904 fatalities reported in the state, Khurda district accounted for 335 deaths, followed by Ganjam (248), Sundargarh (171), Cuttack (141) and Puri (117).

The state has so far conducted over 75.25 lakh sample tests for Covid-19, including 24,012 Friday, and the positivity rate stands at 4.44 per cent.

ANMs allege ouster from dharna site at Lower PMG

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: The Commissionerate Police is alleged to have forcibly dispersed and picked up the auxiliary nurses midwives (ANMs) who have been protesting at Lower PMG here, Saturday morning.

According to sources, a scuffle ensued between the police and ANMs who were on a protest demanding regularisation of their jobs. The protestors at the Lower PMG were asked to immediately vacate the area in view of the rehearsal of forthcoming Republic Day parade.

"We will continue our protest till the Odisha government fulfills our demands. We respect the Republic Day celebrations and hence, are moving from this place (Lower PMG square) for the time being," said a protesting ANM.

Notably, the ANM workers have been protesting at the Lower PMG



Police remove agitating ANMs from the Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar, Saturday, to facilitate the Republic Day parade

OP PHOTO

for over two months. Two of the protesting ANMs had earlier attempted self-immolation by pouring kerosene on them.

The state government had en-

gaged over 21,000 ANMs, staff nurses and pharmacists on 'temporary basis' to augment the health workforce for smooth functioning of Covid care homes (CCHs) in Odisha.

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

- Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech- Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Center- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugd Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookiemann-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

Farmers turning away from agriculture

REMINISCING THE LEGEND



Women raising slogans after garlanding the statue of freedom fighter Veer Surendra Sai on the occasion of his birth anniversary at Jail Square in Sambalpur, Saturday

THREAT TO FOOD PRODUCTION IN KENDRAPARA



Kendrapara canal buried in weeds

OP PHOTO

The district has over 1, 82,184 hectares of farmland but they are deprived of irrigation facilities despite presence of around seven rivers and 27 branch canals. The district annually receives 1340 millimeter of rainfall

Over 36, 038 hectares of high farmlands lack irrigation facilities while drainage of water has become a problem in over 70,333 hectares. Government records claim that over 65,032 hectares of farmland out of 75,818 hectares have irrigation facilities

Formation of Pani panchayat in the district has remained a non-starter with major portions of the grants going to the pockets of government officials and the panchayat members. Rivers like Gobari, Jambu and Kendrapara and Pattamundai canals have been buried with weeds and water hyacinths blocking the flow of water to farmlands

partment claimed that out of 28,070 hectare of farmlands in Mahakalpara block only 6,823 hectares have irrigation facilities. Similarly, out of 25,895 hectares in Rajnagar block only 19.16 per cent of farmland has irrigation facilities.

Over 33.62 per cent of farmland in Rajkanika block receives water from lift irrigation points and other sources. The district has over 1,114 lift irrigation points and 3,063 solo tube wells to irrigate over 30,681 hectares of farmlands while 10,624 hectares of farmland receive water from other sources. The government's lie will be exposed if a survey is undertaken at the ground zero level.

Banambar Sahu, a senior resident, alleged that the formation of Pani panchayat in the district has remained a non-starter with major portions of the grants going to the pockets of government officials and the panchayat members. He said the farmland could be provided with water by constructing barrages and small embankments in various rivers and canals flowing through the district.

Moreover, rivers like Gobari, Jambu and Kendrapara and Pattamundai canals have been buried with weeds and water hyacinths blocking the flow of water to farmlands. When contacted, Prabodh Kumar Rout, executive engineer in the water resources department, said construction of barrages and small embankments in rivers and canals is being undertaken to provide irrigation to farmlands.

farmlands lack irrigation facilities while drainage of water has become a problem in over 70,333 hectares. Government records claim that over 65,032 hectares of farmland out of 75,818 hectares have irrigation facilities.

However, the ground reality is something else. Among nine blocks in the district, Aul, Rajnagar and Rajkanika have no canals for irrigating the farmland in their areas.

The state government had announced ensuring irrigation facilities for 35 per cent of farmland in

each block. However, the promise is yet to be delivered. As a result, agriculture is no more alluring for which the youths and their elders are turning away from cultivation and migrating to outside of the state.

Pramod Kumar Swain, an RTI activist, alleged that how the reality is in sharp contrast with government records. He alleged that the state government had inflated records on providing irrigation facilities to a majority of farmlands but a ground study will nail the lie. Reports obtained from the agriculture de-

Nabarangpur bridge collapse: Engineer suspended

POST NEWS NETWORK

Umerkote, Jan 23: In connection with the collapse of an under-construction bridge in Nabarangpur district January 10 that claimed one life, an executive engineer of the rural works department division-II Santosh Kumar Samal was suspended Friday afternoon.

According to sources, Samal was suspended with immediate effect by an order of the Odisha Governor professor Ganeshi Lal after he was found guilty for dereliction of duty.

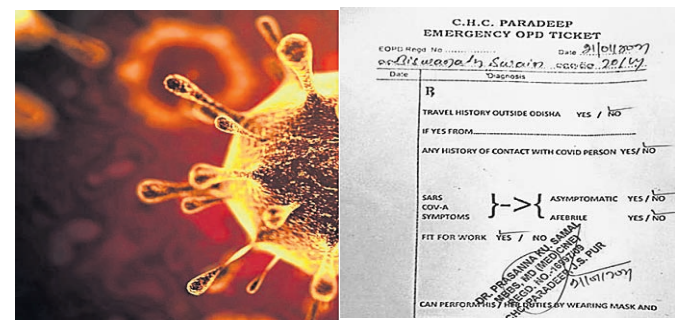
This administrative action was taken following inquiry reports submitted by the engineer-in-chief and chief engineer (PMGSY), said an official notification issued by the rural development department.

The Executive Engineer of RW division-II Nabarangpur (Umerkote) Santosh Kumar Samal has neglected his duties as reported by the EIC RW, Odisha and chief engineer (PMGSY) after their inquiry on the collapse of one RCC slab of the Biju Setu (bridge) across River Nagi on Janiguda-Talapadar road in the district, the notification stated.



Notably, an assistant executive engineer Asit Kumar Patra from Tikiri in Rayagada district was earlier arrested January 17 by Umerkote police.

Fake Covid-19 report racket busted in Paradip, 1 arrested



POST NEWS NETWORK

Paradip, Jan 23: Police Friday busted a racket allegedly involved in issuing fake COVID-19 negative certificates to local people in Paradip, many of whom work at Paradip Oil Refinery. Police have arrested one in this connection.

According to sources, police have arrested Kalandi Tarai, a resident of Dalimpur area of Paradip in Jagatsinghpur district. He was running a photocopy centre, located barely 200 metres from Abhachandpur station in Paradip.

Tarai and some of his other accomplices were earlier issuing fake COVID-19 negative certificates to people for ₹300 to ₹400. Later, he reduced the price to as low as ₹30 each.

As getting a negative report

Tarai and some of his other accomplices were earlier issuing fake COVID-19 negative certificates to people for ₹300 to ₹400

from medical is a time-consuming affair. Tarai had been providing fake COVID-19 negative reports to those who needed it. Moreover, he was also forging the signature of a doctor posted at the CHC on the report. And to make it appear original, he was also using a rubber stamp quite similar to the one being used by the doctor.

A doctor posted at Paradip CHC somehow came to know about this and immediately informed Abhachandpur police Friday. Later, ASP Nimain Sethy and IIC Jugal Kishore Das raided the kiosk and arrested the accused.

Cash, ornaments looted in Bolangir

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, Jan 23: Miscreants allegedly looted cash and ornaments worth several lakhs of rupees from a house by hurling bombs at Shantinagar village under Khaprakhol police limits in the district, police said Saturday. The total looted cash and ornaments are worth ₹6 lakh.

Reports said, a gang of armed dacoits broke into the house of a resident, Artarana Sahu in the village and looted ₹6 lakh and jewellery weighing 170 gm threatening the family members with sharp-edged weapons, police said. On being informed, police rushed to the spot and started an investigation. SP Nitin Kusalkar also reached the spot and took stock of the situation. A forensic team has been pressed into service.

Disabled woman impregnated

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargaon, Jan 23: A disabled woman was impregnated by a co-villager under Bargaon police limits in Sundargarh district, police said.

The accused impregnated the woman, 36, after raping her over a year and later aborted her foetus. The woman suffered in silence due to her physical infirmity but narrated her ordeal before her family members after her health condition deteriorated due to the abortion. Family members got her examined by an ASHA worker which confirmed her pregnancy and subsequent abortion. Later, they lodged a complaint in the police station. Police registered a case and started an investigation.

Fake zarda-making unit busted in Bhadrak, Jaleswar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak/Jaleswar, Jan 23: Acting on a tip-off, Bhadrak police busted another fake chewing tobacco (zarda) manufacturing unit at Chhadak Mahala area under Puruna Bazaar police limits in the district late Friday night.

Police said, a huge quantity of fake tobacco products of various reputed brands, chemicals and packing materials and machines worth over ₹2 lakh were seized during the raid. The busting of the unit confirmed Bhadrak is fast turning into a big manufacturing hub of fake tobacco products.

Police officials said the raid was conducted based on intelligence inputs. However, the accused managed to flee the scene during the raid.

In a separate incident, a team of special task force of police seized two quintals of fake zarda during a raid at Jaleswar in Balasore district. Two persons were also detained in this connection.

Notably, police had busted several



The STF team at the fake zarda unit in Jaleswar

OP PHOTO

illegal tobacco manufacturing units in Bhadrak district in past. A huge cache of fake tobacco products was seized by Bhadrak police following a raid at Mathasahi area, October 25, last year.

The raid had come a day after a police team and some journalists were attacked by the residents during a raid on a fake tobacco manufacturing unit at Holasahi.

Earlier, Puruna Bazaar police

had raided a fake zarda manufacturing factory at Pathan Mohalla area and had seized consignment worth ₹2 lakh during the crackdown, October 6.

In past, a team of Puruna Bazaar police had raided two illegal tobacco manufacturing units at Chandan Nagar and Sarkar Nagar and seized huge consignment of raw materials used to prepare spurious zarda, August 2018.

Youth thrashed for clicking woman's photo

POST NEWS NETWORK

Udala, Jan 23: Irrate residents beat up a youth black and blue and later detained him for allegedly clicking the photographs of a woman without her permission at Udala area in the district, Saturday.

The incident occurred when the youth was found taking multiple photographs of a woman on his cell phone despite her objections. The woman informed the vil-



lagers following which the villagers and passersby intercepted him and thrashed him. They also detained him.

The angry villagers also forced

the youth to delete the pictures from his mobile phone. Later, they handed him over to Udala police.

A villager alleged that the youth was found taking the photographs of the woman at a public place without her permission. This is indicative of his bad intention and stringent action should be taken against the accused, the villagers said.

Recently, a youth was detained while he was trying to click the

photographs and videos of a girl when she was changing clothes in the trial room of a shopping mall in Keonjhar.

The incident occurred when the girl had gone to the mall in the town to buy clothes. The girl realized she's being filmed and raised an alarm following which security personnel of the mall rushed to her help and caught the youth red-handed. He was later handed over to Town police.

ECO-STALLS



Visitors appreciating two eco-stalls set up at Pata Devi Dangar and established by the Koraput forest division near the SLN Medical College and Hospital in Koraput, Saturday. The two eco-stalls will sell various food products, fruits and juices prepared from traditional crops cultivated by the tribals

OP PHOTO

Mahanga double murder: Accused surrenders before JMFC court

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Jan 23: One more accused in the much-talked about murder of local BJP leader Kulamani Baral and his close associate Dibyasingha Baral surrendered before the Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) Court Friday afternoon.

The former Mahanga block chairperson, Kulamani, had been returning home along with Dibyasingha on his motorcycle when miscreants attacked the duo with sharp weapons near Jankoti area in Cuttack, January 2. Doctors declared Kulamani 'brought dead' at Mahanga community health centre and Dibyasingha had succumbed to critical injuries while undergoing treatment at SCB Hospital in the district.

According to police sources, Malaya Barik surrendered before JMFC Court to avoid arrest. Eight persons have been arrested in this connection so far, the source added.

Notably, there are allegations over

Doctors declared Kulamani 'brought dead' at Mahanga community health centre and Dibyasingha had succumbed to critical injuries while undergoing treatment at SCBMCH in the district

very little advancement made in the investigation of the brutal political double-murder in Mahanga area including the demand to arrest state Law Minister Pratap Jena.

Following the murder, Kulamani's son Ramakant had lodged an FIR with Cuttack (Rural) police in which names of the Law Minister and 13 others were mentioned.

Ramakant stated in the complaint that his father was hacked to death for raising voice against corruption.

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
RURAL WATER SUPPLY &
SANITATION ORGANISATION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
RWS&S DIVISION, ANGUL, AT: TALCHER
At- Baghuabole, Po.- Hatatota, Talcher, Dist.- Angul, Pin- 759100
(Ph. No./ Fax - 06760-240762, E-mail : eerwssang@gmail.com)**

National Competitive Bidding through e-procurement
Bid Identification No. 08/EE/RWSS/ANGUL/2020-21 Dt. 19.01.2021 (JJM)
No.O-938:- The Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Angul, at Talcher on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites Item Rate/Percentage bid through e-procurement in double/single cover system according to norm of e-Procurement system in on-line mode.

Nature of Work : Rural Piped Water Supply Schemes.

- No. of tenders : 2 Nos.
- Tender paper cost : Rs.6,000.00
- Value of work : Rs.27.49 Lakhs to Rs. 38.71 lakhs
- Class of contractor : "C" & "B" Class
- Date & time of availability of bid document in portal : 27.01.2021 at 13.00 hours to 03.02.2021 upto 17.00 hours
- Date & time of seeking tender clarification : 30.01.2021 upto 17.00 hours
- Date & time of opening of tender & verification of original document : 04.02.2021 at 15.00 hours in the office of the Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Angul, at Talcher
- Time of completion : 3 (Three) Calendar Months
- The bidders have to participate in online bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in.
- Corrigendum if any shall be publish in the above website only.

