

INCREDIBLE FACTS

Unbelievable it may sound, but Dr BR Ambedkar, the architect of Indian Constitution, wanted to burn it out

LEISURE P2



AYODHYA MOSQUE

Ayodhya mosque may be named after 1857 mutiny warrior Maulvi Ahmadullah Shah

TWO STATES P7



CHINA PUSHES THEORIES

Chinese state media play up questions about Pfizer's vax and suggest coronavirus could've emerged from a US military lab

INTERNATIONAL P10

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Today is the day we got our Constitution, assuring you freedom of speech and me freedom to get you arrested!

HOLIDAY NOTICE

The offices of Orissa POST will remain closed on the occasion of Republic Day. Hence, there will be no edition of the paper January 27, 2021.

SHORT TAKES

RT-PCR report must for visit to Kumbh

Dehradun: Devotees who wish to attend the forthcoming Kumbh mela must bring a COVID-19 negative RT-PCR test report, according to a standard operating procedure (SOP) issued by the Centre for holding the religious congregation. The RT-PCR test must be conducted within 72 hrs of the date of the visit, stated the document by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The Uttarakhand government shall ensure that healthcare and other frontline workers engaged during Kumbh Mela medical and public health operations are vaccinated on priority. Only vaccinated healthcare and other frontline workers be deputed for Kumbh Mela duties, it said. As far as possible, people must maintain a six-foot distance in public places and wear masks, the SOP stated, while the authorities have been directed to ensure the devotees adhere to COVID-appropriate behaviour during the Kumbh.

Amazon moves HC; seeks Biyani arrest

New Delhi: US online retailer Amazon has filed a petition in the Delhi High Court seeking detention of Future Group founders, including CEO Kishore Biyani, and seizure of their assets as it sought to block Future Group from selling retail assets to Reliance Industries. In the petition, Amazon sought enforcement of the Singapore arbitrator's ruling in October against its partner Future's ₹24,713 crore deal with Reliance. Amazon sought the Biyani family to be directed to "disclose their assets, including movable and immovable property" and the same be attached. Also, it sought "detention" of Biyani, his daughter Ashni and seven other members of the founder family as well as three other officials including a company secretary of the Group. P11

Indian, Chinese troops face off at Naku La



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 25: Indian and Chinese troops clashed at Naku La in North Sikkim last week with many injuries reported, said a government source. The situation is said to be under control though as of now.

Naku La, incidentally, was one of the original face-off sites, along with Pangong Tso, Galwan, Gogra, Hot Springs, in early-May last year.

The government source said the clash took place three days ago. It happened while both the countries' government and military were readying for another round of talks to resolve border dispute along the 3,488 kilometre-long Line of Actual Control.

On Sunday, India and China held a 16-hour long marathon military dialogue that ended at after 2 a.m. on Monday to resolve the ongoing ninth month long border dispute and thinning of forces along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

The ninth Corps Commander level talks between both the countries took place at the Moldo Meeting point in Ladakh region. It had started at 10.30 a.m. on Sunday and ended at 2.30 a.m. on Monday.

Lieutenant General PGK Menon, the Corps Commander of Leh-based HQ 14 Corps, led the Indian delegation. India has sought complete disengagement and withdrawal of forces from the disputed areas.

It happened after almost two months after the last dialogue. The details of the meeting were yet to come. The military commanders will convey the details of the meeting to the Prime Minister Office.

On June 15, 2020, India lost 20 soldiers during a violent clash at Galwan Valley with Chinese People's Liberation Army soldiers. Chinese never made their casualty public.

India and China are engaged in a nine-month-long standoff at the LAC. Despite several levels of dialogue, there has not been any breakthrough and the deadlock continues.

INDIA, CHINA HOLD 16-HOUR LONG TALKS

New Delhi: India and China held 16 hours-long marathon military dialogue to resolve an ongoing border dispute and thinning of forces along the Line of Actual Control in Eastern Ladakh, government official said on Monday. The details of the meeting are yet to be known. The ninth Corps Commander level talks between both the countries took place at the Moldo Meeting point almost two months of last dialogue. It started at 10.30 am Sunday and ended at 2.30 am Monday. Lieutenant General P.G.K. Menon, the Corps Commander of Leh-based HQ 14 Corps, led the Indian delegation. India has sought complete disengagement and withdrawing of forces from the disputed areas. The military commanders to convey the details of the meeting to Prime Minister Office. The Ministry of External Affairs representative was also part of dialogue.

The eight Corps Commander level talks had taken place November 6. Though the talks had ended in a deadlock, both countries had agreed to maintain dialogue and communication through military and diplomatic channels, and take forward the discussions, push for the settlement of other outstanding issues, so as to jointly maintain peace and tranquility in the border areas. Indian Army chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane earlier this month said the forces are ready for a long haul along the Line of Actual Control but hoped for an amicable solution in its nine month long conflict with the Chinese People's Liberation Army. "We are prepared to hold our ground where we are for as long as it takes to achieve our national goals and interest," General Naravane had said. Since no thinning of troops happened the soldiers of both the countries are poised to remain exposed to minus 20 degrees Celsius. On August 30, India had occupied critical mountain heights on the southern bank of the Pangong Lake like Rechin La, Rezang La, Mukpari, and Tabletop that were unmanned till now. India also made some deployments near the Blacktop. The movement was carried out after the Chinese tried to make a provocative military move. Now, dominance at these 13 peaks allows India to dominate Spangur Gap under Chinese control and also the Moldo garrison on the Chinese side. At the height of the standoff, India had lost 20 soldiers, while the Chinese side an unknown number.

Padma Vibhushan for Sudarshan; Padma Shri for five others in state

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Jan 25: President Ram Nath Kovind has approved conferment of Padma awards to six eminent personalities from Odisha. Sudarshan Sahoo, an eminent sculptor from the state, has been selected for Padma Vibhushan in the field of art. Padma Vibhushan—the second highest civilian award, is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service, the government announced Monday.

Significantly, five personalities such as Shanti Devi in the field of social work, Purnamasi Jani in the field of art, Rajat Kumar Kar in the field of literature and education, Dr Krishan Mohan Pathi in the field of medicine and Nanda Prusty in the field of literature and education have been selected for Padma Shri awards.



Sudarshan Sahoo

Former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and music legend SP Balasubrahmanyam have been awarded Padma Vibhushan. Celebrated singer SP Balasubrahmanyam was conferred the honour posthumously. He died in a Chennai hospital last year after almost two months of treatment.

Former Assam CM Tarun Gogoi and former Union minister Ram Vilas Paswan, both of whom died last year, have been awarded the Padma Bhushan, the third highest civilian award posthumously. Veteran playback singer KS Chithra has been honoured with the Padma Bhushan as well. The Padma awards were announced Monday evening by the government honouring 119 prominent personalities from various fields.

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New exam pattern for +2 announced

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 25: The state government Monday announced a new examination pattern for students appearing for Plus II annual examination, following a reduction in the syllabus owing to COVID-19 pandemic.

The new question pattern is meant for both regular and ex-regular students, registered in and after 2016. However, the question pattern and syllabus for students registered in and before 2015 will remain unchanged, said School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash.

Dash said 50 per cent of the questions will have multiple optional answers with the right one giving one mark to the student. On the other hand, 30 per cent of the questions will have short answers with each fetching the students two or three marks.

The students will have options to choose from among the questions. The remaining 20 per cent of the questions will have long answers. Here, the student will have multiple options to choose from. Regarding filling up of forms to appear for the exams, the minister said that the dates will be announced soon.

Earlier, January 22 the Board of Secondary Education revised the pattern of examination and distribution of marks in different subjects for annual HSC Examination, State Open School Certificate Examination and Madhyama Examination, 2021.

The pattern can be downloaded from the website www.bseodisha.ac.in. As per the revised pattern, there will be two separate question papers in subjects-General Science and Social Science for HSC & SOSC candidates basing on old & new courses.

As per the pattern, the examination will be held in 20 subjects and each paper will comprise 50 marks of objective (50X1=50) and 30 (3X10=30) marks of subjective questions. The candidates need to attend each paper in two hours.

Similarly, the Madhyama Examination-2021 will be conducted in eight subjects. Even as the test will be conducted for 80 marks in each subject, the evaluation will be done for 100 marks.

The rest 20 marks will be awarded as per marks obtained by a student for 80 marks. The state government announced to provide guide books to students appearing for the annual HSC this year free of cost.

1.77L RECEIVED VAX IST DOSE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 25: With the completion of inoculation of the first dose of Covid-19 vaccines in the pilot phase Monday, as many as 1,77,090 healthcare workers have got shots.

According to official sources, while the health department targeted to vaccinate 1,92,555 health workers in the initial phase, 1.77 lakh turned up at the vaccine centres.

About 3.5 lakh healthcare professionals have registered themselves for vaccination of which 1.77 lakh got first doses. The second spell of the first phase of vac-

nation of the remaining registered health workers will start January 28 and will continue till February 10, said health director Bijay Panigrahi.

"The registered healthcare professionals, who were left out in the initial phase, can get the shot during this period," he said. The director further said that the second dose of Covid-19 vaccination of the health workers in the state will begin February 15 (18 days after the first dose).

The data base of the other frontline workers is under preparation. After completion of vaccination of the health workers, they will be vaccinated, he added.

SIGNATURE THEME



Medics hold the Tricolour as they stand next to a model of coronavirus vaccine syringe and vial, made in honour of corona warriors, ahead of the 72nd Republic Day, in Bangalore, Monday

19 from state to get Prez's Medals

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 25: Thirteen police personnel and six firemen will receive this year's President's Medals. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) Monday released a list of 946 security forces personnel including 13 from Odisha to receive the President's Police Medal on the Republic Day.

Special Director, Intelligence, Radha Kishan Sharma, a 1995-batch IPS officer, and Budhi Bahadur Thappa, Deputy Subedar at the Biju Patnaik State Police Academy, will be conferred with President's Police Medal for distinguished services on the occasion.

The MHA also announced the names of 11 other police personnel from Odisha including senior IPS officer and IGP (law and order), S Praveen Kumar who will receive the Police Medal for Meritorious Service. Three officials of the Directorate of Prisons and Correctional Service have been selected to get the President's correctional service medals for distinguished services. Two other prison officials will be conferred with the correctional service medal for meritorious service.

Six fire services personnel have been selected by the MHA for the President's Medals. Leading fireman Kasyp Kumar Pattanaik will receive the President's Fire Service Medal for gallantry while another leading fireman Kamalakant Puhani will receive the Fire Service Medal for Distinguished Services. Four officials-Assistant Fire Officer Sarat Chandra Mallick, Station Officer Pradeep Kumar Pattanaik, leading fireman Prakash Kumar Behera and driver havildar Balabhadra Dehury will receive Fire Service Medals for Meritorious Service.

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	48347.59	↓ 530.95
NIFTY	14238.90	↓ 133.0
DOLLAR	73.19	↓ ₹0.03
EURO	88.66	↓ ₹0.19
GOLD	₹49,325	↑ ₹185
SILVER	₹67,027	↑ ₹385

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	32.9°C	31.6°C
MIN	20.0°C	19.0°C
Humidity	98%	90%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Dense fog in early morning	

Lockdown made India's rich richer: Oxfam report

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 25: India's 100 billionaires have seen their fortunes increase by ₹12,97,822 crore since March 2020, enough to give every one of the 138 million poorest Indians a cheque for ₹94,045 each. It would take an hour during the pandemic and three years to make what he made in a second, finds the latest India supplement of the Oxfam report "The Inequality Virus"—the latest report being released at Press Club of Odisha here Monday.

The pandemic has been the world's worst public health crisis in a hundred years. It triggered an economic crisis comparable in scale only with the Great Depression of the 1930s. The new global survey of 295 econ-



omists from 79 countries, commissioned by Oxfam, reveals that 87 per cent of the respondents expect an "increase" or a "major increase" in income inequality in their country as a result of the pandemic. "The report shows how the rigged economic system is enabling a super-rich elite to amass wealth in the middle of the worst recession and the biggest economic crisis in the history of independent India, while billions of people are struggling to make ends meet. It reveals how the pandemic is deepening long-standing economic, caste, ethnic, and gender divides," Oxfam India CEO Amitabh Behar said.

"While the Coronavirus was being touted as a great equaliser in the beginning, it laid bare the stark inequalities inherent in the society soon after the lockdown was imposed," Behar added. India introduced one of the earliest and most stringent lockdowns in the face of the pandemic; the enforcement of the lockdown brought the economy to a standstill triggering unemployment, hunger, distress migration and untold hardship in its wake. The rich were able to escape the pandemic's worst impact.

The report notes that billionaires working in sectors like coal, oil, telecom, medicines, pharmaceuticals, education, and retail increased their wealth exponentially since March 2020 when India announced world's biggest COVID-19 lockdown and economy came to standstill. On the other hand, data has shown that 170,000 people lost their jobs

every hour in the month of April 2020. The wealth of Indian billionaires increased by 35 percent during the lockdown and by 90 percent since 2009 to USD 422.9 billion ranking India, sixth in the world after US, China, Germany, Russia and France.

Out of a total 122 millions who lost their jobs 75 per cent, which accounts for 92 million jobs, were lost in the informal sector. The mass exodus on foot triggered by the sudden lockdown & the inhuman beating, disinfection and quarantine conditions the informal workers were subjected to turned a health emergency into a humanitarian crisis. Over 300 informal workers died due to the lockdown, with reasons ranging from starvation, suicides, exhaustion, road and rail accidents, police brutality and denial of timely medical care.

Indian Constitution: Lesser known facts

AGENCIES

The final draft of the Indian Constitution, which is the longest in the world, was adopted November 26, 1949. It was legally enforced January 26, 1950, the day that we celebrate as Republic Day ever since. Here are some lesser known facts that you probably didn't know about the Indian Constitution.

'Babasaheb' was ready to burn it.

"My friends tell me that I have made the Constitution. But I am quite prepared to say that I shall be the first person to burn it out if it doesn't protect the interest of the minorities," said Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar, regarded as the Father of the Constitution in the Rajya Sabha September 2, 1953 during a debate on amendment.

The Constitution was originally written in Hindi and English

The original copies of the Indian Constitution were written in Hindi and English. Each member of the Constituent Assembly that drafted the Constitution, signed two copies of the constitution, one in Hindi and the other in English

The English version has 117,369 words

There are a total of 117,369 words in the English version of the Constitution of India which contains 444 articles in 22 parts, 12 schedules and 115 amendments.

Longest Constitution in the world

With so much of writing, the Indian Constitution is the longest of any sovereign country in the world. In its current form, it has a Preamble, 22 parts with 448 articles, 12 schedules, 5 appendices and 115 amendments.

The Constitution wasn't typed or printed

Both the versions of the Constitution, Hindi and English, were handwritten. It is the longest handwritten constitution of any country on earth.

Handwritten by Prem Behari Narain Raizada

The original Constitution of India was handwritten by Prem Behari Narain Raizada in a flowing italic style with beautiful calligraphy. The Constitution was published in Dehradun and photolithographed by the Survey of India.

Each page was decorated by artists from Shantiniketan

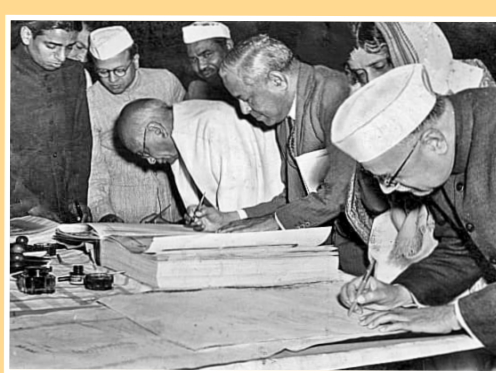
The original Constitution is hand-written, with each page uniquely decorated by artists from Shantiniketan including Beohar Rammanohar Sinha and Nandalal Bose.

The original copies are stored in special helium-filled cases

The original copies of the Indian Constitution, written in Hindi and English, are kept in special helium-filled cases in the Library of the Parliament of India.

It took nearly 3 years to write it down

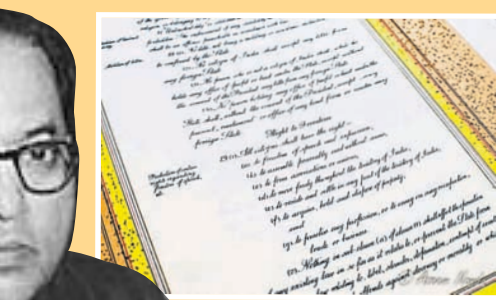
The Constituent Assembly, which first met December 9, 1946, took precisely 2 years, 11 months and 18 days to come up with the final draft.



Members of the Constituent Assembly signing the Constitution



PB Narain Raizada who wrote the Constitution



A page from the Constitution

2,000 amendments were made to the first draft

When the draft was prepared and put up for debate and discussion, over 2000 amendments were made before it was finalised.

January 26, 1950: The Constitution was legally enforced

Passed by the Constituent Assembly November 26, 1949, it came into effect January 26, 1950. The date January 26 was chosen to commemorate the declaration of Purna Swaraj (complete Independence) of 1930.

Constitution of India: A 'Bag of Borrowings'

The Indian Constitution is often called a 'bag of borrowings'. It is called so because it has borrowed provisions from the constitutions of various other countries including Britain, France, the USSR, Japan, Germany and the US. However, it is much more than a mere copy of other constitutions.

Amended only 94 times in over 60 years

Amended only 94 times in the first 62 years, the Constitution of India has stood the test of time. As of January 2019, there have been 103 amendments to the Constitution of India since it was first enacted in 1950.

PIC - Bloombergquint

When Kondh Uprising shook the British Raj

TRIBAL LEADER CHAKRA BISOI ANOINTED LAKSHMI NARAYAN BHANJ, A SCION OF THE ROYAL FAMILY, AS THE NEW RULER OF GHUMSAR AGAINST THE WISHES OF THE BRITISH

CHAITALI SHOME, OP

Bhubaneswar, Jan 25: The aura of Republic Day touches the patriotic nerve of every Indian. In the journey to freedom from the British, Kondhs of Odisha had their fair share of contribution. These indigenous people came into limelight in 1836 for their fierce fight against the British.

Chakra Bisoi took their leadership. He anointed Lakshmi Narayan Bhanj, a scion of the royal family, as the new ruler of Ghumsar against the wishes of the British. The Kondhs rallied behind Bisoi, who eventually fought for the re-establishment of the native rule.

However, the British forces managed to capture Ghumsar in 1767 and that brought untold miseries



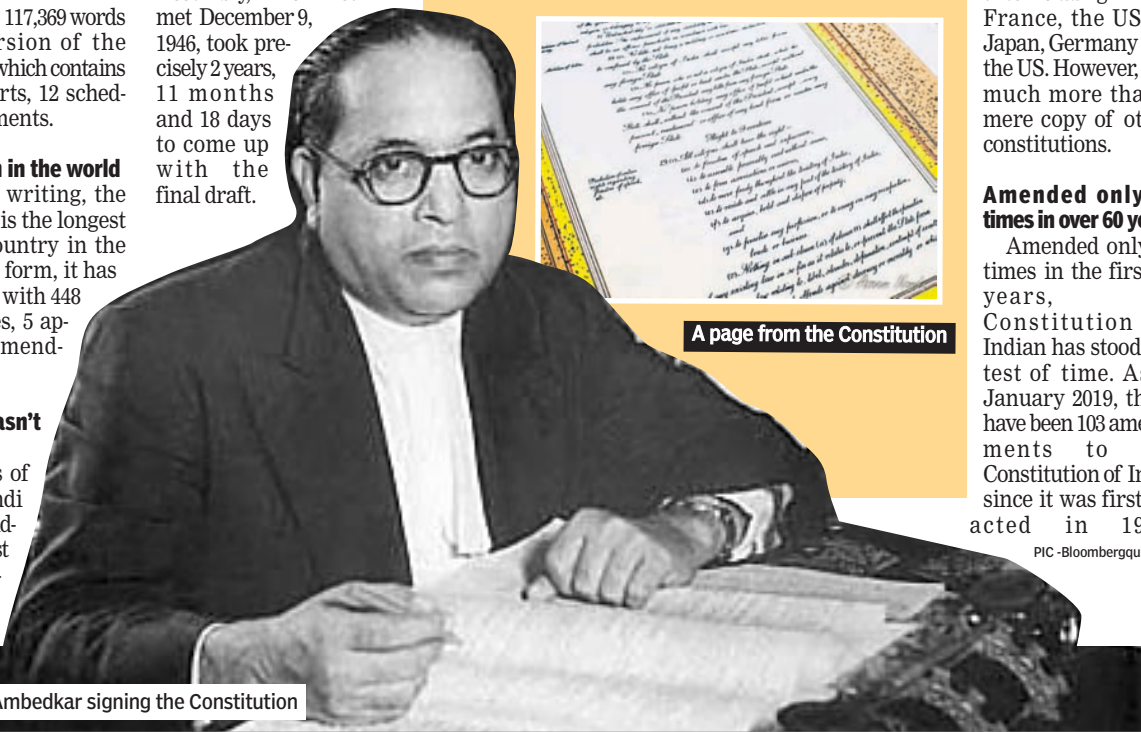
Successors of tribal freedom fighters

British invaded the Kondh area to seemingly stop the Meriah sacrifice, but they failed. The British then decided to use force against them. However, they did not succeed due to high altitude and difficult terrains of where the Kondhs lived. The British meddling in their socio-religious rights led to a prolonged state of warfare.