**Sd/- Executive Engineer
RWS&S Division, Angul at Talcher
OIPR-25019/11/0016/2021**

There is no greater courage than that of recognising one's own mistakes.

THE MOTHER



Growth story over

We have entered the 13th consecutive quarter of economic slowdown in India. Gross Domestic Product, meaning the total value of services and goods produced in this country in the last 12 months, shrunk in 2020-2021 against 2019-2020. We made less than we did the previous year. To return to where we were in January 2020, it will take perhaps another year. Perhaps longer, we do not know.

The problem did not begin with Covid; it existed much before that. Growth began declining from January 2018 and has declined sequentially, meaning every quarter since then. The government has tried to tweak some of the numbers, something that Americans refer to as "putting lipstick on a pig" but to no avail. It is sequential decline over three years. The India growth story is over and has been over for a few years now. You can make all the speeches you want, you cannot argue against 39 straight months of slowing.

Speaking loudly of competing with China and America but then falling behind even Bangladesh's per capita GDP does not inspire confidence. The fact is that even without the lockdown we were in crisis, a word that is used loosely but can be said to be accurate here. The government has no idea why the economy began to stall from January 2018. There are theories from the outside, but they are not discussed or debated in government — who will tell the King that his rule is incompetent? Nobody, unless they want to lose their head (or at least their job) and so we continue to bumble on, along the same path that has brought us to this disaster.

The signs of our decay are all around us. Work that has left China because of Trump's trade war and Covid has not come to India but to Vietnam and Bangladesh. Our neighbour has crept ahead of us in per capita GDP because its exports (powered by high-labour garments manufacturing) are growing while ours have not grown since 2014. We have six years of zero growth in exports. Bangladesh is also ahead because it has much higher participation of women in the labour force. In India, the patriarchy is more concerned about who Indians marry rather than why they are not working. India is the most dangerous place for women in the world. According to the Thomson Reuters Foundation World's Most Dangerous Countries For Women, we were at fourth place in 2011 and then fell to last place in 2018, where presumably we remain.

The low participation of women in the workforce has many complex reasons, but the failure of the State and indeed the inability of this current government to stop the slide further, is also responsible. We have more of the same to look forward to in 2021. We will not see the economy pick up but we will see more bombast from the government about how well we are doing. The enormous hole in the economy that was created in the first quarter of last year (April-June) because of the lockdown will have been filled over the last few months. When results for the same quarter year on year appear sometime in the middle of 2021, Modi will claim that we are the world's fastest growing economy and pretend that the 25 per cent increase is not just the filling up of a hole he himself created but some miracle he has delivered to the Indian economy. The Economist reported that Mukesh Ambani's wealth rose 350 per cent in 2020 and Gautam Adani's rose over 700 per cent, but we are at record unemployment, which is hovering around the 9 per cent mark. And it is not higher still only because many crore Indians have removed themselves from the job market. Those who are not employed and not actively looking for work are not considered unemployed. The real figure could be approaching 15 per cent and perhaps even higher than that. On every conceivable metric that you can think of, from bank credit growth, to automobile sale, the revelation is not only that there is no India growth story but there is a decline that has set us back years, perhaps a decade.

And yet the triumphalism carries on. The BJP won almost half the seats of West Bengal in 2019 and one will be very surprised if they do not win the election there later this year. The amount of resource they have because of the electoral bonds and because of the broad support Modi receives from corporate India cannot be matched by any other party and cannot be matched by all other parties put together.

Another state will fall to the BJP, and if it doesn't this time then certainly it will the next. Elsewhere, society has been torn apart, most likely in a way that cannot ever be repaired. I am not saying this out of despair but one has to be realistic. This amount of poison being injected from the top cannot be detoxified without resistance and one sees no resistance to it.

On every parameter, from economic decline to national security failure to unemployment to social tensions, India will continue in the path that it has chosen for itself since 2014. But at least Modi will continue to be popular, making his daily sermons about how much better things are under him and how bad it was in the past.

WISDOM CORNER

- Coincidence is God's way of remaining anonymous. ALBERT EINSTEIN
- Science is organised knowledge. Wisdom is organised life. IMMANUEL KANT
- Experience is something you don't get until just after you need it. STEVEN WRIGHT

WORDSWORTH

Zany

Somebody zany is amusingly crazy or clownish. If you object to this definition, then you may be in the company of the compilers of several current dictionaries. It's a hard word to pin down — we all think we know what we mean by it, but we may find describing it in plain English surprisingly hard. That may have something to do with the way the word has evolved. It was first a noun, to describe a performer in the commedia dell'arte, an improvised Italian comic form of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. The zany was a foolish servant, a buffoon, who attempted to mimic the actions of his master, himself a clown. The servant was given the generic name Giovanni (the Italian equivalent of John), much as English servants of the same period were frequently called Andrew (indeed, one English equivalent to the zany was a merry-andrew), or as a Glaswegian might call someone Jimmy as an all-purpose name. In time Giovanni turned into zannie and we imported it in that form. Its first use in English was exactly equivalent to the Italian, "a comic performer attending on a clown, acrobat, or mountebank, who imitates his master's acts in a ludicrously awkward way," as the Oxford English Dictionary puts it. This dates back as far as Shakespeare's Love's Labour's Lost in which Berowne says that a trick must have been carried out by "Some carry-tale, some please-man, some slight zany." Zany quickly evolved related senses, first contemptuously suggesting someone who was a hanger-on or toady, then somebody who played the fool for the amusement of others. The noun survived almost to our day; Tennyson wrote in 1847 that "The printers are awful zanies, they print erasures and corrections too, and other sins they commit of the utmost inhumanity." But that — ending made the word look like an adjective, and that is how it has more and more been employed, until now one really can't use it as a noun. Here's an example from 1978: "Television shows that lean heavily on the brand of humor known as 'zany', consisting largely of sight gags and the sight of appealing people making cheerful fools of themselves."

DOUBLE FARMERS' INCOME

FOCUS AGRICULTURE

The government has to tread between the twin objectives of doubling farmers' incomes and dismantling the Minimum Support Price (MSP). Both objectives are good. However, the objective of doubling farmers' incomes does not seem to be on the track. Reason is that government policies in this direction are misplaced. The government had established an Inter-Ministerial Committee to make plan for securing this objective which submitted its report in 2018. The Committee has stressed the need to increase productivity in agriculture. In other words, more production should be obtained from the same one acre piece of land. It seems obvious that more production would get more income for the farmer. Instead of earning ₹2,000 from one quintal of wheat, the farmer would earn ₹4,000 from two quintal of wheat. However, the Committee forgot to note that the prices, more often than not, decline when production increases. The prices of agricultural produce in the global market have been declining in the last three decades. The population is not increasing rapidly while production continues to increase rapidly due to the use of tube wells, tractors, tissue culture and other modern technologies. This is leading to small increases in demand of the agricultural produce while the supply is increasing rapidly. The result is a decline in the prices. Therefore, the Committee's recommendation to increase productivity is having the opposite result. The farmer is producing higher quantities but is earning less because of the parallel reduction in the prices. A few years ago, farmers of Palampur dumped their potato crops on the streets because they could not even recover the cost of harvesting them, let alone recovering the cost of seeds, ploughing and watering.

The second recommendation made by the Committee was to secure an increase in the price of agricultural produce. Here arises a contradiction between the two objectives of the government. The direct solution for increasing the incomes of the farmers is, not



The Union government must introspect why the farmers' incomes have not doubled despite this being promised to be attained in 2018, 2020 and now 2024? It must make heavy investments in research

only to maintain the MSP but to increase it. This stands contrary to the government's objective of dismantling the MSP, which too is good. The MSP system has led to high production of specific crops. The government, through the Food Corporation of India, has to purchase the produce, store it, and often sell or export it at low prices later. There are huge problems of corruption and inefficiency involved here as well. It leads to a financial burden on the government. A circuitous route to securing increase in the incomes of the farmers is adopted in the MSP approach. First, the production is increased and the soil is over-exploited and over-stressed; then losses are incurred in purchase and storage of the crop; lastly loss is incurred in selling it at a low price. Therefore, the doubling of farmers' incomes by securing increase in the price as recommended by the Committee will not, and has not worked.

There is a way out yet. The Committee had also recommended that the agricultural crops should be diversified. This recommendation can help solve the problem. Farmers of Italy and a small country like Tunisia in Africa are earning good incomes from the cultivation of olives. Farmers of France are earning from the cultivation of grapes, those of

Netherlands from tulip flowers, those of Malaysia from rubber, those of United States from walnuts, those of Pakistan from guava and mangoes, and so on. A number of such countries have established themselves as suppliers of specific crops. The farmers of Netherlands are paying a salary of ₹15,000 per day. They are able to do this because their tulip flowers are of specified quality and get high prices in the international market. In our country farmers of Kerala are earning high incomes from the cultivation of pepper, those of Mandya from silk, those of Coorg from coffee, those of Gulbarga from grapes, those of Bhusaval from bananas, those of Nasik from onions, those of Jodhpur from red chillies, and those of Assam from tea and pineapples. Therefore, the global and our own experience tell us that farmers' incomes can be doubled if we can produce good quality produce as per international standards. Then MSP would not be required at all. No wonder, there is little opposition to dismantling of MSP from these areas.

The present imbroglio has been caused because the government wants to double the farmers' incomes later and dismantle the MSP upfront. This is like asking the homemaker to cease using the wood stove first and provide LPG

gas to her after two years. The dismantling of MSP before doubling the income would indeed be hugely harmful for farmers and their protests today are justified.

India has a special advantage in being able to grow high-value crops for the global market. We can grow tulip, gladiolus and rose flowers across the 12 months. These can be grown in the south in the winters, Rajasthan in the monsoons and in the hills in the summers. We can grow olives in the deserts of Rajasthan, grapes of quality suitable for making high-priced wine in Gulbarga, and orchid flowers in the Northeast. These flowers sell for as much as ₹1,000 for a single stem. The government should invest in research on these high-value crops. Varieties of tulips, olives, grapes and other crops need to be developed that can grow in the specific soil and climate of our country. The crop management has to be determined to produce crops as per international standards. We can certainly attain this objective if the laboratories established by the Ministry of Agriculture do their work earnestly without interference. But research does not pay political dividends immediately hence the government puts this on the backburner.

The government must change its strategy. It must introspect why the farmers' incomes have not doubled despite this being promised to be attained in 2018, 2020 and now 2024? It must make heavy investments in research. It may outsource research because termites have taken over our government laboratories. It must establish the infrastructure required to enable farmers to export their crops. A farmer at Paukhal near where I live in Uttarakhand grew gladiolus flowers. He incurred heavy losses because he could not transport them to the market in the plains. The government should first remove these bottlenecks and actually double the farmers' incomes. The MSP system should certainly be dismantled thereafter.

The writer is a former Professor of Economics at IIM, Bangalore.



Bharat Jhunjhunwala

THE DISMANTLING OF MSP BEFORE DOUBLING THE INCOME WOULD INDEED BE HUGELY HARMFUL FOR FARMERS AND THEIR PROTESTS TODAY ARE JUSTIFIED



Aakar Patel

We have more of the same to look forward to in 2021. We will not see the economy pick up but we will see more bombast from the government about how well we are doing

SPECTRUM SOCIETY

For our prosperity, take care of girl child

In my early teens in 1960s, a typical scene of Republic Day parade in Delhi's India Gate lawns ever perplexed me. As the group of young girls jingling the drums passed, there was sudden outburst of macabre shriek and excitement among people on either side. With nonage over, when I discovered the reason of the thrill I still could not compromise with the sordid and sick psyche of men folk about sex!

Not a day passes when the newspaper does not report some cases of rape, molestation, trafficking or some other form of girl child abuse; in some instances the girl victim is just a few years old. To cite a few cases of the month: a scrap vendor was sentenced by a court in Gujarat to three years in imprisonment for molesting a minor girl. In Kerala, after the death of a sexually abused 14-year-old, her relatives staged protest outside the child welfare committee office in Kakkannad, Kochi, as the victim was under the care of a childcare facility there. It is not psychiatric disorder alone. Behind such large scale heinous acts lies primarily deep-rooted sexual frustration and apathy of onlookers.

Discrimination against girl child stems from the ages-old distorted perceptions in favour of male child in

many Indian communities. Whether in providing education, comforts, health or recreational facilities, we reflexively tend to prefer boys. It is taken for granted that boys only, as true successor can, and shall tend the parents in old age though the current boyish behaviour trends indicate otherwise. In contemporary society many sons not only treat ancestral property and leftover assets and cash as their natural right and in the process, are dissuaded to indulge in a productive activity besides turning apathetic to the concerns of ageing, ailing parents. On the other hand, daughters know that they have to quit the paternal home one day, and to have a good position in the new family they have to work hard. Increasingly, they are known to take due care of the needs of their parents.

Admittedly, a female is an eternal symbol of productivity and prosperity; she is Nature's agency to perpetuate the existence of life on earth, something several 'eat, drink and be merry' or 'damn care for marriage' type youngsters have to understand before it is too late.

Girls are groomed to remain satisfied with pariah status accorded to them in meeting food, clothing and deprived of a host of comforts. They are indoctrinated to believe

that later they have to don family responsibilities including nurturing children and serve as correctional agency to mend their husbands. It is against this stereotype that women activists have taken up cudgels, like such messages, "Women, you are not rehabilitation centre for badly raised men. It is not your job to fix him, change him, parent him or raise him. You want a partner, not a project."

A major initiative of government of India to spread awareness among people about inequalities girls face in our society has been the celebration of National Girl Child Day on 24 January annually by the Ministry of Women and Child Development since 2008. Girls fare poorly as against boys along all development parameters. While male literacy stands at 82 per cent, among females it is 64 per cent. As for health, most girls and women suffer from malnutrition, anaemia, and vitamin A deficiency. Child marriages mostly involve underage girls; India is home to one-third of all child brides in the world. Legal protection to women remains inadequate; incidences of crimes against women, feticide, acid attacks, honour killings, rape, forced prostitution, trafficking go on irrespective of the hue of gover-

nance. The much applauded POCSO Act has had limited impact on mitigating injustice against girls. Among POCSO crimes, Maharashtra tops the list with 8,503 cases, followed by Uttar Pradesh 6,978, Madhya Pradesh 5,348 cases, as per the latest National Crime Records Bureau report.

After the POCSO, the flagship Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 22 January 2015 made significant dent to address the issue of declining child sex ratio and related issues of women empowerment.

The situation is so pathetic that "around one adult in every three has experienced abuse as a child," as one study concluded. There is enormous evidence that child abuse and neglect is associated with an increased possibility that as adult they will be at higher risk of suicide. No society or nation can grow without active participation of women, as Theresa J. Whitmarsh said, "If you exclude 50 per cent of the talent pool, it's no wonder you find yourself in a war for talent."

The author, a blogger (www.bluntspeaker.com), writes on social, spiritual and health issues.



Harish Barthwal

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST GIRL CHILD STEMS FROM THE AGES-OLD DISTORTED PERCEPTIONS IN FAVOUR OF MALE CHILD IN MANY INDIAN COMMUNITIES

Time to reciprocate

Sir, Apropos the news report "Govt-farmers stalemate again," published in Orissa POST, January 23, the farm unions' stance to continue with protest along the borders of Delhi rejecting the government's offer to keep the new farm laws in abeyance for a period of 18 months is questionable both in terms of principle and tactics. The reality is the farm laws will open up India's agricultural markets, enable greater choice for farmers, and create a mechanism for closer agri-industry interface. But even as the government has stepped back, farm unions have stuck to a rigid position. This suggests disregard for the process of lawmaking. In a democracy, farm groups exercised their right to protest — but they should not take over the rights of a sovereign Parliament and an elected government, and dictate terms from the streets. In the middle of an agitation, protesters can make the mistake of overestimating their strength — but then a law of diminishing returns sets in. They would be served well to treat the government's new proposal as a victory, revise their position, and engage in consultations with the government to chart future reforms. India needs agri reforms — and it can only come through a process of dialogue. The government has stepped back. It is time for farm groups to reciprocate.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

New regime

Sir, The new regime headed by President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris is in the saddle in the USA now. All things considered, Biden should first look into the US internal crises like gun culture, rising riots and certain ethnic issues. Apart from this, team Biden must take sincere steps to connect with the East. More than this, it is time to befriend the Middle East and the Asian regime not in a hegemonic manner but in the best way possible politically and economically even as Asian nations have been spearheading on all major fronts. Already having been in command and being in charge now, the new US President has indeed got some good opportunities and some more great ideas to mould the US into good shape in the first place and then to make the international community peaceful and much more prosperous in all spheres. It is just being expected that Biden will be able to make his political horse-riding useful and memorable forever.

P. Senthil Saravana Durai, MUMBAI

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rusaagarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Modi reaches out to indigenous Assamese amid anti-CAA clamour

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sivasagar, Jan 23: Reaching out to the indigenous people of election-bound Assam amid frequent anti-CAA protests, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday distributed land ownership certificates to over one lakh such families, insisting the move will guarantee them "pride, freedom and protection."

On his first physical visit outside the national capital this year, Modi reaffirmed the state and the central government's commitment to protecting the land rights and the unique cultural traditions of the indigenous people.

He also castigated the previous governments for depriving them of their land rights for years since Independence.

"When the Sarbananda Sonowal government took over the reins in Assam, more than six lakh indigenous families had no legal rights over their land. In the last few years more than two lakh such families have been allotted ownership certificates. With more than one lakh families added today, the government has shown its commitment to protecting the rights of the indigenous people," Modi said.

The previous governments in Assam never cared for the rights of those who "loved this sacred land," he alleged.

"The land ownership certificates (pattas) will guarantee their 'Swabhiman' (pride), Swadheenta (freedom) and Suraksha (protection)," the prime minister asserted.

As Modi spoke at the function in Sivasagar, the historical capital of the Asom kings, anti-CAA and anti-NRC protests were staged at several places in Assam. The prime minister, however, steered clear of the controversies surrounding the two and made no mention of these in his speech.

Seeking to impart nationalistic fervour to the event, Modi said Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, whose 125th birth anniversary was being celebrated Saturday across the country by his government as



Prime Minister Narendra Modi distributes land allotment certificate during a public meeting in Sivasagar district of Assam, Saturday. PTI PHOTO

'ACT EAST POLICY'

Reaffirming his commitment to restoring peace in the North East, the Prime Minister said the historic Bodo accord signed last year, and the subsequent Bodoland Territorial Council election gave a fresh impetus to the state's development

Noting that Assam and other states of the North East formed the cornerstone of his government's 'Act East Policy', Modi said improved surface, water and air connectivity has opened new vistas of development in the region

'Parakram Diwas', "inspires hope and national pride".

"Netaji is loved and respected for the sense of pride he instilled in all Indians and his spirit of freedom will guide us as we celebrate the day across the country to realise our national goals," he said.

He asserted that the BJP-led government is committed protecting the land, language and culture of the indigenous people of Assam.

Modi said the state's BJP-led government had introduced a new land policy in 2019 to give land ownership rights to them.

"They can now improve their living standards by availing of the benefits of a host of central gov-

ernment schemes like PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, crop insurance scheme, and also easily secure farm loans from banks," he said.

About 70 tribal communities in Assam were provided social security under BJP-led governments at the Centre and in the state, he said.

Modi said in the last four-years-and-half, his government took steps to honour and promote Assamese literary, cultural and spiritual heritage. "It should have been the responsibility of all governments to preserve, protect and spread Assam's cultural heritage. But what happened to the satras, including Batdarva, the birth place of saint Srimanta Sankardeva, is not hidden from the people of Assam," he said, apparently referring to alleged encroachment of its land by illegal immigrants. The satras are hallowed Vaishnavite monasteries in Assam.

The prime minister said the development of Assam and the North East was fundamental to his government's 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' mission.

He said the 1.75 crore Jan Dhan accounts opened by his government proved a boon during the COVID-19 pandemic as relief funds could be directly transferred to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries without any leakage.

Over 50 lakh cooking gas cylinders were distributed to 35 lakh households under the Ujjwala scheme during the pandemic, he said.

Rahul hits campaign trail in TN

IN A SCATHING ATTACK ON MODI, THE FORMER CONGRESS PRESIDENT ALLEGES THE PM PARTNERED WITH BIG BUSINESSMEN AND WAS 'SELLING' EVERYTHING THAT BELONGED TO THE PEOPLE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Coimbatore, Jan 23: Launching his party's campaign for the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Saturday accused the AIADMK government of "compromising" with the Centre and alleged Prime Minister Narendra Modi used agencies like the CBI to get what he wanted.

Addressing people at multiple locations from his campaign van, Gandhi targeted the Prime Minister in his first of the three-day campaign of western Tamil Nadu.

"I will work with the people of Tamil Nadu to help you get a government that you deserve," he said and refrained from mentioning ally DMK, the ruling AIADMK's archrival and a key contender for power in Tamil Nadu.

In April or early May assembly elections are likely in Tamil Nadu and AIADMK, a BJP partner, is in power since 2011.

"I want to help bring a government in Tamil Nadu that truly respects poor people, farmers, labourers and small and medium business owners," Gandhi said.

The Congress party's ties with the DMK appeared strained after the Dravidian party days ago said it had plans to contest all the 30 seats in neighbouring Puducherry as part of efforts to strengthen the party.

Also, DMK office-bearers could not be seen in his campaign here. Cadres of alliance parties taking part in the campaign of top leaders of the combine had so far been a practice in the state.

Hitting out at the AIADMK government, Gandhi said, "You have a government today in Tamil Nadu that is compromised.



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during his campaign rally ahead of Tamil Nadu Assembly polls in Tiruppur, Saturday. PTI PHOTO

Narendra Modi uses the CBI and Enforcement Directorate to get what he wants."

"Narendra Modi feels that he can buy anybody. He thinks he can frighten anybody. He does not understand that just because he is for sale does not mean Tamil Nadu is for sale," Gandhi said.

The Prime Minister believed that as he controls the Tamil Nadu government, he could extend his dominance over the people of the state as well, the Congress MP said, adding the public, were, however, going to make the PM known that he cannot control them.

"Only the Tamil people will determine the future of Tamil Nadu. Nagpur (RSS) can never determine the future of Tamil Nadu," Modi does not understand the spirit of self-respecting Tamil people who would respond only to love and affection, he said. During his campaign,

Gandhi had tea in a roadside shop and interacted with people there and also took part in a brief reception accorded to him by 'Baduga' people of the Nilgiris district.

The Congress leader alleged the Prime Minister partnered with big businessmen and was 'selling' everything that belonged to the people.

"What does Modi do? Modi partners with three or four big businessmen in this country. They provide him media and he provides them money...Narendra Modi is one by one selling everything that belongs to the people of India and Tamil Nadu," he alleged.

Gandhi said what belonged to the farmers was now being taken away by the three new farm laws and alleged ryots "are going to be made servants" of biggest industries.

That was why his party backed farmers and fought the government, he said.

Citing his interaction with representatives of small and medium industries, he said they explained the 'damage' caused by demonetisation and GST implementation.

You have a government today in Tamil Nadu that is compromised. Narendra Modi uses the CBI and Enforcement Directorate to get what he wants

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

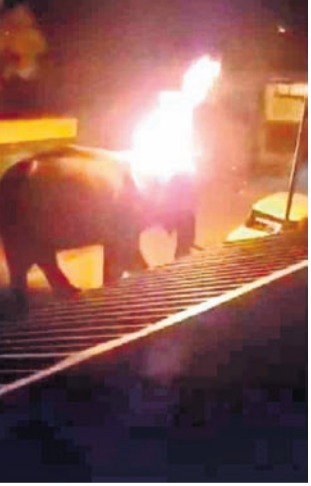
ANIMAL CRUELTY

Resort sealed after burning tyre hurled at elephant in TN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Udhagamandalam, Jan 23: The Police Saturday sealed the resort from where a burning tyre was hurled on a wild elephant that subsequently died in Nilgiris district in Tamil Nadu, even as the resort owner is absconding.

Two persons have been arrested in connection with the death and remanded to 14 days judicial custody, the police said.



The wanton act caused serious injuries to the ear of the straying 50-year-old elephant, leading to formation of pus and death

Friday, the Forest Department released a video in which the two were seen throwing the burning tyre from the resort building.

A search for the resort owner has begun and a special team has been formed to catch him, the police said.

The wanton act caused serious injuries to the ear of the straying 50-year-old elephant, leading to formation of pus and death.

Let's have a duel: Shah slams vaccine critics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

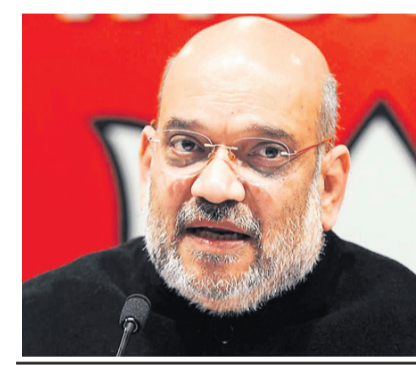
Guwahati, Jan 23: Union Home Minister Amit Shah Saturday came down heavily on those criticising the efficacies of COVID-19 vaccines, asserting that there should be no politics on public health.

Addressing a function to extend the benefit of the government's healthcare programme to the central armed police forces, he said the vaccines developed by Indian scientists are fully safe.

"There are some people who are spreading misinformation on the vaccines. Come to another platform and let's have a duel. But why are you creating doubt over people's health and doing politics?" he asked.

"I appeal to all of you to go for the vaccine when your turn comes. Do not have any doubt over its efficacy. We've already launched the world's biggest vaccination drive," he added. Shah ceremoniously distributed the 'Ayushman CAPF' health cards among some personnel from the seven Central Armed Police Forces here.

He said the CAPFs had three prime concerns - the existing health coverage was not comprehensive, the



AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

satisfaction of housing was not there and long duty hours without leaves due to non-timely recruitment. "Our government is addressing all the three concerns. For the health issue, we've launched the 'Ayushman CAPF' today. This will give health insurance benefit to around 50 lakh people," Shah said.

By May 1, the 'Ayushman CAPF' process will be completed by offering health cards to all the personnel of the seven central police forces, he added.

The home minister said the government and the forces are trying to increase the satisfaction ratio to 55 per cent by 2022 from 36 per cent two years ago, and further take it

I appeal to all of you to go for the vaccine when your turn comes. Do not have any doubt over its efficacy. We've already launched the world's biggest vaccination drive

to 65 per cent by 2025. "We've completed the examination process for 50,000 recruitments. Now, we'll start the process again to hire another 50,000 persons in the CAPFs. Our target is one hiring against one departure in five years. With this, everyone will be able to stay home for 100 days in a year," he added.

An MoU was signed between the National Health Authority (NHA) and Union Home Ministry in presence of Shah, Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai and state Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma at the CRPF Group Centre in Guwahati.

Lankan IS leader's videos used to radicalise TN jihadi gang: NIA

Cleric Zahran Hashim was the alleged mastermind behind the bomb attacks that hit Sri Lanka's capital and other cities on Easter Sunday in 2019, killing over 250 people

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Jan 23: Videos and speeches of Sri Lankan Islamic State leader Zahran Hashim were used by jihadi gang 'Shahadat is our Goal' to radicalise youths in Tamil Nadu during 2017-2018 calling for violent jihad to liberate their associates lodged in prisons.

Various social media groups, especially on WhatsApp, were created by the gang which later started disseminating materials advocating violent jihad in the region. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) revealed these facts in its charge sheet filed against 10 arrested members of the gang in a special court in Chennai Saturday.