Forced taxation by the colonial masters had infuriated the Kondhs on end. They thought that their land would be grabbed by the British. They were never in the habit of paying taxes. The illegal tax system made them broke. So much so, that the officials of the Raj even forcibly took away their cooking utensils. The Kondhs revolted violently against the British.

to the subjects. Making matters worse, the kingdom suffered from a massive agricultural crisis due to very poor rainfall. While the low harvest broke the backbone of the people, levying exorbitant taxes by the British on Ghumsar king only added to the woes. The government demanded arrears from the king, who in turn tried to realise the amount from the Kondh inhabitants. This led to severe unrest among the tribals.

Speaking to Orissa POST researcher Jitu Mishra said, "The Kondhs are the fiercest tribe of Odisha. They are always conscious about their rights. So much so, that after Indian Independence they continued to hold their own courts where justice is delivered instantly."



Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar signing the Constitution

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Nourishing high ambitions is a good thing if they can drive you to achieve your potential. You make plans and execute them with utmost care. You may focus all your attention on attracting a member of the other sex. But Ganesha warns you not to get too swayed by it.

TAURUS
This is a day when you will be dying to share your thoughts and feelings with someone near and dear. You will be extremely effective in communicating your ideas and emotions and will thus develop greater closeness and intimacy with your loved one. The time spent with your sweetheart will be full of love and warmth.

GEMINI
You need to understand and respect the feelings of others. You will be beset by financial worries and plagued by financial insecurity. You will work with grim determination to achieve all your goals and will be successful in doing so, says Ganesha.

CANCER
You will focus on near ones and give more attention to them. You will exude charm in your actions. Your kin's response will surprise you. Long-time relations will progress and benefit you.

LEO
Your expectations from your partner or spouse are likely to be unmet, so keep them low. For traders and commission agents, this could be a tough day, and hence they should be wary of suffering from financial reversals. Important documents should be signed only after careful scrutiny, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
Personal problems which have been simmering for quite a long time may be resolved today. Ganesha advises you to put in that extra bit of effort. You may plan to start a joint venture. In the evening, you can dedicate your time to some much-needed socialising.

LIBRA
Ganesha says that you will be able to impress people with your extraordinary abilities. You will express your intention to study and go in for higher studies in the evening. This decision will help you understand which career field is best suited for you. Ganesha says before taking any further decisions you should think about the future too.

SCORPIO
The chemistry between you and your partner would be electrifying. Ganesha foresees a day full of romantic indulgences. Things at home front would be pretty relaxing. You are on a money saving mission today and your bargaining skills would definitely yield benefits.

SAGITTARIUS
According to Ganesha, creative juices are likely to flow freely today. You are all geared up to meet new challenges in life and crack few business deals. Financial gains on the cards. However, make sure your health does not take a back-seat all this while.

CAPRICORN
If you are holding an authoritative position at work, today is your day, feels Ganesha. Sincere efforts and honesty will not make the current projects cross finishing line, but also fetch you appreciation and rewards from one and all.

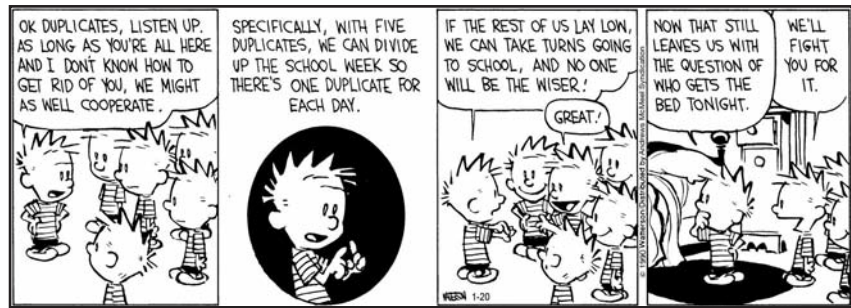
AQUARIUS
The day will kick start with you deciding to opt for higher education or a personality development course. If you are a businessman or associated with finance, it will be a favourable day for you, foresees Ganesha. Through out the day, you will be occupied with one or the other thing but you will not be complaining.

PISCES
You need to control the vortex of emotions swirling through you. Your savage mood swings could have a bearing on vital decisions you need to take today. You need to guard against being emotional, be more calculative in your dealings, and think lesser about chasing after money, says Ganesha.

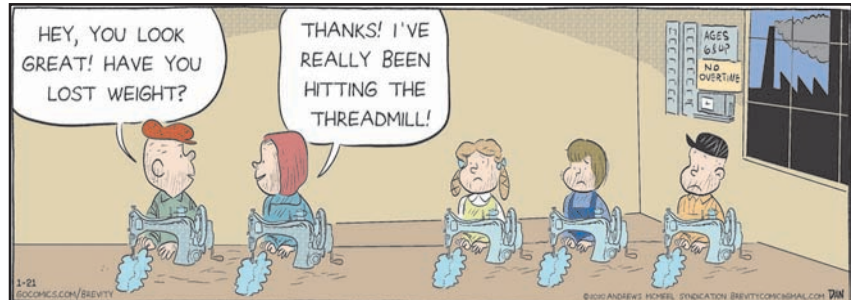
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

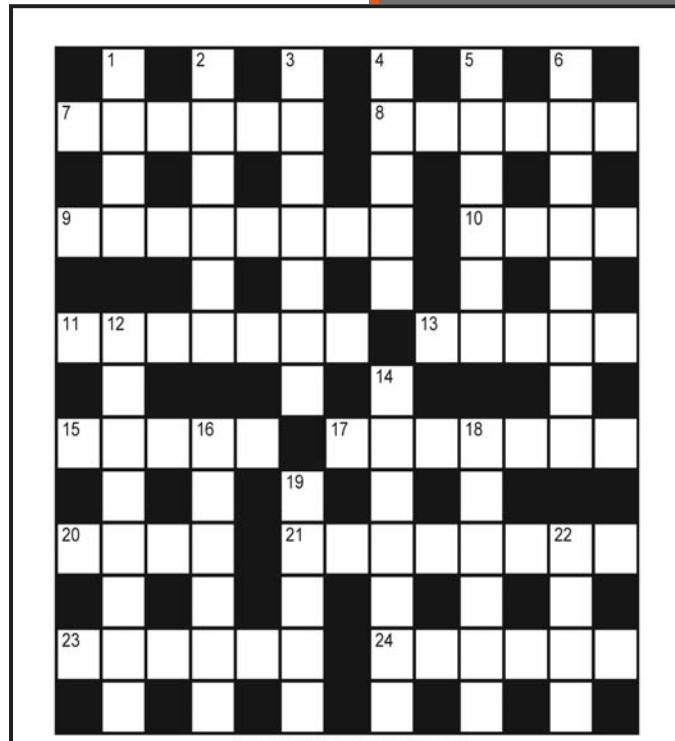


BREVITY



FUN post

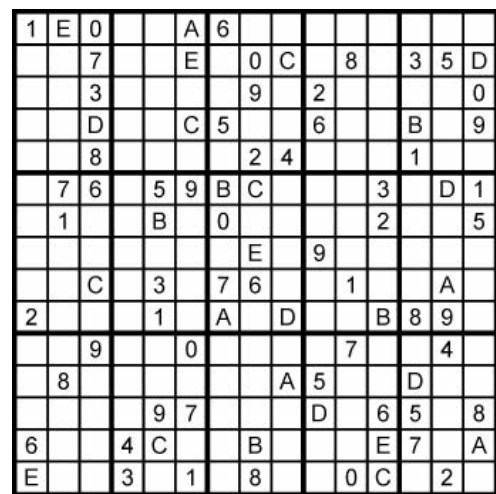
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Turkish capital
 - 8 Ignte
 - 9 Budgie
 - 10 Chip in chips
 - 11 Dried fruits
 - 13 Fiend
 - 15 Roomy vehicle
 - 17 Bicycles-built-for-two
 - 20 Style of poker
 - 21 Torpid
 - 23 Game bird
 - 24 Wiggle room
 - 4 Go blading
 - 5 Loony
 - 6 A stage, for one
 - 12 Opening
 - 14 How-to books
 - 16 Summates (4,2)
 - 18 Golf course feature
 - 19 Out of kilter
 - 22 Hoodwink
- Down**
- 1 Victim of Pizarro
 - 2 Pre-entree dishes
 - 3 Hot pepper

SUDOKU

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

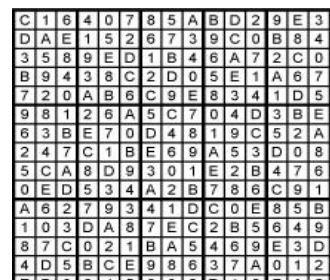


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



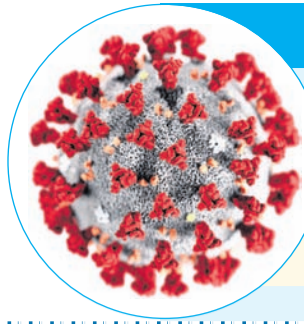
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



FOGGY MORNING

Vehicles pass through a fog-covered Ring Road in Cuttack, Monday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	9,98,55,528	7,18,59,270	21,40,714
India	1,06,26,586	1,02,83,240	1,53,069
Odisha	3,34,430	3,31,284	1,906

CITY DIVYANG CENTRE SHOCKER

Probe begins in sexual harassment allegations

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 25: The State Commission for Persons with Disabilities Monday launched a probe into the alleged sexual harassment of inmates and running of a sex racket at a divyang training centre at Palaspalli area in the state Capital here.

A team of the commission, led by its chairperson Sulochana Das, visited the All Odisha Orthopedically Handicapped Welfare Association centre and met inmates and office bearers.

"We have just started an investigation. The commission requires some time to complete the probe," Das told reporters, adding that strong action will be taken against the accused persons if the allegations are proved.

The disability panel has taken suo motu cognizance of media reports on the incidents. She said that the commission has not received any formal complaint from anyone. The incident of alleged sexual

We have just started an investigation. The commission requires some time to complete the probe

SULOCHANA DAS | CHAIRPERSON, STATE COMMISSION FOR PwD

A special team has been formed to probe the matter and efforts are on to trace the accused persons involved

UMASKANKAR DASH | BHUBANESWAR DCP

The incident came to the fore after a video by a former woman employee went viral on social media

abuse of the inmates and operation of a sex racket in the disability centre came to the fore after a video by a former woman employee of the centre went viral in the social media.

The woman employee also named a senior functionary of the centre and accused him of running a sex racket and even engaging inmates in the immoral activities by luring money.

"The disabled inmates were forced to have sexual relations with government officials. As a woman employee of the centre, I have also been sexually harassed," she told reporters covering her face and concealing her identity.

The woman said that she had lodged a complaint in the Airport police station November 23 last year.

Meanwhile, the Bhubaneswar Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Umaskankar Dash said a special team has been formed to probe the matter and efforts are on to trace the accused persons allegedly involved in sexual harassment of inmates of the centre.

Mo School: CM seeks adoption of govt schools

Naveen writes to two Union ministers, HC judges, MPs and MLAs to adopt maximum three schools each

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 25: With an aim to boost the Mo School Abhiyan, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Monday appealed to two Union ministers from the state, Orissa High Court judges, all MPs and MLAs from the state to adopt government schools under the initiative.

He has written to Union ministers Dharmendra Pradhan and

Pratap Sarangi, HC judges and lawmakers from Odisha to adopt schools of their choice in a bid to bring transformation in the school atmosphere. A person can adopt a maximum of three schools under the initiative.

"You all have established yourselves in society by your own ability and talent. The school in which you had studied has a significant contribution to that. Contribution of schools is immense, it has shaped

us. It has provided us with the ability to create a unique identity for ourselves," he said in the letter.

The Chief Minister said the programme has brought them an opportunity to do something for their dearest school. "We always have an emotional link with the school in which we have studied," he further said.

Patnaik urged everyone to adopt their favorite schools, noting that they can create opportunities for the

transformation of their favorite schools. Notably, a number of bureaucrats including Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra have already come forward to adopt schools for their holistic development this year.

The state government had launched the 'Mo School Abhiyan' on the Children's Day in 2017 to create a platform for people to connect, collaborate and contribute to revamping the government and government-aided schools in Odisha.

ANVESH PRADHAN AWARDED PMR BAL PURASKAR 2021

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Jan 25: 14-year-old Anvesh Shubham Pradhan, a scholar from Khordha district, has been awarded the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2021 for his excellence in the field of Scholastics.

According to the ministry of Women and Child Development, since first class, Anvesh has been awarded more than 200 certificates, prizes and scholarships by various reputed international, national and state level organisations like Australian Mathematics Competition and UNSW Global Australia among others.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Monday interacted with all awardees via video conferencing mode and congratulated them on their achievements.

Significantly, the Union government has been awarding the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar to the children with exceptional abilities and outstanding accomplishments, in the fields of innovation, scholastics, sports, arts & culture, social service and bravery.

As many as 32 children have been awarded the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar this year.

The awardee children are from 32 districts of 21 states/UTs. Seven awards have been given in the field of Art & Culture, nine awards have been given for Innovation and five for scholastic achievements.

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Number of estuarine crocs rises

AGENCIES

Kendrapara, Jan 25: The number of estuarine crocodiles in the Bhitarkanika National Park (BNP) here has increased from 1,757 last year to 1,768 this year, according to the annual status survey conducted from January 15 to 23.

According to Bikash Ranjan Das, Divisional Forest Officer (Rajnagar Wildlife Division), out of 1,768 estuarine crocodiles spotted this year, there were 593 hatchlings (measuring below 2-foot-long), 593 yearlings (measuring between 2-3 feet), 367 juveniles (measuring between 3-6 feet), 152 sub-adults measuring between 6-8 feet) and 336 adult crocodiles.

The enumerators also witnessed several albinos in the wild in addition to a 45-year-

SURVEY AT BHITARKANIKA

Out of 1,768 estuarine crocodiles spotted this year, there were 593 hatchlings, 593 yearlings and 367 juveniles

The enumerators also witnessed several albinos in the wild in addition to a 45-year-old and a 12-year-old captive albinos



old and a 12-year-old captive albinos.

Das said that 1,397 saltwater crocodiles were spotted within Dangamala scheme pond and Kanika wildlife range, 263 estuarine crocodiles in Rajnagar wildlife range, 76 estuarine crocodile at Mahakalapada forest range

and 32 crocodiles at Gahirmatha forest range.

The head count drive of estuarine crocodile was organized by 22 enumerator teams, consisting of wildlife personnel, crocodile experts and researchers.

The enumerators were divided into 54 segments and

conducted the drive in creeks, creek lets, rivers and nullahs in and outside Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary and Mahanadi Deltaic region.

Each unit was provided with a census kit (map showing the area including river and creeks, route to follow, binocular, spot light/powerful torch light with cells, notebook, pen/pencil, day and night census forms, VHF and small boats were used for day and night counting of crocodiles.

The entire day and night census operation was monitored and supervised by technical expert Sudhakar Kar deputized from the Wildlife Headquarters, said official sources. BNP is the only place within India, where saltwater crocodile head count drive has been going on every year since 1976, Das said.

PADDY PROCUREMENT

BJP, Cong slam govt again

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 25: The ongoing political slugfest over issues related to paddy procurement continued Monday with the BJP asking the government to use contingency fund to procure paddy from the farmers.

Holding a press conference here, state BJP president Samir Mohanty said, "Though the farmers are waiting for a long time to sell their hard earned paddy at various mandis, the government is sitting idle. No one is addressing their problems, which is highly unfortunate."

The government had utilised the contingency fund to implement the Kalia scheme. Therefore, now also the government should bring money from the fund to buy paddy from the farmers, he said.

"Who procures paddy from the farmers? The miller or the government? Every farmer

According to the FS&CW minister, none of the genuine farmers will be deprived of procurement

is asking the question because no one from the government is seen in the mandis," the BJP leader said.

Senior Congress legislator Narasingha Mishra targeted both the state government and Centre for non-procurement of paddy from the farmers.

"When the farmers are complaining that they have not received token, the societies are replying that they have not received the target. If the government wants to procure surplus paddy from the farmers, why has the target not been given?" Mishra asked.

"In spite of doing cheap pol-

itics over the issue, you (BJP) should buy paddy through FCI," he further stated.

Reacting on this issue, state Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain said the paddy procurement process is going on full swing and the state has procured 20 per cent more than the amount of paddy the state had procured last year.

The state has procured 6,93,660 tonnes of paddy till date while the last year's figure as on same date was 6,48,382 tonne, Swain said.

While 33 per cent extra paddy was procured in Bolangir district, it was 11 per cent more in Kalahandi, 27 per cent in Koraput, 24 per cent in Nuapada and 25 per cent in Sambalpur, he pointed out.

The paddy procurement process will continue till March end and none of the genuine farmers will be deprived from it, he assured.

R-Day in the air

Members of 'Vande Mataram' hold a patriotic roadshow at Mahatma Gandhi Marg in Bhubaneswar, Monday, on the eve of Republic Day



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Complete rly projects early: CS BJD to demand MSP hike in Parl

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 25: Reviewing the railway traction power transmission projects, Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra Monday asked all concerned officials to complete the projects as per the scheduled timeline.

Deadlines have been set for completion of each project and Odisha Power Transmission Corporation (OPTCL) was asked to adhere to the timeline.

Mahapatra asked the Energy Secretary NB Dhal to take a month-wise review of the work-schedule in coordination with concerned departments for expeditious implementation.

Railways authorities were asked to complete construction of their power conversion sub-stations in pace with power supply projects of the OPTCL.

It may be pertinent here to mention that OPTCL supplies 132 KV or

MONTH-WISE REVIEW



Deadlines have been set for completion of each project and OPTCL has been asked to adhere to the timeline. The Energy Secretary has been asked to take a month-wise review of the work-schedule in coordination with concerned departments for expeditious implementation.

220 KV power to railway feeders from where the railways take power as per requirement of the trains through power conversion sub-stations.

Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd (MCL) was instructed to expedite the issue of no objection certificates (NOCs) for Belpahar transmission tower.

Presenting details of the projects, Dhal said 27 railway traction

transmission projects have been assigned to OPTCL out of which seven projects have been completed within the scheduled time with investment of around Rs 59 crore.

Out of the remaining, 17 projects estimated to worth around Rs 247 crore are in different phases of implementation while three others are in process of tendering, he said.

Out of 17 ongoing projects, eight have been prioritised as critical ones by the railways for which special focus have been laid on early completion of the projects, Dhal said.

Chairman of OPTCL Sourabh Garg said, "As of now, construction of OPTCL railway transmission sub-stations have been completed at Nuapada, Kamakshya Nagar, Kendrapara, Kechobahal, Deogaon, Lanjigarh and Boina road stations. Out of this, railways have started power withdrawal from 5 sub-stations."

Commissioning of power supply to railway lines like Titilagarh-Sambalpur-Jharsuguda, Singapur-Damanjodi, Lanjigarh-Junagarh, Nuapada-Gunupur, Tatanagar-Badamphar, Khurda-Nuagao and Rupsa-Bangiriposi have been expedited. OPTCL was directed to complete these projects in the current working season within two to three months.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 25: The ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) has decided to raise several issues including demand for increase of minimum support price (MSP) of paddy and implementation of the MS Swaminathan Commission report during the upcoming Budget Session of Parliament starts from February 1.

This decision was taken at the meeting of BJD Parliamentary Party held under the chairmanship of BJD President and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik here Monday.