Sri Lankan cleric Moulvi Hashim was the alleged mastermind behind the bomb attacks that hit the country's capital Colombo as well as the towns of Negombo and Batticaloa on Easter Sunday in 2019. Over 250 people, including 45 children and 40 foreign nationals, were killed in the deadly explo-

sions. Sheik Dawood, 33, Mohamed Rifas, 37, Muparish Ahmed, 23, Abubakar Siddiq, 24, Ahamed Imithiyas, 31, Mohamed Rashid, 25, Hameed Asfar, 23, Liyakath Ali, 30, Sajith Ahmed, 23, and Rizwan Mohammed, 26 - all from different districts in Tamil Nadu - are the 10 arrested accused against whom the NIA framed charges under the Unlawful (Activities) Prevention Act and Arms Act.

The case was originally registered April 2, 2018 at Keelakarai Police Station in Ramnathapuram district of Tamil Nadu after the arrest of Mohamed Rifas, Muparish Ahmed and Abupakkar Sithik from Keelakarai. Lethal weapons including swords along with pamphlets pertaining to the terrorist gang 'Shahadat is our Goal' were seized from their possession and the NIA re-registered the case January 10, 2019. Investigation in the case has established that the charge-sheeted accused persons were radicalised by violent jihadi ideology, said the NIA. "Prime accused Sheik Dawood



and Mohamed Rifas had conspired with co-accused and organised meetings at various places in Tamil Nadu, since Ramadan, 2017, with the intention of radicalising and recruiting the co-accused and others for 'shahadat' (martyrdom) to establish Islamic rule in India," NIA said. "The accused had created various social media groups, especially on WhatsApp and were disseminating materials advocating violent jihad, including the videos and speeches of the Sri Lankan ISIS leader Zahran Hashim."

The accused had also prepared pamphlets titled "Shahadat is our Goal" calling for violent jihad to liberate their associates lodged in prisons, said the anti-terror agency, adding Sheik Dawood and Mohammed Rifas had also attempted to carry out terrorist acts by procuring illegal firearms in order to liberate their jailed associates.

Industry-institute initiative to make farmers go 'bananas'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Jan 23: A three way industry-institute-Tamil Nadu government organisation-collaborative effort to increase the value-added products from banana plantation is expected to make the banana farmers in the country go bananas.

The faculty and the students of the Kancheepuram-based Indian Institute of Information Technology, Design and Manufacturing (IIITDM) have come out with an integrated machine that can process the banana trunk or pseudo-stem to make fibre yarn, sap water and other products. The Mumbai-based company Gencrest part of the Samta group

will be putting up a mini-plant with such machines.

Curiously the initiative is not spearheaded by any agriculture scientist or technocrat but by M. Annadurai, former space scientist who headed India's first Moon and Mars space mission.

Annadurai is now the Vice President, Tamil Nadu State Council for Science and Technology, Chennai and Chairman, National Design and Research Forum, Bangalore.

"Banana crops can become like sugarcane in terms of byproducts-fibre yarn for textiles, sap for nutraceuticals and fertiliser, balance waste for acoustic panels and bio-fertiliser," Annadurai told IANS.



Nothing goes waste in the case of sugarcane as its juice is used for making sugar/jaggery, ethanol, the bagasse is used for making paper or fired in a boiler to generate power.

Presently, the banana growers are having disposal problems with

There are small manually operated machines that extract banana fibre to make products like textiles and other handicrafts," Annadurai said.

To solve the problem, the faculty and students of IIITDM have designed and built an integrated machine that can peel, press and extract banana fibre from the pseudo-stem. In the process the machine also separates the core stem that can be processed as ingredients for making biscuits, ice cream and others.

"The concept to realisation of the integrated machine took just three months and three days for our team," Dr M Raguraman, Assistant Professor at IIITDM told IANS. The IIITDM team that de-

veloped the machine consisted of Assistant Professors Dr P Kalpana and Dr AVS Sivaprasad, students Manonmani, Mohammed Yusuf and 12 others and two project engineers were also hired, he said.

"We have also developed technology for banana tree cutting and loading them on to a vehicle at the farm," Raguraman added.

The trunk peels are pressed to extract the excess water or sap. The water rich in potassium can be used for making nutraceuticals, bio-fertiliser or bio-ethanol. The core stem can be pressed to get the stem juice and the remaining fibre can be dried and powdered to be used in making biscuits and ice cream, he said.



Illegal quarrying or mining will not be permitted in the state and necessary action will be taken against such activities
B S YEDIYURAPPA | KARNATAKA CHIEF MINISTER

MODIFIED PARKING PLAN

There will be a modified parking plan for the vehicles being used by the Members of Parliament (MPs) during the forthcoming Budget session of Parliament starting January 29



of the day quote

It is shameful to see that the central government is adamant on its stand and not ready to repeal farm laws as per the demand of farmers
SUKHBIR SINGH BADAL | SAD CHIEF

We have to celebrate the lives of many of our great leaders. We have to come out of the colonial mindset
M VENKAIAH NAIDU | VICE PRESIDENT

Soil and stones from villages of martyrs, main pilgrimage sites and major rivers of the state should be used in building it so that whoever sets foot in it gets inspired
TRIVENDRA SINGH RAWAT | UTTARAKHAND CHIEF MINISTER

Farmers claim Delhi Police nod for tractor rally on R-Day



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 23: Thousands of farmers opposing the Centre's new agri laws will enter the national capital with tractors on Republic Day as the Delhi Police has given its nod to the 'kisan tractor parade', farmer leaders claimed Saturday.

However, Delhi Police Additional Public Relation Officer Anil Mittal said, "We are in the final stages of talks with farmers."

Since November 28 last year, farmers, mostly from Punjab and Haryana, have been protesting against the laws at several Delhi border points, including Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur, and demanding the legislations be repealed.

Over two lakh tractors are expected to take part in the parade and there will be around five routes. The tractor parades will be taken out only after 12 pm, after the Republic Day parade on Delhi's Rajpath concludes, according to protesting farmer unions.

The Delhi Police has given permission to the farmers' tractor parade on January 26, farmer leader Abhimanyu Kohar claimed after attending a meeting between the unions and senior police officers.

The tractor parade will start from the Ghazipur, Singhu and Tikri border points of Delhi, but the final details of routes are yet to be finalised, said Kohar, who is a senior member of the Sanyukt Kisan Morcha, an umbrella body of the agitating unions.

Farmer leaders said that five routes have been decided in-prin-

ciple and farmers will cover 100-km with tractors on every route, and added that 70 to 78 per cent of the routes will be inside Delhi while the remaining will be outside the national capital.

Sources said that one possible route for the tractor parade from Singhu border will be to Sanjay Gandhi Transport Nagar and it will pass through the Kanjhawala and Bawana areas and then return to the protest site.

Farmers camping at the Tikri border point will start their tractor parade from the protest site and cover areas like Nangloi, Najafgarh, Badli, and Kundli-Manesar-Palwal (KMP) Expressway, they said.

For farmers camping at the Ghazipur border point, their tractor parade will cover areas like Apsra border-Ghaziabad-Duhai and return to Ghazipur, the sources said. However, tractor parade routes for farmers camping at Shahjahanpur and Palwal have not been decided yet, they said.

Farmer leader Darshan Pal said that "barricades set up at Delhi borders will be removed on January 26 and farmers will take out tractor parade after entering the national capital". "We have almost finalised five routes," Pal, who is also a member of the Sanyukt Kisan Morcha, said. Earlier, there have been three rounds of meetings between the unions and police officers from Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, but it was the fourth round of talks over the tractor parade on Friday where both sides reached an agreement.

India sends vaccines to Brazil, Morocco

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 23: India has flown the first lot of coronavirus vaccines to Africa, after having shipped these to friendly South Asian neighbours when a Royal Air Maroc plane left India for Moroccan capital Rabat Friday evening.

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has thanked India for supplying COVID-19 vaccines to his country and shared on social media an illustration of Lord Hanuman bringing 'Sanjivani booti' from India to Brazil.

On Friday, India began commercial exports of COVID-19 vaccines and sent two million doses each to Brazil and Morocco.

The Indian embassy in Rabat tweeted: "In a manifestation of excellent relationship between India and Morocco, the first consignment of COVID-19 vaccine developed by AstraZeneca and Oxford University and produced by Serum



Institute of India, the world's largest vaccine producer was shipped from India for Morocco today." The embassy later replied to its own tweet, saying: "Affordable Vaccine4All."

Earlier this week, Minister for External Affairs, S Jaishankar had met the ambassadors of African countries. He tweeted:

"Our conversation covered COVID recovery, vaccines, air travel, and digital experiences. Also spoke about India's current priorities & challenges. Assured them of India's interest in an early IAFS (India-Africa Forum Summit) Summit."

Jaishankar hinted that his talks with the African envoys did touch

vaccines and path to recovery. African countries including multilateral agencies are worried over vaccine hoarding by the developed world. Canada has hoarded enough vaccines to give five jabs per person. Other Western countries too have reserved or pre-booked more vaccines with manufacturers than they require. Stockpiling of vaccines has led to concern that poorer nations may not be able to fend for their citizens - ironically, prolonging the existence of the virus, thereby keeping everyone vulnerable to the infection.

World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus hit out over "vaccine inequity," saying this could amount to a "catastrophic moral failure" on a global scale. The US, Canada, the UK and most European countries are into their second month of mass vaccination even as the lower-income countries fret about protecting their people with no vaccine supply on the horizon.

SHORT TAKES

BJP-TMC clash in Howrah

Howrah (WB): Several people were injured, many vehicles vandalised as BJP and Trinamool Congress supporters clashed in West Bengal's Howrah district on Saturday, police said. BJP alleged that a party member was shot at, while some were beaten with rods and sticks. Crude bombs were also allegedly hurled during the street fight at Bally, triggering panic in the area. Besides, a few bikes and a police vehicle were vandalised, officials said.

Militant hideout busted in Poonch

Jammu: The Border Security Force (BSF) Saturday busted a militant hideout in the Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir and recovered a large cache of arms and ammunition, a spokesperson for the force said. The hideout was unearthed this afternoon during a search operation in Doba Mohalla forest area in Hadiguda, 10 kms from Mandi town, the spokesperson said. He said the search operation was launched by the BSF on specific intelligence information.

Security beefed up in Gurugram

Gurugram: The Gurugram police have made several security arrangements ahead of Republic Day which will be celebrated at the Tau Devi Lal Stadium at Sector-38 in Gurugram. According to the department, around 4,000 cops including a dozen of Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACPs) more than 40 Inspectors along with additional police forces who are equipped with the necessary security equipment have been deployed across the city.

Cash, drugs seized

Siliguri: A large amount of cash, drugs and a note counting machine were seized in two separate raids in West Bengal's Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts, police said Saturday. The first raid was carried out by the Special Task Force of the state police at a house in Ashraf Nagar in Darjeeling district on Friday night, they said. The STF recovered brown sugar worth more than ₹1 lakh, a note-counting machine and ₹17.25 lakh in cash from the house, said a police officer. The second raid was conducted at Fulbari in Jalpaiguri district and two residents of Haryana were arrested on the charge of online fraud, the officer said.

PROTESTS OVER FARM LAWS

Bhopal cops use tear gas, water cannons on Congress workers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, Jan 23: Congress workers protesting against the three agri laws clashed with the police and allegedly hurled stones while on their way to gherao Raj Bhawan here Saturday, prompting police to use water cannons, tear gas and canes to disperse them, officials said.

At least six police personnel and some people were injured in the incident, while 106 protesters were arrested, including Congress veteran Digvijaya Singh, and released later, an officer said.

Hundreds of workers of the Congress led by Madhya Pradesh party unit chief Kamal Nath took part in the protest.

The clash occurred at the barricaded GTB area close to Roshanpur square. TT Nagar area City Superintendent of Police (CSP) Umesh Tiwari said that more than half a dozen people including six policemen were injured. The CSP denied that police used force to suppress the protest.

Besides Digvijaya Singh, his former minister son Jaivardhan Singh, senior leader P C Sharma, MLA Kunal Choudhary were arrested under section 151 (Arrest to prevent the commission of cognizable offences) of the CrPc, Tiwari said, adding that they were let off after completion of legal formalities. Addressing protesters at Jawahar Chowk before the clash, Nath said the three new farm laws enacted by the Central government were completely anti-farmer.

Alleging that small and marginalised farmers have been ignored while making these laws, Nath said mandis (agri markets) and Minimum Support Price (MSP) regime will come to end if these legislations are implemented.



WHITE BLANKET



A worker clears snow on a street during fresh snowfall, at Dal Lake in Srinagar

PTI PHOTO

Cook well, stay well



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 23: A document issued by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India suggests that proper cooking inactivates the bird flu virus present inside meat and eggs.

In view of the bird flu scare in the country, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has issued a guidance document on "Safe handling, processing and consumption of poultry meat and eggs during bird flu pandemic" for creating awareness among the food business operators (FBOs) and consumers.

The document suggests that proper cooking inactivates the virus present inside meat and eggs. Poultry meat and eggs from the areas affected by the outbreak of bird flu should not be consumed raw or partially cooked. Properly prepared and cooked poultry meat and eggs are safe to eat, the FSSAI said. The World Health Organization

(WHO) also states that it is safe to consume poultry meat and eggs. According to the WHO official website, there is no epidemiological data which suggests that the disease can be transmitted to humans through cooked food. The major Do's and Don'ts suggested are - do not eat half-boiled eggs, do not eat undercooked chicken, avoid direct contact with birds in the infected areas, avoid touching dead birds with bare hands, do not keep raw meat in the open, no direct contact with raw meat, use mask and gloves at the time of handling raw chicken, wash hands frequently, maintain the cleanliness of surroundings and eat chicken, eggs and their products after cooking. Cases of bird flu have been confirmed in 13 states so far of which of which Avian Influenza has been reported in poultry birds from nine states while in wild birds from 12 states, the Union Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying confirmed Saturday.

'7 MORE STATES TO ADMINISTER COVAXIN FROM NEXT WEEK'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 23: Seven more states will be administering the indigenously-developed Covaxin from next week, the health ministry said Saturday.

The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) had earlier this month approved Oxford COVID-19 vaccine Covishield, manufactured by the Serum Institute of India, and indigenously developed Covaxin of Bharat Biotech for restricted emergency use in the country, paving the way for a massive inoculation drive.