"The BJD has always stood in support of farmers. We will raise our demand for implementation of MS Swaminathan Commission report and double the paddy MSP during the upcoming Parliament session," said BJD MP Sasmit Patra. The party has also decided to raise the issue for reservation of 33 per cent seats in Parliament and



This decision was taken at the meeting of BJD Parliamentary Party held under the chairmanship of BJD President and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik

assemblies for women in the Parliament, he said.

The party would also press for constitution of Vidhan Parishad in the state and inclusion of Ahimsa (non-violence) in Preamble of Constitution.

As Odisha is always neglected in railways sector, the party members would put pressure on the Union government for early com-

pletion of Khurda-Bolangir railway like. It would also raise the demand for early completion of the proposed coastal highway project, Patra said.

Besides, the issues like set up of an international airport at Puri, inclusion of Sambalpur/Kosali and Ho languages in the Eighth schedule of the Constitution will be raised by the party.

62 POSTS IN SPL WING FOR WOMEN OKAYED

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 25: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Monday sanctioned 62 posts for functioning of the special wing in the police department to deal with offences against women and children. Recruitment of 60 police personnel, a cyber forensic expert and an IT expert has been approved.

This special police wing will be headed by a senior IPS officer of Inspector General (IG) rank while there will be two additional SP rank officers, 10 DSPs, nine inspectors,

10 sub-inspectors (SIs), eight ASIs and 14 constables. Besides, five posts of ministerial staff have also been approved, the CMO said. In December, the CM had announced to set up a special wing in the police to probe various crimes against women and children.

Addressing the valedictory session of the senior police officers' conference, Patnaik had said, "Crime against women and children remains our focus area. I announce the creation of a special wing in Odisha Police to look after offences against women and children."

PLUS III ADMISSIONS

Third phase from January 29

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 25: The Higher Education department Monday sent a letter to all principals of degree colleges specifying guidelines and timelines for the third phase Plus III admission in degree colleges (Plus III first year) for the session 2020-21.

As per the timeline, the process for third phase of admissions into Plus III courses in degree colleges across Odisha will commence from January 29.

Candidates who have not applied for admission/not taken admis-

sion during the first two phases can apply during the third phase. The Common Application Form (CAF) fees will be deposited online through SAMS website of the state Government. The selection will be done as per merit.

The last date of applying online CAF through www.samsodisha.gov.in is February 2, 2021. The merit list will be published February 3. The online admission and data updation of students selected in Phase-III selection will continue from February 4 to February 9, 2021.

Earlier December 21, the department sent guidelines and time-

lines for the second phase of Plus III admissions in 2020-21. The merit list of the second phase was published January 2, 2021.

The application process of Plus III first year admission was started from September 8. The first phase merit list was published September 28. In the first phase, out of a total of 2,13,959 students, 1,58,540 have been selected for admission in the first phase which was held from September 29 to October 2.

Earlier, the government also notified about spot admission to be conducted between November 23 and November 27.

Industech celebrates ninth foundation day

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar: Industech Engineering Services Pvt. Ltd (IESPL) Bhubaneswar celebrated its ninth foundation day at a hotel here Monday.

The occasion was attended by luminaries of various disciplines from industries, academics, banks and law enforcement. The dignitaries were Khilwan sahu (JSPL Vice President), Professor Barun Dandpat (US), A Gayen (NSIC, Govt. of India), BB Mohanty, (AGM Indian Bank), SK Dash (former executive director NALCO), A Rakshit (Principal Kalinga DPS), Professor AK Samal (HOD cardiology, HITECH Medical college), Saroj Patnaik (former chief engineer, minor irrigation, Govt. of Odisha).



The program included presentation on the growth of the company and its mission and vision.

During the deliberation, MD Ranabir Kumar Dey indicated that the company, with the support of the Odisha industries and state government organisations, is planning to achieve a target of Rs 75 crore turnover by 2025.

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HEALTH FIRST



A health camp in progress at Madhupatna Traffic Police Station in Cuttack, Monday, to mark the National Road Safety Month

FAKE SCRIBE HELD

Bhubaneswar: Commissionerate Police Monday arrested a fraud scribe on the charges of extortion and blackmailing. According to sources, the accused, Somya Ranjan Samantray of Tangi, is the owner of a web channel, Durniti Live. Samantray used to extort money from business persons threatening to publish defamatory news against them. A bus owner's wife recently lodged a complaint with Khandagiri police accusing Samantray of demanding Rs 5 lakhs from her husband for not showing defamatory news in his web channel. Samantray had also allegedly threatened the bus owner to frame him in a false sexual case showing fake nude videos. Another bus owner from Nabarangpur district alleged Samantray of demanding a hefty amount as well. Samantray had earlier been arrested by Commissionerate Police for allegedly duping a person of several lakhs on the pretext of helping the victim to start a media channel few months ago. Khandagiri police Monday arrested Samantray after registering a case (865/20) in this regard. He was sent to judicial custody by a local court.

Local artiste uses augmented reality to create tattoos

A step further
THE CONCEPT OF A 'MOVING TATTOO' IS ACHIEVED THROUGH AR TECHNOLOGY. IT COMBINES IMAGE RECOGNITION, KEYED WITH THE TATTOO ALONG WITH REAL-TIME ANIMATION MAPPING
FOR CENTURIES, CREATING TATTOOS MEANT RUBBING CUTS WITH ASHES, OR PRICKING THE SKIN AND INSERTING DYES. AUGMENTED REALITY (AR) IS TAKING THE ART FORM A STEP FURTHER

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 25: Body art has emerged as one of the best ways of expressing one's passion, love and feelings. Where people find a million ways to express their thoughts in the form of a tattoo, the artists find billion ways to make the art form more creative.

In this context, city-based tattoo artist Om Acharya, through his studio Skivas Studios, has achieved something that has happened for the first time in India.

Om recently attempted India's first fully animated "Augmented Reality Tattoo" with International Dance Choreographer Shifu Ash, who came to Bhubaneswar all the way from Mumbai recently.

To simplify the concept, let us revisit the scene from Disney animated movie Moana, which is full of tattoo animations. The concept is achieved through AR technology by Shifu Ash. This AR technology combines image recognition, keyed with the tattoo along with real-time animation mapping. Life was breathed back into the



concept when Om, along with his team, tattooed an image of a dragon and a wolf showcasing the balance of yin and yang. The beasts even interacted with each other in the art form. Om Acharya said, "For centuries, creating tattoos meant rubbing cuts with ashes, or pricking the skin and inserting dyes. Augmented reality

(AR) is taking the art of tattoos a step further: This technology combines image recognition, keyed with the tattoo along with real-time animation mapping. We hope that this new style will attract more people towards tattoo art."



On the impact of Covid-19 on the tattoo industry, Om said, "The impact of the lockdown and the nature of the pandemic are such that

tattoo artists and studios are still struggling to bring in some income. During the unlock phase amid the Covid crisis in the country, businesses are starting to get back to normal and so is the tattoo industry. Since tattooing cannot be a contactless activity, there's a lot of fear among clients to get inked."

"It's a big deal as of now and clients have major concerns. Getting a tattoo takes a minimum of an hour or more. It's not like going to a garment store and browsing around and then leaving in 15 minutes. Here the chances of you contracting the virus are much more because you're in constant contact with the artiste who meets a whole lot of other people throughout the day," Om added.

This technology combines image recognition, keyed with the tattoo along with real-time animation mapping. We hope this attracts more people
OM ACHARYA | TATTOO ARTISTE

XUB holds 2nd edition of TEDx

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 25: Xavier University, Bhubaneswar conducted the second edition of TEDxXUB amid fanfare here recently.

The event was premiered on Youtube and was watched by various stakeholders, including students from the diverse schools in the Xavier fraternity.

The theme for the event was 'Decoding the Millennials'. The theme aims to explore the varying trends and cultures that shroud the millennials. Millennials have seen the world grow and change at a fast rate. They have been both criticised and lauded for their ways but have always been true to their instincts.

The topics covered under 'Decoding the Millennials' were 'Coffee-nomics', 'Gourmet: Transcending Borders', 'Power Dressing: Armour to Transforming Thoughts' and 'Road Less Taken'. The event was hosted by four esteemed speakers.

Varun Painter, executive editor, Power Drift, addressed the topic 'Road Less Taken'. He explained how to take a path less travelled - to do what has never been done before.

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HORSESHOE CRABS FACE EXTINCTION THREAT

They are termed living fossil as they have survived four mass extinctions during their existence of 30 crore years, but it seems that the humankind may wipe them off the face of the earth

POST NEWS NETWORK

Mahakalapara, Jan 25: An endangered marine creature, horseshoe crab, is on the verge of extinction allegedly due to rampant smuggling to foreign countries by some unscrupulous traders, a report said.

The rare marine creature is in danger. The crabs are being pushed into extinction despite their tenacity in surviving around 450 million years. There are four types of the marine creature found in the Pacific and Indian oceans. However, two types of horseshoe crabs are found in the marshy mangrove forest and sandcast areas on the state's coast. Moreover, the movement of mechanised fishing boats, trawlers and use of plastic nets for fishing has also proved detrimental to the population of this endangered species.

Two species of the horseshoe crab are abundantly found migrating to breed regularly along the coast of the state. But unregulated fishing activities along the coast and lack of awareness among the local fishermen about the crab's economic importance are leading to their dwindling population. Every year, horseshoe crabs die in large numbers after getting entangled in fishing nets near the Madali mouth.

These crabs are found in large numbers in the Gahirmatha sanctuary of Mahakalapara block, Hukitola Island in the Bhitarkanika sanctuary, Madali sea mouth, Launchghola of Kendrapara district and in rivers and creeks flowing in the Mahanadi delta region. However, off late the survival of these crabs is under serious threat.



The blue blood of the horseshoe crab is used in preparation of medicines for many dreaded disease for which the Forest department should take adequate steps for their security and growth of their populations. This apart, the fishermen should be taught on the importance of these crabs and their protection

SAMARENDRA MAHALI
ENVIRONMENTALIST

Environmentalists apprehend if urgent steps are not taken then the day is not far-off when this creature will get extinct from our state.

Reports said that horseshoe crabs are claimed to be living on this planet even before the advent of dinosaurs. A medical analysis conducted in 2019 stated that horseshoe crabs have been living on this planet for more than 30 crore years and have survived four mass extinction events for which they have been classified as a living fossil.

The blood of these crabs con-

tains copper instead of iron. Horseshoe crabs use a chemical called hemocyanin to carry oxygen through their blood. Because of the copper present in hemocyanin, their blood is blue.

Their blood contains amoebocytes, which plays a similar role to that of white blood cells of vertebrates in defending the organism against pathogens. The chemical present in their blood helps in detecting disease in the blood of the humans. These crabs have been observed lying in the marshy lands of mangrove forest, river and creeks and in sandy areas.

The mating of these crabs usually takes place on new moon night and full moon night when hoards of crabs could be seen moving towards the sea beach. Pair of crabs could be seen mating on the beach from November till February. The blood of these crabs is used in preparing medicines for dreaded

ALARM CLOCK TICKING

The horseshoe crab outlived the dinosaurs and has survived four previous mass extinctions, but is now menaced by the pharmaceutical industry, fishing communities, habitat loss and climate change too. Abundant three decades ago, this living fossil, which is actually more closely related to spiders than crabs, was put on the vulnerable list by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature in 2016. Scientists say the crab's decline symbolises the huge economic and health costs of biodiversity loss worldwide. Since 1992, more than 30 per cent of the planet's ecological wealth – the estimated value of species, forests, rivers and soil – has been lost, with profound consequences not just for conservation but for the health and wellbeing of hundreds of millions of people.

diseases like cancer. The Gahirmatha sanctuary is a safe breeding place for these crabs.

When contacted, environmentalist Samarendra Mahali said that the blue blood of the horseshoe crab is used in preparation of medicines for many dreaded disease for which the Forest department should take adequate steps for their security and growth of their populations. This apart, the fishermen should be taught on the importance of these crabs and their protection, he added.

Former Begunia-Bolagarh MLA passes away at 68

BHUBANESWAR: Former Begunia-Bolagarh MLA Surendra Nath Mishra passed away at a private hospital here Sunday evening. He was 68.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Monday took to his twitter handle to express his deep grief. His tweet in Odia read, "I am saddened to learn of MLA Surendranath Mishra's death. As a people's representative, he will be remembered for his charitable works. I pray peace and tranquility for the departed soul and express sympathies to the family members." He had been ill for the last couple of days.



New-gen Akash missile successfully test-fired

AGENCIES

Balasure, Jan 25: India Monday successfully test-fired the new-generation Akash missile from an integrated test range off the Odisha coast, an official statement said.

The surface-to-air missile was launched from Chandipur ITR in the afternoon, it said. The Akash-NG (new-generation) missile will be used by the Indian Air Force to intercept high-maneuvring low radar cross-section aerial threats, it said. "The missile intercepted the target with textbook precision. The launch met all the test objectives by performing high manoeuvres during the trajectory."

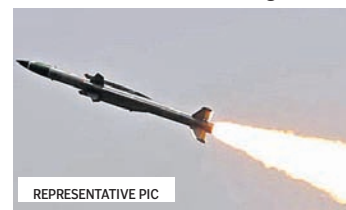
"The performance of the command

and control system, on-board avionics and aerodynamic configuration of the missile was successfully validated during the trial," the statement said.

During the test launch, the entire flight path of the missile was monitored and the flight data was captured by various range instruments.

The multi-function radar was tested for its capability of integration with the system, sources said.

The Akash-NG system has been developed with better deployability compared to other similar systems. The test launch was carried out by a combined team of DRDO, BDL and BEL in the presence of the Air Force representatives, the statement said.



REPRESENTATIVE PIC

3 yrs on but Saubhagya Yojana fails to ward off darkness here

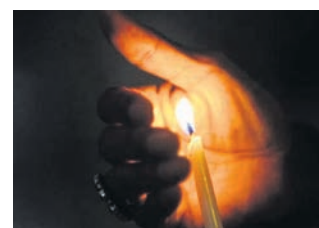
POST NEWS NETWORK

Kesinga, Jan 25: A total of 40 beneficiaries of Bahadurpadar village of Patharha gram panchayat under Kesinga block in Kalahandi district are yet to get any benefits from the 'Saubhagya Yojana' scheme.

The 'Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana' is also known as 'Saubhagya Yojana'. The scheme was launched September 25, 2017 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Under this scheme, free electricity connection would be provided to all APL and poor families in rural and urban areas. The deadline to identify such households was set for December 31, 2018.

In the year 2017-18, the Saubhagya Yojana scheme was launched in Kesinga block. The 40 poor beneficiaries were identified to receive power connection. The equipment required to provide power like meter boxes and wires were installed at their houses. However, it is 2021 and yet electricity does not flow through the meter boxes and wires installed in their homes.

The contractor who is responsible for setting up the power con-



nections has allegedly been skipping the dates. Complaints have been lodged with the concerned SDO alleging that the contractor has taken bribes of ₹200 to ₹300 from some beneficiaries to get them power connection.

According to the villagers, life without electricity means a lot of difficulties. "Our children are not able to study in night whereas their friends in neighbouring villages are enjoying the same. We also cannot work in darkness, without power during summer we cannot have the benefits of lights and fans," alleged a beneficiary on the condition of anonymity. He added that they have taken up the issue with the concerned department officials but to no avail.

When contacted, SDO Mati Babu said he would take steps after an investigation.

Restart Puri-Barbil Intercity Express, urges Keonjhar MP

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Jan 25: Keonjhar MP Chandrani Murmu has urged Railway Minister Piyush Goyal to restart Puri-Barbil Intercity Express at the earliest.

Murmu said the train has been off the rails since March 2020 due to COVID-19 outbreak. As of now, things have returned to near normalcy. Educational institutions have already been opened.

"While Puri-Bangiriposi train to Mayurbhanj district has been resumed, the Puri-Barbil Intercity Express train service is yet to be operational. The Railways is earn-

ing ₹15 crore as revenue every day from Keonjhar district. Yet, the district is being subjected to step-motherly treatment," she alleged.

Expressing her concerns over the suspension of the train, she further said that the said train was withdrawn after making it operational only for three days in last October citing losses as a cause. "The resumption of the train will help at least 3,000 people a day travel to different destinations," she added.

"If the train service is not resumed, general people, as well as political parties, will resort to agitation and halt goods train services," she warned.

Youth livestreams suicide in Dhenkanal

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, Jan 25: A youth committed suicide by consuming poison while streaming it live on a social networking site under Sadar police limits in Dhenkanal district, Sunday evening. However, the reason behind the youth taking the extreme step is yet to be ascertained while police on its part started an investigation into the incident.

The youth, working as a mobile phone tower mechanic, has blamed a lady member of the family and some others for his extreme step. They had been allegedly torturing him for the last two months and were not giving him food to eat. Moreover, they were allegedly blackmailing him.

Family members rescued and rushed him to Cuttack-based SCB Medical College and Hospital in a critical condition. He however, breathed his last while undergoing treatment in the hospital. A pall of gloom descended on the village following the death of the youth. His last rites were performed in the village.

Meanwhile, the local police is also said to have started an investigation into the matter, Sadar police IIC Sandhyarani Behuria said.

Adulterated edible oil unit raided



POST NEWS NETWORK

Gopalpur/Berhampur, Jan 25: Police and food security officials raided an edible palmolein oil manufacturing unit at Suduru Sahi in Ramchandrapur village under Gopalpur police lim-

its in Ganjam district on charge of manufacturing and selling of adulterated edible oil, Monday.

Police seized plastic pouches, 200 litres of oil and 10 packets of oil worth ₹1 lakh during the raid. The owner Kalicharan Sahu was

detained and being questioned in this connection. The oil samples were collected and sent for laboratory examination in Bhubaneswar. The owner has denied any adulteration in oil manufacturing in the unit.

The firm Global Agrotech was procuring the oil from a Paradip-based company and refining them at his unit. Later, he used to sell it in the market under 'Pure Gold' and 'Fresh Drop' brands' names, sources said.

PLEDGE FOR DEMOCRACY



Government officials and people take oath on 11th National Voters' Day at a function to mark the occasion at Jubilee Town Hall in Berhampur, Monday

OP PHOTO

5 arrested for former block chief's murder

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur/Beguniapada, Jan 25: Police Monday arrested five persons in connection with the murder of Debaraj Sahoo, the former block chairman of Beguniapada.

Police seized three pistols, five magazines, 63 bullets, a car, the mobile phone of the deceased and some cash from the possession of the accused persons.

Police however, ruled out any political angle in the murder while attributing the incident to a revenge killing over past enmity. The mastermind of the crime is Ajay Barik, police said.

"It is basically a revenge killing. So far, there is no clue of political

angle and occurred purely due to past enmity over different reasons," DIG (Southern range), Satyabrata Bhoi said. "Barik was nursing a grudge against Debaraj and looking

for opportunity to settle scores after the latter beat him up on one occasion over some issue. Barik procured firearms to execute the crime with the help of his accomplices."

OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF, WATER RESOURCES ODISHA, SECHA SADAN, BHUBANESWAR

2nd Corrigendum to Bid Identification No. CEM/MDS-02/2020-21

No. A-502: Corrigendum in reference to the BID Identification No.-CEM/MDS-02/2020-21 for the work "Supply, fabrication, erection, testing & commissioning of 4 Nos. Fixed Wheel H.R. Gate (Size-3200mm x 2900mm) Feeder Cum Link Canal at RD.17910M of Ex-Betanati Branch Canal of Subarnarekha Irrigation Project under Baisampa Canal Division, Laxmiposi" is as follows:-

i) The FORM J in the bid document is modified. The details of which may be seen the website <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>.

ii) Revised schedule of tender process:

Sl. No.	Event	Schedule Date & Time	Revised Date & Time
1	Date & time of availability of bid documents in the portal	From Dt.13.01.2021 (10.00 A.M.) to Dt.27.01.2021 (5.30 P.M.)	From Dt.13.01.2021 (10.00 A.M.) to Dt.03.02.2021 (5.30 P.M.)
2	Last date/time for receipt of bid documents in the portal	Dt.27.01.2021 (upto 5.30 P.M.)	Dt.03.02.2021 (upto 5.30 P.M.)
3	Date of opening of Technical Bid	Dt.28.01.2021 (12.00 Noon onwards)	Dt.04.02.2021 (12.00 Noon onwards)

All other terms and conditions of the above bid shall remain unaltered.

Sd./ Chief Engineer, Mechanical
OIPR-32031/11/0006/2021

ODISHA ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION

PLOT NO. 4, CHUNOKOLI, SHAILESHREE VIHAR, BHUBANESWAR - 751021
E-mail: oriarc@rediffmail.com
Website: www.oriarc.org

PUBLIC NOTICE

Case No. 72 of 2020

No. CAD-1119:- Hearing of GRIDCO's applications for Aggregate Revenue Requirement (ARR) & Bulk Supply Price (BSP) for the FY 2021-22 under Section 86 (1) (a) & (b) and all other applicable provisions of the Electricity Act, 2003.

Pursuant to the Public Notice published in the English and Odia dailies by GRIDCO Ltd. on 19.12.2020 with regard to its Aggregate Revenue Requirement & Bulk Supply Price for the Financial Year 2021-22, it is notified that the aforesaid application will be taken up for both admission and hearing on 09.02.2021 at 10.30 A.M. in the Hearing Hall of the Commission Office at Plot No. 4, Chunokoli, Shaileshree Vihar, Bhubaneswar - 751021. The objections/suggestions filed by the Organization/Persons whose name appear in this notice against the above stated application of GRIDCO Ltd. have been admitted by the Commission for hearing.

Both the applicant (GRIDCO Ltd.) and the Organizations/Persons whose objections/suggestions are admitted by the Commission for hearing are hereby directed to be present in person or through their authorized representatives or duly constituted attorney before the Commission on the date, time & place mentioned above. The Commission has also decided that in case COVID situation persists and Hon'ble High Court of Orissa continues virtual hearing in the month of February 2021 then the present application of GRIDCO Ltd. shall be heard through virtual mode and for this purpose the applicant and the objectors shall have to furnish their individual e-mail ID and Whatsapp number in the address vc@gmail.com on the previous day of hearing to facilitate providing links for hearing.

By Order of the Commission

Dated: 25.01.2021
Sd./ Secretary
N.B.: The above public notice with list of Organizations/Persons whose objections/suggestions have been admitted by the Commission for hearing is also available in OERC website www.oriarc.org.

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB) NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH E-PROCUREMENT

IDENTIFICATION NO: RWS&S DIVN., PURI - 50 OF 2020-21

Ph. (06752) 251276 Fax - (06752) 251276 E-mail - eerwss_puri@nic.in
No. O-951:- The Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Puri on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites Percentage rate price bids through e-procurement in double cover system according to the norms of e-procurement system, in on-line mode from eligible contractors.

Sl. No.	Nature of work:	Retrofitting of Rural Piped Water Supply
1.	No. of works:	06 (Six)
2.	Estimated Cost:	Rs. 30.96 to 74.72 lakhs (app.)
3.	Time for completion:	06(Six) Months
4.	Cost of bidding document:	Rs. 6000/-to Rs. 10000/-
5.	Class of Contractors eligible:	C, B & A
6.	Availability of bids on-line:	From 11.00 hour of 27.01.2021 to 17.00 hours of 06.02.2021
7.	Last date and time for seeking clarification:	17.00 hours of 30.01.2021
8.	Date & time of opening of technical bids:	On dt. 08.02.2021 at 11.30 hours in the office of the Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Puri (All documents should be submitted in online only. No original documents should be dropped in dropping box before opening of technical bid in Division Office).
9.	Date and time of opening of financial bids:	To be decided.

Further details can be seen from the website <https://www.tendersorissa.gov.in>. Subsequent corrigendum if any shall appear in the web site.

Sd./ Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Puri
OIPR-25017/11/0028/2021

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement

TEL. NO. 067522-22092, e-mail id: eerwpuri@gmail.com

No. 880 (Online - 18) Date: 21.01.2021

No. O-954: The Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Puri on behalf of Government of Odisha invites percentage rate tenders through e-procurement for 25 Nos. of work for the year 2020-21 in the district of Puri.

- Total No. of Works : 25 Nos.
- Tender Cost of Packages : Amount varies from Rs.0.44 lakhs to 19.28 lakhs
- Class of Contractor : As per DTCN
- Period of Completion : 1 (One) Calendar Month
- Period of availability of tenders Online/Date & time of bidding Online/last date of seeking clarification/Date of opening of tender papers.

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender Online for bidding		Last date & time of seeking tender clarification	Date, time & venue of opening of tender
		From	To		
Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Puri	Online - 18	28.01.2021 at 11.00 A.M.	09.02.2021 upto 3.00 P.M.	08.02.2021 upto 1.00 P.M.	10.02.2021 at 11.00 A.M., Office of the E.E., R.W. Division, Puri

6. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents, which is available in website "<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>".
Sd./ Executive Engineer, R.W. Division, Puri
OIPR-25065/11/0021/2021

1 Sri Ananda Kumar Mohapatra, Power Analyst, S/O-Jachindranath Mohapatra, Plot No. 639/1021, Lane-2, Laxmi Vihar, Po-Bankual, Tankapani Road, Ps-Saheed Nagar, Bhubaneswar, Dist-Khurda-751002.

2 M/s. Visa Steel Limited, Kalinganagar Industrial Complex, At/Po-Jakhapura-755026, Dist-Jajpur.

3 M/s. Grinity Power Tech Pvt. Limited, At-K-8-82, Kalinga Nagar, Ghatikia, Bhubaneswar-751029.

4 Shri Ramesh Ch. Satpathy, Secretary, National Institute of Indian Labour & President, Upbokhta Mahasanga, Plot No.302(B), Beherasahi, Nayapali, Bhubaneswar-751012.

5 Shri R.P.Mahapatra, Retd. Chief Engineer & Member (Gen.), Plot No-775 (P), Lane-3, Jayadev Vihar, Bhubaneswar-751013.

6 M/s. Indian Energy Exchange, Shri Jyendra Behera, Plot No. C-001/A/1, 9th Floor, Max Towers, Sector-16B, Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-201301.

7 M/s. Vedanta Limited, At-Bhurkamunda, Po-Kalimandir, Dist-Jharsuguda, Odisha-768202.

8 M/s. OPGC Limited, Zone-A, 7th Floor, Fortune Towers, Chandrasekharpur, Bhubaneswar-751023.

OIPR-14069/11/0005/2021

FOCUS UNION BUDGET

A GROWTH BLUEPRINT



The Budget will have to juggle growth stimulus with higher spends and deficits. This will be an opportunity to implement the promise of "Minimum Government, Maximum Governance"

"I want to see a post-pandemic budget never seen before in 100 years," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman confidently and boldly stated on 18 December, 2020 at an industry association conference. What might we, the people of India, expect to see in such a Budget?

The uniqueness of this Budget is, of course, both in the context of the public health crisis and consequently in the very process of the Budget preparation itself, forcing routine physical interactions to digital modes. Since most of the background data analysis and collation will have been done in virtual mode, with limited physical interactions between various government departments, this in itself is an enormously complex coordination exercise. And a significant achievement. As to the content, this is the culmination of a year of escalating policy responses whereby the government responded, with RBI support, and a "Survive, Revive and Thrive" strategy, to the Covid-induced crisis.

India's 2020-21 GDP is officially estimated to be 7.7 per cent lower than the previous year, the result of the stringent lockdown, although we expect that the ongoing signs of a faster than expected recovery in many sectors will mean that the contraction might be less, in the range of 6-7 per cent. The truth is the pandemic will have permanently cost India a large amount of output and income.

The Budget is an opportunity to regain some of this loss. The first priority will be to raise revenues for the government, since the government will be the main enabler of higher expenditure. Given the scarring in a large section of households' income and earning ability, the required boost in consumption demand will have to originate from government spending. The overall collections will be helped by a significant increase in the nominal GDP growth, which is likely to be projected in the 14-16 per cent range. Some tax revenues, like fuel cess, will have significant buoyancy, given the expected increase in transport and freight traffic, but growth in the other streams is likely to have a more limited upside. Some tax rates will probably have to be in-

creased, but should be concentrated within a small section of the highest income earners, and preferably be temporary cess and surcharges, levied only for a couple of years till household incomes stabilise.

The bulk of the required revenues, however, will have to come from the disinvestment of government companies. The big-ticket sales of stakes in marquee companies will need to be speeded up. The government also owns physical and financial assets - whose cost value was over Rs 15 lakh crore a few years ago, now worth much more - which can be monetised, both to earn revenue and increase efficiency in the operations of these assets. These include land, roads, waterways and much more. For instance, the Railways have been trying innovative models to increase private sector participation and investment in stations, more coaches on tracks and so on. Current high valuations in stock markets will also help in garnering handsome returns.

The Budget, however, is much more than just a statement of taxes and spending. The pandemic has sharply accelerated economic, technology and financial trends which are likely to increase inequality and concentration of incomes. One point of continuity from earlier Budgets will be an accelerated focus on social sector, particularly farming and rural community. In addition, a holistic perspective on spending on healthcare, vaccination, education, water and sanitation

can help deepen initiatives to increase the access of the disadvantaged to economic opportunities. As part of a broader shift in strategy of support to economically weaker sections, there is likely to be a shift in delivery of subsidies away from the current channels of food and fertiliser subsidies to a Direct Benefit Transfer. The Budget is also likely to widen the coverage of insurance schemes - from the existing medical and accident insurance - to widen the scope of social security nets for vulnerable segments of society.

The fiscal and reform measures of the Budget will have to be synchronised with multiple monetary, credit, insurance, market, trade and industry policies in order to maximise the collective impact for growth. The Budget will continue with measures to boost loan flows, including re-capitalisation of PSU banks, further measures to develop corporate bond markets and facilitating access to cheaper foreign capital.

One widely expected step is an announcement of a "bad bank," into which the existing bad loans of the banking sector can be transferred. A much more radical step will be a Financial Holding Company for PSU banks, which will remove their constraints in raising capital by divesting governments' holdings below the statutory 51 per cent floor.

A second initiative will be the increased use of credit guarantees to enhance fund flows to stressed sectors. The emergency ECLGS

scheme for incremental loans to MSMEs has been beneficial in helping them tide over the cash flow loss during lockdowns, and this scope might be further extended for small businesses, and thereafter to other segments and sectors, prominently agriculture and farm loans. Well-designed credit guarantees can minimise direct fiscal spends while ensuring a significant flow of prudent loans to borrowers.

The Budget pulpit should be used to provide a vision of India's development strategy for the next half decade and beyond, accelerating the initiatives under the umbrella of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat.' Increased capital expenditure is needed to enhance India's productivity and growth potential. Hence a fiscally strapped Budget will have to attract private sector investment which will be critical in healthcare and education. Expansion of the Production Linked Incentives programme that encourages 'Make in India' manufacturing will be part of the broader efforts to attract global supply chains which are looking to set up alternative manufacturing locations outside of China.

So many things to be done! Balancing the multiple trade-offs given limited resources to ensure the biggest bang for the buck will require decisions to be data driven. One of the major opportunities to have emerged is the rapid digitalisation, and explosion of data. Increased efficiencies in the delivery of services can leverage the capabilities of India's world class digital infrastructure. Availability of well-designed dashboards - even for public use - will be an important channel to communicate the resolve for outcome-based monitoring of key programmes highlighted in the Budget.

In brief, the opportunity for the Budget to be one "never seen before in 100 years" is striking. The Budget will have to juggle growth stimulus with higher spends and deficits. This will be an opportunity to implement the promise of "Minimum Government, Maximum Governance."

The writer is Executive Vice President and Chief Economist of Axis Bank. Views are personal. ©THE BILLION PRESS



Saugata Bhattacharya

THE BUDGET PULPIT SHOULD BE USED TO PROVIDE A VISION OF INDIA'S DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR THE NEXT HALF DECADE AND BEYOND, ACCELERATING THE INITIATIVES UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF 'ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT'

Whatever is the difficulty if we keep truly quiet the solution will come.

THE MOTHER



Vox Populi

The country celebrates the 72nd Republic Day in the midst of a global pandemic-induced gloom, a ravaged economy and protests by farmers on an unprecedented scale against a controversial legislative exercise. The star attraction of the celebrations throughout the country is the magnificent parades by regiments of the Indian Army, Navy, Air Force, police and paramilitary forces at Rajpath in the national capital. This year, a tractor 'parade' by lakhs of aggrieved farmers is to be witnessed soon after the grand parade is over. The venue will shift from Rajpath to the Outer Ring Road in Delhi and the forces on duty at the Republic Day parade would be remobilised to keep vigil on the tractor march. The organisers have assured the police the march would be held peacefully.

It is a story unfolding like never before, that hundreds of thousands farmers, both young and old and their womenfolk are showcasing to the nation and the world their plight - fighting for their bread and butter - in this fashion.

It would not have come to such a pass had the government at the Centre not been inflexible in its stand and even vindictive, while adopting the strategy of tiring out the farmers agitating at the Delhi borders for the past two full months against three contentious farm laws. Eleven rounds of discussions had taken place between the government and the farmers since the agitation beginning on 26 November, 2020. But the talks remain inconclusive as both sides refuse to budge from their respective positions. Only lately did the government slightly climb down announcing the laws would be put on hold for about 18 months so that the farmers can discuss what amendments they want to the laws. This means the government will not concede the farmers' demand for repealing the laws. The latter turned down the offer and reiterated their demand. In fact, the last round of discussions made matters worse. The farmers charged agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar with 'insulting' them by keeping them waiting for hours only to tell them he had asked them to consider the government's proposal and then said he has ended the process of meetings.

The government had earlier moved the apex court to do its work of finding a solution to the stalemate and also to restrain the farmers from going ahead with their tractor march. The court strayed into unchartered territory by taking it upon itself the task of mediating on the resolution of conflict over the controversial farm laws. But, it smartly nixed the move to involve it in the tractor march by dumping the responsibility on the Delhi police.

The Delhi Police had no option but to chalk out with the agitating farmers the routes for the tractor parade. Special Commissioner of Police (Intelligence) Dependra Pathak told the media an agreement had been reached with the Bharatiya Kisan Union that the march would be carried out after Republic Day celebrations at Rajpath and that there should be no disturbance during the parade.

Likewise, the Sanyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) assured the administration that only tractors and trolleys with tableaux would be allowed in the march and no one would carry a weapon, "not even sticks." A maximum of five people can ride on one tractor and no one will ride on the bonnet, bumper or roof of tractors.

The group made it clear that through the tractor parade the farmers seek to tell the country and the world about their plight and their aim is "not to conquer Delhi, but to win the hearts of the people of this county."

The symbolism is not lost. The farmers have indeed their back to the wall. They fear the three laws would not solve the problem of lower returns from agriculture, as claimed by the government. On the contrary, they would be pushed to a situation where they would be left at the mercy of private operators buying agricultural produce from them on their terms without intervention from the government or legal protection as designed by the laws.

The farmers have shown how much they can withstand to get their demand for the annulment of the laws. As mentioned earlier in this column, it is imperative in any democracy for the government to listen to the vox populi.

WISDOM CORNER

- It's a funny thing about life; if you refuse to accept anything but the best, you very often get it. W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM
- If you do not tell the truth about yourself you cannot tell it about other people. VIRGINIA WOOLF
- Two roads diverged in a wood and I - I took the one less travelled by, and that has made all the difference. ROBERT FROST

WORDSWORTH

Zoilism

A correspondent identified only as J Hooker wrote a disgusted letter to the Lady's Newspaper of London in January 1863 about slovenly and unhygienic rural servants in France: If I were to do more than hint at their hydrophobic habits, their pulicidal, pulicivorous, and even phthierophagous propensities, I should call down, not undeservedly, the Zoilism of our correspondents. The writer - from the tone of the piece he is likely to have been the famous biologist Joseph Dalton Hooker - must have had an uncommonly large vocabulary, or a talent for word coining, for that set of alliterative insults is uncommon. The first two - pulicidal and pulicivorous - have not reached the pages of the Oxford English Dictionary, though their form suggests "flea-killing" and "flea-eating", from Latin pulex. The third word, phthierophagous, is from Latin, based on a Greek word that literally means louse-eating but was used figuratively for persons with unsavoury habits. The original epithet was applied by the Roman writer Strabo to a tribe living near the Black Sea, the Sulae, whom he disgustingly renamed the Phthierophagi. Zoilism is another unfamiliar term. This is Greek and its initial capital letter gives the clue that it's an eponym, a noun derived from a personal name. Zoilus was a Greek grammarian of the 4th century BC, who wrote savage criticisms of such Greek literary worthies as Homer, Plato and Socrates. He gained the nickname Homeromastic, one who assaults or chastises Homer. Writers with good Greek but poor knowledge of word histories assumed that Zoilus and Zoilism were from the Greek word for zeal. This usually means an enthusiastic devotion to something (originally religion) but at one time could also imply jealousy or envy. This false connection caused people to assume that critics described as Zoilist were panning the work of others through resentfulness or spite. There having never been any shortage of critics, Zoilus gained the plural Zoili. It and the other terms are now almost unknown, though bitter and carping criticism by envious hacks has not yet vanished from the world.

LOL

Accident

Two men got out of their cars after they collided at an intersection. One took a flask from his pocket and said to the other, "Here, maybe you'd like a nip to calm your nerves." "Thanks," he said, and took a long



pull from the container. "Here, you have one, too," he added, handing back the whiskey. "Well, I'd rather not," said the first one. "At least not until after the police have been here."

SPECTRUM IDEOLOGY

All quiet on the populist front?



Jan-Werner Mueller

POPULISTS CLEVERER THAN TRUMP SMOTHER DEMOCRACY SLOWLY THROUGH LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL MACHINATIONS

Liberals around the world are daring to hope that there is a silver lining to the violent denouement of Donald Trump's presidency: namely, that the inciter-in-chief's ignominious exit from the political stage will chasten authoritarian populists elsewhere. Unfortunately, their optimism is naive.

Contrary to the cliché about a populist 'wave' sweeping the world in recent years, the rise and fall of populist leaders tends not to have significant transnational effects. Just as there is no honour among thieves, there was no solidarity among the supposed Populist International when it really mattered. More important, while Trump has been omnipresent, he has never been a typical populist. Right-wing populists in government tend to be more careful when it comes to maintaining a façade of legality and avoiding direct association with street violence. Because the storming of the US Capitol on January 6 was clearly a sign of desperation, it does not necessarily foreshadow the fate of populist (and radical right-wing) movements elsewhere. The only real takeaway is that other

populist kleptocrats might also resort to violent street mobilisations if they are ever truly cornered. Liberals often claim to appreciate the world in all its complexity, whereas populists are great simplifiers. But it is liberals who have pushed the highly simplistic narrative of a global populist wave, as if one need not consider particular national contexts very carefully.

According to this domino theory - which was enthusiastically embraced by populists themselves - Trump's unexpected triumph in 2016 was supposed to trigger victories for right-wing populists in Austria, the Netherlands, and France. In fact, the opposite happened. In Austria, Norbert Hofer, the presidential candidate of the far-right Freedom Party, lost after adopting Trumpist antics that made him seem un-presidential. In the Netherlands, the far-right demagogue Geert Wilders had Trump's endorsement but ultimately underperformed. And in France, Marine Le Pen's loss to Emmanuel Macron in the 2017 presidential election confirmed what had already become clear: Euro-

Trumpism might not be such an effective strategy after all. It should go without saying that what works in one political culture might not work in others. Much also depends on the decisions of actors who are not populists themselves: In the US case, Trump benefited from the collaboration of established conservative elites and the Republican Party. In fact, with the possible exception of Italy, no right-wing populist party has come to power in Western Europe or North America without conscious help from supposedly centre-right actors.

Moreover, even if the parties and governance styles associated with right-wing populism end up resembling each other, it does not follow that the rise of populists has the same root causes everywhere. A much more likely explanation for the similarities is that populist leaders have selectively learned from one another. For example, it is now standard populist practice to pressure pesky NGOs through ostensibly neutral legal changes. In what some observers have called "autocratic legalism," many right-wing populists in power studiously

follow formal rules and practices to maintain a patina of neutrality and create plausible deniability for political acts. Unlike Trump, these leaders understand that street violence by an uncontrollable movement could trigger a backlash both within their own country and among international audiences. To be sure, if cornered, any populist might resort to Trump's endgame methods: trying to coerce elites into committing fraud to prevent a transfer of power, or deploying right-wing extremists on the ground to intimidate lawmakers. These desperate acts signaled Trump's weakness. But it is important to note that most Republicans still did not disown Trump even when confronted with his blatant lawlessness on January 6.

Populists cleverer than Trump smother democracy slowly through legal and constitutional machinations. But right-wing populist kleptocracies based on a fusion of big business and bigotry, in the words of Indian journalist Kapil Komireddi, might not go down quietly.