Addressing a media briefing, Additional Secretary in the Union health ministry Manohar Agnani said that as January 23, a total of 15,37,190 beneficiaries have been vaccinated for COVID-19 in 27,776 sessions.

The inoculation drive was launched on January 16 with over three crore healthcare and frontline workers prioritised to get the jabs initially.

In addition to the 12 states currently using Covaxin, seven new states - Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and West Bengal - will be administering the vaccine from next week, Agnani said.

Twitter acts on inactive accounts

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 23: Micro-blogging platform Twitter has started removing blue verification badges from inactive and incomplete accounts and will begin the new verification process for its users in few weeks.

Twitter, which paused its public verification process or that elusive Blue Badge three years ago, in November announced to relaunch verification, including a new public application process, in early 2021.

"Last call! As part of our new verification policy, we'll remove verification badges from inactive and incomplete accounts," Twitter Safety said in a tweet.

The company is reaching out directly to users who have issues with their accounts.

"We've reached out directly to

those who need to take action to stay verified," it added.

Twitter had said it would relaunch verification, including a new public application process, in early 2021.

Verified accounts on Twitter will have a blue check next to the display name throughout the app. "When we relaunch the public application process in early 2021, there will be a link to the application in the Twitter apps and on twitter.com".

Over three years ago, the platform paused the public verification programme after hearing feedback that it felt arbitrary and confusing to many people.

A year later, the company deprioritised this work further to focus on protecting the integrity of the public conversation around critical moments like the 2020 US election.

Tourists can now peek inside Pune's Yerwada jail

CHIEF MINISTER UDDHAV THACKERAY WILL INAUGURATE THE INITIATIVE ON REPUBLIC DAY

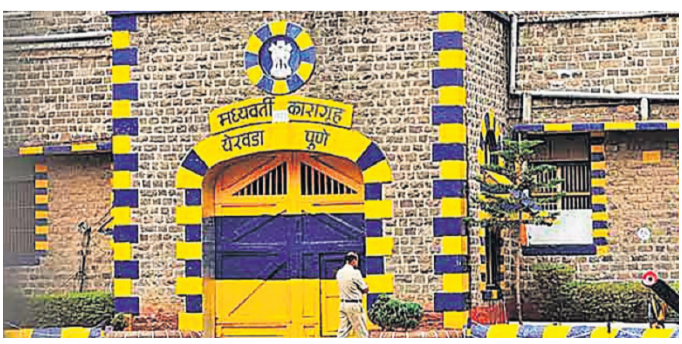
INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Pune (Maharashtra), Jan 23: Marking a new chapter for tourists, the Maharashtra government will throw open important prisons in the state for 'jail tourism', starting this Republic Day on January 26 with the historic 150-year-old Yerwada Central Jail in Pune.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray will inaugurate the initiative on Republic Day in the presence of Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and other top officials, Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh announced Saturday. "This is the first phase of 'jail

tourism' Later, it will be extended to other prisons like Nagpur, Nashik, Thane, Ratnagiri, etc. A small fee of ₹5 for school students, ₹10 for collegians and ₹50 for general tourists shall be levied," Deshmukh said. Built by the British in 1871, parts of the high-security YCJ - spread across lush greenery of 512 acres, the largest in South Asia - will be opened for tourists, students, researchers and others to go around and study various aspects of the old prison deeply linked with India's freedom struggle.

Pune's human rights lawyer Asim Sarode welcomed the move and said it should be implemented with



full security protocols for all concerned so that the tourists can get a feel of the jail without disturbing the inmates.

Earlier, the Cellular Jail in Andaman & Nicobar Islands, infamous as 'Kala Paani' and Fort Aguada Jail in Goa - both sea-facing - were among the major prisons where tourism has been allowed, be-

sides the Sangareddy Central Jail, Telangana, which permits a 24-hour paid stay with full 'jail-comforts' for tourists.

Accessible through an imposing fortress-like entrance, with a tall foyer on which the Tricolour flutters, the YCJ Pune complex is secured by four high walls to prevent any adventurous escapes.

The prison areas are sub-divided as per security zones and barracks for the roughly 5,000 inmates, and there are ultra-secure 10 'Anda Cells' (oval cells) for isolating the most heinous criminals and terrorists. It has a 'Kishore Wing' for prisoners in 18-21 age-group where the

young incarcerated inmates are given education or skills to keep them off crime after their release, and a 300-capacity Female Jail where the inmates get various types of vocational training.

Outside YCJ is the Open Jail where inmates with minimum five years of very good behaviour are permitted limited freedom, with basic security as per the jail norms.

The prisoners' white uniforms are 'colour-coded' - Yellow Bands for those representing their groups/barracks, Violet Bands for those working as volunteers and Red Band for those who made failed escape attempts.

of the day quote

'Swadeshi' will help empower the craftsmen and when the craftsmen progress, the country will become self-reliant



YOGI ADITYANATH | UTTAR PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER

Congress has raised questions on Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan also. They had forced the country to stay dependent. Do they know what self-reliance is?



J P NADDA | BJP PRESIDENT

The courage and valour of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose gave new strength to the Indian freedom struggle



AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

6 dead as vehicle falls into gorge

Mumbai: At least six persons, including five women, were killed and 18 others injured when their vehicle fell into a 400-foot deep gorge in Nandurbar district of Maharashtra on Saturday, a police official said. The accident took place around 10.30 am on the hilly stretch of Khadki ghat, located approximately 10 kms from Toranmal hill station, he said.

50 shanties gutted

New Delhi: Over 50 shanties were gutted in a massive fire that broke out in east Delhi's Ghazipur Dairy Farm area Saturday, officials said. Fire officials received information about the blaze at 1.41 pm, following which 17 fire tenders were rushed to the spot. Around 50 to 60 shanties were gutted in the fire. The blaze was brought under control at 2.50 pm, they said, adding that cooling process is underway.

Flight services hit in Kashmir

Srinagar: The air traffic to and fro Kashmir was affected Saturday in the wake of snowfall in most parts of the valley, officials said. The snowfall began early in the morning and was continuing when the last reports came in. "No flight operations have taken place at the Srinagar airport so far this morning," an official said.

Man shot dead

Imphal: A person was shot dead and another injured in Moreh town at the India-Myanmar border in Manipur's Tengnoupal district Saturday morning, police said.

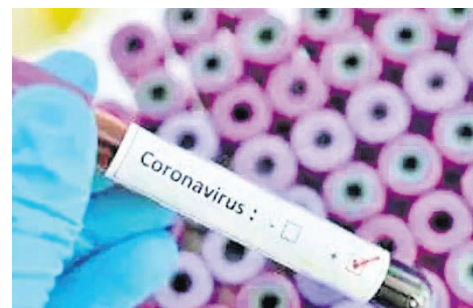


By rejecting the demands of farmers and suppressing the call of justice, the central government has hurt the dignity and democratic system of the country

SACHIN PILOT | FORMER RAJASTHAN DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

FIGHT AGAINST PANDEMIC

The number of people who have tested positive for the UK variant of COVID-19 in India has climbed to 150, the Union Health Ministry said Saturday



BORDER DISPUTE



India, China to hold 9th round of talks

THE MILITARY TALKS ARE SLATED TO BE HELD AT THE MOLDO BORDER POINT ON THE CHINESE SIDE OF THE LINE OF ACTUAL CONTROL (LAC) IN EASTERN LADAKH, THE SOURCES SAID SATURDAY

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 23: India and China are set to hold their ninth round of Corps Commander-level talks Sunday with a focus on ways to move forward on the long-negotiated disengagement process in eastern Ladakh, according to official sources.

The military talks are slated to be held at the Moldo border point on the Chinese side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, the sources said Saturday.

The eighth and last round of military talks took place on November 6 during which both sides broadly discussed disengagement of troops from specific friction points.

India has all along been maintaining that the onus is on China to carry forward the process of disengagement and de-escalation at the friction points in the mountainous region.

"The focus of the talks is going

to be on the disengagement process," said a source.

On January 12, Army chief Gen MM Naravane had said that Indian troops will hold their ground as long as it takes to achieve the "national goals and objectives" even as he hoped for an amicable resolution of the prolonged standoff through talks.

The standoff erupted May 5 last. Nearly 50,000 troops of the Indian Army are deployed in a high state of combat readiness in various mountainous locations in eastern Ladakh in sub-zero temperatures as multiple rounds of talks between the two sides have not yielded concrete outcome to resolve the standoff. China has also deployed an equal number of troops, according to officials.

Last month, India and China held another round of diplomatic talks under the framework of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) on India-China border af-

fairs. However, no concrete outcome emerged from the talks.

Following the sixth round of military talks September 21, the two sides had announced a slew of decisions including not to send more troops to the frontline, refrain from unilaterally changing the situation on the ground and avoid taking any actions that may further complicate matters.

This round was held with a specific agenda of exploring ways to implement a five-point agreement reached between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi at a meeting in Moscow September 10 on the sidelines of a Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) conclave.

The pact included measures like quick disengagement of troops, avoiding action that could escalate tensions, adherence to all agreements and protocols on border management and steps to restore peace along the LAC.

Somnath Bharti sentenced to 2 yrs in jail in assault case



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 23: AAP MLA and former Delhi minister Somnath Bharti was Saturday sentenced to two years in jail by a court here in a 2016 case of assaulting the security staff at AIIMS and causing damage to hospital property.

The ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Delhi backed its MLA from Malviya Nagar, claiming that "injustice" has been meted out to him

and expressed the hope that he will get justice at the appellate level.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Ravindra Kumar Pandey also imposed a fine of ₹1 lakh on the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader. "The court is of the considered view that the prosecution has duly proved its case beyond all reasonable doubt against accused Somnath Bharti," the magistrate said.

The court, however, granted bail to Bharti enable him to file an appeal before the high court against his conviction in the case and jail term. According to the prosecution, on September 9, 2016, Bharti, along with nearly 300 others, brought down the fence of a boundary wall at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here with a JCB operator.

The case was lodged on the basis of a complaint from R S Rawat, Chief Security Officer, AIIMS.

BSF detects tunnel along IB in J&K

THIS IS THE SECOND SUCH STRUCTURE FOUND IN 10 DAYS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Jan 23: Days ahead of Republic Day, the Border Security Force (BSF) achieved a major success when it detected a 150-meter-long underground tunnel constructed by Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district to facilitate the infiltration of terrorists for subversive activities, a top official said.

This was the second such structure found beneath the International Border (IB) in Hiranagar sector in 10 days, fourth in Jammu region within six months and 10th in the past decade.

Inspector General of BSF, Jammu frontier, N S Jamwal said the secret tunnel was detected during an anti-tunnelling operation in the border outpost (BOP) Pansar area of Hiranagar, opposite Abhiyal-Dogra and Kingre-de-Kohe in Shakargarh (Pakistan). "There were inputs from intelligence agencies about existence of a tunnel in Pansar area and possibility of infiltration attempt ahead of Republic Day. Accordingly, our anti-tunnelling



A view of the tunnel

UNI PHOTO

campaign was intensified, which led to the detection of the tunnel," Jamwal, who rushed to the spot, told reporters there. He said Pakistan has constructed this tunnel from the zero line and it is about 150-meter-long with 25 to 30 feet depth and two to three feet diameter so that one can crawl easily to pass through this tunnel. "It is a big achievement and full credit goes to the

troops on the ground and the intelligence agencies who are providing regular inputs to us," he said, highlighting the role of Pakistan in the construction of tunnels to facilitate infiltration of terrorists into India.

The Jammu BSF chief said such type of a construction is not possible without the support of the administration.

SCIENTISTS FIND TWO NEW SPECIES OF RARE ANT



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 23: Two new species of a rare ant genus have been discovered in Kerala and Tamil Nadu by a team of scientists, the Department of Science and Technology said Saturday.

The team was led by Himender Bharti of Punjabi University in Patiala. One of the two species found in the Periyar Tiger Reserve of Kerala has been named *Oococrea Jashii* in honour of pro-

fessor Amitabh Joshi - a distinguished evolutionary biologist from Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), a DST institute.

"The species of the ant genus *Oococrea* found in Kerala and Tamil Nadu add to the diversity of this rare genus. They differ from others of the same genus on the basis of the number of antennal segments," the DST said.

New species are typically named after some distinguishing attribute or location but are often named after scientists as a means of honouring their research contributions to biology, especially in the fields of evolutionary and organismal biology, ecology or systematics.

In India, the genus was so far represented by two species with nine and 11-segmented antennae respectively.

LALU'S HEALTH DETERIORATES



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 23: Jailed RJD chief Lalu Prasad was admitted to AIIMS-Delhi Saturday night after his health condition deteriorated while undergoing treatment at a hospital in Ranchi, officials said.

"He has been admitted in the coronary care unit (CCU) of the cardiothoracic centre of the AIIMS," an official in Delhi said. A team of doctors has been constituted to evaluate and monitor the former Bihar chief minister's condition and he has been admitted under Dr Rakesh Yadav, professor of Cardiology at AIIMS.

Lalu Prasad (72), convicted in fodder scam cases, was undergoing treatment at the Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) in the Jharkhand capital for multiple ailments.

"Lalu Prasad was having trouble breathing for the last two days. On Friday, he was found to be having pneumonia. Considering his age, we decided to shift him to AIIMS-Delhi on the advice of doctors for better treatment," RIMS Director Dr Kameshwar Prasad had earlier said.

On Friday, Lalu Prasad's wife Rabri Devi, daughter Misa Bharti, sons Tej Pratap and Tejashwi reached Ranchi on a special plane after being informed of the veteran leader's deteriorating health.

The family met Prasad in the night. After meeting his father, Tejashwi told reporters that his condition was worrisome.

GEARING UP



Police personnel during the rehearsals for Republic Day parade, at the Ridge in Shimla

PTI PHOTO

'42% girls access mobile phone for limited time'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 23: A new survey has found that about 42 per cent adolescent girls are allowed access to a mobile phone for less than an hour in a day with most parents feeling that they are "unsafe" and an "unhealthy distraction" for them.