The writer is Professor of Politics at Princeton University. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

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, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Republic Day

Sir, The nation is celebrating today the 72nd Republic Day. The past seven decades have witnessed remarkable changes in the functioning of this Republic by bringing in landmark amendments to the Constitution to make the largest democracy of the world move ahead comfortably, keeping in pace with the developments taking place around the world. Sovereignty that forms the vital element of its Preamble has been threatened a number of times, but the resolute Indian defence forces have never succumbed to the evil designs of the intruders except in 1962 Sino-Indian clash when the country was backtracked and befooled following a wrong foreign policy. With the changes in global arena, the policy makers have been giving out befitting replies to the troublesome neighbours through their effective diplomatic tactics. As of now, when the two super powers, the US and Russia, laud India for its success in a number of fields, let us rededicate ourselves while celebrating one of our national festivals today so that we take pride in the fact that the Constitution has contributed immensely in shaping our identity before the comity of nations. Sanjib Das, CUTTACK

Vaccine hub

Sir, India has become a coronavirus vaccine hub and has started commercial export by sending 20 million doses each of 'Covishield' to Brazil and Morocco. Earlier, India had gifted the vaccine to neighbouring countries. This vaccine is produced at the Pune plant of the Serum Institute of India. Another vaccine 'Covaxin' of Bharat Biotech is under trial stage and has been approved for emergency use. Tata Medicals & Diagnostics with Moderna Inc. is planning to manufacture another vaccine in India. The World Health Organisation has praised India for its efforts to make the world COVID-19 free. Gopal Mittal, BHUBANESWAR

Oli in soup

Sir, The decision to expel Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli from the Nepal Communist Party's general membership by the splinter faction led by Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' was on the cards. Oli was expelled for alleged anti-party activities and could also face the ignominy of being forced out of office amid an internal tussle for power following the sharp rhetoric against India amid the growing Chinese influence in Nepal. Could this be the end of the road for Oli? NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE



SC refuses UP's petition to transfer anti-conversion law cases from HC

The top court had January 6 agreed to examine the constitutional validity of the anti-conversion laws enacted by Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, but refused to stay the controversial legislations

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 25: The Supreme Court Monday declined to entertain a plea by the Uttar Pradesh government to transfer all petitions against the anti-conversion ordinance pending in the Allahabad High Court to itself.

A bench headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde said it would like to take advantage of a decision by the High Court, where the matter is slated for hearing in February.

Senior Advocate PS Narasimha, representing the UP government, said that identical petitions challenging the ordinance were pending in the High Court.

The top court said that it was aware of the High Court cases when it issued notice in the mat-



ter earlier. "If the High Court is going to decide the cases, why should we interfere?" the bench remarked.

The counsel for the respondents submitted that the High Court had listed the matter for hearing February 2.

The Chief Justice responded that if the High Court was already seized of the matter, the apex court would not hear it.

Narasimha contended that the top court had already issued notice in the matter.

"We have issued notice but it does not mean that the High Court cannot decide. People are making light of High Courts these days. The High Court is a constitutional court," said the bench.

January 6, the top court had agreed to examine the constitutional validity of the anti-conversion laws enacted by Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, but refused to stay the controversial legislations. The top court had issued notices to the two states on the petitions that challenged the laws.

Ayodhya mosque may be named after 1857 warrior

During the freedom struggle, Maulvi Ahmadullah Shah had launched revolts in the Awadh region

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ayodhya, Jan 25: The proposed mosque in Ayodhya that is set to be built following the Supreme Court verdict in the Babri Masjid case may be named after Maulvi Ahmadullah Shah, the warrior of the 1857 mutiny against the British.

The Indo Islamic Cultural Foundation, the trust constituted by the Sunni Waqf Board to oversee the construction of the mosque, is seriously considering to name it after Shah, who was known as the 'Lighthouse of Rebellion' in the Awadh region, Trust Secretary Athar Hussain said.

After the Trust was formed, there have been discussions on whether the mosque should be named after Mughal emperor Babar or some other name be given. The Babri mosque was named after Babar.

To make the Ayodhya mosque project a symbol of communal brotherhood and patriotism, the Trust has decided to dedicate the project to Shah, who represented these values and was also a true



The blueprint of the mosque.

follower of Islam, according to Trust sources. Hussain said, "The Trust is thinking very seriously over the proposal of dedicating our Ayodhya Mosque project to the great freedom fighter Maulvi Ahmadullah Shah. We have got suggestions regarding the same from different platforms. It is a good suggestion. We will officially announce it after deliberations."

Shah was martyred 5 June, 1858. British officers like George Bruce

Malleon and Thomas Seaton have made a mention of his courage, valour and organisational capabilities. Malleon has repeatedly mentioned Shah in the History of Indian Mutiny; a book on the Indian revolt of 1857.

During the freedom struggle, Shah had launched revolts in the Awadh region. He made the local mosque, Masjid Sarai, located in Chowk area of Faizabad his headquarters. As he liberated Faizabad

and larger part of Awadh region, he used the premises of this mosque to hold meetings with rebel leaders.

According to researcher and historian Ram Shankar Tripathi, "Besides being a practising Muslim, Shah was also the epitome of religious unity and Ganga-Jamuni culture of Ayodhya. In the revolt of 1857, royalties like Nana Sahib of Kanpur, Kunwar Singh of Arrah fought alongside Shah. His 22nd Infantry Regiment was commanded by Subedar Ghamandi Singh and Subedar Umrao Singh in the famous Battle of Chinhath."

The apex court November 9, 2019 had ruled in favour of the construction of a Ram temple at the disputed site in Ayodhya and directed the Centre to allot an alternative five-acre plot to the Sunni Waqf Board for building a new mosque at a 'prominent' place in the holy town in Uttar Pradesh.

The state government allotted a five-acre land in Dhannipur village in Sohawal Tehsil of Ayodhya. The blueprint of the mosque was unveiled December 19.

Negative RT-PCR report must to visit Kumbh

The Uttarakhand government shall ensure that healthcare and other frontline workers engaged during Kumbh Mela medical and public health operations are vaccinated on priority



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dehradun, Jan 25: Devotees who wish to attend the forthcoming Kumbh Mela must bring a COVID-19 negative RT-PCR test report, according to a standard operating procedure (SOP) issued by the Centre for holding the religious congregation.

The RT-PCR test must be conducted within 72 hrs of the date of the visit, stated the document by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The Uttarakhand government shall ensure that healthcare and other frontline workers engaged during Kumbh Mela medical and public health operations are vaccinated on priority.

Only vaccinated healthcare and other frontline workers be deputised for Kumbh Mela duties, it said.

As far as possible, people must maintain a six-feet distance in public places and wear masks, the SOP stated, while the authorities have been directed to ensure the devotees adhere to COVID-appropriate behaviour during the Kumbh.

Mask dispensing kiosks at government-approved rates may be set up at entry points and parking lots. Provision should be kept for

distribution of free masks to those who cannot afford them, it said.

Enforcement agencies should levy penalties on defaulters for not wearing masks or face covers or for not following physical distancing norms, the SOP stated.

Those aged more than 65 years, pregnant women, children below the age of 10, those with underlying comorbid conditions such should be discouraged to attend the Kumbh Mela, it said.

The Kumbh Mela administration should identify spatial boundaries of the fair-ground keeping in view the physical distancing requirements and prepare a detailed site plan which would facilitate compliance with thermal screening, physical distancing and sanitisation. Kumbh Mela administration should make arrangements for adequate ambulances and build a temporary hospital with 1,000 beds which can be expanded to 2,000 beds.

The likely dates for the event are from February 27 to April 30. It is expected that about 10 lakh people will attend the fair on a normal day and about 50 lakh people will attend the mela on auspicious days.

UP police withdraw 'ban' order on fuel to tractors

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Ghazipur, Jan 25: The Ghazipur police have withdrawn the orders issued by two police stations, asking petrol pumps to stop giving fuel to tractors, in view of the proposed tractor rally on January 26 as part of farmers' agitation.

The Samajwadi Party had shared a news report on Twitter that said farmers are being kept under house arrest by the UP Police in order to restrain them from participating in the January 26 tractor rally.

Superintendent of Police, Ghazipur Om Prakash Singh, said he was shocked when he learnt about the orders issued by the in-charges of the Suhwal and Saidpur police stations and has asked ASP (rural) to probe the matter.

He also made it clear that no such restrictions have been imposed in the district.

The SP said he had issued directions to ensure movement of fully fit tractors on roads, especially highways, to prevent accidents in view of the ongoing Road Safety Month, but this order was misinterpreted by cops of the two police stations.

Police officials at Suhwal police station issued an order asking petrol pumps not to give fuel to tractors.

This order stated, "In view of January 26, high alert has been sounded in state and prohibitory orders under Section 144 CrPC are effective. In view of the possibility of farmers taking out tractor rallies, a ban is imposed on movement of tractors. You are directed to stop giving oil to tractors, in drums or containers from January 22 till 26 in order to maintain peace."

The Saidpur police, on the other

hand, imposed complete ban on movement of tractors on the highway till January 26.

Saidpur inspector started issuing notices to tractor owners mentioning that in view of national festival, flag marches and movement of school children on roads, movement of tractors will not be allowed. If any tractor is found on road during checking as part of road safety week, legal action would be initiated against them.

The matter came to light after the Samajwadi Party wrote on Twitter that, "To stop the Farmers' tractor parade, which will take place on January 26, the BJP government is keeping the farmers of Purvanchal under house arrest and stopping petrol pumps from giving diesel to them. In the greed of corporates, the blind government is doing all sorts of atrocities on the Annadata."



Women's safety should be priority, says 1-day CM

SHRISHTI GOSWAMI WAS MADE UTTARAKHAND'S CHIEF MINISTER FOR A DAY ON THE OCCASION OF NATIONAL GIRL CHILD DAY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dehradun, Jan 25: Issues related to women's safety and children should be the priority of all governments, said Shrishti Goswami, who was made Uttarakhand's Chief Minister for a day Sunday to mark the National Girl Child Day.

Shrishti, 20, who has made her recommendations to the state government on a range of issues, says though women's safety situation has certainly improved over the years, a lot still needs to be done. "After all we are still talking about women's safety. That means the sense of insecurity among women persists and we must address it further to improve the situation," said a beaming Shrishti who was full of excitement after chairing a session with members of Children's Assembly as the one-day CM.

"I have made some important suggestions to the state government on women's safety, children's issues and the problem of migration

from the hill areas which will be submitted to the Chief Minister through Uttarakhand Commission for Protection of Child Rights," she said.

Spelling out some of them, she said she has requested the DGP to devise ways to protect school or college going girls from the problem of eve-teasing so that they feel more secure while commuting.

She said she has also sought a total ban on sale of all types of intoxicants within a radius of 500 metres around educational institutions. "Children are the future of our nation and issues related to them deserve to be addressed on priority," Shrishti who is doing her graduation in agriculture said.

On her experience of having a one-day stint as CM, she said it could remind one of the yesteryear flick 'Nayak' in which the protagonist becomes chief minister for a day but the real life experience of being at the helm of affairs of a state was different and extremely



exciting. "After all we are still talking about women's safety. That means the sense of insecurity among women persists and we must address it further to improve the situation" **SHRISHTI GOSWAMI**

her the opportunity.

"Nayak was reel life. But my experience was real. It gave me goose bumps," she said and thanked Uttarakhand Governor Baby Rani Maurya and Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat for giving

When asked whether she had plans to enter into politics she said she may try if given a chance.

The session of Children's Assembly was held in a hall at Uttarakhand Vidhan Sabha dur-

ing which Shrishti reviewed the workings of different government departments including the Police and PWD that gave their presentations on crime control measures taken and infrastructure building respectively. Leader of Opposition in the Children's Assembly Asif Hasan also raised issues related to public interest during the session to which Shrishti and members of her Child Cabinet replied one by one.

Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat said the event was a way of honouring the girls of the state which can help them find an identity of their own. "Children are our future leaders. Such exercises can make them aware of contemporary issues and legislative business to some extent to enable them to drive the nation in the right direction," Rawat said.

Uttarakhand is the first state in the country to give Children's Assembly an opportunity to witness workings of the government first hand.

100 camera traps at Rajaji to keep vigil on relocated tigers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Rishikesh, Jan 25: One hundred camera traps have been installed in the western part of Rajaji Tiger Reserve to keep a constant watch on the movement of relocated tigers, officials said Monday.

Recently, two tigers, one male and the other female, were relocated from Corbett Tiger Reserve to Rajaji to increase their population in its western part.

"We have set up 100 camera traps in the western part of Rajaji to keep an eye on the relocated tigers. We are getting pictures of their movement in the reserve regularly. We are also actively exploring whether the relocated male tiger who ran away from its enclosure at Motichoore range of the reserve can be radio collared once again," Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (Wildlife) Vinod Kumar Singhal told PTI.

The relocated male tiger had escaped from its enclosure at Motichoore range of Rajaji just a few



Picture used for representation

days after its relocation there earlier this month, dropping behind its radio collar. "We are studying methods adopted by other tiger reserves in the country for radio collaring relocated tigers. If all the institutions partnering with us in the tiger relocation project agree, we may try to radio collar the tiger again," Singhal said.

A decision on deploying captive elephants to maintain a vigil on the relocated tigers at the reserve may also be taken soon, Singhal said. DIG (forest) of the National Tiger Conservation Authority of India had recently written to the Uttarakhand Forest Department, asking it to step up vigilance of the relocated tigers at Rajaji.



BJP may pay you cash. If they do, take it but vote for TMC when you enter the booth. The BJP is total fake. They can insult me fine, but I will not tolerate West Bengal's insult

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

MAN RISKS HIS LIFE TO 'ASSURE SAFETY' TO CROCODILE; BOOKED

A 50-year-old man has been detained for 'harassing' a crocodile in Vadodra district of Gujarat after a video of the incident, which occurred on the banks of Karjan lake, showing him "assuring" the reptile of "safety" from harm went viral



of the day quote

We should always respect the valuable right to vote. The right to vote is not a simple right. People around the world have struggled a lot for this



RAM NATH KOVIND | PRESIDENT OF INDIA

When Babar came to India he chose to destroy Ram temple in Ayodhya as he understood that the living force of the country rested there



PRAKASH JAVADEKAR | UNION MINISTER

Solving your (people of Tamil Nadu) issues will be my first job. The first 100 days of my government will be dedicated to solving your problems on a war-footing



MK STALIN | DMK CHIEF

SHORT TAKES

Woman killed by leopard

Pithoragarh (U'khand): A 40-year-old woman was killed by a leopard in a village here Monday, officials said. Seema Devi (40), a resident of Harali Agar village in Devalthal area of the district, was attacked by the leopard when she was cutting grass in a field along with other local women, SDFO of Pithoragarh forest division Navin Pant said. The leopard dragged the woman for a few metres but ran away leaving her behind as the other women accompanying her raised an alarm, he said.

Labourer crushed to death

Palanpur: A labourer sleeping by the Roadside in Palanpur town of Gujarat's Banaskantha district was crushed to death by a dumper truck early Monday morning, police said. Two people who were injured in the accident, which took place on Mansoravar Road around 6:30am, have been hospitalised. "Deceased Megan Degadia, a native of Danta taluka, had come to Palanpur to work at a construction site. The truck veered off the road and climbed onto the pavement where the deceased and others were sleeping," he said.

ED raids Omkar group premises

Mumbai: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Monday carried out raids at 10 locations in Mumbai linked to the Omkar Group builders and its officials Babulal Verma and Kamal Kishore Gupta in connection with a money laundering case. An ED official wishing not to be named said, "Today ED's raids included seven residential and three office premises belonging to Omkar Group, one of the leading builders in Mumbai."

Naxals kill deputy sarpanch

Kondagaon: A deputy sarpanch was killed by Naxals in Chhattisgarh's Kondagaon district, over 200 kilometres from state capital Raipur, police said Monday. The incident took place late Saturday evening in Permapal village under Bayanar police station limits when the victim, identified as Bajjaram Korram, was in his house with his family, an official said. As per preliminary information, over a dozen ultras stormed into the house of Korram, deputy sarpanch of Permapal, dragged him out, thrashed him and strangled him, the official said.

NCPCR seeks appeal against Bombay HC's judgment on sexual assault

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 25: National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), India's apex child rights body, has asked the Maharashtra government Monday to file an urgent appeal against Bombay High Court's recent judgment that an act cannot be termed as sexual assault if there is no 'skin-to-skin' contact.

The Bombay High Court ruled that groping without 'skin to skin' contact is not sexual assault as defined under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. The ruling was pronounced by a single judge bench of Justice Pushpa Ganeidivala January 19.

Asking the Maharashtra government to file an urgent appeal against Bombay HC's judgement, in a letter to the state chief secretary, NCPCR chairperson Priyank Kanoongo Monday said the words "skin-to-skin with sexual intention without penetration" in the judgment also needs to be reviewed and the state should take note of this as it seems to be derogatory to the minor victim in the case.

In the January 19 judgment, the Nagpur bench of Bombay High Court ruled that there must be physical contact "ie skin-to-skin contact with sexual intent without penetration" and mere groping would not amount to sexual assault under the POCSO Act. The court



NCPCR chairperson Priyank Kanoongo Monday said the words "skin-to-skin with sexual intention without penetration" in the judgment also needs to be reviewed and the state should take note of this

NCW to challenge Bombay HC judgment

New Delhi: The National Commission for Women on Monday said it will challenge in the Supreme Court the Bombay High Court judgment which said groping without "skin to skin" contact is not sexual assault as defined under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. This judgment will not only have a cascading effect on various provisions involving safety and security of women in general but also subject all women to ridicule, National Commission for Women (NCW) Chairperson Rekha Sharma said. It has trivialised the legal provisions provided by the legislature for the safety and security of women, she said.

opined that touching a minor's chest would not amount to sexual assault unless the accused removed

the top worn by the child or slid their hand within the child's garment.

The judgement has drawn the ire of child rights bodies and activists across the country.

The NCPCR chief said it seems that the identity of the victim has been disclosed and the commission is of the view that the state should take note of this and initiate necessary steps.

"Therefore, in view of the above and considering the seriousness of the issue, the commission being the monitoring body under section 44 of the POCSO Act, 2012 requests you to take necessary steps in the matter and file an urgent appeal against the aforesaid impugned judgment of the Hon'ble High Court."

"You are requested to provide details of the minor victim [maintaining strict confidentiality] so that the commission can provide help such as legal aid etc. in the best interest of the child," Kanoongo said.

Andhra couple murders daughters to resurrect them

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Madanapalle (Andhra Pradesh), Jan 25: A highly superstitious teacher couple killed their two daughters, believing that they could be resurrected at Madanapalle in Andhra Pradesh's Chittoor district.

V Purushotam Naidu, lecturer in a government women's degree college and his wife V Padmaja, a maths teacher in Masterminds IIT Talent School committed these murders Sunday evening.

"It appears that they were following some superstitious beliefs like after death they will be resurrected and life can be put into them," Chittoor superintendent of police S Senthil Kumar told this news agency.

Kumar said Naidu and Padmaja are currently in a deranged mental state and it appears that they were living in occult practices, which he said is the motivation them to kill their daughters.

Of the murdered two, elder daughter Alekhya (27) completed a forest studies diploma in Bhopal

while the younger one Sai Divya (22) studied BBA. Divya was also a student of AR Rahman Music School in Chennai. On Sunday, one of Naidu's colleagues alerted the police and when the police arrived, the couple tried to prevent them from entering their house. However, on entering the house, police found one girl lying dead in the prayer room while other girl was found in another room with some ritual material on her body and a red cloth. Incidentally, the parents asked police to keep their daughters' bodies in their home itself for a day as they believed that they would return to life.

According to police, parents as well as the daughters were devotional to the extent that they thought God will save them.

"They performed some puja in the house itself because they are saying that ill will come out of their daughters. They killed them within the house," said a police official. One of girls was bludgeoned with a dumbbell and police found both of their bodies naked when they entered.



Dancers perform during the full dress rehearsal for the Republic Day parade in New Delhi, Monday

SC rejects PIL for free, fair Assembly polls in Bengal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 25: The Supreme Court Monday refused to entertain a plea seeking directions to the Centre, the West Bengal government and the Election Commission to ensure "free, peaceful, safe and fair" Assembly polls scheduled this year in the state.

A bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan, while declining to entertain the PIL of one Puneet Kaur Dhanda, said it was open for her to take other remedy as permissible in law.

"You take other remedies available under the law," said the bench which also comprised justices Hemant Gupta and R Subhash Reddy in the proceedings conducted

through video conferencing. The plea, filed through lawyer Vineet Dhanda, had sought several reliefs including a direction to the CBI to probe alleged killings of political activists and adversaries of the ruling All India Trinamool Congress Party in the state.

During the brief hearing, the lawyer said Rohingya voters from Telengana have got themselves registered as voters in West Bengal and "Hindu voters are not allowed to go out to vote in places where Muslims are in majority". He also alleged BJP leaders, including its national president JP Nadda, were attacked in West Bengal. "Free and fair elections are not possible in the state in such condition," Dhanda urged, adding, "free and fair election is possible under the watchful eyes on the apex court".

The public interest litigation (PIL) had made Union Ministry of Home Affairs, West Bengal government, the Election Commission, the state poll panel, the Director General of Police and CBI as parties.

against them by the Interpol. Additional Director General (law and order) Prashant Kumar said, "The UPATS arrested the two for purchasing SIM cards by submitting forged documents and then making fraudulent monetary transactions with those SIMs via banks. It is for the first time that the ATS has arrested Chinese nationals." He further said, "We traced the duo after interrogating 14 persons arrested last week from Delhi and different parts of Uttar Pradesh in a similar fraud."

GK Goswami Inspector General ATS said Xu Xunfu's business visa had expired in July 2020, while Li Teng Li's tourist visa expired in September 2020.

The Delhi Police have also hinted two Chinese nationals Yangqing Zhang and Bao Peng, are the kingpins of this criminal conspiracy to cheat and defraud Indian citizens and hack into their devices through malicious mobile applications. This is a serious concern as kingpins of Chinese origin are hatching the conspiracy from locations outside India. Not just financial frauds but alleged Chinese involvement have also been claimed by Delhi police in a spying case as September 14 last year, the Special Cell of the Delhi Police had arrested 61-year-old freelance journalist Rajeev Sharma, for allegedly working with Chinese intelligence.

Why Chinese interest in financial frauds in India is alarming

WITHIN A SPAN OF 15 DAYS, TWO MAJOR FINANCIAL FRAUD CASES INVOLVING CHINESE NATIONALS HAVE COME TO THE FOREFRONT

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 25: Within a span of 15 days, two major financial fraud cases involving Chinese nationals have come to the forefront. Soon after the Delhi Police unearthed a transnational malware and fraud syndicate and arrested two Chinese women in a gang of 12 in multiple raids starting January 13, two Chinese have been caught by the UP ATS from Noida for fraudulent monetary transactions.

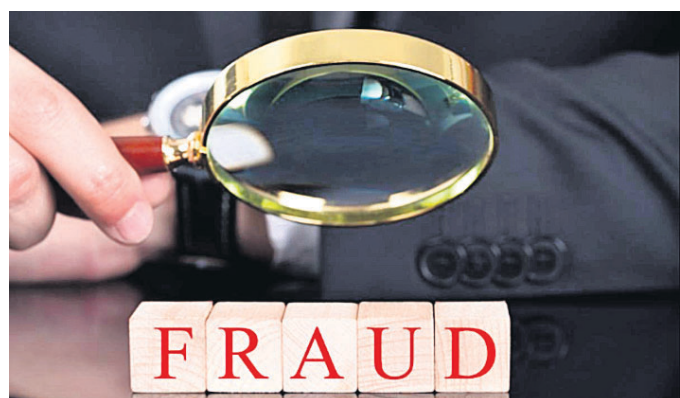
This is cause for alarm as it raises apprehensions that multiple Chinese syndicates have been operating within the country to cheat and defraud Indian citizens and capture personal data of unsuspecting peo-

ple for illegitimate purposes.

When it arrested Chinese nationals Chaohong Deng Daoyong, 27, and Wu Jiazhi, 54, the Delhi Police said the accused were installing malware in devices of people in the garb of a multi-level marketing application.

Police said that around 40,000 confirmed victims have been identified who have been cheated of crores in two months. Almost ₹4.75 crore of cheated money has been blocked in various accounts and more than ₹25 lakh recovered in cash from the arrested Chinese nationals.

"The malicious app was also making millions of Indian users follow thousands of social media accounts of unknown origin and own-



ership, with huge potential of future misuse of this by a foreign entity," said Anshay Roy, DCP (Crime).

Now the Uttar Pradesh Anti-

Terror Squad (UPATS) has arrested Xu Xunfu aka July and Li Teng Li aka Alice from Gautam Buddha Nagar, following a red corner notice

against them by the Interpol. Additional Director General (law and order) Prashant Kumar said, "The UPATS arrested the two for purchasing SIM cards by submitting forged documents and then making fraudulent monetary transactions with those SIMs via banks. It is for the first time that the ATS has arrested Chinese nationals."

He further said, "We traced the duo after interrogating 14 persons arrested last week from Delhi and different parts of Uttar Pradesh in a similar fraud."

GK Goswami Inspector General ATS said Xu Xunfu's business visa had expired in July 2020, while Li Teng Li's tourist visa expired in September 2020.

Two minor boys beaten to death

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ranchi, Jan 25: Bodies of two minor boys were recovered in Chanhoo area of Jharkhand's Ranchi Sunday. According to police, the motive behind is suspected to be land dispute. The bodies were recovered in a small hut in the fields.

Police have detained three suspects in connection with the matter and are investigating the case from all angles. The two boys have been identified as Manish Oran (12) and Ganesh Bhagat (16). Manish was found hanging while Ganesh's body was recovered from inside the hut.

Meanwhile, angered villagers blocked roads and National Highway connecting Ranchi to Palamu in protest against the killing of the two boys.

MAN TIED TO TREE, BURNT ALIVE IN UP

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bareilly (UP), Jan 25: In a shocking incident, a 45-year-old man was tied to a tree with barbed wires and set on fire in Sheeshgarh area of Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh, over an old enmity.

The charred body of Dharampal was found late Saturday night and an FIR against two persons was filed on late Sunday evening.

Station House Officer (SHO) of Sheeshgarh, Rajkumar Bhardwaj, said: "Our forensic team has collected samples and we have also started investigation. The circumstantial evidence suggests the man was forcefully tied to the tree and set on fire."



China is expanding its occupation into Indian territory. Mr 56" hasn't said the word 'China' for months. Maybe he can start by saying the word 'China'

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

QUEST FOR KRISHNA LEADS RUSSIAN WOMAN TO END LIFE

A 41-year-old Russian woman allegedly committed suicide by jumping to her death from the top floor of a six-storey apartment building, where she was residing, in Vrindavan



of the day quote

Obscene content is being served on OTT platforms. Young children are also getting affected due to Internet and mobile phones

SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN | MADHYA PRADESH CM

You can chant Jai Shri Ram thousand times, but at temples, at religious functions, at your place but not in this fashion at a government programme to commemorate an icon like Netaji

ABHISHEK BANERJEE | TMC LEADER

We are very interested that this seat-sharing between Congress and Left parties in West Bengal is finalised so that we can concentrate on joint programmes which will lead to vote transfer more easily

JITIN PRASADA | CONGRESS LEADER

SHORT TAKES

Schoolgirl found dead in Kolkata

Kolkata: The body of a schoolgirl was found in a pool of blood in northeast Kolkata's Bangur area, police said Monday. It is suspected that the teenage girl, a resident of Lake Town, died by suicide after jumping off a multi-storey building in Bangur Block A where the body was found Sunday evening, they said. A purported suicide note was found beside the body along with a mask, an officer said. The girl, a student of a well-known school in Salt Lake, had left home to get pens and noodles from a local stationery shop, police said.

COVID +ve I-T officer hangs self

Jaipur: An income tax inspector who was sentenced to jail last week in a bribery case allegedly committed suicide at a hospital here where he was admitted after he tested positive for coronavirus, police said Monday. Vinay Kumar Mangla, 45, was caught by the CBI in 2016 while taking a bribe of ₹1 lakh. A court in Jaipur had awarded him a sentence of five years last Friday. Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) Abhijeet Singh. He was found hanging in the COVID ward of the hospital Monday morning.

4 killed in road mishap

Jaipur: Four men were killed when their motorcycle collided with a truck in Banswara district of Rajasthan, police said Monday. The incident occurred on Sunday night near Katumbi Adibhit area in Ambapura. The four Mukesh (26), his brother Sohan (20), Dilip (22) and Dinesh (26), were on their way to Banswara city when a truck hit the motorcycle. The bodies were handed over to their family members after post mortem, police said.

Sasikala moved out of ICU

Bangalore: Expelled AIADMK leader VK Sasikala, who is serving a jail term in Bangalore in a corruption case, has been moved out of the ICU after her coronavirus symptoms reduced, the Victoria Hospital authorities said in a statement. The former aide of late Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa, who is set to be released from prison January 27, contracted coronavirus January 20 and was later admitted to the Bowring Hospital.

Every second person in Delhi infected with nCoV

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 25: While on the one hand vaccination has started against coronavirus in full steam in India, the results of the fifth serological survey in Delhi have brought both relief and surprise. According to the latest sero survey, 1 in 2 people in Delhi were likely infected by COVID-19 and then got cured.

Multiple rounds of sero surveys have been conducted by the Delhi government to assess the spread of coronavirus infection in the national capital. The fifth and the largest sero survey of Delhi was conducted in January 2021. In a sero survey, samples of blood are collected from the person's body and then medical team tests whether antibodies have been formed against coronavirus in the blood or not.

According to Delhi government sources, the preliminary trend of Delhi's fifth sero survey has revealed that 60 per cent of people



in one particular district in Delhi have been found to have COVID-19 antibodies. This means that they were unknowingly infected with coronavirus and got cured later. In other districts, more than 50 per cent of people were found to have antibodies and had, therefore, come in contact with coronavirus.

Delhi has a population of more than 2 crores and the fifth sero sur-

vey indicates that around 1 crore population has been cured after being infected with coronavirus.

The high prevalence of coronavirus antibodies indicates that the capital may have reached the stage of herd immunity.

Dr Arun Gupta, president of Delhi Medical Council, has explained herd immunity in three parts. First, it is very important to

FIFTH SERO SURVEY

According to the latest sero survey, 1 in 2 people in Delhi were likely infected by COVID-19 and then got cured

The preliminary trend of Delhi's fifth sero survey revealed that 60 per cent of people in one particular district in Delhi have been found to have COVID-19 antibodies

first understand what herd immunity is. If a large population has an antibody against a disease, then it stops the spread of that disease and the rest of the population can be saved from infection.

Second, herd immunity can occur in two ways - one by the natural spread of infection or by vaccination. As scientists and doctors, we always wish that herd immunity comes from vaccination.

Thirdly, if antibodies against in-

Security beefed up in Delhi ahead of R-Day, farmers' rally

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 25: Thousands of armed personnel have been deployed at the Rajpath and several border points of the national capital which has been brought under a multi-layered security cover in view of Republic Day celebrations as well as the proposed tractor parade by farmers Tuesday.

Protesting farmer unions opposing the three contentious farm laws said their parade will not enter central Delhi and it will start only after the official Republic Day parade concludes.

The unions claimed that around two lakh tractors are expected to participate in their parade which will move into the city from three border points - Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur (UP Gate).

For Republic Day celebrations, an official said around 6,000 security personnel have been deployed to maintain vigil. Facial recognition system of Delhi Police has also been set up at vantage points for suspect identification, the official said.

Checking and frisking staff deployed at Rajghat will be done by personnel in PPE kits, with mask and face shield, keeping in line with COVID-19 protocols, official said. On Tuesday, sharpshooters and snipers will be deployed on top of high-rise buildings to keep watch on the eight-km-long parade



Thousands of armed personnel have been deployed at the Rajpath and several border points of the national capital which has been brought under a multi-layered security cover

Protesting farmer unions said their parade will not enter central Delhi and it will start only after the official Republic Day parade concludes

route from Rajpath.

A five-layer security cover comprising of border pickets, inner, middle and outer security has been deployed in and around the city to maintain law and order during the Republic Day ceremony and the proposed tractor parade, a senior police officer said. Deputy Commissioner of Police (New Delhi) Eish Singhal said more than 6,000 police personnel will be deployed at Rajpath for Republic Day celebrations.

Following COVID protocols, only 25,000 people will be allowed to attend the ceremony at Rajpath as opposed to over one lakh spectators who usually attended the event every year, he said.

The parade will also be shorter this year. Instead of marching up to Red Fort, the parade will end at National Stadium and only the tableaux will be allowed to perform at Red Fort, he also said.

PATRIOTIC FERVOUR



School children holding Tricolour masks pose for a photograph on the eve of Republic Day in Mathura, Monday

Padma Vibhushan for Japan ex-PM Abe, Balasubramaniam

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 25: The government Monday conferred the Padma Bhushan award posthumously on former Union Minister Ram Vilas Paswan, former Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi and former Gujarat Chief Minister Keshubhai Patel.

One of the tallest Dalit leaders from Bihar and the founder of the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) Paswan passed away October 8 last year, just ahead of the crucial Bihar assembly polls. He had undergone heart surgery days before his death.

He was the Union Minister for Consumer Affairs in the Narendra Modi-led Union government.

The government also conferred three-time Assam Chief Minister and veteran Congress leader Tarun Gogoi with Padma Bhushan posthumously. Gogoi passed away November 23 last year after recovering from Covid-19.



The government also conferred the Padma Bhushan award to former Gujarat Chief Minister Keshubhai Patel posthumously. Patel became the first BJP Chief Minister of Gujarat in 1995. He passed away October 29 last year after recovering from Covid at the age of 93. Patel was a worker of the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) and was popularly called Keshubapa in the state.

Besides these three tall leaders, the government also conferred the Padma Bhushan on former Lok Sabha speaker Sumitra Mahajan and former bureaucrat Nripendra Mishra, who



served as Principal Secretary to Prime Minister Narendra Modi between 2014 and 2019. The government also conferred the Padma Bhushan on former Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament Tarlochan Singh.

The government also conferred the Padma Shri award on former Union Minister and former BJP MP from Assam's Guwahati Bijooya Chakravarty.

The list of the Padma Shri winners included Colonel Quazi Sajjad Ali Zahir, who defected from the Pakistani Army to join the Bangladeshi Liberation War in 1971.

Lalu seeks bail in Jharkhand HC



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Ranchi, Jan 25: Former Bihar Chief Minister Lalu Prasad's lawyer Monday filed a reply in the Jharkhand High Court and sought bail for the RJD president.

In the reply, Devarshi Mandal, the lawyer of Lalu Prasad, argued that his client has completed half of the sentence period in jail and he should be granted bail.

He argued that Lalu Prasad has spent 42 months and 23 days in jail, which is half of his seven-year jail term. Mandal also appealed for an early hearing on the bail petition.

The reply was filed in connection with the Dumka treasury fraud case, in which Lalu Prasad has been awarded a prison sentence of seven years.

Sources in the CBI said that two seven-year sentences have been awarded to Lalu Prasad, which amount to 14 years. The CBI may oppose the bail plea on the same ground.

Lalu Prasad has been convicted in four fodder scam cases with a prison sentence of up to 14 years.

At present, the RJD strongman is undergoing treatment at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in New Delhi.

Tata in talks to launch Moderna COVID-19 vax in India

REUTERS

Mumbai, Jan 25: Tata Group's healthcare venture is said to have started initial discussions with Moderna Inc for a partnership to launch its COVID-19 vaccine in India, the Economic Times reported Monday.

Tata Medical & Diagnostics could team up with the India's Council of Scientific and Industrial Research to carry out clinical trials of Moderna's vaccine candidate in India, the report said, citing officials familiar with the matter.

Moderna did not respond to Reuters request for a comment outside business hours, while Tata Medical & Diagnostics did not immediately respond.



Unlike Pfizer's vaccine, which must be kept at minus 70 degrees Celsius or below, Moderna's can be stored at normal fridge temperatures, making it more suited for poorer countries such as India where cold chains are limited.

Data released in November from Moderna's late-stage study showed it was 94.1% effective with no serious safety concerns. The shot was approved for use in the United States in December and in Europe earlier this month.

India among top 10 hit by climate change: Germanwatch

German said vulnerable people in developing countries suffered the most from extreme weather events like storms, floods and heat waves

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 25: India is among the top 10 most affected countries in the Global Climate Risk Index 2021 published Monday by the Bonn-based environmental think tank Germanwatch.

It said vulnerable people in developing countries suffered the most from extreme weather events like storms, floods and heat waves, while the impacts of climate change are visible around the globe.

Being the deadliest and costliest tropical cyclone in the South-West Indian Ocean, tropical Cyclone 'Idai' was labelled "one of the worst weather-related catastrophes in the history of Africa" by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres.

It caused catastrophic damage and a humanitarian crisis, making

Mozambique and Zimbabwe the two most affected countries in 2019.

The Bahamas rank third after the devastation of Hurricane Dorian. In the past 20 years (2000-2019), Puerto Rico, Myanmar and Haiti were the countries most affected by the impacts of such weather events.

These are some of the main results of the Global Climate Risk Index 2021, published only a few hours before the Global Climate Adaptation Summit begins.

"The Global Climate Risk Index shows that poor vulnerable countries face particularly great challenges in dealing with the consequences of extreme weather events. They urgently need financial and technical assistance," said David Eckstein of Germanwatch.

"Therefore, it is concerning that



recent studies show that the 100 billion dollars per year pledged by

the industrialised nations will first not be reached, and second that

only a small proportion of this has been provided for climate adaptation. The Climate Adaptation Summit starting today must address these problems."

Eight of the 10 countries most affected between 2000 and 2019 are developing countries with low or lower middle income per capita.

India ranked as the seventh worst-hit country in 2019.

Responding to the ranking, Anjal Prakash, Research Director and Adjunct Associate Professor at Bharti Institute of Public Policy and Coordinating Lead Author of IPCC's special report on oceans and cryosphere, said it was not surprising to know that India appeared to be in the top 10 most affected countries in the global climate risk index of 2021.

"As an IPCC scientist, we have

been pointing towards extreme risk an emerging market such as India is going to face due to very rapidly changing climatic conditions."

"India is blessed by many ecologies - glaciers, high mountains, long coastlines as well as massive semi-arid regions which are the hotspots for climate change. Global warming is leading to an increase in the frequency of cyclones, the melting of glaciers at much faster rates, and heatwaves.

"A majority of the Indian population is dependent on agriculture, which is being severely affected by the impacts of climate change. This year, India saw many of its cities drowning due to variability of the monsoon system. Many global reports, including IPCC reports, have been pointing this out year after year," he said.

international



I call on people who feel that politics doesn't represent them, to those who feel that politics doesn't hear their voice, come home. Even if the Labor Party wasn't your home in the past, I promise to represent all of you
MERAV MICHAELI | ISRAEL'S LABOR PARTY LEADER

REPUBLICANS COME TO TRUMP'S RESCUE

As the House prepares to bring the impeachment charge against Donald Trump to the Senate for trial, a growing number of Republican senators say they are opposed to the proceeding



of the day quote

Guided by their expertise, breadth of experience and following the science, these Department of Energy appointees will contribute to creating a clean energy economy that produces millions of good-paying American jobs and safeguards the planet for future generations

TARAK SHAH | CHIEF OF STAFF, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, USA

I regret to inform you that I am infected with Covid-19. The symptoms are mild but I'm already under medical treatment. As always, I am optimistic. We will all move forward

ANDRÉS MANUEL LÓPEZ OBRADOR | PRESIDENT, MEXICO

There wasn't a hint of cynicism or lack of commitment to at least trying to work something out. If they were just trying to jam this through, I don't think it would have interrupted the Packers game

ANGUS KING | SENATOR (INDEPENDENT), MAINE, USA

US military in SCS not good for peace: China

The strategic South China Sea, through which trillions of dollars in trade flows each year, has long been a focus of contention between Beijing and Washington

AGENCIES

Beijing, Jan 25: The United States often sends ships and aircraft into the South China Sea to "flex its muscles" and this is not good for peace, China's Foreign Ministry said Monday, after a U.S. aircraft carrier group sailed into the disputed waterway

China Sea, where Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Brunei and Taiwan all have competing claims. The carrier group entered the South China Sea at the same time as Chinese-claimed Taiwan reported incursions by Chinese air force jets into the southwestern part of its air defence identification zone, prompting concern from



POWER PLAY

A U.S. carrier group led by the USS Theodore Roosevelt and accompanied by three warships, entered the waterway Saturday to promote "freedom of the seas"

It holds significance as it happened just days after Joe Biden became U.S. President

The carrier group entered the zone at the same time as Chinese-claimed Taiwan reported incursions by Chinese air force jets into the southwestern part of its air defence identification zone

The strategic South China Sea, through which trillions of dollars in trade flows each year, has long been a focus of contention between Beijing and Washington, with China particularly angered by U.S. military activity there.

The U.S. carrier group led by the USS Theodore Roosevelt and accompanied by three warships, entered the waterway Saturday to promote "freedom of the seas", the U.S. military said, just days after Joe Biden became U.S. President.

"The United States frequently sends aircraft and vessels into the South China Sea to flex its muscles," the foreign ministry spokesman, Zhao Lijian, told reporters, responding to the U.S. mission. "This is not conducive to peace and stability in the region."

China has repeatedly complained about U.S. Navy ships getting close to islands it occupies in the South

Washington.

China has not commented on what its air force was doing, and Zhao referred questions to the defence ministry.

He reiterated China's position that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China and that the United States should abide by the "one China" principle. Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen visited a radar base in the north of the island Monday, and praised its ability to track Chinese forces, her office said.

"From last year until now, our radar station has detected nearly 2,000 communist aircraft and more than 400 communist ships, allowing us to quickly monitor and drive them away, and fully guard the sea and airspace," she told of ficers.

Taiwan's defence ministry added that just a single Chinese aircraft flew into its defence zone on Monday, an anti-submarine Y-8 aircraft.

Ten miners' bodies retrieved from gold mine in China

A total of 22 miners were trapped underground following a blast at the mine in Qixia, January 10

AGENCIES

Beijing, Jan 25: A day after 11 trapped workers were rescued from a gold mine in China's Shandong province, authorities Monday retrieved the bodies of the 10 other miners, while one was still reported to be missing.

A total of 22 miners were trapped underground following a blast at the mine in Qixia January 10, reports Xinhua news agency.



"We will not stop searching for the missing miners," said Chen Fei, mayor of Yantai, adding that the rescue work is extremely difficult as the underground water is very deep.

According to Chen, the 11 rescued miners are receiving proper medical treatment, and DNA tests are being conducted to confirm the identities of the deceased.

The investigation into the cause of the accident is still underway.

Mining accidents are not uncommon in China, where the industry safety regulations can be poorly enforced, according to a BBC report.

In December 2020, 23 miners died after a carbon monoxide leak at a coal mine.

In September, 16 workers were killed at another mine on the outskirts of Chongqing, also due to carbon monoxide.

SHORT TAKES

Burial ceremony triggers tension

Islamabad: The body of Karima Baloch, a 37-year-old Pakistani dissident from the ethnic Baloch community and a prominent women's rights activist, who died in mysterious circumstances while in exile in Canada, was brought home and buried in her village in the restive Balochistan province amid tight security, officials said Monday. Karima, who was highly critical of Pakistan's security agencies and campaigned extensively against disappearances and human rights violations in the troubled Balochistan province, was found dead in Toronto downtown waterfront December 22.

Pressure mounts on AstraZeneca

Brussels: The European Union is pressuring the pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca to deliver more coronavirus vaccine doses to its 27 nations and to stick to its initial promises once the jab gets EU approval, especially since the bloc has already invested in enhancing production capacity.

Lee won't appeal prison sentence

Seoul: Samsung scion Lee Jae-yong and prosecutors have decided not to appeal a court ruling that convicted him for bribing South Korea's former president for business favours, confirming a prison term of two and a half years for the country's most influential corporate leader, according to lawyers and court officials Monday. But Lee's legal troubles aren't over. He has been indicted separately on charges of stock price manipulation, breach of trust and auditing violations related to a 2015 merger between two Samsung affiliates.

Bangla receives 1st vax consignment

Dhaka: Bangladesh Monday received the first consignment of the 5 million doses of Covishield vaccines from India under a procurement agreement, four days after New Delhi gifted two million doses of the vaccine to Dhaka. A special Air India flight carrying the Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine co-manufactured by SII reached the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport earlier in the day.

'Buy American' in Prez Biden's agenda

AGENCIES

Baltimore, Jan 25: President Joe Biden plans to sign an executive order that aims to boost government purchases from US manufacturers, according to administration officials.

The United States has shed roughly 540,000 factory jobs since last February as the coronavirus pandemic hurled the world's largest economy into recession. The goal of the order would be to use the \$600 billion the federal government spends on procurement to boost domestic factories and hiring, said officials who insisted on anonymity to discuss the forthcoming announcement.

Biden's order would modify the rules for the Buy American program, making it harder for contractors to qualify for a waiver and sell foreign-made goods to federal agencies. It also changes rules so that more of a manufactured good's components must originate from U.S. factories. American-made goods would also be protected by an increase in the government's thresh-



old and price preferences, the difference in price over which the government can buy a foreign product.

The order also has elements that apply to the separate Buy America program, which applies separately to highways and bridges. It seeks to open up government procurement contracts to new companies by scouting potential contractors. The order would create a public website for companies that received waivers to sell foreign goods to the government, so that U.S. manufacturers can have more information and be in a

more competitive position.

To help enforce these goals, the order establishes a job at the White House Office of Management and Budget to monitor the initiative and focus on ensuring the government buys more domestically made goods. It also requires federal agencies to report on their progress in purchasing American goods, as well as emphasizing Biden's support for the Jones Act, which mandates that only U.S.-flag vessels carry cargo between U.S. ports.

Past presidents have promised to revitalize manufacturing as a source

Biden's order would modify the rules for the Buy American program

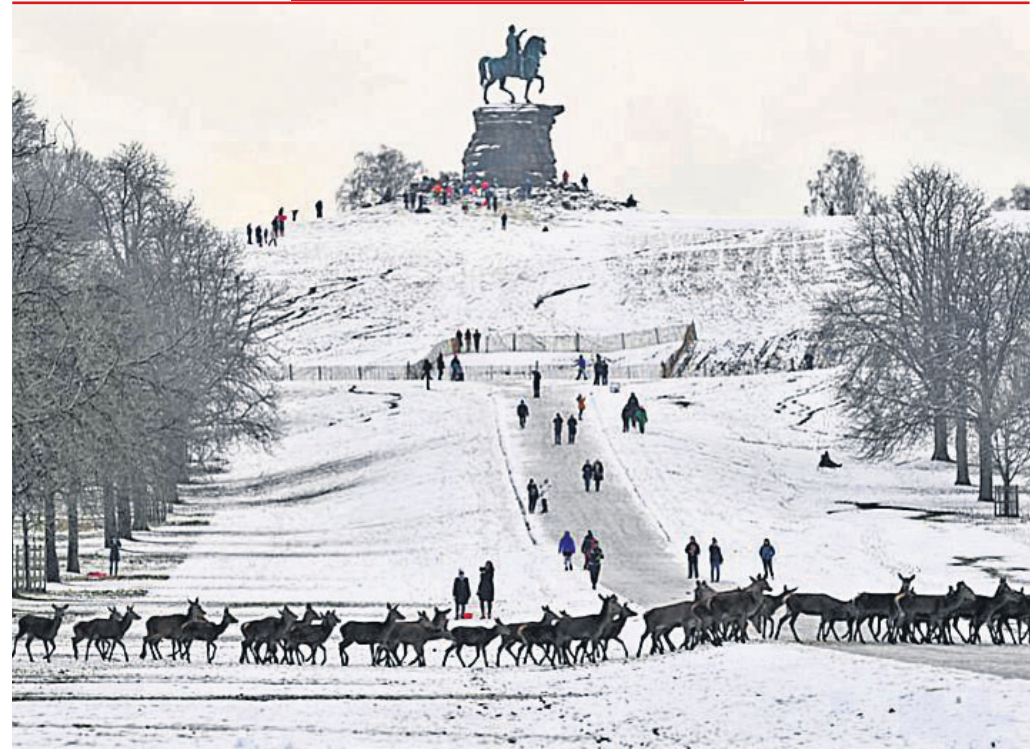
The United States has shed roughly 540,000 factory jobs since last February

The goal of the order would be to use the \$600 billion the federal gov spends on procurement to boost domestic factories and hiring

of job growth and achieved mixed results. The government helped save the automotive sector after the 2008 financial crisis, but the number of factory jobs has been steadily shrinking over the course of four decades.

The number of U.S. manufacturing jobs peaked in 1979 at 19.5 million and now totals 12.3 million, according to the Labor Department. Biden's predecessor, Donald Trump, famously promised a factory renaissance, yet manufacturing employment never returned to its pre-Great Recession levels before the coronavirus struck.

FEAST FOR YOUR EYES



A herd of deer walks through the snow in Windsor, Britain

REUTERS

Finally, Israel opens its UAE embassy

AGENCIES

Tel Aviv, Jan 25: Israel has announced that it has opened an embassy in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), following a normalisation deal signed last year to establish diplomatic ties between the two nations.

Taking to Twitter Sunday, the Foreign Ministry said: "The Israeli embassy in Abu Dhabi officially opened today with the arrival of the Head of Mission Ambassador Eitan Naeh."

"The Israeli embassy in the United Arab Emirates will promote the full range of relations between the two countries in all areas and expand ties with the Emirati government, economic entities and the private sector, academia, the media and more."



In a separate statement published on its website, the Ministry said that until a permanent location is found, the embassy will operate from temporary offices, which will be inaugurated in the coming days.

In the statement, Minister of Foreign Affairs Gabi Ashkenazi said: "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs continues to lead the implementation of the peace and normalisation agreements in the Gulf and to advance Israel's international status."

"The opening of the mission will enable the expansion of bilateral ties between Israel and the UAE, and the full and quick implementation of the potential inherent in our relations."

Israel's announcement came just hours after the Council of Ministers of the UAE approved the establishment of an embassy in Israel's Tel Aviv city.

MORE SANCTIONS AWAIT RUSSIA

AGENCIES

Brussels, Jan 25: The European Union will consider fresh sanctions on Russian individuals after more than 3,000 people were arrested across Russia Saturday to demand the release of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny.

Lithuania's foreign minister, arriving in Brussels for a meeting of the bloc's 27 top diplomats, said "a change is in the air in Russia" that the bloc must support, especially after Navalny's detention as he returned to Russia from Germany.

"The EU needs to send a very clear and decisive message that this is not acceptable," Gabrielius Landsbergis said in a video statement, calling for more sanctions on Russian individuals.

The EU already has economic sanctions on the Russian energy, financial and arms sectors over its 2014 annexation of the Crimea peninsula and has imposed sanc-



tions on Russian officials close to President Vladimir Putin in response to Navalny's poisoning in August.

Fellow Baltic countries Latvia and Estonia support more EU sanctions on Russian individuals, and Italy's foreign minister said Sunday that Rome was ready to support

more travel bans and asset freezes. Romania publicly backed sanctions Monday.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas demanded the immediate release of protesters who braved extreme cold to call for Navalny's release, but did not make further comment.

The EU needs to send a very clear and decisive message that this is not acceptable

GABRIELIUS LANDSBERGIS | FOREIGN MINISTER, LITHUANIA

In central Moscow Saturday, where Reuters reporters estimated up to 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.

Germany and France, the EU's main powers, will be central to deciding if the bloc goes ahead with punitive measures on Russia, a big oil and gas exporter to the bloc, although no detailed list of names is expected to be decided Monday.

Navalny says Putin was behind his poisoning last August, a version that the Kremlin rejects. The Kremlin says it has seen no evidence that Navalny was poisoned.

China pushes fringe theories on Covid origins

AGENCIES

Taipei, Jan 25: Chinese state media have played up questions about Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine and whether it could be lethal. A government spokesperson suggests the coronavirus could have emerged from a US military lab.

As the ruling Communist Party faces growing questioning about China's vaccines and renewed criticism of its early COVID response, it is hitting back by encouraging fringe theories that some experts say could cause harm.

State media and officials are sowing doubts about Western vaccines and the origin of the coronavirus in an apparent bid to deflect the attacks. Both issues are in the spotlight because of the ongoing rollout of vaccines globally and the recent arrival of a WHO team in Wuhan,

China, to investigate the origins of the virus.

While fringe theories may raise eyebrows overseas, the efforts also target a more receptive domestic audience. The social media hashtag "American's Ft. Detrick," started by the Communist Youth League, was viewed at least 1.4 billion times last week after a Foreign Ministry spokesperson called for a WHO investigation of the biological weapons lab in Maryland.

"Its purpose is to shift the blame from mishandling by (the) Chinese government in the pandemic's early days to conspiracy by the U.S.," said Fang Shimin, a now-U.S.-based writer



The Communist Party sees the WHO investigation as a political risk because it focuses attention on China's response

JACOB WALLIS | SENIOR ANALYST, AUSTRALIAN STRATEGIC POLICY INSTITUTE

known for exposing faked degrees and other fraud in Chinese science. "The tactic is quite successful because of widespread anti-American

sentiment in China."

Yuan Zeng, an expert on Chinese media at the University of Leeds in Great Britain, said the government's stories spread so widely that even well-educated Chinese friends have asked her whether

they might be true.

Inflaming doubts and spreading conspiracy theories might add to public health risks as governments try to dispel unease about vaccines, she said, saying: "That is super, super dangerous."

In the latest volley, state media called for an investigation into the deaths of 23 elderly people in Norway after they received the Pfizer vaccine. An anchor at CGTN, the English-language station of state broadcaster CCTV, and the Global Times newspaper accused Western media of ignoring the news.

Health experts say deaths unrelated to the vaccine are possible during mass vaccination campaigns, and a WHO panel has concluded that the vaccine did not play a "contributory role" in the Norway deaths.

business

of the day quote

We realised the grim situation of the skill gap in India. This (inclusive academic learning) is done with a central and unified approach to enhance and connect skills of candidates to potential employers with a dual objective: elevate employability and increase the ROI for firms

For a nascent and disruptive industry like EV that is heavily dependent on government policies, there needs to be an effective approach that would drive the market of EVs in the country. The industry is still lagging behind the desired target

Though job postings and searches have seen a dip from pandemic-induced restrictions on mobility, while fear of the virus kept consumers away from traditional vacation spots, there is hope in a new year and a new season of travel.

SHORT TAKES

Thomas Cook, MMPRC ink pact

New Delhi: Travel services provider Thomas Cook India has signed an agreement with the Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC). The agreement will leverage to promote the Maldives as a preferred destination. Thomas Cook India said in a filing to the BSE Monday. "We are delighted to partner with the MMPRC to jointly promote the Maldives as the destination of choice for our range of Indian traveller segments," Thomas Cook (India), President, Rajeev Kale said.

'RIL's Ebitda back to pre-Covid levels'

New Delhi: Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) has seen pre-tax profit recover to pre-pandemic levels on the back of continued growth in consumer businesses, Moody's Investors Service said Monday. The oil-to-retail-to-telecom behemoth Friday reported a 0.7% Ebitda (earnings before interest, tax and depreciation and amortisation) growth for the quarter ended December 31, 2020, compared with the corresponding quarter in the previous year.

Indian Oil Corp raises ₹1,290 cr

New Delhi: Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOC), the nation's top oil firm, has raised ₹1,290.20 crore in debt to refinance existing borrowings and meet business expenses. In a stock exchange filing Monday, IOC said it has issued "5.60 per cent unsecured, listed, rated, taxable, redeemable, non-convertible debentures of ₹10 lakh each aggregating to ₹1,290.20 crore on private placement basis".

'IT spending to grow 6.2 pc'

San Francisco: After a decline in the pandemic-hit 2020, worldwide IT spending is projected to total \$3.9 trillion in 2021, an increase of 6.2 per cent from the previous year, according to the latest forecast by Gartner Monday. Worldwide IT spending declined 3.2 per cent in 2020 as Chief Information Officers (CIOs) prioritised spending on technology and services that were deemed "mission-critical" during the initial stages of the pandemic.

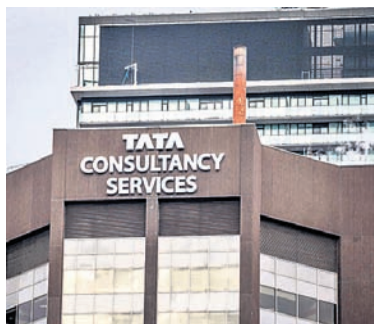


Steel prices have increased by 65 per cent in the last six months. The rates of steel and cement will reduce once cheaper alternatives are available

NITIN GADHKARI | UNION MINISTER

TCS BECOMES MOST VALUED DOMESTIC FIRM

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) Monday surpassed Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) to become the country's most valued firm by market capitalisation. During the afternoon trade, the market valuation of TCS was at ₹12,45,341.44 crore while that of RIL was at ₹12,42,593.78 crore on the BSE



Panasonic opens third store in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 25: Japan's leading appliances brand Panasonic Monday inaugurated its exclusive store at Saheed Nagar market building in City. It is the company's third store in the city and tenth in Odisha.

The new brand shop was inaugurated by Durgesh Shukla, branch head of Panasonic, in the presence of proprietors Aditya Patodia and Snehal Patodia. Area manager of Panasonic Trupti Kanta Das and Marketing Manager SK Raffiqullah were also present



during the inauguration ceremony. Home appliances like refrigerators, LED TV, washing machines, microwaves, mixer and others will be available for the customers. The store is also offering lucrative discounts, financing service and sure gifts for the buyers, Shuklasaid. "We have planned to set this store much earlier but we had to delay owing to the lockdown. We provide best quality products with a wide range."

Shukla also mentioned that the new store will generate ₹5 millions of turnover. He also said that Panasonic takes 9% of market share in LED in the country and 13% in Odisha. It expects the market share to increase by 2% in the post-covid period.

BoA gives special pandemic bonus to 97% of its 1.7L staff

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 25: Bank of America (BoA) is rewarding its over 1.7 lakh staff worldwide, including over 24,000 in India, with a cash award of \$750 each to those earning under \$1 lakh in annual compensation for the appreciation of their work through the pandemic.



Called 'delivering together' compensation awards, the bank expects over 97% of its employees to get the special one-time cash bonus.

In an internal memo sent to the employees worldwide, which has been accessed by PTI, BoA chief executive Brian Moynihan said in appreciation for the outstanding efforts, the management team and board have decided to recognise employees with 'delivering together' compensation awards.

During the first quarter of 2021, all eligible employees with \$1 lakh or less in annual total compensation will be paid a cash bonus of \$750 each. Those in the US will receive this award in late February and those outside the US will receive the payment in March, Moynihan said.

WFH norm creates tax challenges for SEZs



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 25: The Covid-induced work from home (WFH) norms at workplaces has presented

special challenges even for the government to mould tax regulations that take note of the new norm. One such issue is coming in the IT and ITES sectors, who have be-

The pandemic-induced WFH has created doubts over continuation of income tax holiday extended to IT and ITES units operation from SEZs as the current functioning of staff is akin to employees delivering services virtually from their home location and not from the SEZs

come the flagbearers of country's resilience to the pandemic, growing both their operations and revenues even during the current difficult period.

The pandemic-induced WFH has created doubts over continuation of income tax holiday extended to IT and ITES units operation from Special Economic Zones (SEZ) as the current functioning of staff is akin to employees delivering services virtually from their home location and not from the SEZs. "There is a need to clarify,

whether services delivered by employees of SEZ-based IT-ITES units, virtually from their home location, shall be eligible for income tax holiday. This would not only ensure that future litigation is minimised but also provide some elbow room to the sector to drive higher operational efficiencies," said Naveen Aggarwal, Partner, Tax, KPMG in India.

While the tax officials said that this issue should not be a concern as the department is constantly working to see that pandemic-in-

duced disruptions do not impact functioning of businesses, sources said that a clarification over treatment of services rendered from work from home in case of IT and ITES companies may come in Budget 2021-22.

This would provide big relief to companies operating in the sector where WFH had almost acquired levels of permanency. Some organisations have announced long term plans on WFH while a few have already made this arrangement permanent.

'Govt's primary spending to grow 4.6 pc in FY22'

According to a report on the state of economy, the government would be able to narrow fiscal deficit to 5.5 pc of GDP in FY22 from expected level of over 7 pc in FY21, but this would assume a 19% growth in total receipts in FY22

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 25: With constrained revenue position running well into next financial year and country's fiscal position under strain, the government would have no option but to limit its expenditure to come back on path of fiscal consolidation and reduce its heavily enlarged deficit.

According to a report on the state of economy by Motilal Oswal Institutional Services, the government would be able to narrow fiscal deficit to 5.5% of GDP in FY22 from expected level of over 7% in FY21, but this would assume a 19% growth in total receipts in FY22 and an increase of just 5.6% in total spending by the Central government. This indicates that primary spending (excluding interest payments) would grow just 4.6% in FY22 (vs 6% growth in FY21), marking the second lowest growth in four decades, the brokerage said in its report.

The finance minister will present the Union Budget 2021-22 February 1 in this contained environment. As always, expectations are running high. However, the government's fiscal response in 2020 indicates certain inflexibility and the lack of resources to



stimulate the economy, the report said.

Although there was no massive fiscal stimulus in CY20-various estimates put it between 1.5% and 2.5% of GDP, of which 0.7% of GDP was on account of food subsidies, which is unlikely to affect the fiscal balance-a significant shortfall in receipts likely led to the doubling of the fiscal deficit to 7% of GDP in FY21 (from the budgeted 3.5%), Motilal Oswal said.

The assumption (based on actual data available up to Nov'20) is gross taxes would decline 5.3%, total receipts would fall 12.4%, and total expenditure would grow 7.2% in FY21.

Besides these all important macro

numbers, the brokerage said that this year's budget would be tracked for announcement in three areas: the lack of receipts has led to debates related to one-off cess/surcharge. However, the government may consider keeping the taxation regime unchanged, helping to sustain and bolster the economic momentum.

The other area, the brokerage said, is that close monitoring would be done to see whether the Union Budget includes measures to revive residential real estate demand in the country. Also, it would be interesting to note whether the Government can continue to support the rural sector as much as it has in the past couple of years.

BUDGET 2021: GOVT MAY TWEAK CUSTOMS DUTIES ON HOST OF GOODS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 25: The government may tweak customs duties in the Budget next week on several goods, including furniture raw materials, copper scrap, certain chemicals, telecom equipment and rubber products, to promote domestic manufacturing and exports, sources said.

They said that while import duties could be tweaked on over 20 products such as cut and polished diamonds, rubber goods, leather garments, telecom equipment and carpet, the customs duties could be removed on select raw materials (like wood in rough, swan wood

and hard board) used for furniture manufacturing and copper concentrate.

"Expensive raw materials impact India's price competitiveness in the international market. The country's exports of furniture is very low (about one per cent), while countries like China and Vietnam are major players in the sector," they added.

The government may also consider reducing customs duties on coal tar pitch, and copper scrap, while raising the levies on certain finished goods like refrigerator, washing machine and clothes dryer, one of the sources said.

'₹1.10L cr credit potential for Odisha'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 25: National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) Monday assessed a total credit requirement of ₹1, 10,735 crore for the year 2021-22 with greater emphasis on crop diversification, animal husbandry and fishery sector apart from greater thrust on enhancing credit flow to Self Help Groups.

The credit plan was announced at the State Credit Seminar 2021-22, held Monday.

Chief General Manager of NABARD C Udayabhaskar said that the credit projections for Odisha for 2021-22 is ₹1, 10,735 crore which is based on the potential assessed



under various sectors and sub sectors in all the agro climatic zones of the state. Udayabhaskar solicited co-operation of state Government, banks and other stake holders towards achieving the credit growth required to realise the potential identified under plan.

According to NABARD's statement, the projected credit flow to priority sector for the year 2021-22 has

been enhanced by 22.5% from the year 2020-21. "The projection for credit to agriculture sector was pegged at ₹46,460.40 crore which is 7.34% more than the projection of the year 2020-21," statement said.

"Keeping in view high credit growth in MSME sector with a potential generate rapid employment in the post-Covid period, a projection of 41867.10 crore for credit to MSME sector has been made with a growth of 37.46% compared to the previous year. Also, in order to improve flow of credit to SHG, the projection for loan under the category which will also increase the average loan for SHG, the statement revealed.

WEF COALITION

Infy, TCS, Cognizant join hands to tackle workplace racism

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Davos, Jan 25: Indian IT majors Infosys and TCS Monday joined global giants like Microsoft, Facebook, Google and Bank of America (BoA) in an international coalition launched by the World Economic Forum (WEF) to tackle racism in workplaces.

Announcing the coalition during its week-long online Davos Agenda Summit, the WEF said it would work towards improving racial and ethnic justice in the workplace.

The founding members include 48 organizations representing 13 industries, with more than 55 lakh employees worldwide and with

headquarters in three continents, the WEF said.

It further said companies must put racial and ethnic justice on their board's agendas, take at least one firm action and set a long-term strategy to become an anti-racist organization and build equitable and just workplaces for professionals with under-represented racial and ethnic identities.

Examples of business commitments towards racial and ethnic justice range from allocating financial and human resources to racial justice work, setting representation goals for all seniority levels, and establishing mentorship programmes for racially and ethnically diverse employees. One of



the initiative's starting points will be Black inclusion and addressing anti-Blackness.

"With just 1 per cent of Fortune 500 companies led by Black chief executives, the need to tackle racial

under-representation in business is urgent and obvious," WEF Managing Director Saadia Zahidi said.

The founding members of the coalition also include AP Moller-Maersk, AlixPartners, AstraZeneca,

BlackRock, Bloomberg, Boston Consulting Group, Bridgewater Associates, Centene, Cisco, Cognizant, Dentsu International, Deutsche Bank, EY, H&M, Henry Schein, HP and IKEA.

Other members are Jacobs Engineering Group, Jefferson Health, Johnson & Johnson, Kaiser Permanente, Kearney, LinkedIn, ManpowerGroup, Mastercard, Mayo Clinic, McKinsey, Nestle, PayPal, Procter & Gamble, PwC, Salesforce, SAP, Standard Chartered Bank,

Coca-Cola, Depository Trust & Clearing (DTCC), Thermo Fisher Scientific, Uber, Unilever, UPS and Willis Towers Watson.

The WEF said the COVID-19 pandemic continues to widen inequalities, with disproportionate repercussions for disadvantaged groups and minorities.

At the ongoing summit global leaders will discuss what policies, practices and partnerships are needed to embed equity and inclusion into our economic systems.

With just 1 per cent of Fortune 500 companies led by Black chief executives, the need to tackle racial under-representation in business is urgent and obvious

SAADIA ZAHIDI | MD, WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

MAN UTD EDGE PAST REDS



Bruno Fernandes curls in a free-kick for the winner against Liverpool as Manchester United's other scorer Marcus Rashford looks on, Sunday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Manchester, Jan 25: A scream from Andy Robertson was a forlorn attempt to distract Mason Greenwood beginning Manchester United's comeback. The defender won't be the only one shrieking at Liverpool after going out of the FA Cup.

Not that everything went wrong for Liverpool, with Mohamed Salah scoring twice. The Liverpool striker's opener was cancelled out by Greenwood and he levelled after Marcus Rashford put United in front. But Bruno Fernandes bent in a free-kick in the 78th minute to send United into the fifth round with a 3-2 victory Sunday.

Losing compounded a miserable 70 hours that also saw Liverpool beaten at home by Burnley Thursday in a further blow to its title

defense. It was a 0-0 draw with United a week ago that helped Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's side stay top of the standings in the pursuit of the team's first Premier League title since 2013.

The excitement lacking in the Anfield league encounter was on show a week later at a freezing and fan-free Old Trafford with the highest scoring match between these fiercest of English rivals since 2010.

United was joined by Chelsea, Everton, Leicester and Burnley Sunday in advancing to the round of 16 where it will play West Ham next month.

Liverpool have gone 483 minutes without a league goal but remember where the net is in the cup. Roberto Firmino threaded a pass to Salah who lifted a shot over Dean Henderson from close range in the 18th minute.

But the lead lasted only six minutes. Paul Pogba's tackle gained possession, Donny van de Beek released Rashford on the left flank by the halfway line and a diagonal pass landed perfectly at the feet of Greenwood, who withstood the yelling of Robertson to maintain his composure to score.

The favor was returned three minutes into the second half. Greenwood played in Rashford through the center and the striker placed the ball in bottom corner for his 15th goal in all competitions this season. But United was made to pay for its slackness.

A sideways pass from Edinson Cavani was too casual and was intercepted by James Milner. After passing to Firmino on the left of the penalty area, Milner was inside the box as the return pass came across. But Milner's stepover let

the ball roll through to Salah who squeezed a shot through Henderson's legs.

The introduction of Fernandes was transformative — as so often since he arrived a year ago. Presented with a chance to grab a winner from a free-kick, the Portugal midfielder seized it, bending the ball around the wall into the net.

CHELSEA ADVANCE
In snowy conditions at Stamford Bridge, Tammy Abraham scored a hat trick as Chelsea beat Luton 3-1 — the first two coming in a seven-minute span in the first half.

There was a rare start these days for Chelsea goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga but familiar error, which allowed Jordan Clark's shot to go through him. But Abraham struck again in the 74th minute.

Not even a cup game could help Timo Werner find the net again. The German missed a late penalty to leave him with only one goal in two months, which came in the previous round.

Only the cup run is going well for Chelsea at the start of 2021, with Frank Lampard's side losing five of its last eight Premier League games.

FOXES' COMEBACK
Leicester staged a second-half comeback to beat Brentford 3-1 after conceding after six minutes from Mads Bech Sorensen.

James Maddison teed up Cengiz Under to equalize and Youri Tielemans put Leicester ahead from a penalty after being tripped. Maddison tapped in a rebound to seal the win.

BURNLEY ADVANCE
Jay Rodriguez struck twice for Burnley in a 3-0 win at Fulham — the 31-year-old striker's first goals since July. Rodriguez turned provider for Kevin Long for the third.

EVERTON THROUGH
Dominic Calvert-Lewin scored his first goal in 50 days after returning from injury to set Everton on its way to a 3-0 victory over Sheffield Wednesday. Corners from James Rodriguez were headed in by Richarlison and Yerry Mina in the second half.

De Jong, Puig script Barca win



Frenkie de Jong pushes the ball into the net as the Elche custodian and a defender look frustrated, Sunday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, Jan 25: Barcelona picked up their second win in a row without the suspended Lionel Messi, defeating Elche 2-0 to regain third place in the Spanish league.

Frenkie de Jong scored in the 39th minute and set up Riqui Puig's 89th-minute goal to give Barcelona their fourth league win in a row as Messi served the second of his two-game suspension for hitting an opponent.

The Catalan club moved a point in front of Sevilla, who Saturday beat Cadiz 3-0. Barcelona was three points behind second-place Real Madrid — which won 4-1 at Alaves Saturday — and seven points behind leader Atletico Madrid.

It was the first time Barcelona won four consecutive league matches this season, with all four victories coming in away matches. They haven't lost in nine straight league games.

De Jong scored into the open net after the Elche defense failed to fully clear a cross from Martin Braithwaite to Antoine Griezmann inside the area. The Dutch mid-

ATLETICO RALLY AGAIN TO WIDEN THEIR LEAD

MADRID: Atletico Madrid haven't flinched in their quest to win the Spanish league title for the first time since 2014. Coming from behind for a second straight time, Atletico defeated Valencia 3-1 Sunday to strengthen their hold on the league lead entering the second half of the season. Joao Felix, Luis Suarez and Angel Correa scored to give Atletico their seventh straight league win and a seven-point gap to second-place Real Madrid with a game in hand. Diego Simeone's team are 10 points ahead of Barcelona. Atletico had also needed to rally to win its previous league match, against Eibar. Valencia opened the scoring with a beautiful curling long-range shot by Uros Racic in the 11th minute, but Felix restored parity off a corner kick in the 23rd and Suarez put the hosts ahead with a well-placed low shot into the far corner in the 54th from a Felix pass. Correa sealed the victory by completing a cross from Marcos Llorente in the 72nd. Suarez, who netted a late winner against Eibar last weekend, is now one of the league's leading scorers with 12 goals, along with Sevilla's Youssef En-Nesyri. Valencia, which was unbeaten in five matches in all competitions, stayed in 14th place.

fielder made a well-placed cross for Puig's late header for his first-ever Spanish league goal.

Marc-Andre Ter Stegen made a crucial foot-save to keep Barcelona ahead in the 50th after Elche forward Emiliano Rigoni entered the area in a one-on-one situation. The break-away for the hosts was prompted after a blunder by Barcelona defender Oscar Mingueza, who gave the ball away near midfield.

Barcelona was coming off a 2-0 win over third-division club

Cornella in the round of 32 of the Copa del Rey Thursday, when Messi served the first match of his suspension for hitting an opponent in the team's 2-3 loss to Athletic Bilbao in the Spanish Super Cup final January 17. The Argentina playmaker will be allowed to return to action in Barcelona's visit to Rayo Vallecano in the round of 16 of the Copa del Rey Wednesday. Elche, winless in their last 13 league games, was second-to-last in the 20-team standings.

Six sportspersons, including Mouma, awarded Padma Shri

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 25: Veteran table tennis player Mouma Das and the legendary PT Usha's coach Madhavan Nambiar were among six sportspersons awarded the prestigious Padma Shri by the Government of India on the eve of the country's 72nd Republic Day.

Besides Mouma and the great athletics coach, better known as OM Nambiar, former India women's basketball team captain P Anitha, long-distance runner Sudha, former Indian wrestler Virender Singh and para athlete KY Venkatesh have also been honoured with the country's fourth highest civilian award in the sports category.

Mouma, who won the Arjuna Award in 2013, became only the second table tennis player after Achanta Sharath Kamal to win the Padma Shri. Sharath won the recognition in 2019.

Sudha, who was awarded the Arjuna in 2012, is the second-most renowned athlete to bag the recognition. She is an Indian Olympic athlete in the 3000 metres steeplechase event. A na-

tional record holder in the event, she has represented India at international events since 2005.

Singh is an Asian champion and has won two gold and four silver medals at various editions of Asiad and the continental championships. She had represented India at two consecutive Olympic Games, in 2012 and 2016.

Nambiar is a 1985 Dronacharya awardee. Virender is a bronze medal-winning wrestler in the 1992 World Wrestling Championship at Cali, Colombia. He also won a silver medal in Commonwealth C'ship in 1995 (Senior, 74kg, freestyle).

Venkatesh was a para athlete who has his name in the Limca Book of Records for winning the highest number of medals in the World Dwarf Games, 2005. He also represented India at the first International Paralympic Committee (IPC) Athletics World Championships in Berlin, Germany in 1994.

Anshu Jamsenpa is an Indian mountaineer and the first woman in the world to scale the Mount Everest twice in a season, and the fastest double summiter to do so within five days.

MCFC blunder gifts CFC a point

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bambolim, Jan 25: A terrible late error in the box by Ahmed Jahouh and Chennaiyin FC's (CFC) improved second-half display helped them hold Mumbai City FC (MCFC) to a 1-1 draw in the Indian Super League (ISL) here, Monday. However, the result meant the Islanders extended their unbeaten run to 12 games, matching FC Goa's record.

Mumbai grabbed the lead through Bartholomew Ogbeche (21st minute) but his goal was cancelled out by Esmael Goncalves (76th) as Chennaiyin rallied to earn a hard-fought point.

The opening 45 minutes were nothing short of entertainment with both the sides creating ample chances and testing each other. However, Mumbai proved more clinical than their opponents in the attacking third and deservedly led at the break.

Chennaiyin dominated the opening exchanges and created a chance as early as in the second minute. Goncalves won the ball in midfield and played Thoi Singh on the right flank, whose cross was flicked by Mourtada Fall just outside the box. It fell towards Lallianzuala Chhangte who unleashed a shot on his weaker foot which was parried away by Amrinder Singh.

Another chance went begging for Chennaiyin, this time from a set-piece. Chhangte whipped a dangerous cross through a corner for



Chennaiyin FC players celebrate after scoring the equaliser, Monday

Eli Sabia, who got a free header but saw his effort sail over the crossbar.

Those missed opportunities would haunt Chennaiyin as Mumbai broke the deadlock. The Islanders have scored the most goals from set-pieces this season and opened the scoring in a similar fashion.

After Amey Ranawade's throw was cleared away poorly, Rowlin Borges found Bipin Singh on the left. The winger delivered a delicious cross at the far post for Ogbeche, who thumped a brilliant header to notch his fifth goal of the season. That was his 32nd ISL goal as he overtook Marcelinho to climb to third on

the all-time scoring charts. Chennaiyin began the second half strongly in search of an equaliser but neither side was able to fashion clear-cut chances as the game progressed.

However, they were fortunate to win a penalty after an error from Ahmed Jahouh. The midfielder was deemed to have tripped Jakob Sylvestr in the box. Goncalves stepped up to take the spot-kick and sent Amrinder the wrong way to draw Chennaiyin level.

Mumbai piled on the pressure in the last quarter of the game but Chennaiyin's defense stood tall to deny their opponents any chance of finding a winner.

Blues fire Lampard; likely to hire Tuchel

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, Jan 25: Frank Lampard was fired by Chelsea Monday halfway through his second season in charge after being unable to replicate his success as the club's record scorer in his first Premier League managerial job.

Chelsea have lost five of their last eight Premier League games and dropped to ninth place, despite Lampard benefiting from nearly USD 300 million spent on new players for this season.

Chelsea said the performances had "not met expectations" and left the team "without any clear path to sustained improvement" — making a change of managers necessary with former PSG coach Thomas Tuchel set to be hired.

Reflecting Lampard's statement at the west London club, the firing was announced in a rare statement by owner Roman Abramovich.

"This was a very difficult decision for the club, not least because I have an excellent personal relationship with Frank and I have the utmost respect for him," owner Roman Abramovich said. "He is a man of great integrity and has the highest of work ethics. However, under current circumstances we believe it is best to change managers. "On behalf of everyone at the



club, the board and personally, I would like to thank Frank for his work as head coach and wish him every success in the future. He is an important icon of this great club and his status here remains undiminished. He will always be warmly welcomed back at Stamford Bridge." Lampard leaves with the lowest points-per-game record of the dozen managers since Abramovich took the club in 2003. As the pressure has grown, the cracks were showing ahead of this weekend's FA Cup win over Luton, when Lampard hit out at perceived negative coverage of the team.

Chelsea brought back its mid-field great as coach in 2019 despite him having only a single season's experience in management in the second division with Derby. He achieved Champions League qualification in his first season by securing a fourth-place finish in the EPL.

Juventus close gap with AC Milan, Inter

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Milan, Jan 25: Weston McKennie scored to help Juventus beat Bologna 2-0 in Serie A and bounce back from their demoralising loss to title rival Inter Milan.

The American netted Juve's second goal, in the 71st minute, after Arthur had given the Bianconeri the lead in the first half.

Juventus moved within seven points of Italian league leader AC Milan, which were beaten 0-3 at home by Atalanta Saturday. Second-placed Inter Milan also dropped points with a 0-0 draw at Udinese.

Nine-time defending champions Juventus have a match in hand. Juventus are fourth, level

on points with fifth-place Atalanta.

Juventus had lost 0-2 at Inter last week but boosted morale by beating Napoli by the same score-line Wednesday to lift the Italian Super Cup.

Andrea Pirlo's side needed a stroke of luck to take the lead against Bologna in Turin, with Arthur's somewhat hopeful shot deflecting into the bottom right corner in the 15th minute.

It was Arthur's first goal for Juventus since joining from Barcelona in June.

It took Juventus until the 71st to get the second when McKennie headed in a corner for his fourth goal for the Bianconeri.



Members of the SOA Aluminiz team (champions) and CCC (runners-up) pose, Sunday, with the trophies after the final of the Corporate Cricket League, which was organised by WE4YOU January 22-24 at Mulapadia

'We're not allowed to share lift with Aussies'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 25: Senior off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin has revealed that the Indian players were not allowed to share the lift with their Australian counterparts during the Sydney Test, something the visitors found 'too difficult to digest'.

The third Test of the recently-concluded four-match series was played at the SCG and throughout the tour, players and support staffs of both the teams stayed in a bio bubble due to threat posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We reached Sydney, they locked us with severe restrictions. There was a unique thing that happened in Sydney. It was strange, to be

honest. Both India and Australia were in the same bubble. But when Australian players were in the lift, they won't allow Indian players inside it," Ashwin said.

The seasoned spinner made the revelation during a YouTube video chat with India's fielding coach R Sridhar. Ashwin added, "Seriously guys? We felt so bad at that time. We are in the same bubble. But you get into the lift and you can't share the space with another person staying in the same bubble. It was too difficult for us to digest. We are all in the same bubble, but you get into the lift and share the lift space!"

The Test was also marked by allegations of racial abuse against Indian pacers Mohammed Siraj and Jasprit Bumrah.

Plane crash kills 4 footballers, club's president in Brazil

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rio de Janeiro, Jan 25: Four players and the president of Brazilian football club Palmas died in a plane crash Sunday in the northern state of Tocantins, the team said. The cause of the accident was not immediately known. The statement didn't identify the type of plane.

The accident occurred when the plane suddenly plunged to the ground at the end of the runway while on takeoff, the club reported. The players were on their way to Goiania, in the central region, to play a match against Vila Nova.

The victims were identified as president Lucas Meira and players Lucas Praxedes, Guilherme Noe, Rauland and Marcus Molinari.