Centre for Catalyzing Change (C3), a New Delhi-based NGO, in association with Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF) conducted the survey in 29 districts of 10 states with 4,100 respondents to understand digital access to young girls in India.

The survey, released ahead of the National Girl Child Day, covered 4,100 respondents across four key stakeholder groups - adolescent girls, family members, teachers, and representatives of com-



Representative image

munity organisations (like NGOs) in ten states - Assam, Haryana, Karnataka, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

The survey found that there is a crisis of access to digital devices for

adolescent girls in India.

"Access differs from state to state. Karnataka is where the maximum amount of adolescent girls enjoyed easy access to digital or mobile devices, with 65 per cent.

"Boys have easier access. In Haryana, the gender gap is the

widest, while Telangana reported the lowest difference between the percentage of boys and girls having digital access (12 per cent)," it said.

The survey said family attitudes and biases restrict the time given to girls to access a digital device - 42 per cent of girls are allowed access to a mobile phone for less than an hour in a day.

And on top of this, the survey found that 65 per cent of teachers and 60 per cent of community organisations say being a girl is a factor in accessing digital technology. Most parents felt that a mobile phone is "unsafe" and an "unhealthy distraction" for an adolescent girl, the survey said.

"Even when families and adolescents can afford smartphones, computers or other digital devices, it is always the male family members' usage of such devices that is

prioritized," the survey found.

Noting that financial affordability is a major cause for lack of access, the survey said 71 per cent of the girls do not own a mobile phone because they cannot afford it. "81 per cent of families say they cannot afford one, while 79 per cent do not have a computer at home," it said.

Access to digital modes in community facilities like schools, community centres and internet cafes is limited - 83 per cent of the girls get less than an hour's access in a week, the survey said.

The survey found that girls also remain at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to digital literacy as only 32 per cent of adolescent girls know how to "receive calls" on a mobile. About 26 per cent know how to "use features like clock, calculator, torch and other offline apps", it said.

Snow in valley, rain in Jammu

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, Jan 23: Minimum temperatures improved across Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh on Saturday as snow occurred in the valley and rain lashed the plains of Jammu division. Most people in the valley preferred to remain indoors in the morning due to the snow and slippery road conditions.

The weather office has forecast more snow in Kashmir and hills of Jammu with rain in the Jammu plains. Weather is likely to improve



from tomorrow onwards.

The 40-day long period of harsh winter cold the 'Chillai Kalan' will end January 31. Minimum temperatures rose appreciably due to thick cloud cover bringing in some measure of relief. Srinagar recorded minus 2 degrees Celsius, Pahalgam minus 1.3 and Gulmarg minus 4.8 as the minimum temperature of the day.

Leh in Ladakh was at minus 10.1, Kargil minus 17.6 and Drass minus 5.6. Jammu city recorded 10.3, Katra 9.3, Batote 4.0, Bannihal 1.2 and Baderwah 2.1 degrees Celsius.

international



Thank you, India and Prime Minister Narendra Modi for your continued support to global Covid-19 response. Only if we act together, including sharing of knowledge, can we stop this virus and save lives and livelihoods

TALK SHOW HOST LARRY KING DIES

The iconic talk show host Larry King, one of the most recognisable figures on US television as he quizzed everyone who was anyone over a career spanning 60 years, died Saturday at the age of 87



of the day quote

There is evidence that there is an increased risk for those who have the new variant, which is also more transmissible than the original virus. The new strain might be about 30% more deadly, but the evidence is not yet strong and more research is needed



Increasing the gap between doses to a maximum of 12 weeks would allow many more people to be vaccinated much more quickly



The rising frequency and severity of flooding and other extreme environmental events can overwhelm a dam's design limits and accelerate its ageing process. Decisions about decommissioning, therefore, need to be taken in the context of a changing climate



'Small farmers need more climate aid to ward off famines'

AGENCIES

Paris, Jan 23: Climate aid to millions of small farmers around the world must "substantially increase" to ward off hunger and instability, a United Nations body warned Saturday. Small farmers "do little to cause climate change, but suffer the most from its impacts," Gilbert F Houngbo, President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) said in a statement.

"If investments... do not substantially increase, we risk widespread hunger and global instability," IFAD added.

Houngbo said small farmers "increasingly common crop failures and livestock deaths put our entire food system at risk", warning that "hunger, poverty and migration will become even more widespread" without increased aid. The UN body's warning comes ahead of a climate adaptation summit on January 25 and 26 in the Netherlands. At the gathering, IFAD plans to launch a new \$500-million fund dubbed ASAP+ "to reduce climate change threats to food security, lower greenhouse gases and help more than 10 million people adapt to weather changes". Austria, Germany, Ireland and Qatar have already said they will contribute. British actor Idris Elba and his wife Sandrine, both IFAD "Goodwill Ambassadors", will take part in a debate at the summit with Belgian Prime Minister Alexander de Croo. IFAD-funded research forecasts a potential fall in production of staples like beans, maize, and cassava



Small farmers do little to cause climate change, but suffer the most from its impacts

of between 50 and 90 percent by 2050 across much of sub-Saharan Africa due to climate change, "which would result in substantial increases in hunger and poverty". "Climate change could push more than 140 million people to migrate" over the same period, the studies found. IFAD's earlier ASAP programme has already distributed \$300 million to more than five million farmers in 41 countries. But the body notes that only 1.7 per cent of global climate finance goes to small-scale farmers in developing countries.

Protests across Russia demand Navalny's release

AGENCIES

Moscow, Jan 23: Police detained over 2,000 people and used force to break up rallies across Russia on Saturday as tens of thousands of protesters ignored extreme cold and police warnings to demand the release of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny.



Navalny had called on his supporters to protest after being arrested last weekend as he returned to Russia from Germany for the first time since being poisoned with a nerve agent he says was slipped to him by state security agents in August. The authorities had warned people to stay away from Saturday's protests, saying they risked catching COVID-19 as well as prosecution and possible jail time for attending an unauthorised event. But protesters defied the ban and, in at least one case in temperatures below -50 Celsius (-58 Fahrenheit), turned out in force. Leonid Volkov, a Navalny ally, called on them to do the same next weekend to try to free Navalny from what he called "the clutches of his killers". In central Moscow, where Reuters reporters estimated at least 40,000 people had gathered in one of the biggest unauthorised rallies for years, police were seen roughly detaining people, bundling them into nearby vans. The authorities said just some 4,000 people had shown up, while the foreign ministry questioned Reuters' crowd estimate. "Why not just immediately say 4 million," it suggested sarcastically on its official Telegram messenger channel. Ivan Zhdanov, a Navalny ally, put turnout in the capital at 50,000, the Proekt media outlet reported. Some protesters chanted "Putin is a thief", and "Disgrace" and "Freedom to Navalny!". Navalny's wife Yulia was briefly detained at the rally before being released. Some of Navalny's political allies were detained in the days before the protest; others on the day itself. At one point, protesters surrounded a sleek black car with a flashing light used by senior officials, throwing snowballs at it and kicking it. A group of policemen were also pelted with snowballs by a much bigger crowd. The OVD-Info protest monitor group said that at least 2,250 people, including 855 in Moscow and 327 in St Petersburg, had been detained at rallies in nearly 70 towns and cities.

SHORT TAKES

Sudan violence killed 250: UN

Cairo: Tribal clashes in Sudan's Darfur region have killed at least 250 people and displaced more than 100,000 people since erupting earlier this month, the UN refugee agency said. The violence in the provinces of West Darfur and South Darfur has posed a significant challenge to the country's transitional government. Among those displaced were some 3,500 people, mostly women and children, who fled into neighboring Chad, according to Boris Chesnikov, a spokesman for the UNHCR said Friday.

PIA pays \$7mn to Irish firm

Islamabad: The Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has informed the London High Court that it has paid \$7 million to an Irish jet company, a week after a plane of the cash-strapped national flag carrier with 170 passengers on board was seized at the Kuala Lumpur airport over a lease dispute. The PIA informed a judge at the HC Friday that it has paid around \$7 million to the Peregrine Aviation Charlie Limited in the case pertaining to two jets leased to it by the Dublin-based AerCap.

SL to receive free vaccines from India

Colombo: Sri Lanka will receive Covid-19 vaccines free from India next week, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa said on Saturday, a day after the country approved emergency use of Oxford AstraZeneca's Covishield vaccine. "We do not have to wait longer than the 27th of this month to receive a quantity of free vaccines from India," the president said, addressing the presidential mobile service at Walailawita south of here this morning.

Drone intercepted over Riyadh skies

Dubai: Saudi Arabia said Saturday it intercepted an apparent missile or drone attack over its capital, Riyadh, amid the kingdom's years long war against neighbouring Yemen's Houthi rebels. Social media users posted video of what appeared to be an explosion in the air over Riyadh. Saudi state TV quoted authorities in the kingdom acknowledging the interception.

AMID THE RUINS



Internally displaced Syrian boys play with snow, at a camp in Northern Aleppo countryside, Syria

PAK ANTI-TERRORISM COURT JAILS HAFIZ SAEED'S 3 AIDES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lahore, Jan 23: A Pakistani anti-terrorism court has sentenced three leaders of Mumbai attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed's Jamaat-ud-Dawah (JuD) terrorist organisation to six months in prison in a case of terror financing. Saeed's brother-in-law Hafiz Abdur Rehman Makki, JuD spokesperson Yahya Mujahid and Zafar Iqbal were handed down the six-month imprisonment each by the Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Lahore.



years respectively. The verdicts against them will run concurrently in the terror financing cases registered by the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) of the Punjab police. "ATC-II Presiding Judge Arshad Hussain Bhutta announced the ver-

dict in FIR No 32 of 2019 against Zafar Iqbal, Abdul Rehman Makki and Yahya Mujahid," a court official told PTI. The three convicts were present in the court when the judge announced the verdict, he said. The CTD had registered as many as 41 cases against the leaders of the JuD in different cities of Punjab, the court official said, adding that the trial courts have so far decided 37 cases. In a recent verdict, operations commander of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terror group Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi was given a 15-year imprisonment on three counts in a case of terror financing.

Trump's impeachment trial put off until early February

REUTERS

Washington, Jan 23: The leaders of the US Senate agreed (late) Friday to push back former President Donald Trump's impeachment trial by two weeks, giving the chamber more time to focus on President Joe Biden's legislative agenda and Cabinet nominees before turning to the contentious showdown over Trump. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, a Democrat, said the trial is set to begin during the week of Monday February 8, an arrangement praised by the chamber's top Republican, Mitch McConnell. The House of Representatives



is due to formally deliver to the Senate on Monday the impeachment charge accusing Trump of inciting an insurrection, a move that ordinarily would have triggered the beginning of the trial within a day. The charge stems from Trump's incendiary speech to supporters before they stormed the Capitol January 6 in a ram-

page that delayed the formal congressional certification of Biden's election victory and left five people dead, including a police officer. Schumer said the new timeline will allow the Senate to move quickly on key Biden appointees and other tasks while giving House lawmakers who will prosecute the case and Trump's team more time to prepare for the trial. "During that period, the Senate will continue to do other business for the American people, such as Cabinet nominations and the COVID relief bill which would provide relief for millions of Americans who are suffering during this pandemic," Schumer said on the Senate floor.

Mallya applies for asylum to stay in UK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, Jan 23: Vijay Mallya, who is due to be extradited to India, has applied for "another route" to be able to stay in the UK, the embattled liquor tycoon's barrister representing him in bankruptcy proceedings in the High Court here confirmed in the court for the first time. The 65-year-old businessman, whose legal challenge to the Indian government's extradition request was turned down at the Supreme Court level in the UK last year, remains in Britain on bail until UK Home Secretary

Priti Patel signs off on the order for him to be extradited to India to face charges of fraud and money laundering related to the now-defunct Kingfisher Airlines. "The extradition was upheld but he [Mallya] is still here because as you know there is another route for him to apply to the Secretary of State [Patel] for status," said barrister Philip Marshall, when specifically asked by Deputy Insolvency and Companies Court Judge Nigel Barnett about the status of the extradition proceedings during a remote hearing on Friday.

Wuhan: Epicentre of pandemic marks lockdown anniversary

AGENCIES

Wuhan, Jan 23: The Chinese city of Wuhan marked one year since the start of its traumatic 76-day coronavirus lockdown Saturday while the pandemic continued to rage elsewhere, with US President Joe Biden warning America's death toll could pass 600,000. Traffic hummed, sidewalks bustled, and citizens packed parks and public transport in Wuhan, underscoring the scale of the recovery in the metropolis of 11 million where the pathogen first emerged before going global. The spread of the virus was accelerating elsewhere, with British

Prime Minister Boris Johnson saying a new strain that emerged in the UK could be more deadly and more transmissible than the one that menaced Wuhan a year ago. "In addition to spreading more quickly, it also now appears that there is some evidence that the new variant... may be associated with a higher degree of mortality," Johnson told a news conference. The sobering news came as Britain reported record deaths from Covid-19, following a surge in cases and hospitalisations since the variant was first identified in south-east England in September. The nation's death toll - 95,981 as of Friday - is the highest in Europe.

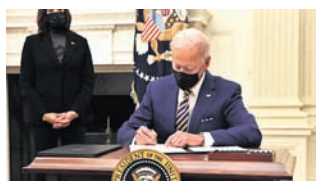


In the United States, the world's worst-hit country, the new president gave his highest estimate yet of its eventual toll, as he stepped up federal aid. "The virus is surging," President

and hammered economies. There were new signs of the depth of damage dealt to the global economy, with the closely watched Purchasing Managers' Index showing that Europe was heading for a new recession, while Latin America suffered its steepest drop in foreign trade since the global financial crisis. Origins probe In Wuhan, a team of WHO experts was still in hotel quarantine ahead of a mission to investigate the source of the virus, and the body said it was too early to conclude whether the pandemic actually started there. "All hypotheses are on the table," WHO emergencies director Michael Ryan told a press conference in Geneva. "And it is definitely too early to come to a conclusion of exactly where this virus started, either within or without China." Beijing is braced for the scrutiny the team will bring to its virus narrative, having drip-fed the idea that the pandemic started outside its borders. And while Wuhanites looked back on their confinement from the distance of a year, Hong Kong was introducing its first lockdown of the pandemic, the government ordering thousands of residents to stay home as authorities battled an outbreak in one of its poorest and most densely packed districts.

US-TALIBAN TALKS

Biden administration to review withdrawal deal



AGENCIES

Washington, Jan 23: The Biden administration said Friday it will review a landmark US deal with the Taliban, focusing on whether the insurgent group has reduced attacks in Afghanistan, in keeping with its side of the agreement. Washington struck a deal with the Taliban in Qatar last year, to begin withdrawing its troops in return for security guarantees from the militants and a commitment to kickstart peace talks with the Afghan government. But violence across Afghanistan has surged despite the two sides engaging in those talks since September. President Joe Biden's newly appointed national security advisor, Jake Sullivan, spoke with his Afghan counterpart Hamdullah Mohib and "made clear the United States' intention to review" the deal, National Security Council spokeswoman Emily Horne said. Specifically, Washington wants to check that the Taliban is "living up to its commitments to cut ties with terrorist groups, to reduce violence in Afghanistan, and to engage in meaningful negotiations with the Afghan government and other stakeholders," her statement continued.

Don't talk on public transport, urge French doctors

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, Jan 23: French doctors have new advice to slow the spread of the virus: stop talking on public transport. The French Academy of Doctors issued guidance Friday saying people should "avoid talking or making phone calls" in subways, buses or anywhere in public where social distancing isn't possible. Masks have been required since May, but travellers often loosen or remove them to talk on the phone. Other French experts are urging more dramatic measures - notably a third lockdown. France's hospitals now hold more Covid patients than in October, when President Emmanuel Macron imposed a second lockdown. Virus patients occupy more than half of the country's intensive care beds. Infections in France are gradually rising this month, at more than 20,000 per day. France currently has the longest virus curfew in Europe, from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., and restaurants and tourist sites have been closed since October. The government has so far sought to avoid a full new lockdown. Protests are expected around France on Saturday against virus-related layoffs and to support those arrested for holding a techno rave party despite virus restrictions.





Tata Power is in the forefront of producing green energy across the country. Such achievement demonstrates the trust and leadership of Tata Power's project management capability and execution skills in solar projects

PRAVEER SINHA | CEO & MD, TATA POWER

US RISKS FALLING INTO 'ECONOMIC HOLE'

White House economic adviser Brian Deese has said that the US risks falling into a "very serious economic hole" without decisive action, urging the Congress to approve more Covid-19 relief as soon as possible



of the day quote

All our hotels resumed operations in a staggered manner after the lockdown was eased. We are witnessing a growth in demand especially in the leisure segment and a gradual pick up of corporate business.

PRAMOD RANJAN | MD, ORIENTAL HOTELS

The Maritime India Vision-2030, a 10-year blueprint with the aim of overhauling the Indian maritime sector, is ready to be implemented soon

MANSUKH MANDAVIYA | MINISTER OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS

Since the launch in January 2020, in FY21, the company's market share in the hatchback category has increased by 5.4 per cent compared to last fiscal

SHAILESH CHANDRA | PRESIDENT (PV BUSINESS UNIT), TATA MOTORS

Mobile industry raises demand for GST rate cut

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 23: Industry body India Cellular and Electronics Association (ICEA) has renewed its demand for reducing Goods and Services Tax (GST) for the mobile industry ahead of the Union Budget to be presented February 1.

Terminating the GST hike of 50% in March 2020 as "a cruel blow" dealt to the industry, the ICEA said that the rationale presented to the GST Council for raising the rate was "flawed".

"To achieve the goal of smartphones in the hands of every Indian and to attain a domestic mo-

bile phone market of \$80 billion, it is imperative to reduce the GST on mobile phones from 18% to 12%," Pankaj Mohindroo, Chairman, ICEA, said in a statement.

ICEA also recommended Rs 500 crore budgetary allocation for establishing various Centres of Excellence for the key areas of electronics develop-



To achieve the goal of smartphones in the hands of every Indian and to attain a domestic mobile phone market of \$80 billion, it is imperative to reduce the GST on mobile phones from 18% to 12%

PANKAJ MOHINDROO, CHAIRMAN, ICEA

BUDGET 2021

ment, and a Rs 200 crore budgetary allocation for Mobile Design Centre.

Among other recommendations, the industry body sought interest subvention of 5 per cent for

loans up to Rs 1,000 crore and credit guarantee of Rs 100 crore.

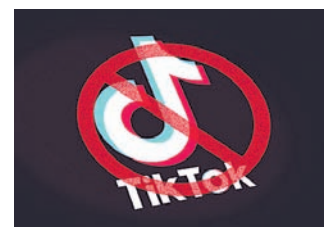
Regarding the homegrown handset makers, the ICEA said the "government is extremely supportive of building Indian champion companies which can be global leaders in the sub-\$200 entry level mobile phone segment".

"It is strongly recommended that a budget head should be opened in the Union Budget with an allocation of Rs 1,000 crore to begin with. Indian champion companies will build a strong supply chain and this investment will pay disproportionate dividends to our nation," ICEA said.

Centre to continue ban on Chinese apps including Tiktok

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 23: The government has sent notices to Chinese apps, including Tiktok, that the order to block them will be continued. The notice has been issued by the Ministry of Electronics and IT after reviewing replies of blocked apps, according to a source who did not wish to be identified.



When contacted, Tiktok confirmed to have received a reply from the government.

"We are evaluating the notice and will respond to it as appropriate. Tiktok was among the first companies to comply with the Government of India directive issued on June 29, 2020.

We continually strive to comply with local laws and regulations and do our best to address any concerns the government may have. Ensuring the privacy and security of all our users remains to be our topmost priority," a Tiktok spokesperson said.

The government had blocked 59 Chinese apps in June and 118 more apps, including PUBG mobile game, in September.

'Halwa Ceremony' kickstarts process of Budget compilation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 23: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, MoS for Finance Anurag Thakur and senior officials of the finance ministry Saturday participated in the symbolic 'Halwa Ceremony' that marks the beginning of compilation of budget documents.

Unlike the past, the voluminous budget documents will not be printed this year following the Covid-19 protocol and will instead be distributed electronically to the Members of Parliament (MPs). Previously, the ceremony marked the launch of printing exercise for the budget.

This will be the first time since the presentation of independent India's first budget on November 26, 1947, that the documents containing income and expenditure statement of the Union government along with the finance bill, detailing new taxes and other measures for the new financial year, will not be physically printed.

"In an unprecedented initiative, Union Budget 2021-22 will be delivered in paperless form for the first time. The Union Budget 2021-22 is to be presented on February 1, 2021," the Finance Ministry said in a statement.

On the occasion, the Finance Minister also launched the 'Union



Unlike the past, the voluminous budget documents will not be printed this year following the Covid-19 protocol

Budget Mobile App' for hassle-free access of Budget documents by Members of Parliament (MPs) and the general public using the simplest form of digital convenience.

The mobile App facilitates complete access to 14 Union Budget documents, including the Annual Financial Statement (commonly known as Budget), Demand for Grants (DG), Finance Bill etc. As prescribed by the Constitution, it said.

Finance Secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey, Economic Affairs Secretary

Tarun Bajaj, Financial Services Secretary Debasish Panda, DIPAM Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey, Expenditure Secretary T V Somanathan and Chief Economic Adviser K V Subramanian and other senior involved in the Budget preparation and compilation process, were also present in the customary pre-Budget event.

"Later, the finance minister reviewed the status of the compilation of the Union Budget 2021-22 and extended her best wishes to the officials concerned," it said.

The statement further said that the App has a user-friendly interface with embedded features of downloading, printing, search, zoom in and out, bidirectional scrolling, table of contents and external links, etc.

The App can also be downloaded from the Union Budget Web Portal (www.Indiabudget.Gov.In), it said, adding, the App has been developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) under the guidance of the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA). The Budget documents will be available on the Mobile App after the completion of the Budget Speech by the Finance Minister in Parliament February 1.

As part of the ritual, "halwa" is prepared in a big 'kadhai' (large frying pot) and served to the entire staff involved in the Budget making exercise of the ministry.

US factory activity near 14-year high

REUTERS

Washington, Jan 23: US manufacturing activity surged to its highest level in nearly 14 years in early January, but bottlenecks in the supply chain caused by the Covid-19 pandemic are driving up prices and signaling a rise in inflation in the months ahead.

Other data Friday showed an unexpected increase in sales of previously owned homes in December. Manufacturing and the housing market are helping to anchor the economy, which is being battered by a wave of coronavirus infections. But the pandemic is causing labor shortages at construction sites and factories, which could erode some of the strength in the manufacturing and housing sectors.

Data firm IHS Markit said its flash US manufacturing PMI accelerated to a reading of 59.1 in the first half of this month, the highest since May 2007, from 57.1 in December.

Economists had forecast the index would slip to 56.5 in early January. A reading above 50 indicates growth in manufacturing, which accounts for 11.9% of the U.S. economy. Manufacturing is being supported by businesses rebuilding inventories and a shift in demand towards goods from services because of the pandemic.



The IHS Markit survey's measure of new orders received by factories raced to its highest level since September 2014. The surge in demand reflected both existing and new customers, "with some clients reportedly committing to orders previously placed on hold." That led to manufacturers hiring more workers early this month. The survey's factory employment index increased to 54.8 from 52.2 in December.

But the pandemic is gumming up the supply chain, resulting in manufacturers paying more for materials, and they are passing on the higher production costs to consumers. The survey's gauge of prices received by factories vaulted to its highest level since July 2008.

This mirrored other manufacturing surveys, suggesting inflation could pick up and remain elevated beyond the anticipated boost from the drop of weak readings in March and April from the calculation.

Being targeted through false propaganda: Adani

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 23: Billionaire Gautam Adani's Adani Group Saturday said it is being targeted through false propaganda and a manufactured online campaign of malicious lies about its operations and will take actions such as filing court cases to protect its interests.

Without referring to any particular allegation, the Adani Group in a statement posted on its Twitter handle said some attacks had been mounted by vested interests to "sabotage India's strategic interests".

"Adani Group is impacted by the malicious campaigns by forces inimical to our national interest," it said in a post titled 'An Open Letter on the need to act against false propaganda'. It went on to state that "accuracy, objectivity and im-

partiality" are core principles of fair and balanced journalism.

"But on numerous occasions, Adani Group has been targeted through false propaganda. We have also been a victim of manufactured online media campaigns aimed at spreading malicious lies about our operations and inflicting harm to our shareholders," it said.

Gujarat billionaire Adani and his group has often been accused of "unfairly" benefiting under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In recent weeks it has been said to be the beneficiary of the three controversial farm reform laws. The group has denied all allegations of favouritism and had on farm laws said it does not do contract farming and only operates grain silos on behalf of the Food Corporation of India (FCI).

Geared up to meet any surge in fuel demand: CIL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 23: State-owned Coal India Ltd Saturday said that it is well geared to meet any surge in demand for coal from the power sector. The statement follows power demand touching an all-time high of 187.3 GW Friday.

"CIL (Coal India) is well geared to meet any surge in demand for the dry fuel from the power sector especially on the back of close to 63 million tonnes stock at its pitheads," the PSU said in a statement.

The company is also pushing ahead for increased production, committed to shoring up the supplies to coal-fuelled power plants. In this backdrop, close to 67 per cent of the total coal-fired power generation in the country is fuelled



through CIL's supplies.

Of the 199 GW of coal-based power programmed for generation per day during the ongoing fiscal, 133 GW is scheduled from CIL-linked coal.

Average coal-based power generation of power per day which

was 2.795 BU till Friday spurted up to 3.072 BU, a jump of nearly 10 per cent on the morning of the record making day.

Coal-based power generation remains consistently high among all other categories.

"This increase in coal-based power generation bodes well for us. If this continues, we could expect our supplies to power sector go up in near future," the company said adding that the power plants need to submit adequate programme at the coal companies to avoid any shortage of dry fuel as the demand started peaking.

Coal India is focusing on ramping up its supplies to pithead based power plants to higher levels. This would influence in cost per unit of power generated coming down.

'Future bright as Global VC funding soars \$300.5bn'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 23: The Covid-19 pandemic had little impact on the deal street as global VC funding in 2020 was \$300.5 billion - up from \$281.6 billion in 2019 and second only to 2018's record \$329.7 billion despite a drop in deal volume, the latest edition of a KPMG report said Saturday.

The Private Enterprise Venture Pulse report, said that despite global uncertainty resulting from a number of ongoing events including the Covid-19 pandemic, global VC investment remained very robust in Q4'20, with \$80.8 billion in investment across 5,418 deals.

It is this strong performance that helped drive annual global VC investment to \$300.5 billion despite a drop in deal volume.

Global median deal sizes rose across all deal stages in 2020 - to \$1.2 million for seed/angel deals, \$4.5 million for early stage deals, and \$9.9 million for later stage deals.

Also, global first-time venture financing dropped for the third straight year - to \$24.9 billion across 6,580 deals in 2020 from \$29.4 billion across 8,149 deals in 2019, the report said.

China accounted for the top five largest VC deals in the world during Q4'20.

The report said that Global VC-backed exit activity reached a record high of \$189 billion in Q4'20 as the march of unicorn exits continued with high profile IPO exits.

With regard to India, the report said that VC investment here remained relatively robust in Q4'20. While VC investment dropped some-



what during the quarter, India saw deal volume rise to its highest level since Q1'18.

India reported 294 deals valued at around \$3,169.4 million in Q4'20.

During Q4'20, home delivery, marketplace platforms, and e-commerce were the hottest areas of investment, attracting the majority of India's funding rounds of \$100 mil-

The report, said that despite global uncertainty resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, global VC investment remained very robust in Q4'20

Global median deal sizes rose across all deal stages in 2020 - to \$1.2 million for seed/angel deals

China accounted for the top five largest VC deals in the world during Q4'20

lion or more.

Commenting on the India findings, Nitish Poddar, Partner and National Leader - Private Equity, KPMG in India said, "There have been a number of sectors that have really benefited from the pandemic here in India. Interest in staples delivery - fresh food, groceries, and

the like - has grown quite significantly in recent months, in addition to online retail and gaming. That has driven a lot of investment. Then there's edtech. It's been an attractive area for VC investors for a couple of years now but in 2020, that interest skyrocketed and so did the investments."

While the VC investment braved the pandemic throwing better results, the report said that the future also looks bright for VC market. It said, Global VC investment is expected to remain quite high in Q1'21 given the large amount of dry powder in the market, low interest rates in many regions of the world, and the increasing drive of corporates for digital transformation. IPO and M&A activity is also expected to remain very robust as other unicorns look to exit.



Navdeep Saini reacts after feeling pain following his groin injury

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 23: A groin strain prevented India pacer Navdeep Saini from giving his best in the Brisbane Test but fearing that he may not get such a big stage again, he remained at the beck and call of his captain and ended up bowling five overs despite injury.

The 28-year-old, who finally made his Test debut in the Australia series after years of wait, said he risked aggravating his injury by bowling in the second innings but given what was at stake, "It was a no brainer".

"Ajinkya bhैया asked me if I would be able to bowl with the injury, I just had to say yes," Saini, who was in the middle when Rishabh Pant hit the winning runs at the Gabba, told this agency.

Having taken four wickets in his debut game at Sydney, Saini suffered a groin strain in Australia's first innings and could bowl only 7.5

overs at the Gabba, increasing concerns for an already injury-hit India, who were forced to go into the game with a bowling attack which had the combined experience of four games.

For someone who made a massive leap of playing Ranji Trophy for Delhi in 2013 straight from making a quick buck in tennis ball cricket across Haryana, Saini wondered about the timing of his injury as he had just realised his dream of playing Tests.

But the like of the rest of his teammates, he showed a steely resolve and carried on. "I was fine and suddenly I got injured. I was wondering 'why it is happening in such a crucial game and have got the opportunity to play after a long time'."

"I just wished if could keep going with that injury and support my team. I knew I might not get a stage like that again. Captain asked me if I could do it. I was in pain but said I would do with whatever I could. "I am recovering now and should

SAINI OPENS UP ON INJURY TALE

to be fit soon," said the lanky fast bowler from Karnal who was fast-tracked into first-class cricket by former India opener Gautam Gambhir and received his maiden Test call-up in back in 2018.

Saini, who has also played 10 T20Is and seven ODIs, is not part of India's squad for the first two home Tests against England starting February 5 in Chennai.

Out of his four Test wickets, the first one was most special as he trapped another debutant, Will Pucovski, in front of the stumps with a full and fast incoming delivery.

"All wickets were special but yes you can't forget the first one. Because until that happens, you keep thinking about that first wicket."

With senior bowlers like Mohammad Shami and Umesh Yadav out of the series, the pressure to perform instantly had increased on the likes of Saini, who had not played Tests before but had a substantial experience of playing IPL

and shorter formats for India.

Having not bowled with red-ball in Australia ever prior to the series, Saini said it was an enriching experience. "It is easy to get excited in Australia with the bounce on offer. It is natural to think about bowling short balls then but Test cricket is not only about that, it is about patience and bowling in the same channel consistently."

"To be able to do well in Australia, you have to be mentally very strong, they don't give up till the very end. The management was very supportive including the captain and Rohit bhैया. They all told me to bowl the way I would bowl in Ranji Trophy," said Saini, who is back home after five long months in the world of bio-bubbles. Mohammed Siraj, the find of Australia tour in coach Ravi Shastri's words, was seen counselling Saini consistently in the latter's maiden Test. It helped the Delhi pacer immensely as he and Siraj go back a long way.

"He is one of my best mates. We have played a lot together (for India A). We talk a lot about bowling. He was always there for me in the first game. Pace is important but he was telling me to also focus on line and length to be effective."

"Siraj is a very different bowler. He showed a lot of courage by staying back after his father's death. What he achieved was very crucial for the team and showed his character."

Talking about his extraordinary journey, Saini, son of a bus driver, said he never planned to be a professional cricketer; it was only fate at play.

"I played with tennis ball for the major part of my growing up years. It all started when I played Ranji trophy. That is when I felt I could play professionally. Before that I was just playing without an aim, I had no idea. It all happened step by step after I played for Delhi," added Saini.



Ajinkya Rahane (L) and Jasprit Bumrah (R) consoles Navdeep Saini after the bowler decides to leave the field

Struggling Odisha face BFC challenge



Odisha FC players go through their training drills ahead of their match against Bengaluru FC, Sunday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Margao, Jan 23: Desperately seeking a turnaround in fortunes, former champions Bengaluru FC find themselves in a tough spot as they take on a struggling Odisha FC in the Indian Super League (ISL) here, Sunday.

BFC have not won in their last six games of which they have lost five. After the exit of Carles Cuadrat, interim coach Naushad Moosa has not been able to turn things around.

However, he has the chance to spark a recovery Sunday, when the Blues face ISL's bottom-dwellers Odisha FC at the Fatorda Stadium.

"A win gives us three points and it will push us higher in the table. Just a matter of winning one game. Just that one win is very important for us. The dynamics will change entirely," said Moosa.

Bengaluru are in seventh spot, a position they are not too familiar with, but still have a chance to progress into the knockout phase. "Of course, the (position on the) points table is something we are not used to. They know the importance of each match now. We are being positive."

"Apart from the top two, all are very close. We have to keep fighting," added Moosa, who stressed on

the importance of not conceding easy goals if they had to make it to the playoffs.

Bengaluru had a good game against Kerala but the result wasn't in their favour. However, Moosa believes that his side can win against Odisha, if they take their chances.

"If you ask Odisha, they will say that BFC is not in good form. But if we maintain that (level they showed against Kerala), we can win against Odisha," he said.

"It depends on converting those chances. We keep trying to take advantage of it and remain disciplined at the back. It is important that we don't allow them to play."

Meanwhile, Odisha have won just one match so far, and coach Stuart Baxter would be aiming to register his second win in the competition. But the Englishman believes his side will have to defend strongly and play their best in order to keep their playoff hopes alive.

"We had chances to beat bigger clubs like ATKMB but to do that against anybody — not just Bengaluru — we have to defend well, take our chances and play our own game. If we do that with quality, I think we have shown that we can run everybody close," Baxter said.

JFC eye turnaround against HPC



Jamshedpur FC will have a tough challenge ahead as they take on Hyderabad FC, Sunday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Vasco, Jan 23: Smarting from three successive defeats, Jamshedpur FC (JFC) will be desperate to turn things around when they face Hyderabad FC (HFC) in an Indian Super League (ISL) fixture at Tilak Maidan Stadium Sunday.

The business end of the tournament beckons and after 12 games, Jamshedpur find themselves in a precarious position. Three defeats on the spin have seen them drop to eighth on the table and they will look to break the streak of losses as they set their eyes on qualifying for their first-ever playoffs.

In Owen Coyle, Jamshedpur have a coach who knows what it takes to

get there. The Englishman masterminded Chennaiyin's fairly tale run last season after taking charge midway, guiding them from the bottom of the table to the final.

And despite dropping points in recent games, Coyle believes Jamshedpur are in a better position this time to make the top four compared to the position he found himself with the two-time ISL winners last season.

"We have eight games to go to fight for those playoff spots," said Coyle. "And if anybody knows the challenge of doing that, it's myself, since I was down there at the bottom last year (with Chennaiyin) before we set out on a tremendous run."

"Jamshedpur are in a better position than I was with Chennaiyin

last year. So we are more than capable of making up the deficit to get there. What we have to do is get back to our very best."

Jamshedpur have bolstered their squad in the transfer window with the additions of forwards Seiminlen Doungel (loan) and Farukh Choudhary, both of whom could feature Sunday.

Hyderabad, on the other hand, have been in good form, unbeaten in their previous four games. And one area they will be looking to capitalise on is Jamshedpur's stuttering defence that has conceded eight goals in their last three games. Earlier, Coyle's side had just conceded nine goals in as many matches.

But Hyderabad are up against a side they have never managed to beat in their three meetings so far, allowing Jamshedpur to be optimistic about their chances as well.

Hyderabad coach Manuel Marquez is expecting a difficult game for both sides. "We play against a team that will want to win after three consecutive teams," he said. "They want to try and arrive in the top four which is the reason they signed two new players. It's a strong team led by a coach with a lot of experience."

With just four points separating both teams at the moment, there could be another close encounter on the cards.

10-man FC Goa hold Kerala Blasters

AGENCIES

Goa, Jan 23: A 10-man FC Goa held Kerala Blasters to a 1-1 draw in their Indian Super League (ISL) match at the GMC Stadium in Bambolim, Saturday.

Goa dominated the game in the first-half as Jorge Ortiz Mendoza (25th) scored the opening goal. After being outplayed in the first 45 minutes, Kerala Blasters returned with better intent in the second-half as KP Rahul (57th) equalised from the set-piece.

After Blasters' equaliser, Ivan Gonzalez was sent off due to indecency. The result saw Goa remain on the third spot with 20 points while Kerala Blasters are at the seventh spot with 14.

Goa started the match on a high as they almost drew the first blood inside opening five minutes. Jorge Ortiz Mendoza made a brilliant run on the right flank to find AR Jesuraj in support as he played the ball to the centre but then the ball was passed all the way back to goalkeeper.

However, Goa didn't let the momentum slip away and rebuild for yet another attack. It was a brilliant interplay from the Gauras as a through ball was played inside the box to Ortiz who took the shot but the ball hit the post. So near yet so far.

Goa's continuous pressure on



Jorge Ortiz (L) reacts after putting FC Goa ahead against Kerala Blasters during their ISL match in Bambolim, Saturday

allowed the goal as it came off Kone's arm. It was a good decision as the ball hit his thigh before taking his arm and ending at the back of net.

However, the equation changed after change of ends as Blasters kept building up pressure on the Gauras. And it paid off as they found the equaliser in the 56th. Pereyra whipped in a brilliant ball from the left flank as KP Rahul came steaming in to hit the ball at the back of net.

The situation turned worst for the Gauras as Gonzalez was sent off following an argument with the referee. Gonzalez just pushed Gary Hooper on the flank as the referee waved a yellow card on him. However, an unhappy Gonzalez then took a step forward to touch the referee in argument. The gesture cost Goa dearly as the on-field official gave Gonzalez the marching orders.

Goa tried desperately to fill the void, left by Gonzalez. And they managed to do show and bagged a point to show for their efforts. The story would have been different had Blasters not missed a clear scoring chance in the 84th.

Naveen Kumar charged outside the box to come one-on-one with KP Rahul as he lost possession with Hooper having a clear chance but he decided to pass the ball on the left flank and the shot went above the crossbar.

Anjali, Kalpana spells fashion Violet victory

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: Skipper Anjali Singh (3/10) and Kalpana Nayak (2/13) helped Odisha Violet script a 34-run victory over Odisha Red in their match of the MGM Odisha Women's T20 cricket tournament at the KIIT Stadium here, Saturday.

Defending a small total of 96, Violet bowlers, led by their captain, performed superbly under pressure as they restricted the Red to a paltry 62/8. Besides Anjali, who was adjudged 'Player of the match' and Kalpana, Sushree Dibyadarshini (1/5) was brilliant in her three-over spell. Shilpa Swain (16) and skipper Madhuri Meheta (15) were only batters to offer some



resistance for the Red.

Earlier, Odisha Violet were bowled out for 96 with a ball to spare in their innings. It was after they won the toss and opted to bat first. Aditi S Deo (18) was the top scorer for the Violet as their batters got starts but couldn't convert those starts into big scores. Sonali Hembram (2/12), Rajashree Swain (2/17) and Tanmayee Behera (2/16) shared six wickets among themselves for the losing side.

Mbappe brace helps PSG rout Montpellier

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, Jan 23: Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) coach Mauricio Pochettino made a surprising return to watch Kylian Mbappe snap a four-game scoreless run with two goals as the league leaders crushed 10-man Montpellier 4-0.

PSG moved three points clear of second-place Lille, which can move level on points by winning at fifth-place Rennes Sunday but has a vastly inferior goal difference.

In an unexpected sight at Parc des Princes stadium, Pochettino returned to coach PSG just one week after testing positive for the coronavirus.

"I feel better," Pochettino told broadcaster Telefoot before kick-off. "I'm allowed to be here tonight as long as I keep my distance." Forwards Neymar and Mauro Icardi



Kylian Mbappe scores past an onrushing Montpellier custodian during their match, Friday

also netted for defending champion PSG. The game became one-sided after Montpellier goalkeeper Jonas Omlin was sent off in the 19th

minute for clattering into Mbappe just outside the penalty area. Omlin was replaced by Dimitry Bertaud.

Mbappe put PSG ahead in the 34th when he collected a pass from Angel Di Maria and lifted the ball over Bertaud. But the goal came with Montpellier midfielder Florent Mollet out of action after limping off with an ankle injury.

A flurry of action saw Mbappe set up Neymar in the 59th, before Icardi turned in right back Alessandro Florenzi's cross one minute later. Icardi then unselfishly set up Mbappe for an easy goal in the 62nd.

Mbappe's brace took him to the top of the scoring charts with 14, two more than Reims striker Boulaye Dia. Pochettino had been expected to be replaced by assistant coach Jesus Perez, who stood in for him in last Saturday's away win at Angers.

Satwik-Ashwini pair knocked out

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangkok, Jan 23: The Indian mixed doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Ashwini Ponnappa produced a spirited performance before going down narrowly to top seeds Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Sapsiree Taerattanachai in the semifinals of the Thailand Open here, Saturday. Dechapol and Sapsiree prevailed 22-20, 18-21, 21-12 over the Indians in a 57-minute battle.

Satwik and Ashwini, Friday, became the first Indian mixed doubles pair to reach the semifinals of a BWF World Tour Super 1000 event.

Earlier, World No.10 Indian pair of Satwik and Chirag Shetty's also lost their semifinal in men's doubles 18-21, 18-21 to World No.9 Malaysian combination of Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik.