



ALAYA F GETS NOSTALGIC

Actor Alaya F Sunday got emotional talking about working on her debut film *Jawaani Jaaneman*

LEISURE P2



SHAH SLAMS MAMATA

In a stinging attack on WB CM Mamata Banerjee, Amit Shah alleged that she is working towards serving her nephew

TWO STATES P7



PROTESTS ROCK RUSSIA

Thousands of people took to the streets in Russia Sunday demanding the release of jailed Oppn leader Alexei Navalny

INTERNATIONAL P10

India may lose oilfield to Cairn

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 31: The government may give Cairn Energy one of the surrendered oil fields such as Ratna R-Series in lieu of the \$1.4 billion it has to pay to the British firm, helping prevent seizure of foreign assets in case of default as well as get an experienced operator in struggling exploration & production (E&P) sector, sources said.

Cairn Energy gave India its biggest onland oil discovery but exited the country after it was slapped with ₹10,247-crore tax demand using a legislation that gave the government the power to tax companies retrospectively. The firm has now won an international arbitration against the tax demand and the government has been ordered to return the value of shares of Cairn it had sold, dividends it had seized and tax refund it had withheld to recover the tax demand.

For a government struggling to find revenue to boost a COVID-19 battered economy, options of appeal against the arbitration award are limited and it may not have the financial bandwidth for such a payout, two sources with

The govt may offer to hand over an oilfield to Cairn in lieu of the \$1.4 billion it has to pay the Edinburgh based company to prevent seizure of its foreign assets

Cairn Energy gave India its biggest onland oil discovery but exited the country after it was slapped with ₹10,247-crore tax demand



The govt's options of appeal against the arbitration award are limited and it may not have the financial bandwidth for such a payout

knowledge of the development said.

"One option is to give Cairn one or more of the oil and gas fields that the government now owns after they are surrendered by operators for various reasons," one of them said. "The government could give the Ratna and R-Series oil and gas field in the Arabian Sea that were taken away from Essar Oil-Premier Oil consortium in 2016 because contractual terms had changed."

The Barmer oilfield in Rajasthan, which was originally discovered by Cairn Energy, could be another option. Vedanta Ltd, which now operates the field after it bought out Cairn's Indian subsidiary a decade back, has so far not agreed to the government conditions for getting an extension of contract beyond its original end day of May 2020.

Under Vedanta, which continues to operate the field on monthly extensions till its legal challenge to government conditions is settled, Rajasthan oilfields have seen steady decline in output.

"It's a win-win - the government settles its liability without paying a single penny or upsetting investor sentiments by not honouring the arbitration award through endless legal challenges and at the same time getting back an established exploration and production (E&P) firm back," another source said. No major oil and gas discovery has been made in the past seven years since the retrospective tax demand was raised. In case the government chooses not to honour the arbitration award, it risks the prospect of its assets in foreign countries being seized just like US oil firm ConocoPhillips did with Venezuela to recoup multi-billion dollar of compensation awarded in arbitration.

Earlier this month, Cairn Energy's chief executive officer Simon Thomson wrote to the Indian government that the arbitration ruling is final and binding, and failure to comply would breach the international rules. "As

India is a signatory to the New York Convention, the award can be enforced against Indian assets in numerous jurisdictions around the world for which the necessary preparations have been put in place," according to the letter, referring to the 1959 Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards.

Cairn Energy has asked the Indian government for an early indication of implementing the arbitration award, well before the announcement of its full year earnings March 9 for clarity of its shareholders, according to the letter. The tax authorities had in January 2014 slapped with an initial assessment of unpaid taxes of ₹10,247 crore over a restructuring carried out in 2006 while preparing for an initial public offering of Cairn India. The tax authorities in 2015 seized Cairn Energy's residual shareholding of about 10 per cent of Cairn India, then valued at about \$1 billion. The Edinburgh-based company filed a dispute under the UK-India Investment Treaty and sought international arbitration that started later in 2015 for the losses over expropriation of its investments in India.

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BUDGET 2021 Healthcare to get 'top priority': Survey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 31: India's healthcare sector is likely to get the maximum attention of the government in the upcoming Budget to be unveiled Monday, as it comes in the face of the country braving a once-in-a-century global pandemic, says a survey.

The ASSOCHAM-Primus Partners survey covered more than 550 industry participants, and 39.7 per cent respondents said healthcare would receive the highest priority in terms of resource allocation and policy support in the Budget.

Manufacturing emerged as the second key sector expected to be in focus, with 14.7 per cent respondents expecting it to receive the Finance Minister's attention, followed by MSMEs (11.4 per cent), real estate (10.7 per cent) and infrastructure (9.6 per cent).

"The COVID-19 pandemic tested the limits of the global healthcare system. While the government's proactive measures and the frontline workers' tireless efforts have helped tide the way, the pandemic has also brought forth the fragility of the healthcare system," the survey stated.

On measures which can strengthen the healthcare and pharma sector, 67.3 per cent respondents expect the allocation of a fund to modernise existing primary healthcare infrastructure.

This was followed by an expectation (by 62.9 per cent) that the government should increase investments in creating new primary healthcare infrastructure.

With regard to aspirations of individual taxpayers, 79.3 per cent respondents said they would like to see a cut in personal income tax rates, especially in the wake of pressure on their earnings in the pandemic-hit economy.



IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Govt values journalists and gives them preferential treatment... You can check this by lodging an FIR against one of them

RD VARSITY GIRL'S DEATH

Seized articles to be sent to forensic lab today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rasulpur, Jan 31: Jajpur police, investigating mysterious death of Jharaphula Nayak, have intensified their probe raiding six places in the last 24 hours.

SDPO Bijay Kumar Nayak has formed two squads, who have gathered vital clues after raiding the places in Jajpur and Bhubaneswar.

Various articles used by the accused and the deceased are being examined. All the articles seized from various places will be sent to the forensic laboratory Monday. While the post mortem report is yet to be made available, efforts are on to nab the associate of the accused.

Police Saturday examined the video footage collected from the CCTV cameras installed at the brick kiln and a plastic factory near Mulapala Chowk at Kuakhia along the National Highway-16.

The investigating officials again examined the CCTV footage Sunday. An eight-member team has been set up to investigate the case.

A team of Jajpur police Saturday carried out raid at the hotel in Khandagiri area in Bhubaneswar where the deceased Jharaphula and her accused boyfriend Rakesh Kumar Swain stayed on the night of January 26. The couple stayed in room no. 201 of Sibasai Guest House at Dharma Vihar on the said night.

A forensic team accompanying the special squad of the Kuakhia police examined the room and checked the register of the guest house. The police also collected the CCTV footage of the guest house and one eatery in Bhubaneswar.

HARSH WINTER



Boats anchored on the frozen Dal Lake in Srinagar, Sunday. The temperatures plummeted to minus 8.8°C, recording the coldest night after 30 years

At €555mn, Messi's deal biggest in sports history

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Barcelona, Jan 31: Lionel Messi's most recent contract with Barcelona is worth up to 555 million euros (\$673 million) over four seasons, the El Mundo newspaper reported Sunday.

The Spanish daily said it had access to the document Messi signed with the Catalan club in 2017, which included fixed incomes and variables that could reach nearly 138 million euros (\$167 million) each season. The newspaper said it is the most expensive contract ever paid to an athlete.

Messi would have to pay about half of that amount in taxes in Spain. The report said the 33-year-old player has already secured more than 510 million euros (\$619 million) of the total contract.



The leak comes as Barcelona tries to manage a huge debt prompted mostly because of the coronavirus pandemic. The club has been led by a caretaker board since president Josep Bartomeu resigned in October while facing a no-confidence motion. New presidential elections are scheduled for March 7.

The newspaper also detailed how Messi rewarded the club over the years, having helped it win more than 30 titles.

Maoists desperate to regain lost ground in state, say experts

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 31: The killing of two innocent villagers in Kandhamal by Left Wing Extremists (LWEs) late Friday night is an indication of the insurgents' desperation to gain their lost ground in the wake of losing the support of among the locals as well as the success of the security forces in cutting of their supplies.

According to a top police official, residents of many villages in the Maoist-infested areas have been openly supporting the implementation of various developmental projects by the government in their areas. They are also offering security to the contractors engaged in these projects.



The Maoist organisations are also failing miserably in finding new recruits from among the tribals. The official claimed that out of the total 328 Maoists cadres active in Odisha only 98 belong to the state.

Meanwhile, sources claimed that one of the deceased, Hemanta Patra, reportedly arranged funds for the Maoists under pressure and recently he had denied helping them further. Enraged, the Maoists killed Patra.

That the Maoists are losing

ground in Odisha is reflected from the decreasing number of their of-fensive. As per the data available with state police, as many as seven civilians were killed by Maoists in 2020, while only two security personnel were martyred during in that period.

Similarly, the Maoists killed 10 civilians and one security personnel in 2019. In 2018, as many as 12 civilians were killed, while the number of civilian deaths due to LEW insurgency was 17 in 2017.

Twenty-three persons were killed by the ultras in 2016. According to sources, around 362 civilians were killed by LWEs between 2000 and 2020. On the other hand, as many as 224 security personnel and 308 extremists died in the same period.

SHORT TAKES

Scribe arrested at Singhu border

New Delhi: A freelance journalist was arrested from the Singhu border Sunday for allegedly misbehaving with the police personnel on duty at the farmers' protest site there, officials said. A case was registered against him and he has been arrested now, a senior police officer said, a day after the scribe was detained. Police had earlier said that they placed barricades at the border following the violence Friday to ensure that no one could get through. However, some people including the journalist were trying to remove the barricades, the police had alleged, adding the scribe also misbehaved with the police personnel there.

Two held for minor girl's gangrape

Gopalpur: Police arrested two persons in connection with the gangrape and attempt to murder a seven-year-old girl in Golanthara police limits of Ganjam, Sunday. The accused were identified as Rutu Behera(30) and Hemant Behera(30) of Solra. The heinous crime was committed in Sorala village under Golanthara police limits of Ganjam district, January 28. The duo has been booked under various Sections of the IPC and Section 6 of the POCSO Act. They were produced in court, which remanded them in judicial custody.

Navalny, Greta, Trump in race for Nobel Peace Prize

Other names are Belarusian activists Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, Maria Kolesnikova and Veronika Tsepkalo for their "fight for a fair election and inspiration for peaceful resistance"

REUTERS

Oslo, Jan 31: Russian dissident Alexei Navalny, the World Health Organization and climate campaigner Greta Thunberg are among those nominated for this year's Nobel Peace Prize, all backed by Norwegian lawmakers who have a track record of picking the winner. Former US President Donald Trump is also among the nominees.

Thousands of people, from members of Parliaments worldwide to former winners, are eligible to propose candidates. Nominations, which close Sunday, do not imply an endorsement from the Nobel committee. Norwegian lawmakers have

nominated the eventual laureate every year since 2014, with the exception of 2019, said Henrik Urdal, Director of the Peace Research Institute Oslo. "The pattern from recent years is quite stunning."

The Norwegian Nobel Committee, which decides who wins the award, does not comment on nominations, keeping secret for 50 years the names of nominators and unsuccessful nominees.

But nominators can choose to reveal their picks. According to a Reuters survey of Norwegian lawmakers, nominees include Thunberg, Navalny, the WHO and its COVAX programme to secure fair access to COVID-19 vaccines for poor coun-



tries. Thunberg was named as one of "the foremost spokespersons in the fight against the climate crisis", with the campaigning group she co-founded, Fridays for Future, also receiving a nod.

Navalny, nominated by Russian academics, was named for his "efforts for a peaceful democratisation of Russia" by Norwegian former minister Ola Elvestuen.

The battle against COVID-19 is

front and centre, including a nomination for the GAVI vaccine alliance.

Other names are Belarusian activists Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, Maria Kolesnikova and Veronika Tsepkalo for their "fight for a fair election and inspiration for peaceful resistance", one nominator, Geir Sigbjorn Toskedal, said.

Another, Jette Christensen, also named the Hungarian Helsinki Committee, a human rights group, and IUSTITIA, a group of Polish judges defending civil rights.

"My nomination this year is... for the fight to preserve democracy as a form of government in Europe," Christensen said. Freedom of information is a recurring theme

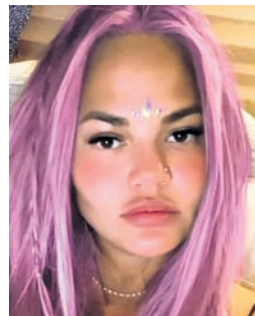
with nominees including the US-based Committee to Protect Journalists; former Charlie Hebdo journalist Zineb el Rhazoui; news website Hong Kong Free Press, the US-based International Fact-Checking Network and Paris-based Reporters without Borders (RSF).

Other nominees include former US President Donald Trump, NATO and the UN refugee agency (UNHCR). Also on the list is Aminatou Haidar, for her peaceful campaigning towards an independent Western Sahara, the International Space Station and the International Scout Movement. The 2021 laureate will be announced in October.

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	28.0°C	28.2°C
MIN	16.8°C	14.5°C
Humidity	47%	58%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Dry weather likely



CHRISSY TEASES NEW HAIR COLOUR

Model Chrisey Teigen has channelled her inner Barbie as she chose to colour her hair pink. Chrisey, who is married to musician John Legend, posted a picture on Instagram. In the image, she is seen sporting grey jeans paired with a black crop top and over jacket. She is seen wearing white stilettos.

SIMON BAKER, REBECCA RIG ANNOUNCE SEPARATION

Actor Simon Baker, known for his role in the show, *The Mentalist*, has announced separation from wife Rebecca Rig. The duo separated after 29 years of marriage. They parted ways quietly sometime last year, reports *People.com*.



Alaya F gets nostalgic over Jawaani Jaaneman



Mumbai: Actress Alaya F Sunday recalled working on her debut film *Jawaani Jaaneman*, which released a year ago.

"As my debut, I believe *Jawaani Jaaneman* was the best thing that could have happened to me. This past one year, I've received nothing but praises for the film and I feel truly blessed. More than just being the perfect character that I could essay, I really resonated with the character Tia, as she was just how I am in my actual life," said Alaya, who plays a teenage daughter who later becomes a mother in the film.

"The entire shoot experience for me was just 'wonderful' from working with such experienced actors Saif Ali Khan sir and Tabu ma'am, who were the perfect guides that any new talent can ask for and helped me throughout the process to getting critical acclaim for my performance. I will cherish this experience forever," she added.

Alaya is keen on getting back on set. "I really miss being at a shoot set right now, and I just can't wait to bring more such characters to the audience," she said. During lockdown, she dedicated her time to honing and improving her skills as an actor. She has also been reading scripts, taking master classes and workshops too.

IANS

Kriti hopes for a 'time machine'



Mumbai: Bollywood actress Kriti Kharbanda is soaking in the sun and is hoping for a miracle.

Kriti posted a picture on Instagram, where she is seen dressed in a white tank top. She completed her look with minimum make-up and hoop earrings.

"Soaking in the sun, hoping for a miracle, a time machine maybe?! #sundayfunday #takeback," she wrote as the caption.

Talking about her work, Kriti was last seen in the thriller drama *Taish* directed by Bejoy Nambiar.

She is currently busy shooting for her next film titled *14 Phere*.

Directed by Devanshu Singh, *14 Phere* is a contemporary social comedy film that will see Kriti romancing Vikrant Massey.



Abhay flaunts his 'experiments with painting'

Mumbai: Actor Abhay Deol has flaunted his artistic side on social media and showcased his experiments with painting.

Abhay posted a picture of his painting on Instagram to show it to his fans and followers.

"My experiments with painting. This from an old #burlesqueposter. Still incomplete, don't know if I want to finish it. But sharing it anyway," Abhay wrote as the caption.

The actor keeps sharing glimpses of his artwork on social media.

Abhay's *1962: The War In The Hills*, a series inspired by true events, is set for launch February 26. Directed by Mahesh Manjrekar, the series will take viewers back to November 1962, to narrate an untold story of valour. Abhay plays an army major who leads a battalion.



'Always nurtured the dream of directing Madhuri Dixit'

New Delhi: Actress-director Renuka Shahane says Madhuri Dixit is like a dream to work with, and would love to direct the actress someday.

The two have co-starred in the Bollywood hit *Hum Aapke Hain Koun..!* (1994) and Marathi film *Bucket List* (2018). They have also given a glimpse of their friendship on social media. For instance, Madhuri shared best wishes on Twitter during the launch of

Renuka's recent directorial *Tribhanga: Tedhi Medhi Crazy*.

Asked if they have another project together, Renuka told IANS: "She (Madhuri) is like a dream to work with. She is one of the best co-stars I have ever worked with, and she is such a nice human being"

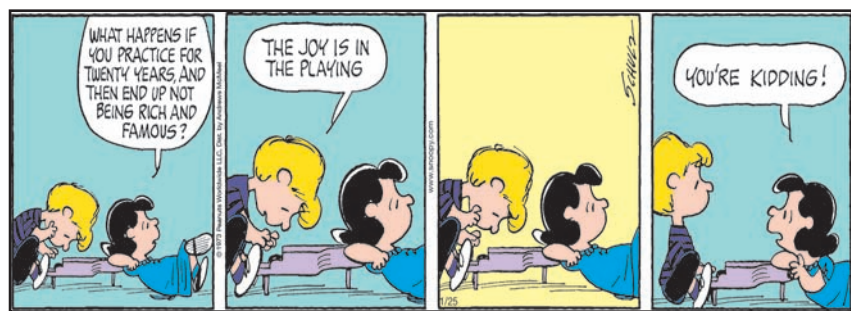
"I still feel that most of her talent has still not been tapped. I have always nurtured the dream of directing her one day. There are

many ideas that are forming in my head. But once the script is done, and I feel that it is worth approaching her; I will definitely approach her and then we will see if that works out," she added.

Renuka had made her directorial debut way back in 2009, with the Marathi film *Rita*. She returned as a director for the new Hindi film *Tribhanga: Tedhi Medhi Crazy*, which stars Kajol, Mithila Palkar and Tanvi Azmi.

FUN post

PEANUTS



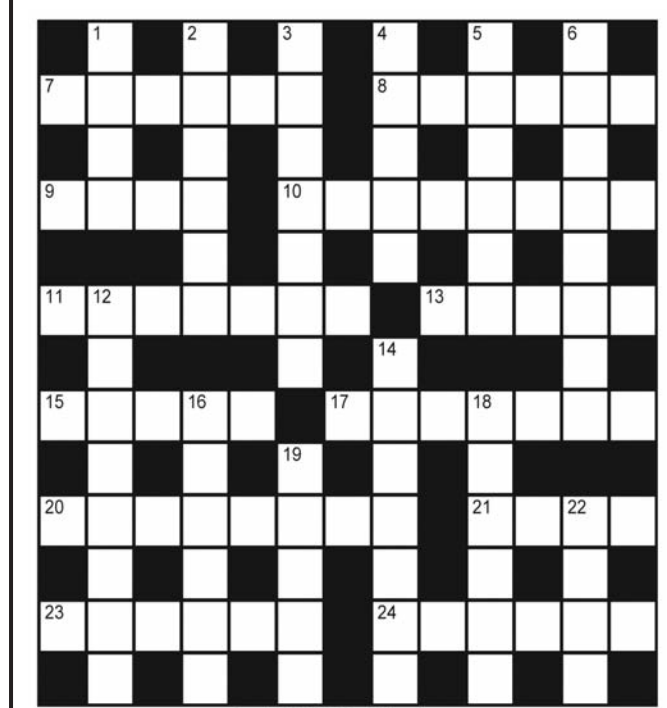
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



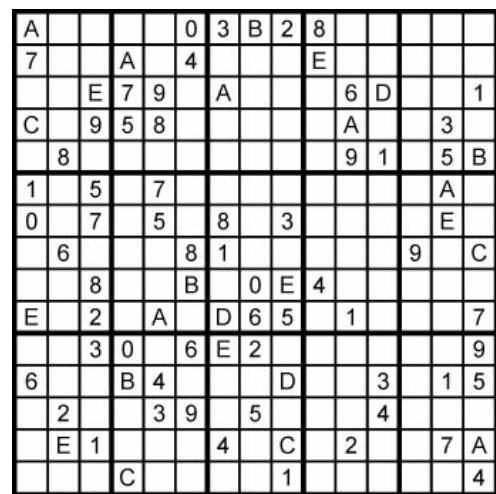
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Way across
- 8 Chess piece
- 9 Bugbear
- 10 Skulduggery
- 11 Shipping hazard
- 13 Taste, e.g.
- 15 Swig
- 17 Movie theatres
- 20 Blunders
- 21 Ivory source
- 23 Audition (3,3)
- 24 Assert without proof
- Down**
- 1 Hot rum drink
- 2 Modifier
- 3 Moves
- 17 Movie theatres
- 20 Blunders
- 5 Predicament
- 6 Personal magnetism
- 12 Messengers
- 14 Short sleeps
- 16 Water depth measure
- 18 Lauds
- 19 Large edible ray
- 22 Endorse

SUDOKU

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

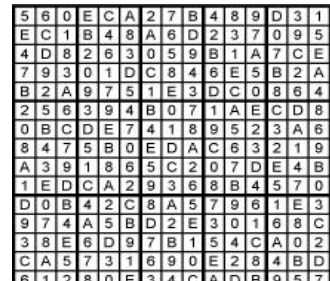


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

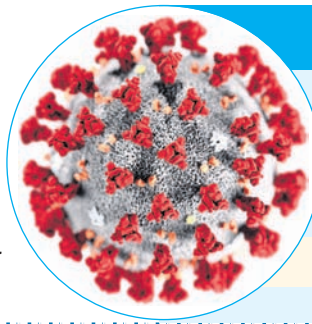


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



ANNUAL MEET

The annual conference of Indian Institute of Public Administration, Odisha Regional Branch, underway at a hotel in Bhubaneswar, Sunday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	10,32,19,722	7,48,82,771	22,31,236
India	1,07,20,971	1,03,93,162	1,54,047
Odisha	3,35,072	3,32,103	1,906

Hope job creation, demand get stimulus: Experts

India Inc. has huge expectations from the Budget 2021-22. The India Inc. expects that the annual Budget would have solid measures to boost demand in the market. It is expected that the Centre will allocate more resources to the infrastructure and employment-generating sectors to push the demand side

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 31: This year's Union Budget is likely to be landmark in the recent history of India in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. The people of India as well as the economy are going through a very difficult time due to the pandemic-induced recession.

Many experts are of the opinion that the country would take several years to recover from the difficulties caused by the outbreak of novel coronavirus and subsequent nationwide lockdown to tackle the virus spread. So, many people expect that this year's Budget would have the necessary provisions to revive the economy and strengthen the employment and health sector. This apart, it is expected that the Budget would give a big push to the industrial sector, including the small and medium scale industries.

In this context, Orissa POST talks to people from various walks of life to know about their expectations from the Budget, which is scheduled to be presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Parliament February 1.

Director of IIM-Sambalpur, Mahadeo Jaiswal, said that the India Inc. has huge expectations from the Budget 2021-22. "The India Inc. expects that the annual Budget would have solid measures to boost demand in the market. It is expected

UNION BUDGET 2021-22



that the Centre will allocate more resources to the infrastructure and employment-generating sectors to push the demand side.

"We hope that the focus would be on employment generation and putting more money in the hands of consumers to boost demand as well as growth in the country. Besides, the Centre may allocate funds for Covid vaccination. The Budget may give priority on healthcare and manufacturing sectors in the wake of the pandemic. Research and development sector may also witness a big push," Jaiswal added.

Educationist and Chairperson of KIIT International School, Mona Lisa Bal, said that education is one of the primary sectors for any country and there is huge expectation from the Budget 2021-22 in this as-

pect. "The pandemic has given us a clear picture of the great digital division in our country. Covid acted as an eye opener for us. We have realised that India is ill-prepared for digital education. The Budget should have measures to meet that challenges in this regard. The education sector requires higher investments to sustain the growth. There should be adequate fund allocation for the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP)."

Environmentalist and secretary of Odisha Environmental Society (OES), Jaya Krushna Panigrahi, said, "In addition to giving thrust on infrastructure development in health sector, the annual budget should have allocations to deal with pollution issues and promote non-conventional sources of energy.

Besides, there should be measures to conserve biodiversity and forest resources and meet the challenges of climate change. Steps should be taken to clean up the river systems across India and promote green energy."

Sriram Singh Rattan, an employee of a digital media company, expects some relaxation in the field of taxation. "Lower tax rates are very much required as the pandemic and the countrywide lockdown have broken the backbone of the Indian economy. The growth projection doesn't look encouraging at all. There should be lower interest rates on education loans. Besides, the Budget should look into the issues of the working class people and the senior citizens," he said.

Sudarshan Chhotray, a social activist, said there should be more allocation for the healthcare sector in the present scenario. The Centre should allocate at least seven per cent of the GDP to the health sector. Similarly, there should be adequate budgetary allocations for education and other social sectors. "The Union government should take certain measures to create confidence among the workers of informal sector and the migrants. The Centre should provide more grants to Odisha to improve the living standards of people from economically weaker sections, including tribals and Dalits," he said.

Parties for increased Central assistance to state for Covid crisis

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 31: The major political parties from the state have demanded adequate attention to the state in the Union Budget 2021 which will be presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Monday before the Parliament.

The Biju Janata Dal (BJD), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress have expressed their expectations from the Budget during their interaction with the media Sunday.

BJD leader and minister Padmanabha Behera said, "Different areas in the state struggle to get internet connectivity. We demand that internet facility must be given to the state to boost its coverage. We have demanded that the state should be aided in Centrally-sponsored schemes in the ratio of 90:10 so that we can do better progress."

He also said that Covid-19 is likely to be an issue and part of the Budget. "We have demanded assistance for Covid-19 management. We have to see how much assistance we get from the Centre in the Budget. We have been badly affected by Covid-19 in the last one year. We have a lot of ongoing projects. We need more assistance from the Centre for the ongoing railway projects," he said.

The Congress meanwhile alleged neglect towards the state from the Union government. Congress leader Suresh Routray said, "Odisha has been neglected by the Centre. The Odisha Chief Minister has been supporting the BJP government in Parliament but in return it has failed to get adequate assistance from the Centre. There were tall claims of the Union government regarding railway development in the state." He said, "There were also talks on farmers' issues. The state is struggling in railways, rural housing, farming and other sectors. Hope the government can focus on these issues in the Budget."

The BJP on the other hand claimed that the Narendra Modi government at the Centre has always supported the state during Budgets. Party leader Prithviraj Harichandan said, "Odisha has been getting good attention of the Narendra Modi government through Budgets but the state has



Different areas in the state struggle to get internet connectivity. We demand that internet facilities must be provided across the state to boost its coverage

PADMANABHA BEHERA | MINISTER, COMMERCE & TRANSPORT DEPT



Odisha has been neglected by the Centre. The Odisha Chief Minister has been supporting the BJP government in Parliament but in return it has failed to get adequate assistance from the Centre

SURESH ROUTRAY | JATNI MLA (CONGRESS)



The government is likely to focus more on the farmers and help in improving the GDP of the country which has been hampered due to the pandemic

PRITHVIRAJ HARICHANDAN | LEADER, BJP

failed to tap the potentials. The government is likely to get attention through the Budget especially in the light of impact of Covid-19 in the state." He added that the government is likely to support the farmers and help in improving the GDP of the country which has been hampered due to the pandemic.

Forest officer to get Asia Environmental Enforcement Award

Lenka and her team had detained around 28 persons and seized three live Indian pangolins and one dead besides seizing 5kg of pangolin scales between August 2019 and April 2020

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 31: Forest officer Sasmita Lenka will receive the prestigious Asia Environmental Enforcement Award under 'impact' and 'gender leadership' category at a virtual event February 17, official sources said Sunday. Being given by the United Nations

Environment Programme in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the International Criminal Police Organization and the World Customs Organization, the Asia Environmental Enforcement Awards publicly recognize and celebrate excellence in enforcement by government officials and institutions or teams combating transboundary environmental crime, including illegal wildlife trade.



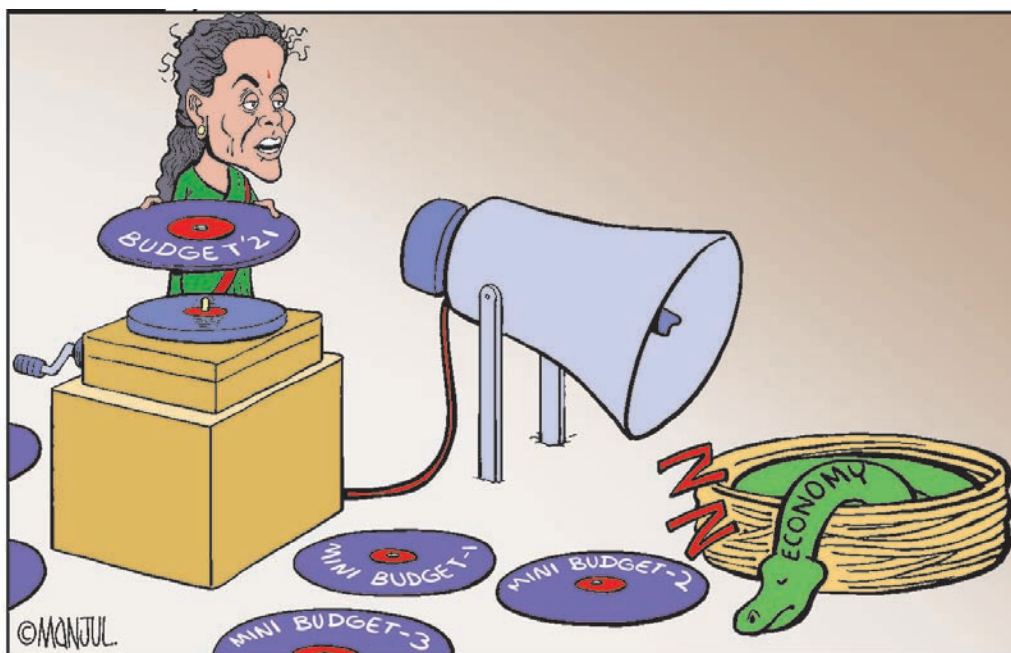
REPRESENTATIVE PIC

Interacting with Orissa POST Lenka said, "I'm honoured for this recognition. The hard work has definitely paid off as people are more aware about protecting wildlife. Time will come when there will be near zero poaching of such wildlife in the state."

Lenka had been serving as the Atharaghar Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) since October 2018. "During her tenure, Lenka and her team had detained around 28 persons and seized three live Indian pangolins and one dead besides

seizing 5kg of pangolin scales between August 2019 and April 2020. In December 2019, she and her team busted an international pangolin smuggling racket by arresting eight suspects and recovering numerous pangolin scales. In a general effort to curb smuggling of pangolins in her division, Lenka has announced a cash reward of Rs 10, 000 for information on pangolin traffickers," said a source.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



PULSE POLIO DRIVE STARTS ACROSS STATE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 31: The state Health department Sunday started its statewide drive for Pulse Polio vaccination for children below the age of five.

The immunisation drive was seen across the state where a number of health centres, anganwadi centres and other institutions were roped in to inoculate the kids during the special drive. It may be mentioned here that the government has suspended the Covid-19 vaccination drive for three days in light of the polio vaccination drive.

Bijay Panigrahi, Director, Department of Medical Research



Health workers at a vaccination booth

and Training (DMET) said, "We started the Pulse Polio drive today across the state where children below the age of five years are being vaccinated. We have planned to

cover around 41 lakh kids from across the state."

He also added, "We dedicated the day (Sunday) exclusively for the ones coming to the booths. Special

We started the Pulse Polio drive today across the state where children below the age of five years are being vaccinated. We have planned to cover around 41 lakh kids from across the state

BIJAY PANIGRAHI | DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF MEDICAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING

booths have been organised to give the vaccine. In the next two days our health volunteers will roam around the state to get the uncovered kids vaccinated."

The health secretary and other officials inaugurated the session in the state capital. Different district administrations and Urban Local Bodies have planned to conduct the drive smoothly across the state. The officials have taken onboard the health workers and grassroots workers like ASHA anganwadi workers, ANM and others to make the drive a success.

The Primary Health Centres, Community Health Centres, Upper Primary Health Centres and other government hospitals were roped in to vaccinate the kids to ward off any threats emanating from the polio infections. A number of kids Sunday were vaccinated under the drive.

CAPTIVATING AUDIENCE



Artists perform traditional dance at Annapurna Theatre in Puri, Sunday

OP PHOTO

IIT-Bhub holds polio drive for in-campus children

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 31: A pulse polio drive was organised at IIT Bhubaneswar for the in-campus children, under five years of age, as a part of National Polio Immunisation Programme under the Ministry of Health, Sunday. The pulse polio drive was organised by the Medical Unit of IIT Bhubaneswar in collaboration with the state government. Speaking on the occasion, Prof. R.V. Raja Kumar, Director, IIT Bhubaneswar appreciated the initiative by the Medical Unit of IIT Bhubaneswar headed by Dr M.A. Khan, in collaboration with the state government for organising a pulse polio drive for the in-campus children of under five years of age.

He further mentioned pulse polio



immunisation programme, aimed at bringing down the number of polio affected people, has been successful across the nation in the recent years. He urged the faculty, staff members to utilise such immunisation camps organised inside the campus including the ones conducted by state government and non-governmental organisations to help eradicate polio from the world. He also mentioned that from

the time of its inception, IIT Bhubaneswar has been consistent in its commitment for the wellbeing of its students, workforce and its dependents. "Taking the above into consideration, we at IIT Bhubaneswar successfully organised this pulse polio drive in the best interest of in campus children."

As many as 40 children aged below five were administered the pulse polio drops inside the campus.

NCW felicitates state police

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 31: The National Commission for Women (NCW) Sunday felicitated the women COVID Warriors of the State Police for their contribution in managing the Covid-19 situation on the occasion of 29th Annual Foundation Day of the Commission.

The Bargarh Superintendent of Police Padmini Sahoo received the memento trophy along with an appreciation certificate from the Commission on behalf of Odisha Police at a special event held at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi.



Politics over Mahanadi erupts again

THE BJD REFUTES ALLEGATIONS OF BEING LETHARGIC TOWARDS THE ISSUE AND HOPES FOR A FAVOURABLE JUDGMENT FROM THE TRIBUNAL IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 31: Two months before the Mahanadi Inter State River Dispute Tribunal will be reaching its deadline, without any conclusive judgment, Opposition parties have started to fire salvos against the ruling government in the state.

Veteran BJP leader Bijoy Mohapatra Sunday interacted with the media and blamed the state government and the BJD to have failed in fighting for the interests of people on the issue of Mahanadi dispute.

"In the last three years, the state government has forgotten about the issue of Mahanadi. The people who used to feel aggrieved on the issue earlier are now nowhere to be seen. I believe the state government has failed to put their issues strongly before the Tribunal. I sus-

In the last three years, the state government has forgotten the issue of Mahanadi. The people who used to feel aggrieved on the issue earlier are now nowhere to be seen
BIJOY MOHAPATRA | LEADER, BJP

During the elections, the BJD leaders used to camp in Delhi and the BJP was also in the frontline. Due to this a Tribunal was formed. What development has happened there, people are clueless about this
TARA PRASAD BAHINIPATI | CONGRESS MLA



visions of extension of the Tribunal by two more years. The Mahanadi issue was raised because during the non-monsoon season the state needed relief due to the alleged actions of Chhattisgarh. There is lack of coordination among government officials on the issue."

The Congress party also claimed that it has planned to rake up the issue in the upcoming Budget

Session of the Assembly. Congress MLA Tara Prasad Bahinipati said, "During the elections, the BJD leaders used to camp in Delhi and the BJP was also in the frontline. Due to this a Tribunal was formed. What development has happened there, people are clueless about this."

He also added, "We have debated on the issue in the past in Assembly. We have decided to strongly rake up the issue in the Odisha Assembly during the upcoming session."

The BJD on the other hand tried to refute allegations of lethargy on side of the BJD government in the state and hoped of a judgment from the Tribunal in the next few months.

Party leader Padmanabha Behera said, "I am of the opinion that the judgment of the Mahanadi Tribunal will come in our favour. After getting orders from the Tribunal, Chhattisgarh will definitely release water to the state."

FOR A BETTER TOMORROW



Collector Samarth Verma inspects a cleanliness drive in Baliapanda area of Puri city, Sunday

No COVID-19 death for 6th day in a row

State logs 114 new coronavirus cases, tally rises to 3,35,072

Odisha	CONFIRMED	ACTIVE	RECOVERED	DECEASED
	3,35,072 (+114)	1,151 (+114)	3,31,962	1,906
	0.01% of India case	0.00% of India case	0.01% of India case	0.00% of India case
India	1,07,20,971 (+1,14,448)	1,69,284 (+1,422)	1,03,93,162 (+1,14,448)	1,54,047 (+1,144)

Numbers vis-a-vis national data

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 31: State's Covid-19 caseload Sunday surged to 3,35,072 after 114 more people tested positive for the infection, a senior official of the Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department said.

The coastal state's coronavirus death toll remained at 1,906 as no fresh fatality has been reported for last six days, the official added.

The new cases were detected in 19 of the state's 30 districts, with 68 reported from different quarantine centres, while the remaining 46 are local contact cases.

Sundargarh district recorded the highest of 21 fresh cases followed by Bargarh (11) and Khurda (9)

The official said that Odisha had reported one coronavirus death from Sundargarh district January 25. There has been no such fatality since January 26, said the official. Apart from the death of 1,906 people, as many as 53 other Covid-19 positive patients had died due to comorbidities.

Currently, the state has 1,151 active Covid-19 cases, while 3,31,962 patients have so far recovered from the highly infectious disease.

The state has so far conducted over 77.09 lakh sample tests for Covid-19 including 22,830 Saturday



Sundargarh dist recorded the highest of 21 fresh cases followed by Bargarh (11) and Khurda (9)
Odisha's positivity stands at 4.35 per cent

Odisha's positivity stands at 4.35 per cent, the data released by the H&FW department said.

Meanwhile, as many as 2,08,424 healthcare workers have been inoculated till Saturday. The Covid-19 vaccination drive across the state that remain suspended January 31 will continue to be suspended February 1 and February 2 in view of the pulse polio immunization programme across the state, H&FW department sources said, adding that the Covid-19 vaccination programme will resume February 3.

India's Covid-19 tally is at 10,746,183 after the Union Health Ministry Sunday reported that the country had logged 13,052 new infections in the preceding 24 hours. The number of Covid-19 related fatalities, meanwhile, spiked to 154,274 with 127 more people succumbing to the infection.

4 from Raj held for idol theft

AROUND 22 ASHTADHATU IDOLS FROM THE DAKSHYA PRAJAPATI TEMPLE IN BANAPUR AREA WERE STOLEN DEC 22 LAST YR

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khurda, Jan 31: Banapur police claimed to have arrested four residents of Rajasthan in connection with the stealing of at least 22 octo-alloy (Ashtadhatu) idols from the Dakshya Prajapati temple in Banapur area December 22, last year.

Police have seized at least nine idols from accused Mukesh Chandra Meena (44), Kailash Meena (34), Chhutan (32) and Manoj Kumar Meena (30). "Several other idols were melted down by the accused. All the four accused have been sent to jail after rejection of their bail pleas by a local court," said Khurda Superintendent of Police (SP) Ajay Pratap Swain at a press conference at Banapur police station here Saturday.

All the accused were earlier booked in several cases at various police stations in Rajasthan, police said. "At least nine cases were filed against Manoj while Mukesh was booked in seven cases. Six cases were filed against Kailash and four were filed against Chhutan at various police stations in Rajasthan," Swain added.

Police claimed that all the four accused were involved in several idol theft cases in various states. "The accused used to move from one place to other in search of work. They keep track of temples and idols while working in a place. The accused have stolen many idols from several temples in various states," Swain said while elaborating the modus operandi of the gang.

According to police, the four accused were working under a private contractor engaged in the power sector in Banapur area. They had prepared a blueprint to steal idols



The arrested accused - Mukesh Chandra Meena (44), Kailash Meena (34), Chhutan (32) and Manoj Kumar Meena (30)

POLICE CLAIMED THAT ALL THE FOUR ACCUSED WERE INVOLVED IN SEVERAL IDOL THEFT CASES IN VARIOUS STATES

THE ACCUSED USED TO MOVE FROM ONE PLACE TO OTHER IN SEARCH OF WORK
AJAY PRATAP SWAIN | SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE, KHURDA

THE FOUR ACCUSED WERE WORKING UNDER A PRIVATE CONTRACTOR ENGAGED IN THE POWER SECTOR IN BANAPUR AREA. THEY HAD PREPARED A BLUEPRINT TO STEAL IDOLS MADE OF OCTO-ALLOY FROM THE DAKSHYA PRAJAPATI TEMPLE

made of octo-alloy from the Dakshya Prajapati temple.

"The gang had stolen at least 22 idols from the temple in the late hours of December 22. A case in this regard was registered at Banapur police station. A special police team led by Balugaon SDPO investigated into the case. The team found some clues with regard to the idol theft

by examining CCTV footage from a nearby shop," Swain said.

Initially, police nabbed Kailash from near Barunei temple. After interrogating Kailash, police arrested the three other accused. "All the accused have confessed to the crime. Now we are trying to find out whether anybody else is involved in the idol theft case," Swain added.

Cyber fraudsters dupe 2 of more than ₹1 lakh

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 31: A person lost around Rs30,000 to the cyber fraudsters while trying to recharge his mobile number with Rs 10 add-on. The victim identified as Eshan Acharya of Niladri Vihar area has lodged a complaint with the Chandrasekharpur police in this regard.

According to sources, he received a call along with a message on his mobile phone offering free recharge of Rs 10. The cyber crooks also provided a link on his mobile phone for the recharge.

He lost around Rs 30,000 while trying to recharge through the address given by the fraudsters.

Meanwhile, unknown cyber crooks duped another young lady of more than Rs 80,000 on the pretext of offering job. The victim woman has lodged a complaint with the Sahid Nagar police in this regard.

According to the complaint, she allegedly received a call from one job portal few days back. The caller asked her to register with their

portal with her CV if interested to get a job. Subsequently, the victim registered herself with the portal by paying Rs1,000.

Later, the fraudsters asked her to pay Rs13,750 for 'verification of documents.'

However, she refused to pay further when the cyber criminals continued to demand more from money her. She also requested them to return her money.

The fraudsters asked her to deposit more money in their accounts for the refund process. In the process, she lost more than Rs80,000.

Unknown cyber crooks duped another young lady of more than ₹80,000 on the pretext of offering job. The victim woman has lodged a complaint with the Sahid Nagar police in this regard



WRITER FETED



Dignitaries including noted poet Ramakanta Rath confer Sachi Routray Saraswat Samman on writer Ram Chandra Behera (2nd from L) at Sarala Bhawan in Cuttack, Sunday. The award is being given by Sarala Sahitya Sansad

Brainstorming on enhancing higher-edu in public varsities

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 31: The Higher Education department held a meeting with Odisha Society of America (OSA) on enhancing the quality of higher education of public universities in the state.

In the meeting, Higher Education minister Arun Sahoo addressed current issues and challenges facing the state's higher education ecosystem. Important aspects were discussed such as how the international community is ready to conduct webinars including topics on institutional development depending on the need of various departments and universities, also how the universities facilitate the international student and faculty exchange programmes starting with US universities.

The Higher Education Secretary



Saswat Mishra said Government of Odisha is analysing the WiFi broadband availability in the university campuses which is going to be upgraded expeditiously in all campuses. As per the possible research collaboration, the faculty profiles and their research interests will be clearly placed in the university websites so that OSA and Higher Education Committee will facilitate the collab-

oration with the international faculty members and researchers.

The proposal of formation for an External Advisory Council for the universities was well received by the minister and the VCs of various universities, starting with inclusion of eminent individuals as Syndicate members. Formation of a strong Alumni Database for each university is a requirement which was approved by everyone leveraging the forthcoming 'Mo College' initiative. Higher Education Minister Sahoo agreed for a follow up meeting to be held quarterly with VCs for exchange and implementation of ideas in the future.

Vice Chancellors of several universities of the state and Manas Pujari, Registrar, Odisha State Open University, Sambalpur; and Akash Dasnayak, Chairperson, Mo College programme were also present.

GOVT OFFICIALS' KIDS MUST STUDY IN GOVT-RUN SCHOOLS



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 31: In a letter to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Sunday Utkala Bikasha Juba Parisad demanded that the children of government servants and representatives must study in government schools.

In a letter, Debiprasad Prusti, president of the Parisad, said that the Chief Minister should issue a one line order which should contain that children of all government servants, from Class IV peon level to Chief Secretary-level and all people's representatives; MLAs, MPs including all teachers', must read in government schools to bring a qualitative change in the school education ecosystem.

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ROAD SAFETY



Police personnel along with students of Anchalika Vigyan Mahavidyalay take part in an awareness rally on road safety in Aska area of Ganjam, Sunday

Maoist killed in gunfight with forces in Malkangiri

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, Jan 31: A Maoist was Sunday killed inside the Kakadapadar forest under Mudulipada police limits of Malkangiri district following an exchange of fire with security forces.

The identity of the slain Maoist was yet to be revealed by the police. The police were tipped off that the Maoists were convening a meeting in Makadapadar forest, close to the border with Andhra Pradesh. Taking the tip-off seriously, a combined team of Special Operations Group (SOG) and District Voluntary Force (DVF) jawans under the guidance of Malkangiri SP Rishikesh D Khilari launched a combing operation in the jungle.

Seeing the forces marching towards them, the ultras opened fire. In retaliation, the joint team too fired at the Maoists.

The gunfight continued for nearly about two-three hours till the rebels turned tail and escaped into the deep forest. Close inspection of the spot revealed that one of the Maoists



Security forces have intensified combing operations in Makadapadar forest under Mudulipada police limits in a bid to flush out ultras

was dead and several others suffered bullet injuries. The slain Maoist's body was recovered from the spot.

The forces have intensified combing operation in the forest. Meanwhile, it was learnt that none including journalists and villagers were allowed to go near the forest.

This has happened a day after a group of armed Maoists allegedly killed two villagers in Kandhamal district, accusing them of being police informers.

The incident occurred under the Belaghara police limits of the dis-

trict Friday night, said police sources. Their bodies were found in two separate places Saturday.

The Maoists belonging to the Bansadhara-Ghumsar-Nagabali division left a handwritten note accusing the two of providing information to police about five of their colleagues, who were killed in a police encounter in September last year. According to the poster, the Maoists warned the other informers to surrender within 15 days at 'Jan Adalat', otherwise they will be sentenced to death.

Long-awaited Joda flyover project to start soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

Joda, Jan 31: The long-awaited flyover project proposed in Joda town of Keonjhar district is going to start soon, as the ground-laying ceremony for its construction was held here Sunday.

Champua MLA Minakshi Mohant, Barbil tehsildar Alok Patel,

executive officer of the Joda municipality Suryamani Pattajoshi, executive engineer of the Odisha Bridge Construction Corporation Ajit Kumar Sahu and other officials were present.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik laid the foundation stone of this ambitious project November 12, 2020, through video conferencing.



The 2.875-km-long bridge project has been estimated at a cost of Rs 206.02 crore. The three-laned project

will start from DAV School to Joda Government Hospital.

Odisha Bridge Construction Corporation Limited had earlier floated a tender for its construction. Once completed, the flyover will help in easing traffic snarls routinely affecting people in Joda, Jurudi, Bansapani and Bamebari areas.

6 arrested for leopard's death

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhanjanagar, Jan 31: The forest department Sunday arrested six persons in connection with the death of a leopard, which was caught in a trap meant to catch wild boars in Kundakhai forest under Buguda forest range in Ganjam district.

According to Dr Bhagabati Prasad Das, who performed autopsy on the dead animal, the leopard died due to asphyxiation and hunger. The knot of the trap around the animal's neck resulted in asphyxiation.

The department is yet to reveal the identities of the arrested persons.

The nearby villagers were surprised to see that a leopard got stuck in a trap laid out to capture wild boars Thursday morning. They immediately informed the forest department. Upon reaching the spot, forest department officials launched an operation to free it from the trap.



During the rescue operation, the animal managed to free itself from the trap. It then mauled Dillip Naik and sneaked into the forest. Later, a mobile team from Bhanjanagar comprising DFO Surya Narayan Behura, ACF Shankarshan Behera and other officials reached the spot. They managed to capture the animal after several hours.

However, the animal was found dead Friday morning at the time when the officials were to release it in the wild.

Immediately after the incident, the Principal Chief Conservator of Forest ordered a probe into the matter and directed the Regional Chief Conservator of Forests, Berhampur to investigate into the incident.

10 yrs on, labourers still wait for wages



POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, Jan 31: MGNREGS is aimed to ensure job opportunities for rural workers through various labour-intensive projects, but the central scheme has been marred at different places of Jajpur district due to alleged irregularities. Job card holders had worked in an MGNREGS project 10 years ago in Bari block, but their wages have not been paid till date, a report said.

According to the report, the scam was reported from Mahakalpada panchayat under Bari block. Irregularities were also allegedly committed in an MGNREGS project in Siha panchayat under Barhana block.

About 10 year ago, a pond was excavated in plot-no-1457(khata-104) at Mahakalpada panchayat. Eleven labourers engaged in the project have not yet received their wages. One Purna Chandra Sahu on behalf of the labourers had moved a PIL (WPC/17859/2013) in the Orissa High Court in this regard.

The HC has recently directed the Jajpur Collector to ensure payment of wages to the 11 labourers. As per guidelines, labourers are supposed to be paid their wages once in a week through their bank accounts. But labourers awaiting wages for the last 10 years has raised many eyebrows. It is alleged that no action was taken against the sarpanch, the VLW and the GRS who were allegedly involved in the

scam. Some influential people are allegedly creating hurdle in action against the guilty.

The MGNREGS is significantly aimed at providing jobs to rural poor though creation of work scope, thus keeping poverty at bay.

But scams have defeated the purpose of the scheme in the district, it was alleged.

In the PIL, it was stated that the then sarpanch of Mahakalpada had issued a work order to Purna Chandra Sahu to dig Mo Pokhari pond under MGNREGS April 4, 2010. Eleven labourers were engaged in the work. The project was completed June 14, 2010.

The labourers had given their signatures in the muster roll with promise of wages to be cleared within seven days.

After two years, the labourers sought information about their wages from the Bari block through RTI queries.

The RTI papers revealed that there were no muster roll and labourer document for the wage clearance. Later, the Vigilance and the block administration investigated the issue and detected misappropriation of wages. The BDO initiated departmental proceedings against the officials involved in the scam.

Still then, the wages were not cleared. The complainant moved the court in 2013. The BDO could not be contacted over phone for comment.

Fake certificate costs woman job after 25 yrs

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, Jan 31: Forged certificate has cost the job of a woman clerk, who had been serving in Malkangiri district for the last 25 years.

Laxmipriya Behera, a native of Kalahandi, was dismissed from government service after her caste certificate was found to be fake.

She started her job in 1996 and has even got promotions in the last 25 years.

Malkangiri Collector Yeddula Vijay has dismissed Behera from service and directed her to return the salaries and other financial benefits that she has received for



Malkangiri Collector Yeddula Vijay has dismissed Behera from service and directed her to return the salaries and other financial benefits that she has received for the last 25 years

the last 25 years. A notice to this effect was pasted on her official residence.

An allegation about her caste certificate was made at with Southern Range Revenue Divisional Commissioner.

A probe was earlier conducted by the Commissioner into the alle-

gation. On the basis of the investigation report, the action was taken against her.

The probe revealed that Behera, who belongs to Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC), had married a man of Scheduled Tribe (ST). Later, she applied for ST certificate on the

basis of her husband's identity. The then Junagarh Tehsildar had issued her an ST certificate without proper enquiry. Behera had secured the government job using the certificate.

It may be noted here that four people had been arrested eight years ago for providing forged HSC, CET, BEd and Plus II certificates in the district. Many teachers were found to be serving on the basis of forged certificates.

After the forgery came to fore, Adibasi Mahasangh and other tribal outfits have demanded that certificates and documents of all officials serving in various departments of the district be verified.

Goods train hits deer herd, three killed

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jagatsinghpur, Jan 31: Three deer were killed after being run over by a goods train near Gopalpur village under Raghunathpur police limits in Jagatsinghpur district Sunday. In this mishap, four deer were injured.

It has been a common practice for the animals of nearby jungles to stray into villages in search of water and food. The herd comprising over 10 deer was coming to the Gopalpur village crossing the railway line at around 9.00 am. At that time, a goods train was also crossing through that point. It mowed down three animals and injured four others.

After coming to know about the mishap, the villagers gathered at the spot and immediately informed the forest department officials.

Later, the forest department officials reached mishap spot and carried out a probe.

An officer from the forest department confirmed that the deer herd was hit by a goods train.

Despite measures taken by the forest department and the Railways, cases of elephants, cows and deer being killed by trains are quite common. Local people and animal lovers, meanwhile, demanded concrete steps to be taken to avoid such mishaps in future.

Bargarh youth, sister to guard India's borders

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargarh, Jan 31: Prabhat Barik and Rashmita, children of Ratra Barik, a resident of Tihikipali under Bheden block in Bargarh district, have been selected by the Border Security Force and they will soon be on duty to guard India's borders. The two have been on cloud nine since the news of their selection was conveyed to them. The siblings had always wanted to serve the country since childhood. Initially they wanted to join the police force. However, they managed to pass the selection tests organised by the BSF.

"I still remember how we would play by acting as police personnel when we were kids. We had a special liking for police uniforms. And now we have been selected to join the BSF which is nothing but a blessing from God. He has given us much more than what we had been wished for. Now we can serve Mother India. Our parents, family members and friends are elated at



Prabhat and his sister Rashmita said being selected to join the BSF is nothing but a blessing from God. We got what we had wished for

hearing the news," Rashmita said.

Rashmita completed her schooling at the village school. Then she did her Plus-II from Kadobahal College and Plus-III from Siddharth College in Binika. Prabhat, after passing his class 10 exams, took

admission in Bargarh Panchayat College and did his Plus-II and graduation.

Rashmita said as they had a childhood desire to join police they had regularly been exercising and appearing for various examinations and tests. "Our failures in past have made us stronger. We had never given up the hope or the attempts," she said.

Prabhat said: "We did not undergo any training or coaching. It is our self-confidence that kept us propelling ahead. At last, our prayers were answered."

PM all praise for Rourkela girl's Pattachitra

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Jan 31: Bhagyashree Sahu, an Odia engineering student and a Pattachitra artist was on cloud nine when Prime Minister Narendra Modi was all praise for her artistic creations in his radio talk 'Mann Ki Baat' Sunday.

Bhagyashree, a resident of Sector-19 in the Steel City, has done Pattachitra on various themes using soft stones. She used her skill during the lockdown period and created splendid arts on unused bottles, fuse electric bulbs and others glass and plastic materials.

"On her way to college, Bhagyashree found these soft stones, she collected and cleaned them. Later, she painted these stones in Pattachitra style for two hours every day. After painting these stones, she started gifting them to her friends. During the



Bhagyashree, a resident of Sector-19 in the Steel City, has done Pattachitra on various themes using soft stones, created splendid arts on bottles, fused electric bulbs, glass and plastic materials

PM said: A few days ago, on the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Bhagyashree paid him a unique tribute done on stone. I wish her all the best for her future endeavours

niversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Bhagyashree paid him a unique tribute done on stone. I wish her all the best for her future endeavours."

Reacting to the PM's applause, Bhagyashree said, "The moment Modi spoke on me it was unbelievable. I can't express my feelings. I would like to thank Prime Minister Narendra Modi for recognising me and my art."

Creating a number of arts on various bhesha (appearance) of Lord Jagannath, Bhagyashree has plans to make more paintings on other Hindu deities like Shiva-Parvati and Radha-Krishna.

She said that she had once visited Raghurajpur village in Puri, famous for Pattachitra. This inspired her to adopt Pattachitra. She was doing B Tech in Dhenkanal. At leisure, she used to make Pattachitra.

lockdown, she started painting on bottles too. And now, she even conducts workshops on this art form,"

Modi said. Wishing her all success, the Prime Minister said, "A few days ago, on the birth an-

RALLY FOR RELIGION STATUS



Activists of Adivasi Sengel Abhiyan stage a demonstration, seeking religion status to Sarna Dharma, a tribal faith, in Udala of Mayurbhanj district, Sunday

Watch the too indignantly righteous. Before long you will find them committing or condoning the very offence which they have so fiercely censured.



SRI AUROBINDO

Whither Democracy

The wounds inflicted on the agitating farmers during their tractor march to the capital on Republic Day are fresh and raw. The country is still unable to come to terms with the monumental assault on the sacred symbol of the republic, the Tricolour fluttering atop the Red Fort, by a bunch of criminals masquerading as farmers. It was, in fact, a double assault since the intention was clearly to sabotage the valiant, peaceful fight of the farmers to stop the government from, as they are convinced, snatching their livelihood by imposing three contentious farm laws.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his first Mann Ki Baat address of this year rightly regretted "Amidst all this, the country was saddened by the insult to the Tricolour on January 26." To this Rakesh Tikait of the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) has equally rightly responded by urging the government to nab those who insulted the national flag which "the whole nation loves." The government is yet to arrest the main perpetrators of the violence, who are known BJP supporters and one of whom was an election agent of a star saffron MP from Punjab.

The previous day, the PM had announced in the customary all-party meeting before the Budget session that "the government has not closed the door" for discussion with the farmers. The farmers' representatives responded by saying "Farmers are ready to hold talks with the government, but not at gunpoint."

This only brings things back to square one. For, there have already been interminable rounds of fruitless discussions, with both sides sticking to their ground. The government won't budge from its position of only being amenable to some changes in the laws, while the farmers will end their agitation only if the laws are repealed.

Adding to the complex situation is the zeal of the Delhi and the UP police to crack down on the farmers and critics of the government by lodging spates of FIRs to intimidate them and tar their agitation using the pretext of violence and vandalism during the tractor march. The UP administration is also going out of its way to disrupt the agitation by withdrawing power and water facilities from the venues of agitation. Simultaneously, so-called local residents of the areas where the farmers are agitating are now demanding clearance of their roads.

The whole move, starting from the violence engineered by elements who were ostensibly not part of the agitation, is suspect for two reasons. First, the agitation has since November 26, 2020, been peaceful. The farmers, old and young and their womenfolk, have in the process endured severe cold staying in the open air with several of them even dying. Second, right from the beginning, the government tried to tarnish the agitation with an orchestrated propaganda that it was backed by Khalistanis with funds and men. It is difficult to believe that an agitation which had remained peaceful since inception two months ago could suddenly turn violent. On the other hand, the government has been reactive in the whole matter. First, it tried to hide under the cloak of the Supreme Court judges. Then smartly, the SC pushed the dice back to the Delhi police, claiming it was a law and order administrative work. Without a cover of legality, the police permitted the tractor rally. Interestingly, amongst many videos doing the social media rounds, there are those showing how the police are allowing a certain number of people to pass through the barricade towards Red Fort. This behavior of the police would seem suspect when the aftermath happened.

It is unfortunate the way FIRs with hard sections such as treason are being lodged indiscriminately since the rally against farm leaders who have been negotiating with the Centre. Of over 40 such leaders, more than 30 have been named by the Delhi Police under the Home Ministry. This only creates the impression that the government is trying to discredit the farmers' agitation and bulldoze opposition to the farm laws.

Another matter of concern is a recent report that claims about 100 farmers going missing from the day of the tractor rally. This is disconcerting since every day that passes without a search for or trace of them mounts fears of the worst. There could also be a possibility that these farmers are being held hostage to build pressure for negotiation as well as weakening the farmers' morale.

It is known that India has an agriculture based economy. The proof is observed annually when, after a good crop, the SENSEX goes high and dips after every poor harvest. Notwithstanding our slogan of *Jai Jawan Jai Kisan*, this severe style of persecution of farmers could lead to a dangerous and divisive future for the country.

WISDOM CORNER

- The constant assertion of belief is an indication of fear. **JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI**
- Find ecstasy in life; the mere sense of living is joy enough. **EMILY DICKINSON**
- Yesterday is but today's memory, and tomorrow is today's dream. **KAHLIL GIBRAN**

WORDSWORTH

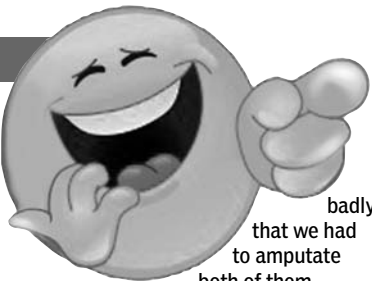
Macaronic

If this sounds as though it is connected with Italian pasta, you're right. It was coined in the sixteenth century by the Italian poet Teofilo Folengo, in reference to a sort of burlesque verse he invented in which Italian words were mixed in with Latin ones for comic effect. He said that he linked the crude hotch-potch of language in the verse with the homely foodstuff called macaroni, a dish which he described (in Latin, of course) as "pulmentum farina, caseo, botiro compaginatam, grossum, rude, et rusticanum" ("a savoury dish bound together with flour, cheese [and] butter, [a dish] which is fat, coarse, and rustic"). The word first appeared in English a century later and expanded its scope to refer to any form of verse in which two or more languages were mixed together. A once-famous American example was the mixed German-English verses of Hans Breitmann's Ballads by Charles Leland, in which a German immigrant is overwhelmed by mid-nineteenth-century America and speaks in a mixture of German and heavily accented English. Macaronic verse has a link to the eighteenth-century London dandies who were called macaronis because they liked foreign food, Italian in particular, as a result of experiencing it on the Grand Tour. A certain famous old song also contains the word: "Yankee Doodle went to town, / Riding on a pony, / Stuck a feather in his hat, / And called it macaroni," but that is linked to the dandy sense, not the verse one.

LOL

Good news & bad news

Patient: I'm in a hospital! Why am I in here?
Doctor: You've had an accident involving a bus.
Patient: What happened?
Doctor: Well, I've got some good news and some bad news. Which would you like to hear first?
Patient: Give me the bad news first.
Doctor: Your legs were injured so



badly that we had to amputate both of them.
Patient: That's terrible! What's the good news?
Doctor: There's a guy in the next ward who made a very good offer on your slippers.

FOCUS ECONOMY

NOT ON EASY PATH

India is poised to grow despite the pandemic panic shock during a critical financial year when all budget projections had gone awry thanks to total countrywide shutdown of all production, predicts the Economic Survey 2020-21. Agriculture alone is growing at 3.4 per cent.

Importantly, the survey is positive on future real GDP growth for 2021-22 at 11 per cent despite the economy being in recession leading to GDP contraction of a record (-) 23.9 per cent in April-June and full contraction of 7.7 per cent during the year. The Survey while praising the lockdown, notes that the economy is technically in a recession due to the severe contractions.

This path, with 11 per cent real GDP growth in FY22 would entail a growth of 2.4 per cent over the absolute level of FY20, implying that the economy would take two years to reach and go past the pre-pandemic level. The Survey also estimates the real GDP to grow at its trend rate of 6.5 per cent in FY23 and 7 per cent in FY24, aided by structural reforms. (The National Statistics Office revised the GDP growth rate for 2020-21 to 4 per cent from 4.2 per cent earlier mainly due to contraction in manufacturing and construction on 28 January.)

The growth is to be achieved on such low base through spending more as there is impulse for "expansionary fiscal policy." In short, the prescription is to follow the Hindu Charvak philosophy of resorting to high debt and be a spend-thrift for "a happier life" and political dividend as well.

It is an indication that the budget is to have high fiscal deficit, may be around 7.5 per cent and likely to resort to tough measures to raise revenue. It might not be easy on taxes though the room for actually raising it is limited as the industry is keen on softening of the tax regime even on personal income-tax to create an environment for increasing purchasing power.

Chief Economic Adviser KV Subramanian says economic growth leads to debt sustainabil-



So as imagined it will be a five-year budgetary process and not a recovery in two years to undo the pandemic recession. The Fitch Rating agency earlier had indicated that it would take five years to get to the pre-pandemic level

ity and even if India were to have real GDP growth rate as low as 3.8 per cent each year from 2022-23 to 2028-29 the country's debt levels will still come down. Subramanian further said India has a track record of having adopted expansionary fiscal policy focused on infrastructure spending.

So as imagined it will be a five-year budgetary process and not a recovery in two years to undo the pandemic recession. The Fitch Rating agency earlier had indicated that it would take five years to get to the pre-pandemic level.

The Survey severely criticizes Moody's, S&P as "noisy, opaque and biased." It adds that the fiscal policy "must not remain beholden to such noisy/biased measures and should be guided by considerations of growth and development rather than be restrained by biased subjective sovereign credits."

Western agencies maintain a negative view on deficits and high borrowing and the Survey wants transparent sovereign methodology, as India's willingness to pay is unquestionably demonstrated through zero sovereign default history, Subramanian adds.

A study sponsored by RBI in mid-2020 by Survey of Professional Forecasters is also not very different from the sovereign agen-

cies. It avers, "Real GDP is likely to contract by 1.5 per cent in 2020-21 but is expected to revert to growth terrain next year, when it is likely to grow by 7.2 per cent."

The Survey projects that to 11 per cent possibly on better data. But credit agencies globally keep a tab on different growth parameters and even the IMF and World Bank do not wish them away. While the Survey extols borrowings, its expectations are a bit speculative. Usually sovereign borrowings lead to inflation and act as check on growth. Of late, inflation despite some moderation has been high, including that of food, despite a liberal food dole to over 80 crore people.

Largely the 2021-22 projections are based on "V" shaped recovery in the second half on a low-base effect of 2020-21; recovery in pent-up demand; high liquidity and low interest rates driving credit -- a measure that is hitting the banking sector; supply side reforms through easing of regulations to increase investment; spending on manufacturing (provided there is demand growth); and speculative arena of hopes of rise in discretionary consumption of vaccine roll-out!

One major aspect of all these aspirations is the RBI revenue payout. The CARE Ratings says that the Central Bank's earnings, which

build a surplus and contributed to the country's non-tax revenue, may be dented due to low-yielding US dollar assets, and also due to payment of interest to banks in reverse revenue repo.

Its earnings were hit by low-interest rates. This would lead to lower dividend payment by the RBI, which had squeezed itself in paying over Rs 2 lakh to pay dividend during the last two years. The Survey has not taken this aspect into its calculations.

While it has laid stress on raising R&D spending to 3 per cent from 1.5 per cent, noting more than half of it was done by the government, it has not taken note of the ground reality that most research in academia-related institutions are not in proper direction and may be a great waste due to the lack of a proper methodology.

The Survey stood by the farm laws and labour codes saying these are instruments of growth and sustained the view by citing of 21 reports since 2001. While the views are fine it has overstressed the benefits of 1991 reforms, often called Manmohanomics.

The nation in the 30th year of liberalization needs to have a vociferous debate on the "liberalization and new economy." It needs to study the linkage of present farm stress and protests and look for remedies. Its stress on reforms may not be as ideal as the Survey has projected.

However, it gives a cue to the budget proposals, which may have large doses of allocations for various supposed "development and construction" projects as it benefits certain industries.

All in all the Survey is hopeful on the repaying capacity of high projected borrowings but also indicates many distresses like credit delinquency, asset quality review of banks, recapitalization and substantial reform of banks. This could pose a severe squeeze on corporate borrowers indicating that the optimism on the overall economy may not be as easy to achieve. The nation is not on an easy path despite a rosy projection.

INFA

SPECTRUM HUNGER

Prevent the next food crisis now

Mark Lowcock & Axel van Trotsenburg

THE NUMBER OF CHRONICALLY HUNGRY PEOPLE INCREASED BY AN ESTIMATED 130 MILLION LAST YEAR

The toxic cocktail of climate change, conflict, and Covid-19 is making itself felt most intensely in the world's poorest and most vulnerable countries. As a result, a record 235 million people worldwide will need humanitarian assistance and protection in 2021 – an increase of 40 per cent from last year.

It can be hard to wrap one's head around such numbers. But behind the statistics are individual human lives. For the most vulnerable people, the pandemic's secondary effects – not the coronavirus itself – will cause the most damage. And the hunger pandemic triggered by Covid-19 threatens to be the biggest killer. The number of chronically hungry people increased by an estimated 130 million last year, to more than 800 million – about eight times the total number of Covid-19 cases to date.

Countries affected by conflict and climate change are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity. Empty stomachs can stunt whole generations.

Moreover, the spectre of multiple famines looms just as government budgets are being stretched by efforts to protect populations and economies from the pandemic. International solidarity to help prevent such disasters may look like

a hard sell just now. But preventing famine and food insecurity is a smart investment for everyone.

Still, we must ensure that we are getting the most from every dollar we spend. That is why the United Nations and the World Bank are increasingly investing in an anticipatory approach to humanitarian need. It has become ever clearer that acting early to address humanitarian needs ahead of a crisis is more effective, dignified, and cost-efficient than waiting until disaster has struck.

For example, in Bangladesh last year, the UN and the Red Cross/Red Crescent provided vulnerable people with cash so that they could get themselves and their livestock out of harm's way before devastating floods hit. This effort cost half as much as picking up the pieces afterward would have done, and it helped more people.

We are applying a similar anticipatory approach to the growing hunger pandemic, by taking action before food emergencies turn into full-blown famines. This involves addressing long-term drivers of food insecurity – including vulnerability to extreme weather and pests, low incomes, fragile value chains, and conflict – in order to prevent new crises down the road.

In line with this goal, the

International Development Association (IDA), the WB's fund for the poorest countries) committed \$5.3 billion for food security in the six months between April and October 2020. This sum comprised a mix of short-term Covid-19 responses and investments to address the longer-term causes of food insecurity.

In Bangladesh, the WB redirected resources from an existing project to provide, among other things, cash transfers to 620,000 vulnerable small-scale dairy and poultry-farming households. In Haiti, where remittances were expected to decrease as a result of the pandemic, the IDA provided farmers with seeds and fertilizer to safeguard future harvests, and supported small irrigation works. The IDA has also extended its Crisis Response Window to include \$500 million in financing dedicated to responding during the early stages of slow-onset food-security crises and disease outbreaks.

Likewise, in June 2020, the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund provided financing to help avert a food crisis in Somalia. Acting ahead of the triple threat of locusts, floods, and Covid reduced the risk of disease outbreaks. By upgrading boreholes early, the UN averted disputes related to water sources, kept

livestock healthier, improved household finances, boosted mental health, and prevented large-scale displacement.

The development of effective vaccines means that the world may soon start to see the light at the end of the tunnel. But for many of the most vulnerable countries, the crisis will have deep and long-lasting after-effects – on incomes, health, nutrition, education, and whole economies.

Swift action can make the hang-over less painful. We need to focus today on monitoring risks and the factors that compound them, and emphasize effective early action and long-term investment to avoid much larger costs in future.

Acting now on the danger signals is the smart, moral, and cost-effective strategy. By working together to save and transform lives, we can free the world's most vulnerable people from crippling hunger and insecurity and build the foundations of a better future for all.

Mark Lowcock is UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. Axel van Trotsenburg is MD of Operations at World Bank.

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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, Russagarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Be on guard

Sir, Beijing's antics at the LAC have continued unabated. New Delhi has downplayed the Naku La incident saying there was a minor faceoff that was deftly resolved by Commanders according to established protocols. Some sources have said the tiff was "more than a minor scuffle." Did the Chinese side eat the humble pie notwithstanding the nature and magnitude of the scuffle? Though there was no telltale evidence of skirmishes having taken place, India has not denied the incident while China has dismissed the whole standoff as "fake news." Beijing is worried that back home the PLA will be sneered at if the details of injuries suffered by its personnel fall into the public domain. The Xi Jinping government is steadfast in guarding its army from brickbats. The PLA is looking to set its roots in Naku La, an area where a fracas had erupted between the two sides in May, 2020, just before Galwan, that left scores of soldiers from either side injured. The Commander-level talks between the two countries at Moldo, China has stressed on "early disengagement" while describing the meet as "positive and constructive." However, going by Naku La, the chance of an early troop pullout may be nothing more than an illusion. Both countries are adamant that the other side take the early initiative towards withdrawal. China is, quietly busy with infrastructural activities along the border. In the Aksai Chin region and along the Tibetan border with India, the effects of housing and township creation by Beijing has not been lost on New Delhi. Somehow, peace and tranquillity appear to be alien words for Beijing. Its proclivity for provocation is common knowledge. New Delhi has to be on its guard.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

A big setback

Sir, This refers to the news item "Tigris Sundari's relocation likely in Feb" published in Orissa POST on 31 January. Tiger census is conducted every four years in India. The last one was done in 2018. There was a 33 per cent increase in tiger population in India (from 2,228 in 2014 to 2,967 in 2018). Madhya Pradesh saw a 71 per cent increase from 308 to 526, but in Odisha the tiger population has remained the same at 28. The state government spent money in bringing two tigers from MP in 2018. They were released in Satkosia Tiger Reserve where Mahavir was killed by poachers and Sundari became violent, injured/killed villagers. To protect the villagers' lives, Sundari was caged and is now being sent back to MP. This is a big setback for Odisha's tiger conservation efforts. Gopal Mittal, BHUBANESWAR



Shah, Irani slam Mamata

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dumurjala, Jan 31: In a stinging attack on West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Union Home Minister Amit Shah Sunday alleged that she is working towards serving her nephew in the state, and will have no one by her side by the time assembly elections are held.

Noting that the TMC which boasts of the slogan 'Maa Mati Mansuh' (Mother, Land and people) actually indulges in extortion, corruption and appeasement, Shah exuded confidence of forming the next government in the state and take it to the path of development.

"I want to make it clear that the BJP would come to power in the state after the elections. While the Modi government is working towards 'Jan Kalyan' (serving people), the Mamata Banerjee government is working towards 'bhatija kalyan' (serving her nephew) in Bengal," Shah said addressing a rally through video-conferencing here.

"Mamata Banerjee should think why so many TMC leaders are joining the BJP. It is because she has failed the people of the state. By the time elections arrive, she will be left alone," he said, hinting at more exodus from the ruling party.



Accusing the ruling Trinamool Congress in West Bengal of indulging in corruption, Union Minister Smriti Irani said Sunday that while Prime Minister Narendra Modi provided foodgrains for 80 crore people of the country for eight months during the pandemic, the rations were looted by the party in the state.

Maintaining that over 50 crore mandays were created under 'Garib Rojgar Yojana' for migrant workers returning home, Irani claimed that "it did not happen in Bengal".

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had in June last year launched the employment scheme for migrant workers who had returned to villages from cities, during the coronavirus lockdown, to help them get jobs near their home and help in development of villages.

"The Prime Minister provided five kg rice and one kg dal for 80 crore people of the country for eight months through 'Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana', but in Bengal, TMC looted it during the lockdown," she said addressing a BJP rally here.

Disgruntled TMC leaders join BJP

NEW DELHI: A day after quitting the Trinamool Congress, former West Bengal minister Rajib Banerjee joined the BJP in New Delhi along with a few other disgruntled leaders of the state's ruling party in presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah. Banerjee and MLAs Prabir Ghosal and Baishali Dalmiya, who was expelled from the TMC a few days ago, former Howrah Mayor Rathin Chakraborty and actor Rudranil Ghosh flew to the national capital on a special plane from Kolkata, and met central BJP leaders. They have joined the BJP, party general secretary and the party's Bengal minder Kailash Vijayvargiya told PTI following the meeting.

Claiming that Shramik Special Trains arranged by the Centre were termed 'Corona Express' by Mamata Banerjee, Irani said, "I want to ask her whether sons and daughters from Bengal working in different parts of the country are considered viruses by her."

RJD MAY JOIN FORCES WITH TMC IN ELECTION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Jan 31: Bihar's main opposition party RJD is in talks with the Trinamool Congress to fight the upcoming West Bengal elections together, a senior RJD leader said Sunday.

RJD principal general secretary Abdul Bari Siddiqui and national general secretary Shyam Rajak are in Kolkata to hammer a tie-up with Mamata Banerjee's party for the Bengal polls.

"We will be meeting Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Monday to fight Bengal elections together," Rajak told PTI.

Siddiqui and Rajak are meeting party leaders in the state ahead of the discussions with Banerjee.

RJD spokesperson Mrityunjay Tiwary said over the phone from Patna that the party is exploring the possibility of contesting some seats on the Bengal-Bihar border.

He, however, did not give any numbers on which the party is planning to fight the state elections, likely in April-May.

Banerjee has a cordial relation with RJD supremo Lalu Prasad



Banerjee has a cordial relation with RJD supremo Lalu Prasad and the party wishes to strengthen her hands in the Bengal polls

MRITYUNJAY TIWARY | RJD SPOKESPERSON

West Bengal and strengthen the secular forces under the leadership of the TMC chief, he added.

Though not a noticeable player in Bengal politics, the RJD, which emerged as the largest party in the recently concluded Bihar polls and enjoys considerable support among the Muslims besides the Yadavs, is eyeing a few seats on the interstate border that have a sizeable number of Hindi-speaking voters.

RJD had an MLA in the Bengal assembly between 2006 and 2011 during the Left Front rule.

Kafeel Khan in list of history-sheeters

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gorakhpur, Jan 31: Dr Kafeel Khan and 80 others have been included in the list of history-sheeters in Gorakhpur district of Uttar Pradesh and they will be on the radar of police, officials said.

The 81 people have been included in the list on the instruction of Senior Superintendent of Police Jogendra Kumar, they said.

The district now has a total of 1,543 history-sheeters, or persons with a criminal record.

Kafeel Khan's brother Adeel Khan, however, told PTI that the history-sheet against the doctor was opened on June 18, 2020, but the information was given to the media on Friday.

In a video message released on Saturday, Kafeel Khan said, The UP government has opened my history-sheet. They say that they will monitor me for life. Good, give two security guards who will keep an eye on me for 24 hours. At least, I will be able to save myself from fake cases.

In Uttar Pradesh, the situation is such that the criminals are not monitored, but the history-sheet

BAFFLING ARREST

Khan was arrested in January 2020 after a speech he had delivered at the Aligarh Muslim University during the anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) protests

Allahabad High Court had quashed Khan's detention under the NSA and ordered his immediate release, saying his speech at the AMU didn't promote violence

of innocent persons is opened, he charged.

Khan was arrested in January 2020 after a speech he had delivered at the Aligarh Muslim University on December 10, 2019 during the anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) protests. He was subsequently booked under the stringent National Security Act (NSA).

In his video message, Khan also said he had written to the state government requesting it to reinstate him at his post in Gorakhpur's Baba Raghav Das (BRD) Medical College.



MAGH MELA



View of tents placed for devotees on the bank of Ganga river during Magh Mela festival, in Prayagraj, Sunday PTI

Power employees to strike Feb 3

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mathura, Jan 31: Intensifying stir against the Centre's privatisation policy, 15 lakh power employees of the country would resort to work boycott on February 3, the All India Power Engineers Federation (AIPEF) said.

Prime Minister (Narendra Modi), through a letter, has also been apprised (of this) besides notice served on Union and state governments, AIPEF Chairman Shaileendra Dubey said Sunday, during a virtual conference. He firmly said the Electricity (Amendment) Bill in its current form is unacceptable.

To build pressure on the government, the Federation earlier held meetings and has resorted to token work boycotts.

Unless the government rescinds its decision, the agitation would



further be intensified as the steps taken by the government in the name of reforms had placed power distribution companies (discoms) in alarming financial crisis, said the AIPEF chairman.

Despite failure of privatisation in Agra, Greater Noida and Orissa, the government is moving ahead without bothering to take feedback of practical aspect from discoms, who are the real sufferers, he added.

In the name of reforms, the government is serving the interest of the private sector, gradually de-

stroying the public sector across the country, the official said.

AIPEF wants the commencement of the withdrawal process of privatisation of electricity from the public sector to private companies in states and Union territories without further delay, he said.

The official said the Federation demands scrapping of the Electricity Bill and standard bidding document for total privatisation of distribution of electricity.

It also urged the government to re-merge all power utilities in states with function components of generation, transmission, and distribution like KSEB Ltd and HPSEB Ltd.

The Federation official also demanded the implementation of old pension scheme for all power sector employees and regularisation of all contractual workers

Farmers 'deeply hurt' by Centre

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Jan 31: Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav Sunday said the farmers were deeply hurt by the moves made by the BJP to defame them.

The farmers are feeling deeply hurt because of the moves made by the BJP to defame them. The BJP has enacted demonetisation, GST, labour laws and farm laws to give benefits only to the billionaires

AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF

Facilitation) Act, 2020, the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020 and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020.

The protest took a violent turn



He also alleged that the BJP has tortured common people.

"The farmers are feeling deeply hurt because of the moves made by the BJP to defame them. The BJP has enacted demonetisation, GST, labour laws and farm laws to give benefits only to the billionaires. The BJP has tortured the common people," the Samajwadi Party chief said in a tweet in Hindi.

Thousands of farmers have been protesting at Delhi's borders with Haryana and Uttar Pradesh demanding the rollback of the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and

during the farmers' tractor rally on January 26.

Enacted in September 2020, the central government has presented these laws as major farm reforms aimed at increasing farmers' income, but the protesting farmers have raised concerns that these legislations would weaken the minimum support price (MSP) and "mandi" (wholesale market) systems and leave them at the mercy of big corporations.

The government has maintained that these apprehensions are misplaced and ruled out a repeal of the laws.

Yogi launches pulse polio programme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Jan 31: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Sunday launched the pulse polio programme in the state by administering drops to children at a health-care facility here and said over 1.10 lakh booths have been set up for the vaccination drive.

All the newborns should be taken to booths and administered polio drops so that the state and the country remain free of the disease, he said. "A little bit of laxity may paralyse the future of a child... Almost 3.40 crore children in the age group of 0-5 years in the state are being administered the drops. For this, more than 1.10 lakh booths have been set up," the chief minister said.

"The World Health Organisation had on March 27, 2014, declared India polio-free. Even today, three countries - Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nigeria -- are still polio-infected."

Hence, despite India being polio-free, the danger of the disease coming from the polio-infected countries still remains. So, effective implementation of pulse polio immunisation programme is necessary, Adityanath said.

About the COVID-19 situation, the pandemic has been effectively curtailed in Uttar Pradesh due to dedicated work done by medical teams.



"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, serious work has been done to improve the health facilities. Two COVID vaccines have been made in the country. India has been providing coronavirus vaccines to other nations as the prime minister strongly believes in 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (world is one family)," Adityanath said.

Referring to the health scenario of the state, he said, "From Independence to 2016, there were only 12 medical colleges in the state. In the last four years, work is going on to establish 31 new medical colleges in the state. District hospitals have also been expanded."

He also said that when the first COVID-19 case was reported in the state, there was no testing facilities. "At present, everyday almost 1.75 lakh samples are tested in the state. Ventilators have been provided in every district and training has also been imparted to operate them," the chief minister said.

CM face may be an issue for BJP in Bengal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 31: The BJP's major problem in West Bengal will be its chief ministerial face for the 2021 assembly elections, according to a new book which also claims the party does not have a leader who can match the mass appeal of Mamata Banerjee.

In states like Uttar Pradesh, the BJP achieved success without projecting any chief ministerial candidate but will this be possible in West Bengal, journalist Sambit Pal asks in his book "The Bengal Conundrum: The Rise of the BJP and the Future of the TMC".

As West Bengal grapples with tumultuous times - from the controversy surrounding the National Register of Citizens (NRC) to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic - on the cusp of this crucial election, the BJP and the TMC are rolling their dices to win the strategic battle.

"The BJP's major problem in Bengal will be the chief ministerial face for 2021 assembly election. There is already an internal feud on this issue," Pal argues.



"The names of former Indian cricket captain Sourav Ganguly, Rajya Sabha member and journalist Swapan Dasgupta and even a monk of Ramakrishna Mission, Swami Kripakarananda, have already come up in media reports. Former governor of Tripura and Meghalaya and former BJP state president, Tathagata Roy, also openly threw his hat in the ring, expressing

his desire to be the chief ministerial candidate," he writes.

BJP leader Kailash Vijayvargiya has, however, asserted that the party would not go to the assembly elections with any chief ministerial candidate.

"The Bengal BJP has no such leader who can match the mass leader that Mamata Banerjee is. The TMC also knows this will be an ad-

vantage for them," the author claims.

"While the BJP is all set to take up the issues of TMC's corruption, syndicate raj, bhatija-raj (targeting Abhishek Banerjee), Muslim appeasement and Mamata's opposition to NRC-CAA, Mamata Banerjee is depending on her fighter image and on rousing the Bengali sentiment," the book, published by Bloomsbury India, says.



Today, India is undertaking the world's biggest Covid vaccine programme. Do you know what's a matter of more pride? Along with the biggest vaccine programme, we are vaccinating our citizens faster than anywhere in the world

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

PATNA'S HARDINGE PARK TURNS 105

Hardinge Park, Patna's famed garden built in honour of the viceroy who was instrumental in the creation of Bihar and Orissa as a separate province and which hosted the Prince of Wales a century ago, Sunday completed 105 years, albeit shorn of its heritage identity



of the day quote

The people of Jammu have a great history of serving the nation and sacrificing their lives for the integrity of the country... every community must not forget their martyrs and young generation shall know about their brave stories regarding sacrifices and serving the motherland

FAROOQ KHAN | JAMMU AND KASHMIR LT GOVERNOR'S ADVISOR

The central government has no right to make farm laws. The farmer's agitation will not end till the three new agriculture laws are repealed. These farm legislations will only benefit the capitalists

GURNAM SINGH CHADUNI | HARYANA BHARATIYA KISAN UNION (BKU) CHIEF

The farm laws were detrimental to the interests of not only the farmers but the whole country

PRIYANKA GANDHI | VADRA | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY

Farm stir: Thousands converge at Ghazipur

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 31: Despite an increasing number of barricades, thousands of farmers have been converging at Ghazipur on the Delhi-Uttar Pradesh border following a tearful Bharatiya Kisan Union leader Rakesh Tikait's impassioned appeal to protesters to bolster the stir.

The tide of the over two-month protest against the farm laws, which had lost its sheen after the violence in Delhi during the tractors parade on Republic Day, appears to have regained momentum as is evident from the increased number of tents set up at the protest site. Many protesters waited for hours to talk to Tikait or take a selfie with him as the farmer leader remained busy meeting his supporters and talking to the media.

A Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) member said Tikait has been sleeping only for around three hours a day for the last three days. "He had complained of blood pressure issues, but is doing fine now," the member said. Shiromani Akal Dal chief Sukhbir Singh Badal visited the Ghazipur border to lend his support to the protesting farmers. Badal, whose party pulled out of the NDA



Sukhbir Singh Badal presents a sword to Rakesh Tikait

PTI PHOTO

government over the three farm laws, met Tikait for around 10 minutes. Farmers, carrying tricolours and raising slogans, took out marches, while a group of youths gathered at a spot near the Delhi-Meerut expressway and danced to patriotic songs till the sun went down. The scene was quite different just three days ago.

A day after the Republic Day violence in Delhi, when a section of farmers taking part in the tractor parade broke through barriers, clashed with police and stormed the Red Fort for a few hours, the farmer game it seemed to be over. Morale

plummeted and many farmers returned home. On Wednesday night, the atmosphere was tense at Ghazipur.

The Ghaziabad administration issued an "ultimatum" to the protesters occupying a stretch of the Delhi-Meerut expressway to vacate as the January 26 clashes painted a not-so-peaceful picture of the peasant community. As security presence at the site escalated and fears grew that the protesters would be forcibly evicted, an emotional Tikait broke down while talking to reporters.

'Will honour PM's dignity':

Protesting farmers will honour the dignity of prime minister, but are also committed to protecting their self-respect, the Tikait brothers who are leading the agitation asserted Sunday, a day after Narendra Modi said his government was just a "phone call away" for talks with the unions.

Both Naresh and Rakesh Tikait said they were open to talks with the government to find a "middle path", which the former suggested could be the BJP government not implementing the three laws during its tenure.

Rakesh, the younger of the two and the national spokesperson for the BKU, said a "respectful solution" should be found to the issue, but asserted they will not agree to anything under pressure.

Country saddened at insult to Tricolour: PM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday that the country was saddened by the "insult" to the Tricolour on Republic Day, referring to the religious flag incident at Red Fort during the farmers' tractor parade. In his monthly 'Mann ki Baa' broadcast, Modi maintained that his government is committed to "modernising" farming and has been taking many steps.

'100% occupancy in theatres from Feb 1'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 31: Cinema halls across the country will be permitted to operate at 100 per cent capacity from February 1 with adherence to COVID-19 safety protocols, Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Prakash Javadekar announced Sunday.

Digital booking of tickets and staggered show timings will be encouraged, the minister said, releasing a set of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). "There is good news. In February, people can watch and enjoy films in theatres as we are allowing full occupancy in all cinema halls. Cinema halls can now open at 100 per cent capacity. We encourage as much online booking (of tickets) as possible," Javadekar told reporters here.

"Staggered show timings will be encouraged so that the entry and exit of the crowd can be managed better. Sanitisation and all COVID-19 safety protocols must be followed," the minister added. The



development comes days after the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) allowed cinema halls and theatres to operate with more people as per fresh COVID-19 reopening guidelines, to be effective from February 1. Javadekar said he hopes people will "welcome" this move as the government is working towards relaxing several restrictions imposed due to the abnormal challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic. "Customers can also buy food and beverage from the stalls at the theatres and can carry it with them inside (the auditorium). These are all normal things but when the situation became abnormal due to COVID-19, we had to put these restrictions. These restrictions are on the verge to be relaxed," the minister added.

'Make Rahul party chief again'

Delhi Congress chief Chowdhury Anil Kumar moved the resolution, to request Rahul Gandhi to take over as the President of the Congress at the earliest

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 31: Ahead of organisational polls in the party slated for May, the Delhi Congress has passed a resolution calling for Rahul Gandhi to be appointed party President.

Delhi Congress chief Chowdhury Anil Kumar moved the resolution, to request Rahul Gandhi to take over as the President of the Congress at the earliest.

He said, "Considering the disturbed and dangerous political situation in the country, Congress needs a dynamic and powerful leader like Rahul Gandhi at the helm, to lead the party forcefully, to counter the communal, authoritarian and undemocratic forces, trying to take the country on the path of destruction." The resolution said that Rahul Gandhi has been waging a determined battle to "expose the misdeeds" of the Modi government, and his leading from the front as the Congress President was an urgent need to



boost the confidence and morale of the Congress workers.

The two other resolutions demanded the resignation of Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, for their "mishandling" of the farmers' tractor rally and the resultant violence in Delhi, and alleged Kejriwal was also responsible for the present "state of ruin" in Delhi.

26% women cite gender pay gap in new survey

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 31: In a recent international survey on gender equality opinions and experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic, most (87 per cent) female respondents from India have said they feel at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, of assault or harassment in some place or another. In the same survey, about 26 per cent women say they are not paid as much as their male counterparts.

According to India-based findings of the report by Women Deliver and Focus 2030, women in India cited public places to be the most common place where they felt at-risk. "Fifty-five percent of female respondents feel at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, online", and 40 per cent do "in the place where (they) work or study".

Twenty-six per cent of female respondents in India feel at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, of assault or harassment in their home," said



Representative image

the report. Of the 1,003 respondents surveyed, 48 per cent of female respondents in India state that they have had their "freedom of movement restricted against their will by family members or (their) partner".

As per the report, 60 per cent women find it acceptable for women to refuse sexual intercourse with their partner; and 56 per cent find it unacceptable to whistle at a woman in the street, or touch her without her consent. 35 per cent think it acceptable to share a sexist joke about a woman with friends or on social media, while 51 per cent find this unacceptable.

SHORT TAKES

Man dies after getting nCoV vaccine

Ahmedabad: A 30-year-old sanitation worker died around two hours after being administered a coronavirus vaccine in Gujarat's Vadodara on Sunday, following which authorities ordered a postmortem to ascertain the exact cause of his death, officials said. While the family members of the deceased said they suspect that the COVID-19 vaccine was the reason behind his sudden death, officials said he might have died due to a heart attack as he had a history of heart disease since 2016 and was not taking medicines. Jignesh Solanki was a sanitation worker at the Vadodara Municipal Corporation (VMC). He was vaccinated on Sunday morning. However, hours later, he fainted at home and was rushed to the SSG Hospital in the city, where he was declared brought dead by doctors, the officials said

Railway police SI shot at

Patna: A Government Railway Police Sub-Inspector was shot at and seriously injured at the Barh railway station in Bihar's Patna district, police said Sunday. SI Vipin Kumar Singh sustains gunshot injury in the chest around midnight Saturday and was under close observation at the Patna Medical College and Hospital (PMCH).

Two Army men killed in accident

Agra (Uttar Pradesh): Two army men were killed when their Scorpio lost control and rammed into a divider near milestone 74 on the Yamuna Expressway in Mathura's Naujheel area Sunday morning. The deceased have been identified as Lance Naik Pradeep Singh Sardar, 35, from Gwalior and Guru Bakshish Singh, 42, from Tarn Taran as per available documents.

Woman stabbed to death

Meerut (Uttar Pradesh): A woman in Meerut was brutally killed by her nephew after she refused his sexual advances. The woman's body was found in her house with several stab wounds and a slit throat, two days ago. Police station in-charge, Rishipal Singh, said the police have arrested the woman's nephew, who is in his B.Com final year. The police said that the woman's nephew allegedly demanded sexual favours from her.

GOLDEN HOUR



A couple silhouetted against the setting Sun at Broken bridge, in Chennai

PTI PHOTO

76% students forced to watch tobacco advertisements

According to a study conducted by the Ministry of Health, 14.6 per cent of adolescents between the ages of 13 and 15 in India use some form of tobacco

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 31: Despite the ban on advertising of tobacco products in our country, 76 per cent of school-college students are forced to watch advertisements of tobacco companies. Also, to entice the teenagers, these companies showcase their products specially between toffee-chocolate, etc. Experts caution that it increases the risk of addiction in adolescents.

Addressing a webinar on 'Tobacco Freer: Challenges and Way Ahead' Dr. Uma Kumar, Professor at AIIMS and head of the Department of Rheumatology, said that tobacco companies that make products like cigarettes and gutka are specifically targeting teenagers.

Citing the latest survey 'Big Tobacco Tiny Target' conducted in 25 cities of the country, she said that it has been found that 75.9 per cent of such shops near schools



Representative image

and colleges have not only advertised tobacco products but also they are

showcased in a place where they have high visibility. Similarly, 72.32 per cent of these shops display tobacco products near candies and sweets to lure children.

Famous cancer specialist and Regional Director, HCG Hospital, Bangalore, Dr. Vishal Rao, said that the chances of addiction in adolescence are high. So these companies are specifically targeting them.

BJP leader and senior advocate of Supreme Court Aman Sinha

said that the Central Government has made a great effort to remove the deficiencies in the Tobacco Control Laws and have proposed several amendments in this regard. They would help in curbing consumption of tobacco by the youth.

Youth leader and Maharashtra BJP spokesperson Shweta Shalini said that every day five and a half thousand teenagers in the country are getting addicted to tobacco products. Amendment of the COTPA

Act is very important to end the conspiracies targeting these youth. This webinar was organised by SpeakIn.

According to a study conducted by the Ministry of Health, 14.6 per cent of adolescents between the ages of 13 and 15 in India use some form of tobacco. The ministry has made the draft amendments to the COTPA laws public recently and has sought feedback from the people.

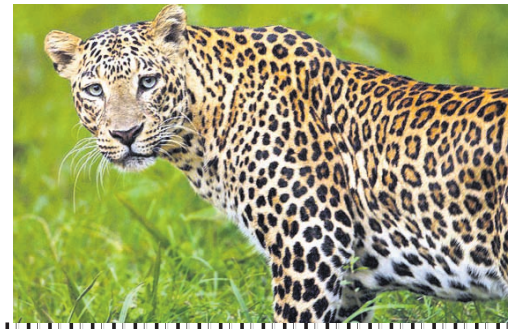


For the last 35 years under the Congress rule, 52 per cent of the population in the UT remained below the poverty line

J P NADDA | BJP PRESIDENT

LEOPARD SEEN IN DELHI VILLAGES

The Delhi Forest Department has sounded an alert and is conducting patrols after a leopard was spotted around Najafgarh and Ghumanhera villages for two consecutive days, officials said Sunday



of the day quote

The people should right now decide, do we want corporate-driven agriculture or agriculture driven by the farmers? This is an inescapable question posed to us right now



P. SAINATH | NOTED AGRICULTURAL JOURNALIST

We pity the BJP's tactics who despite having their government at the Centre and in many states, have lost people's trust and hence have to use Arvind Kejriwal's doctored video to save the farm laws



MANISH SISODIA | DELHI DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

The new farm laws do not affect the current MSP system and APMC's Mandis as well



NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR | UNION MINISTER

Vax diplomacy adds fresh layer to Indo-US ties

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 31: India's health diplomacy is yielding unexpected results with the United States now joining the United Nations in lauding New Delhi's vaccine heft. On Friday, the newly-appointed US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, in a conversation with External Affairs Minister, S. Jaishankar, nailed Covid-19 vaccinations as a key dimension of ties during the Joe Biden presidency.

"Warm conversation with Secretary of State @SecBlinken. Congratulated him on his appointment. Look forward to working with him again. Agreed that we could build further on the solid foundation of our partnership. Also discussed our efforts at combating the Covid-19 pandemic," tweeted Jaishankar. The dialogue between the two top diplomats follows an unexpected praise about India's global role in vaccinations by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres.

"I would like to say how much we count on India. I mean, India has one of the most advanced pharmaceutical industries. India played a very



important role in the production of generics for use that was a very important element of democratisation of access to medicines all over the world," Guterres said during a media interaction in New York on Friday.

He added: "And we strongly hope that India will have all the instruments that are necessary to play a major role in making sure that a global vaccination campaign becomes possible. I think that the production capacity of India is one of the best assets the world has today, and I hope the world understands that it must be fully used." As

IndiaNarrative.com reported earlier, nearly a dozen vaccines are in the pipeline in India. The vaccine factory of the world is not only developing indigenous vaccines but also manufacturing vaccines developed by MNCs. The line-up is such that a series of launches will take place from India right till the end of 2021. India has in the past few days supplied millions of Covid-19 vaccines to countries in South Asia, South America, Africa, West Asia, as well as the Pacific Island states.

After Brazil, Mexico has become the second Latin American country that will be getting an India-

made vaccine to inoculate its frontline workers amid the surging Covid-19 pandemic in the country. Mexico will be importing about 870,000 doses of the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine from India in February, Mexican President Andres Manuel Loopez Obrdor said Friday. India, which has emerged as the "pharmacy to the world" in the war against Covid-19, had dispatched two million doses of the same Pune-made vaccine to Brazil January 22.

This has enabled the Latin American country to kick off its inoculation drive at a time when its Covid-19 death toll has crossed 214,000 which is the second highest in the world after the US. Mexico, which has been averaging over 16,000 fresh Covid-19 cases every day and has lost 1.55 lakh lives to the pandemic, also has an agreement with UK pharma giant AstraZeneca to produce the vaccine but this is expected to take more time. India has also exported three million doses of its Covid-19 vaccine to Saudi Arabia in a reinforcement of its extended neighbourhood doctrine.

Sasikala hints at political battle with AIADMK

Sasikala was expelled from the party in Sept, 2017 along with her nephew TTV Dhinakaran and others by the general council of the combined AIADMK under the leadership of Palaniswami

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Jan 31: Expelled AIADMK leader V K Sasikala was discharged from a hospital here Sunday after recovering from COVID-19, days after she was set free by the prison officials on completion of her jail term in a corruption case, authorities said.

Sending a strong signal, Sasikala, a close aide of late Tamil Nadu chief minister J Jayalithaa, travelled in a car that sported the AIADMK flag from the hospital, with the ruling party questioning the propriety of her action when she had been ousted from the party.

The AIADMK has time and again made it clear that the 66-year old Sasikala would not be taken back and her release would not have any impact on the party, which is keen to retain power in the assembly elections, expected in April-May. It has already declared incumbent K Palaniswami as the chief ministerial candidate for the polls. On Sunday, the AIADMK in its twitter handle said the use of its flag by Sasikala was against the law and quoted senior party leader D Jayakumar: "How Sasikala, who is not even a party member could use the party flag? This is against the law," Jayakumar, who is also the Fisheries Minister, said.

Defending Sasikala, Dhinakaran, who is the general secretary of Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam floated by him in March, 2018 as an arrangement to retrieve the AIADMK, claimed "she (his aunt) is the general secretary of the AIADMK."

Cases relating to her so-called 'expulsion' and connected matters were pending before the court in Tamil Nadu, he told reporters,



V.K Sasikala

adding "I have already told you that legal fight will continue (to retrieve the AIADMK)."

The very purpose of floating the AMMK was to retrieve the AIADMK in a democratic way and "Thiyaga Thalaivi Chinnamma" (leader of sacrifices, junior 'Amma') would continue legal efforts to win back the party, he said. Dhinakaran said as per doctors' advice she would stay back here and take rest for a week before returning to Chennai. Political analyst Sumanth Raman tweeted "#Sasikala coming out of hospital in a car with an AIADMK flag on it seems to be a clear signal of her intentions. Game on." Soon after she was discharged, Sasikala reached a resort near the scenic Nandi Hill at Devanahalli in North Bengaluru. Sasikala was admitted to the Victoria Hospital after she tested positive for COVID-19 recently while under judicial custody. Prison authorities here had formally released her on January 27 after she completed the four-year jail term in a ₹66 crore disproportionate assets case.

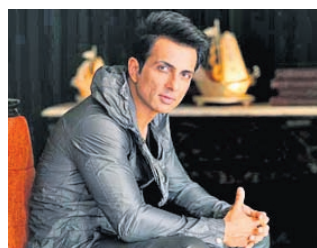
Sonu Sood moves SC against HC order

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 31: Actor Sonu Sood has moved the Supreme Court challenging the Bombay High Court order which dismissed his appeal against a BMC notice over alleged illegal construction at his residential building in Mumbai's Juhu area.

Sood's petition stated that his application for conversion has been approved by the Municipal Commissioner subject to Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority (MCZMA) permission.

It said the high court order dated January 13, 2021 has been passed without considering the provisions of Section 43 (1) of the Maharashtra Regional and Town Planning Act, 1966 and his application for conversion of residential premises into a residential hotel was submitted in 2018 before the department concerned. The plea contended that their ap-



plication for conversion, which has been approved by the Municipal Commissioner subject to MCZMA, be directed to be decided by authorities concerned. "The petitioners have already stopped the work of internal renovation which require no permission as per the provisions of Section 43 of Maharashtra Regional and Town Planning Act, 1966, therefore, the respondents may kindly be restrained from demolition of the renovation work already done in the building," the plea filed by Sood and his wife said.

BUILDING NEST



Greater adjutant storks perch on a silk-cotton tree, in Nagaon district

PTI PHOTO

JOURNALIST ARREST CONG SLAMS BJP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 31: The Congress Sunday slammed the BJP-led Centre over the arrest of a freelance journalist from the Singhu border with party leader Rahul Gandhi saying those who fear truth arrest honest scribes.

Mandeep Punia was arrested from the Singhu border Sunday for allegedly misbehaving with the police personnel on duty at the farmers' protest site there, officials said.

A case was registered against him and he has been arrested now, a senior police officer said, a day after the scribe was detained. Reacting to the development, former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi tweeted in Hindi, "Those who fear

truth arrest honest journalists." He also tagged a video purportedly showing Punia being held by police at the Singhu border. Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said journalists covering the farmers' movement are being arrested, cases are being slapped against them and the internet is being shut down in many places.

Congress' chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala, in a tweet in Hindi, addressed PM Modi and said by slapping false cases at the BJP's behest against journalists exposing the attack on farmers and shutting down mobile internet at protest sites, "you will not be able to suppress the farmers' movement and shut out the country's voice".

'Tejas Mark II to roll out next year'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 31: A more potent version of the indigenous Tejas multi-role combat jet featuring a much powerful engine, greater load-carrying capability and next-generation electronic warfare system is expected to be rolled out next year and its first high-speed trials will start in 2023, according to Chairman and Managing Director of Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd R Madhavan. He said the structural package and related work on the Tejas Mark II, which will have an array of superior avionics, was progressing well, and the production of the high-performance jet is likely to start around 2025.

Madhavan said the upgraded version will have a bigger fuselage, longer range, better maintainability, greater load-carrying capabil-



ity, much stronger engine power and superior net-centric warfare systems. With an increase in range and payload capability, Madhavan said the new variant will be much superior to the Tejas Mark-IA, 73 of which are being procured by the Indian Air Force from the HAL under a ₹48,000-crore deal that was approved by the government January 13.

"Tejas Mark II is likely to roll out by August-September of 2022. After that, the first flight will take some time. The first high-speed

trial of the jet will start in 2023 and we expect the production to start somewhere around 2025," Madhavan told PTI. Asked about the weapon package for Tejas Mark II, the chief of the state-run aerospace giant did not give a direct reply and said it will be decided at a later stage depending on the requirement and changing dynamics. Tejas is a single-engine and highly agile multi-role supersonic fighter capable of operating in high-threat air environments. The aircraft, manufactured by the HAL, is a potent platform for air combat and offensive air support with reconnaissance and anti-sheep operations as its secondary roles. The Tejas Mk-IA will be equipped with an active electronically scanned array radar, beyond visual range missile, electronic warfare suite and air-to-air refuelling system.

SHORT TAKES

R-Day violence: FSL team reaches ITO

New Delhi: A team of Forensic Science Laboratory reached Delhi's ITO area Sunday, days after the farmers' tractor parade turned violent, leaving 394 security personnel injured and one agitator dead, officials said. The team is collecting forensic evidences from the ITO and nearby areas, they said. A protestor died near ITO during the violence on Republic Day.

No new nCoV case in Andamans

Port Blair: Picturesque Andaman and Nicobar Islands have not reported any coronavirus case for the last five days notwithstanding a steady inflow of tourists into the archipelago, health department officials said Sunday. The Union Territory has not reported any new COVID-19 case since Tuesday, they said. The virus caseload in the archipelago remained at 4,994, with only four active cases, a senior health official said.

Naxals kill ambulance driver

Narayanpur: An ambulance driver has been killed by Naxals in Chhattisgarh's Narayanpur district over suspicion of being a police informer, police said Sunday. The incident took place in Tekanar village Friday evening when the victim, identified as Jairam Usendi (35), went to a local market along with his brother, an official said. Usendi's brother reported the matter to police Saturday, he said.

Maoists set vehicles ablaze

Balaghat (MP): Nearly a dozen Maoists set three vehicles on fire in the Balaghat district of Madhya Pradesh which were involved in construction work on a road as 10 to 12 Maoists were reportedly involved in the incident Sunday. According to official information, road construction work is on between Devbareilly-Malkua in Lanji police station area and this work is being undertaken by a Raipur contractor.

Gambling racket busted, 70 held

Chandigarh: The Punjab Police's Organised Crime Control Unit on Sunday busted a gambling racket active in Mohali district with arrest of 70 people, including 10 women, from a marriage palace. The police seized ₹8.42 lakh cash, 47 vehicles, 40 liquor bottles, playing cards and laptops from the spot.



Double whammy for government

The government seems to have put on hold labour code rules as it is grappling with the farmers' agitation which is threatening to derail reforms of the Modi government. The Prime Minister's Office is working overtime with concerned ministries to end the farmers' agitation as a new situation emerged after January 26 violence. But major trade unions of workers across the country are upping the ante against implementing four labour codes. The labour laws were passed by the Modi government in Parliament during the Monsoon session in 2019 in a similar fashion as were three

farm laws enacted. But the government saved face by promising that these codes would be implemented after framing of rules by the Labour ministry by consulting trade unions and stakeholders. Now 10 of the 13 trade unions have demanded that framing of rules should be put on hold and fresh discussions take place in the spirit of "bipartite and tripartite consultations." These included INTUC, AITUC, HMS, CITU, AIUTUC and others opposed the process. The Unions alleged that these codes were passed in Parliament without any discussion with the Central Trade Unions. The Unions have said these codes concerned 50 crores workforce.

Bank frauds of over ₹67,300 cr

If you thought lockdowns and restrictions during the year-long Covid pandemic prevented financial frauds, you will surely be in for a shock. If the report of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for 2020 is any indication, bank fraud cases more than doubled compared to 2019. Of the 543 total FIRs registered during

2020 by the CBI, 196 related to bank frauds. It meant that the CBI is mostly grappling with bank fraud cases. The bank fraud cases during 2019 were just 91 and these jumped to 196 in 2020. The amount in bank frauds involved was equally mind-boggling at ₹67,319.40 crore which is three times more than in 2019. The bank fraud amount was ₹19,830.14 crore in 2019. Of the total amount of fraud in CBI cases, ₹53,379.38 crore (79.29 per cent) were in 27 FIRs, each with a fraud amount of over ₹500 crore.

Selling vaccines to states

The Centre may consider Vaccine makers' request to sell directly to state governments, companies and open market. It may also permit the vaccine makers - Pune-based Serum Institute of India and Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech Limited (BBL) to even export to other countries once India's domestic obligations are met. A number of states, institutions and private companies have written to the Government to allow them to buy vaccines directly from the makers approved by the regulators.

Many state governments want to vaccinate people free of cost if it is made available to them. Highly placed sources in the government say that India may require 70-80 million doses of vaccines by May-June considering the current pace of vaccination. The phase-I of vaccination program for 3 crore frontline health workers may be complete by March-end, April middle. The Phase-II to vaccinate above 50 years people will begin thereafter. The Centre has so far purchased 16.60 million doses of Covidshield and Covaxin (11 million from Serum & 5.6 million from BBL).

Govt's communication problem

The government is now pondering to create a small group of ministers to improve its communication of serious issues engaging the attention of the people. The government normally lacks in communicating with the people and stakeholders on crucial issues, be it implementation of three agriculture related Acts or rushing into decisions and lacking in communication. The government realized its folly in farm Acts issue

and now holding a series of parleys to mollify the farmers. Had the government held such talks with the Opposition leaders before rushing to pass these acts in a rush in September, the situation would not have passed. The latest example of messing up is of giving Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) to Bharat Biotech's Covaxin without phase-III trial efficacy data. There was nothing against Covaxin in the country and people were eagerly awaiting the vaccine. The Covidshield had been cleared two days before and there were 50 million doses available in stocks. But the Modi government wanted a second vaccine in Covaxin in utter secrecy and hurry. It is said that the Subject Expert Committee of the Drug Controller General of India gave Emergency clearance in a sudden U-turn within 36 hours. It was alleged that the government had rushed into giving preferred treatment violating rules and risking lives of people.

CBI truly independent

Those doubting the independence of CBI need to change their opinion, for a change.

The CBI showed great alacrity in completing a probe into the Hathras incident in UP where a girl was allegedly raped and murdered. The Yogi Adityanath government denied these charges saying it was a conspiracy to destabilise his government. The September 2020 incident which rocked the nation was finally entrusted to the CBI. It was felt that the CBI will sit over Hathras case for months or may be years. After all, there are many such cases where it continues to probe such cases awaiting forensic evidence, viscera reports etc. Remember the Sushant Singh Rajput case of June 2020 when the young actor was found hanging in his apartment and the entire world moved. The NCB found no evidence against Sushant's live-in partner Rhea Chakraborty, the ED was forced to eat the humble pie and other agencies went silent. But the CBI is still investigating it and not sharing why this humongous delay even after Bihar elections are over. But hold your breath!! The CBI confirmed in its report that the Hathras girl was raped and murdered. It came as a huge setback to the BJP government in UP in general and Yogi in particular.



President Joe Biden has done really well on progressive priorities, but his proposed \$1.9 trillion relief package should be between \$3 and \$4 trillion to meet Americans' needs

PRAMILA JAYAPAL | CHAIR OF THE CONGRESSIONAL PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS, US

TRUMP LOSES IMPEACHMENT LAWYERS

Former US President Donald Trump has parted ways with his lead impeachment lawyers little more than a week before his trial, two people familiar with the situation said Saturday. The change injects fresh uncertainty into the makeup and strategy of his defense team



of the day quote

China has deployed me here to crush the Baloch movement and has given me a six-month task



AYMAN BILAL | MAJOR GENERAL, PAKISTAN ARMY

I am immensely proud that we have brought in this new route for Hong Kong British National



(Overseas)'s to live, work and make their home in our country. In doing so we have honoured our profound ties of history and friendship with the people of Hong Kong

BORIS JOHNSON | PRIME MINISTER, UK

What makes this research unusual is that we looked at very early time points [of infection], at just one hour after the virus infects lung cells. It was scary to see that the virus already starts to damage the cells so early during infection



ELKE MUHLBERGER | VIROLOGIST, BOSTON UNIVERSITY

SHORT TAKES

Record rise in Covid cases

Beijing: China recorded more than 2,000 new domestic cases of Covid-19 in January, the highest monthly total since the tail end of the initial outbreak in Wuhan in March of last year. The National Health Commission said Sunday that 2,016 cases were reported from January 1-30. That does not include another 435 infected people who arrived from abroad. The tally for January 31 is due to be released Monday.

Norway: 2 killed in avalanche

Helsinki: Two civilian employees of the Norwegian military were killed and a third one injured in an avalanche on a remote Arctic Ocean island inhabited only by soldiers and researchers of the Nordic country. A statement from the Norwegian Armed Forces said Sunday that the accident took place Saturday afternoon on Jan Mayen island, located 500 kilometres east of Greenland and 1,000 kilometres west of mainland Norway.

Germany to support Portugal

Berlin: Austria and Germany say they will provide medical assistance to Portugal as the country struggles with a surge in coronavirus cases. Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said Sunday that the Alpine nation will receive intensive care patients from Portugal, without specifying a number. Kurz said in a tweet that "swift, unambiguously help" was required to save lives, adding that Austria has previously taken in patients from France, Italy and Montenegro.

Israel to provide vax to Palestine

Jerusalem: Israel Defence Minister Benny Gantz's office says Israel has agreed to transfer 5,000 doses of the coronavirus vaccine to the Palestinians to immunise front-line medical workers. It is the first time that Israel has confirmed the transfer of vaccines to the Palestinians. Israel has come under criticism from UN officials and human rights groups for not providing vaccines to the Palestinians. Israel says it is not responsible. Israel is one of the world's leaders in vaccinating its population.

'Queen likely to host Biden at Buckingham Palace'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, Jan 31: Britain's Queen Elizabeth II is expected to host US President Joe Biden at Buckingham Palace ahead of the G7 summit scheduled between June 11 and 13, according to a media report Sunday. Indian PM Narendra Modi is also expected to participate in events in the lead up to and during the summit in the coastal region of Cornwall after India was invited as a guest country to join the Group of Seven – the UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the US – by UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

According to 'The Sunday Times', the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) is keen for the royal family to have a strong presence as part of a pre-summit and post-Brexit charm offensive of world leaders. "There is a desire from the



Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office to have a very strong royal presence before G7 events, and all senior members of the royal family will be part of what happens," the newspaper quoted a senior royal source as saying. The 94-year-old Queen, who has

The 94-year-old Queen, who has been based at her Windsor Castle home in SE England through the lockdown since last year, will be hoping to return to her London palace and get a calendar of activities going at Buckingham Palace

A one-on-one meeting between the monarch and the new US President is set to be her first significant diplomatic engagement after she returns to London.

A so-called "soft power" reception in June is expected to include her son and heir, Prince Charles, and

wife Camilla – the Duchess of Cornwall, as well as grandson Prince William and wife Kate Middleton – the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge – under plans being drawn up by royal and government officials to cement the "special relationship" between the UK and US. The Queen sent the new US President a private message ahead of his inauguration January 20.

According to royal aides quoted by the newspaper, Charles has already written to Biden to congratulate him on his appointment and is said to be delighted with a series of executive orders signed by the new president which address climate change and the environment, overturning many of Donald Trump's policies.

During his UK state visit in 2019, Trump had broken with the tradition of arriving at Buckingham Palace in a motorcade, choosing to fly in by helicopter instead.

Flouting rules, thousands attend Jerusalem funeral

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jerusalem, Jan 31: Thousands of ultra-Orthodox Israelis participated Sunday in the funeral of a prominent rabbi in Jerusalem, flouting the country's ban on large public gatherings amid the pandemic.

The funeral procession for Rabbi Meshulam Soloveitchik, who died at age 99, wended its way through the streets of Jerusalem in the latest display of ultra-Orthodox Israelis' refusal to honour coronavirus restrictions.



The phenomenon has undermined the country's aggressive vaccination campaign to bring a raging outbreak under control and threatened to hurt Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in March elections.

Densely packed throngs of people gathered outside the rabbi's home in a public rejection of restrictions on outdoor gatherings of more than 10 people. Thousands of black-garbed ultra-Orthodox funeral-goers coursed past the city's main entrance toward the cemetery where Soloveitchik was to be buried. Police officers blocked intersections to traffic to allow participants to pass, but appeared to take no action to prevent the illegal assembly.

Israeli media said Soloveitchik, a leading religious scholar who headed a number of well-known seminaries, had recently suffered from Covid-19.

Vietnam's Communist party re-elects chief to lead nation

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hanoi, Jan 31: The 13th Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee (CPVCC) on Sunday re-elected incumbent President Nguyen Phu Trong as the its general secretary for a third term.



The election took place at the first meeting of the newly-elected 13th CPVCC on Sunday morning during the ongoing 13th CPV National Congress scheduled to run through February 1, Xinhua news agency.

The CPVCC's politburo, secretariat, inspection commission and head of the inspection commission were also elected at the meeting. A total of 1,587 delegates representing over 5.1 million CPV members are attending the congress which kicked off January 25.

A press release made public earlier on Saturday read that the congress had agreed on adjusting the agenda of the political event, which will now conclude February 1, one day earlier than in the original programme.

WHO experts visit Wuhan wet market

AGENCIES

Beijing/Wuhan, Jan 31: The WHO experts, probing the origins of the Covid-19, on Sunday visited the Huanan Seafood Market in Wuhan, where the deadly coronavirus was presumably transmitted from animals to humans in the late 2019 and spiralled into a pandemic.

The wet market was where a variety of live animals were traded until it was shut down following fears that the coronavirus had jumped to humans either from bats or pangolins.

"Very important site visits today - a wholesale market first & Huanan Seafood Market just now. Very informative & critical for our joint teams to understand the epidemiology of COVID as it started to spread at the end of 2019," Peter Daszak, a zoologist with the US group EcoHealth Alliance and a member of the WHO team, tweeted Sunday.

Though the market remained shut and cleaned up after the coronavirus cases surfaced in Wuhan in December 2019, the visit is still important to get a feel of what flow of goods, people were, Daszak was quoted by CBS news network.

The visit which took place amid



tight security assumed significance as the market was widely presumed to be the source of the virus though Chinese official media in recent months questioned the premise.

While permitting the 14-member WHO team of international scientists to study the origin in Wuhan after considerable delay and controversy, China claims that the virus has emerged from various places in the world while it was the first to report it.

Although the Huanan seafood market has been sealed off, experts believe that there is still plenty to see and experience there.

"(We hope to) understand the setting, see the places where cases were linked, reconstruct the initial event there, search for records of animals, products traded there," Peter Ben Embarek, who leads the WHO team said.

Russia arrests 4,400 during wide protests backing Navalny

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Moscow, Jan 31: Police detained more than 4,400 people across Russia and blocked off the centre of Moscow on Sunday in a massive clampdown on protests demanding the release of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny. Police also detained Yulia Navalnaya, the wife of Navalny, at the protest in Moscow Sunday, Navalny's allies said on social media.

Thousands of protesters defied government warnings to rally from Vladivostok to Saint Petersburg in a second weekend of mass demonstrations over the arrest of President Vladimir Putin's most prominent opponent.

Navalny was detained at a Moscow airport in mid-January after flying back to Russia from Germany where he was recovering from an August poisoning he blames on the Kremlin.

The 44-year-old anti-corruption campaigner is being held in a Moscow detention centre and faces years of potential jail time in several different criminal cases, despite calls from Western governments for his release.

In moves not seen in years in



Russian authorities mounted a massive effort to stem the tide of demonstrations after tens of thousands rallied across the country

The 44-year-old Navalny, an anti-corruption investigator who is Putin's best-known critic, was arrested January 17 upon returning from Germany

Moscow, authorities locked down the centre of the capital Sunday, with hundreds of police lining the streets, central Metro stations closed and the movements of pedestrians restricted.

Protesters who had hoped to gather outside the headquarters of the FSB security service were instead scattered to various parts of the city as organisers made last-minute changes in locations.

AFP journalists saw dozens of protesters detained and taken into police vans. US condemns "harsh tactics." Several thousand were seen marching throughout the city centre, but it was unclear amid the chaos how many people took part in the demonstration.

Independent monitor OVD-Info said at least 4,407 people had been detained across the country, after reporting more than 4,400 detentions.

ALL ILLUMINATED



Crans Montana: People wearing protective face mask walk under snowfall the 2 km long snow-covered Lantern Path (chemin des lanternes) between Lake Moubra and Lake Etang Long amid the Covid-19 pandemic, in the Alpine region of Crans-Montana, Switzerland

EU in Afghanistan calls for 'end to violence'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kabul, Jan 31: The European Union's (EU) special envoy to Afghanistan, Ronald Kobia, has called for an immediate end to violence in the war-torn country, followed by a ceasefire.

Taking to Twitter Saturday, Kobia said: "If some parties don't like the term 'ceasefire', call it truce, cessation of hostilities, moratorium, silent period. Whatever the semantics until it stops rivers of Afghan blood. You have an opportunity with new US administration to show you really want peace. Now".

Without naming anyone or party, he stated there is a good opportunity with the new US administration of President Joe Biden,

but political parties in Afghanistan have to demonstrate how much they are intended to have a prolonged peace, Khaama Press reported.

Violent incidents mostly in the shape of target killing has been on rise over the past couple of months amid the tough and slow peace dialogue between negotiating teams of the Afghan government and Taliban group in Doha.

The second round of intra-Afghan talks after more than three weeks of break resumed January 6 without significant progress, reports Xinhua news agency. According to local media reports, no official dialogue has been held between the two sides over the past 10 days.

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The CPVCC's politburo, secretariat, inspection commission and head of the inspection commission were also elected at the meeting. A total of 1,587 delegates representing over 5.1 million CPV members are attending the congress which kicked off January 25.

A press release made public earlier on Saturday read that the congress had agreed on adjusting the agenda of the political event, which will now conclude February 1, one day earlier than in the original programme.

CHINA'S SUBMARINES IN SOUTH CHINA SEA

'One in five sailors suffer from mental health problems'

A STUDY BY NAVAL MEDICAL UNIVERSITY IN SHANGHAI OF MORE THAN 500 SERVICEMEN AND OFFICERS CLAIMS TO BE THE FIRST OF ITS KIND TO HIGHLIGHT THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS THE TROOPS WORKING IN THE DISPUTED WATERWAY ARE FACING

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, Jan 31: One in five sailors serving with China's submarine force, especially nuclear subs in the disputed South China Sea, are experiencing mental health problems, according to a new research.

China in recent years focussed its military deployment in the South China Sea (SCS), which has become a new theatre of conflict with frequent forays by US naval vessels to assert freedom of navigation in

the region. China claims almost all of the 1.3 million square mile South China Sea as its sovereign territory. China has been building military bases on artificial islands in the region also claimed by Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.

A study by Naval Medical University in Shanghai of more than 500 servicemen and officers claims to be the first of its kind to highlight the psychological problems the troops working in the disputed

waterway are facing.

Based on their answers to a self-assessment questionnaire, 21 per cent of respondents were found to be suffering from some degree of mental health problems, Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported. According to a US Congressional Research Service report in 2019, China's People's Liberation Army Navy has about four ballistic missile submarines, six nuclear-powered attack submarines and 50 diesel electric attack



submarines. According to the study, the Chinese submariners also reported higher indicators of anxiety and paranoid ideation – thinking that

is dominated by suspicious or persecutory content – than the average for all Chinese military servicemen. The findings suggested the submariners were "at higher risk of and have more serious psychological problems", the researchers said in the report published this month in Military Medicine, a journal produced by the Society of Federal Health Professionals in the United States.

The study said more research was needed to understand the causes

of the mental health problems, but said the sea's strategic importance to China was likely to be one of the contributing factors. "We speculate that this may be because of, on one hand, increasing military manoeuvres in south China in recent years that can involve 60 to 90 days of submerged cruising," the researchers said.

On the other hand, the physically unfriendly environment means that submariners are living in an isolated environment."



Education is one of the primary sectors in any country and there is a huge expectancy from Budget 2021 for reviving the sector after the covid-induced challenges that the industry faced in 2020

MONA LISA BAL | CHAIRPERSON,
KIIT INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

POWER DEMAND TOUCHES ALL-TIME HIGH

Power demand touched an all-time high of 189.64 GW Saturday, Power Secretary SN Sahai has said. "Power demand galloping. All India demand: 1,89,644 MW (189.64 GW) at 10.39 hrs today (January 30) crossed the previous highest all India demand of 1,88,452 MW (188.45 GW) January 28," Sahai tweeted



19, said PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Sanjay Aggarwal.

The overall performance is projected at the second position after Germany in 2021, he added. India's real GDP growth rate is projected to be the highest at 11.5 per cent in the year 2021 among the top-10 leading economies in the world, according to the industry body.

The merchandise export volume growth is estimated to be the strongest at 14 per cent in the year 2021, reflecting the great potential that the economy holds in terms of its international presence, said Aggarwal.

of the day quote

More than 200 overseas buyers have already registered and equal number of their representatives in India shall be interacting on virtual platform with more than 100 renowned and big Indian companies manufacturing and trading silk and silk blended products

SMRITI IRANI | UNION MINISTER

One conscious decision HCL made (during lockdown) was that we will not divert our regular developmental agenda for Covid. HCL Group dedicated another part of the fund for COVID, which was equally big as much as our CSR

NIDHI PUNDHIR | DIRECTOR, HCL FOUNDATION

We are looking for higher funds for the PLI scheme. For laptops, servers, etc, the government has just proposed ₹7,325 crore. I don't think that, for PCs, if you relocate and reposition supply from China or other parts of the world, it will be possible with just these kinds of funds. They are very insignificant

NITIN KUNKULIENKER | PRESIDENT, MAIT

'India to emerge as most resilient economy after Germany in 2021'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

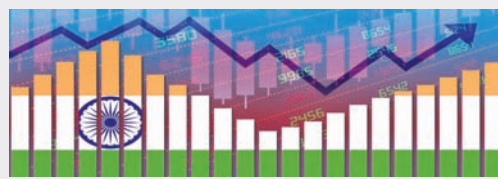
New Delhi, Jan 31: India will emerge as the most resilient economy after Germany in 2021 exhibiting a strong economic resurgence to the global economic turmoil caused by the Covid-19 pandemic,

according to a report.

Germany ranks first in the PHDCCI International Economic Resilience (IER) Rank followed by India and South Korea at second and third positions, respectively, according to the report released by industry body PHDCCI.

FIGHTING BACK

Germany ranks first in the PHDCCI International Economic Resilience Rank followed by India and South Korea at second and third positions, respectively



India's IER Rank stands at second among the top-10 leading economies, indicating strong resilience of the Indian economy to the daunting pandemic

India's real GDP growth rate is projected to be the highest at 11.5 per cent in the year 2021 among the top-10 leading economies in the world

The merchandise export volume growth is estimated to be the strongest at 14 per cent in the year 2021

It is based on analysis of five lead macroeconomic indicators reflecting a country's economic performance including real GDP growth rate, merchandise export

growth rate, current account balance (as percentage of GDP), general government net lending/borrowing (as percentage of GDP) and gross debt-to-GDP ratio.

India's IER Rank stands at second among the top-10 leading economies, indicating strong resilience of the Indian economy to the daunting pandemic of Covid-

RBI likely to maintain status quo on interest rate: Experts

AGENCIES

Mumbai, Jan 31: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is likely to maintain a status quo on benchmark interest rate in its next monetary policy meet outcome to be announced February 5, four days after the presentation of the Union Budget 2021-22.

Experts are of the view that the RBI will refrain from tinkering with the interest rates and keep the monetary stance accommodative at the policy review though it will take guidance from the budget to be unveiled by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Lok Sabha February 1.

"We expect the MPC (Monetary Policy Committee) to continue the pause. The fall in inflation rate was mainly due to fall in food prices. The core inflation rate has not come down. Excess liquidity needs to be watched. The vaccine availability is not going to impact macro economy immediately," opined M Govinda Rao, Chief Economic Advisor, Brickwork Ratings.

The six-member MPC headed by RBI Governor is scheduled to meet for three days starting February 3. The resolution meeting



M GOVINDA RAO | CEA, BRICKWORK RATINGS

would be announced February 5. The current repo rate or rate at which the RBI lends to banks is 4 per cent.

The RBI had last revised its policy rate on May 22, in an off-policy cycle to perk up demand by cutting interest rate to a historic low. The central bank has cut policy rates by 115 basis points since February last.

On expectations from the MPC, Aditi Nayar, Principal Economist, ICRA Limited, said that even

though the CPI inflation dipped in December 2020, the trajectory remains unpalatable.

"We expect an extended pause for the repo rate, with the stance to be changed to neutral in the August 2021 policy review or later, once there is clarity on the durability of the economic recovery," she said.

Sunil Kumar Sinha, Principal Economist and Director Public Finance, India Ratings and Research, too does not expect any change in policy rate.

"Growth needs to be supported through the monetary policy and that is the reason the accommodative stance of RBI will continue," he said, and added there will be a status quo in the policy rate because the December number has shown that the CPI has somewhat moderated.

GST revenues touch record high of ₹1.20L cr in Jan

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 31: GST collections for January touched an all-time high of about ₹1.20 lakh crore, the Finance Ministry said Sunday. The ministry said in line with the trend of recovery in the GST revenues over past five months, the revenues for the month of January 2021 are 8 per cent higher than that in the same month last year.

"The gross GST revenue collected in the month of January 2021 till 6 p.m. 31.01.2021 is ₹1,19,847 crore, of which CGST is ₹21,923 crore, SGST is ₹29,014 crore, IGST is ₹60,288 crore (including ₹27,424 crore collected on import of goods) and Cess is ₹8,622 crore (including ₹883 crore collected on import of goods)," Finance Ministry said in a statement.



The number could be upped further as more number of GST sales returns get filed. GST revenues had topped ₹1 lakh crore in nine out of 12 months of 2019-20 fiscal. However, in the current fiscal, the revenues have taken a hit due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

CEA pitches for private sector-led bad bank to deal with NPAs

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 31: Chief Economic Adviser KV Subramanian has made a strong case for setting up of a bad bank led by private sector to effectively deal with non-performing assets (NPAs) of the financial sector which may see a surge once regulatory forbearance to deal with the impact of Covid-19 is withdrawn.

The proposal to set up a bad bank has been under consideration of the government for long and some steps may be announced in the Budget 2021-22 to be unveiled by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Monday in the Lok Sabha.

Bad bank refers to a financial institution which takes over bad assets of lenders and undertakes resolution. Lenders have been making a case for setting up a bad bank to ease out pressure of bad loans on them in these difficult times.

"The bad bank will certainly help in consolidating some of the non performing assets. It's important to also think about implementing the bad bank in the private sector that enables (faster) decision making," he said. Resolution of bad assets with



alacrity in decision making often in the public sector is impacted because of the fear of 3Cs, he said.

3Cs refer to Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) and Comptroller and Audit General (CAG).

"So, the bad bank idea itself is actually something which is required at this point in time, but also designing it in the private sector actually has a lot more possibility for it to be effective," he said.

The Economic Survey 2017 had proposed this idea, suggesting the creation of a bad bank called Public Sector Asset Rehabilitation Agency (PARA) to help tide over the problem of stressed assets.

Earlier this month, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das indicated that the central bank can consider the idea of a bad bank to tackle non-performing assets (NPAs).

SHORT TAKES

Fire TV users double in 2020: Amazon

New Delhi: Internet streaming device Fire TV users in India doubled consumption of entertainment content during their stay at home in 2020 with movies, cricket, online gaming and music gaining traction, Amazon said in a report Sunday. Over half of Mirzapur season 2 viewers finished watching the show within 48 hours of its release, Disney+ Hotstar viewership increased 50 per cent during IPL 2020 and Amazon Prime Music streaming grew more than 35 per cent on Fire TV devices.

Westlife to open McDonald's stores

New Delhi: Westlife Development Ltd, which owns Hardcastle Restaurants, the master franchisee of McDonald's restaurants for western and southern India, expects its business to return to pre-COVID-19 level from the next quarter and continue its expansion journey by adding more stores to its network, said a company official. The company plans to open 3 new stores in Q4 and then resume its growth journey.

MF investment in REITs jumps 6-fold

New Delhi: Emerging investment instrument REIT seems to have finally gaining popularity among investors, with mutual funds investing a staggering ₹3,972 crore in such units in 2020, a six-fold jump from the preceding year. Green Portfolio co-founder Divam Sharma said that with names like DLF, Brookfield and Godrej in the process of launching REIT, more interest from MFs in such offerings is expected in the coming years.

Toyota domestic sales surge 92 pc

New Delhi: Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) Sunday reported 92 per cent increase in domestic sales at 11,126 units in January. The company had clocked domestic sales at 5,804 units in January last year. "2021 started on a positive note for us and our sales growth stands testimony to the same," TKM Senior VP Naveen Soni said.

BIZ BUZZ

Pine Labs launches 'All Tap' app

Bhubaneswar: Pine Labs, a leading merchant commerce platform in Asia, launched All Tap, a feature-rich app that can significantly accelerate digital payments adoption in India. The app is a revolutionary new app for small merchants to immediately start accepting digital payments on their NFC-enabled smartphone without the need of any additional hardware. The 'tap and pay' feature within the app is secure and is certified by PCI Security Standards Council (PCI SSC), RuPay, Visa, Mastercard and Amex. Pine Labs All Tap addresses this key segment especially small merchants, home entrepreneurs, street vendors, hawkers, cab drivers, and others who are not ready to invest in a traditional point-of-sale terminal to accept digital payments. Sanjeev Kumar, CTO, Pine Labs said, "With All Tap, we are offering merchants a robust PCI SSC-compliant Contactless Payments on COTS solution."



'All-new S60 can now, be booked online'

Bhubaneswar: Volvo Car India has opened advance online bookings for the All-New S60. It has set an introductory price of ₹45.9 lakh (ex-showroom) for a limited number of bookings made online. The car is built on Volvo Cars' own Scalable Product Architecture (SPA) platform and has secured a five-star rating from Euro NCAP. The new S60 shares safety technology and infotainment system with the top-of-the-line 90 Series cars and award-winning XC60. This makes the new S60 one of the safest cars on the road. The All New S60 come equipped with safety features such as City Safety with Steering Support, Adaptive Cruise Control, Pilot Assist, Oncoming Mitigation by Braking, Lane Keeping Aid, Driver Alert Control, Speed Alert and many more.

Prices of petrol, diesel remain steady ahead of 'Budget day'

The petrol and diesel prices have increased 10 times in January with both auto fuels increasing by ₹2.59 and ₹2.61 per litre respectively during the month



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 31: Prices of petrol and diesel remained unchanged for the fourth consecutive day across the metros. In the national capital, petrol was priced at ₹86.30 per litre. In Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata, petrol was sold for ₹92.86, ₹88.82 and ₹87.69 per litre. Diesel prices in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata remained unchanged at ₹76.48, ₹83.30, ₹81.71 and ₹80.08 per

litre, respectively. Though firm global crude and product price is the reason for the increase in retail price of petrol and diesel, it is interesting to note that even though crude has been hovering just over \$55 a barrel for some time now, OMCs have gone in for both a pause in price of auto fuels as well increase in its retail prices on consecutive days.

Informed sources said that oil companies may be building buffers on the retail price of petrol and diesel to prevent any sharp price increase if the government decided to further raise excise duty on the two products to mobilise additional revenue.

Crude prices have remained firm for the last few weeks in wake of unilateral production cuts announced by Saudi Arabia and a pick-up in consumption in all major economies globally.

The petrol and diesel prices have increased 10 times in January with both auto fuels increasing by ₹2.59 and ₹2.61 per litre respectively during the month.

The last few increases in pump prices in petrol and diesel has taken its price to record levels across the country in all major metro cities and other towns.

AUTOMATION IMPACT

Tech M to reduce BPO staff by 5,000 in FY'21

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 31: Despite rising revenues, IT major Tech Mahindra is set to reduce its business process services (BPS) headcount by 5,000 to 38,000 in FY 2020-21, as a larger part of the tasks get completed through automation and artificial intelligence.

Company executives said there is a "non-linearity" between revenue growth and overall headcount as technology makes it possible for a single individual to accomplish multiple tasks.

It can be noted that the BPO vertical, which has its genesis in the 'call centres' business of the past, is one of the biggest employment generators in the technology space, where Indian executives handle a slew of processes for overseas clients often across time zones.

5G roll out 'soon' in India, mass adoption still years away

THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT SELLING TRADITIONAL 5G SPECTRUM IN THE UPCOMING AUCTION THE BIDDING FOR WHICH WILL COMMENCE IN MARCH, BUT A TWEAK IN THE NOTICE INVITING APPLICATIONS HAS RAISED HOPE THAT COMPANIES WILL BE ABLE TO LAUNCH 5G EVEN ON EXISTING BANDS

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 31: With talks of "timely" 5G roll out in India resurfacing again after a Covid-hit year that delayed spectrum auction, there are hopes that the fifth-generation cellular technology could be a reality in the second half of the year, even though various reports suggest that its mass adoption could still be years away.

The government is not selling traditional 5G spectrum in the upcoming auction the bidding for which will commence in March, but a tweak in the notice inviting applications has raised hope that companies will be able to launch 5G even on existing bands.

The amendment reduced the no-

tice time period required for telecom companies to give to make advancements and upgrades in technology from one year to six months.

Telecom major Bharti Airtel January 28 successfully demonstrated live 5G service on a use case basis over a commercial network in Hyderabad city over its existing liberalised spectrum in the 1800 MHz band through the NSA (non-standalone) network technology - that is, fall back on 4G network.

Reliance Industries (RIL) Chairman Mukesh Ambani last month said that Reliance Jio will pioneer India's "5G Revolution" in the second half of 2021.

"We should see some soft launches in the later part of second half this year," Neil Shah, Vice President of



Research at Counterpoint Research, a global industry analysis firm, said.

"The device ecosystem is ready unlike in 4G or 3G era as we are see-

months of 5G rollouts," he said. The first quarter of 2020 witnessed the launch of the first 5G-ready smartphone in India.

At the end of Q3 2020, India's 5G handsets shipments stood at 1.7 million, a number which was projected to cross four million by the end of 2020, according to Counterpoint.

"So there is an option of using technologies such as dynamic spectrum sharing (DSS) to use 4G spectrum for 5G but we expect government to auction off 3.5GHz mid band spectrum this year," Shah said.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) has already recommended for the auction of spectrum in 3,300-3,600 MHz

bands. However, several reports have suggested that mass adoption of 5G would not be immediate.

According to a forecast by GSMA Intelligence, published in October 2020, 5G connections in India will reach six per cent of total population by 2025-7.2 crore - and 93 per cent by 2040.

Swedish gear maker Ericsson in a report in November 2020 said that 5G subscriptions in India will surpass 350 million, accounting for 27 per cent of all mobile subscriptions in 2026.

While globally, more than one billion people were estimated to have access to 5G coverage by the end of 2020, according to the "Ericsson Mobility Report."

INDIA'S TEST BATTING MAINSTAY TALKS ABOUT CHALLENGES HE FACED DOWN UNDER

Pujara reveals batting plans

Staying inside the bio-bubble and playing international cricket is not easy. It puts an immense pressure on the mind, especially for those who like going out regularly

CHETESHWAR PUJARA



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 31: There are times when balls faced matter a lot more than runs scored and the recent tour of Australia was all about that for India's Test batting mainstay Cheteshwar Pujara. The middle-order batsman said he found the 'strike-rate talk' overrated. Pujara had collected a lot more runs (521 at 41.41 strike rate and three

hundreds) in his 'Player of the Series' performance to ensure a historic triumph in Australia two seasons ago. However, considering the 'extraordinary circumstances' of the recent showdown that just went by, he rates his effort (271 runs at 29.20 and three half centuries) equally special.

"Both tours have been fantastic for the team. Personally I did well on both tours, but the circumstances were completely different. This time I was playing after a long time, almost eight months (due to COVID-19), there were no first class games also," Pujara said Sunday before entering the bio-bubble for the upcoming home series against England.

The 31-year-old stood like a rock through the series, quite literally in the final Test in Brisbane. He took multiple blows on the body to keep a relentless Australian attack at bay.

"It wasn't easy at all in terms of preparation. The Australian team had a thorough game plan for each of us. To get back into

rhythm took a little bit of time but luckily all went positive in the end," Pujara informed.

"Numbers wise, it may not look like a very good series for me, but if you look at the pitches, not many runs were scored this time. It was more challenging than last time without a doubt," he added.

The 81-Test veteran said the balls faced, 928 to 1258 two years ago, mattered more than runs scored, given the challenging pace attack, nature of pitches and barrage of injuries that the Indian team suffered through the four games.

"Very difficult to compare both the tours but this one is a tad more special considering we had a weaker team with so many youngsters. But I wouldn't say this is the only best series I have been a part of," Pujara pointed out.

"There are times when strike rate hardly matters. Every batter has a role to play. The team management completely understands that. Whether it was Ravi (Shastry) bhai (coach) or Vicky (Vikram Rathour) bhai (batting coach) or Ajinkya (Rahane), they just told me to keep batting the way I bat. The Aussies were not giving anything away. So, it wasn't that I wasn't batting well but they hardly bowled any loose balls," added the rock-solid cricketer.

SERIES SCORES		
Adelaide	43	0
Melbourne	17	3
Sydney	50	77
Brisbane	25	56

KOHLI HAS NO REAL WEAKNESSES: MOEEN

Captain's form worries England



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Jan 31: England all-rounder Moeen Ali doesn't know how they are going to tackle Virat Kohli in the upcoming Tests against India. He feels the batting maestro will be extra motivated to fire after missing his team's incredible triumph in Australia.

"How do we get him (Kohli) out? He's obviously an amazing player, world-class, he's very motivated to do well and I'm sure he'll be even more motivated after they did well in Australia and he had to leave for the birth of his child," Moeen told reporters during a video conference.

"I don't know how we're going to get him out because I don't think he has any sort of weaknesses. We have a good bowling attack, some pace in the line-up, so that we'll have to put to use. He's a great guy and a good friend of mine (both play for RCB in IPL)," added Moeen.

Besides the Tests, India and England will play three ODIs and five T20s. Moeen said playing Test cricket is his 'biggest motivation' and he has 'little targets', which he wants to achieve in the upcoming series.

"I still feel I've got wickets and runs in me and match-winning

performances within me. I have little targets I want to achieve first. I am not too far away from getting 200 wickets. I have set some targets for me... the first is to get 200 Test wickets," Moeen said.

The 33-year-old had tested positive for COVID-19 upon England's arrival in Sri Lanka. He missed the two Tests there, which the vis-

itors won for a series sweep. "I'm all right now. Once I tested positive, I just wanted to get it over and done with really. It has been tough but I'm a big believer in 'after hardship comes ease'. Hopefully there is ease after this," said Moeen, who had just five or six net sessions due to the time he had to spend in quarantine.



When you're playing Test cricket, you're on top of your game in terms of your batting and bowling; your technique. I don't think it's great when you're just playing white ball cricket

SHORT TAKES

Unusual gift

Agra: Young cricketers like T Natarajan and Mohammed Siraj have been awarded SUVs for their stellar performances in Australia. For the wrestlers in India it is a different story altogether. They have to do with buffalos as gifts. Sources said Sunday here that it makes sense to gift them an endless supply of protein through buffalo milk. A decision has been taken to present the 'best athlete' at the National Women Wrestling Championships here with a buffalo worth Rs 1.5 lakh. Dronacharya awardee Mahavir Prasad gave the information here Sunday and said a committee has been set up to decide the best wrestler of the event.

Gill blazes track

Coimbatore: Gaurav Gill was in blazing form at the wheels of his Mahindra XUV as he and navigator Musa Sherif showed immense skills and patience to win Sunday the Rally of Coimbatore and again emerge national champions. Gill had won two legs on tarmac in Itanagar last month. He came to the leafy environs of Kethanur - 40 km outside this town - where the rally stages were situated and showed he was also the king on gravel. There were twists and turns, cars kicking up dust which made the two days of rallying action a joy to watch. "I am extremely happy to win three rallies in a row and become national champion for the seventh time," said Gill.

New development

New Delhi: Spectators might be allowed in the second India-England Test in Chennai after the central government's fresh COVID-19 guidelines permitted crowd attendance at fifty per cent of capacity at sporting venues. But the fresh Home Ministry guidelines on easing of restrictions on public movement have changed the scenario. "There is no time to allow entry of spectators for the first Test starting February 5. But yes, now with fresh guidelines, there is every possibility that second Test starting February 14 might have spectators as per notification," an official said. The Chepauk has a capacity of 50,000, so only 25,000 persons will be allowed.

T-20 WOMEN'S CRICKET LEAGUE

Easy victories for Red, Yellow sides

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 31: Odisha Red and Odisha Yellow won their respective matches quite comfortably in the MGM Odisha Women T-20 Cricket League played Sunday. Both the games were played at the KIIT Stadium here. Odisha Red defeated Odisha Green by eight wickets with 57 balls to spare. In the other game played on the day Odisha Yellow beat Odisha Purple by six wickets with three balls to spare. However, in spite of losing their respective games, both the Green and Purple teams qualified for the play-offs along with Odisha Red and Odisha Violet.

In the first game, Odisha Green scored 73 for seven in 20 overs

against some very tight bowling by the Red bowlers. Woman of the match Sonali Hembaram (4-0-9-3) was outstanding with the ball. Only Rasanara Parwin (42) managed to offer some resistance. In reply, riding on Madhuri Mehta's unbeaten knock of 32, the Reds scored 77 for two in 10.3 overs to romp home comfortably.

In the second game, Purple scored 113 for four in 20 overs. Sarita Meher (50 not out) top scored for the Purple side. In reply, Odisha Yellow scored 115 for four in 19.3 overs to book their spot in the play-offs. Sangita Khadia (50 not out) and Barsa Singh (28) batted well for the Yellow side. Khadia was adjudged woman of the match for her match-winning innings.



Woman of the match Sangita Khadia of Odisha Yellow receiving the cheque for her match-winning knock Sunday

Ganguly discharged from hospital after successful surgery

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Jan 31: Indian cricket board chief Sourav Ganguly was discharged from hospital Sunday morning, three days after he underwent a fresh round of angioplasty to clear clogged coronary arteries, officials said here. The 48-year-old cricket legend was hospitalised Wednesday for the second time in a month due to his cardiac condition.

Two more stents were implanted Thursday during the surgery conducted by a team of doctors, including noted cardiologist Dr Devi Shetty and Dr Ashwin Mehta.

"Mr Ganguly is doing fine and his heart is as strong as a normal person. He had an uneventful recovery and we are hopeful that within the next couple of days, he will be able to return to normal life," a senior doctor of the private hospital, where he was admitted, said. The former India captain is required to follow a strict routine and needs to be on medication for a few months, he added.

The batting great suffered a mild heart attack earlier this month and was diagnosed with Triple Vessel Disease.

Sources said Ganguly has been asked to avoid spicy food. Also he will not be able to use the gymnasium for a month.

NO CHANCE OF QUALIFYING FOR ISL PLAY-OFFS

Only pride at stake for OFC

PNN & AGENCIES

Bambolim (Goa), Jan 31: Virtually out of contention for a play-off spot, bottom-placed Odisha FC (OFC) will play for pride when they take on Jamshedpur FC (JFC) in an ISL match here Monday. The Kalinga Warriors have won just one game while losing seven and are at the bottom of the 11-team league with eight points. However, they have managed to draw their last two encounters against better sides.

Head coach Stuart Baxter urged his side to step up and turn things around. "At the moment, we need to start (turning) those good performances that ended in a draw to good performances that result in a win," Baxter said. "We are not talking about the play-offs till about two to three weeks. We're talking about getting to the next game. And, hopefully, we will get a victory - that's what we have been trying to do since the season started," he added, Sunday.

The last time the two teams clashed, they split points in a four-goal thriller. Baxter is anticipating another tough fixture Monday. "Owen's (Coyle) team are usually very competitive. I've seen them play games where they don't give up and they've got some good players. So I don't expect anything less



Odisha FC head coach Stuart Baxter shouting instructions during a training session ahead of the game against Jamshedpur

than a difficult game," said Baxter. Jamshedpur find themselves in an almost similar situation, though they still have a chance for the play-offs. They are currently eighth in the table with 15 points. However, they have failed to register a win in their last five games. They have also failed to score in three out of their last four matches.

"The way for us is to try and win those games which can make a dif-

ference, from one point to three points. We have six massive games ahead of us but we will take each game at a time starting with Odisha FC. We want to try and win that game," Coyle said.

"Odisha have some very good players. When you look at the forward players, they are capable of scoring goals. It will be an exciting game as both teams would want to win," the JFC coach added.

CHELSEA MANAGER TUCHEL GETS FIRST VICTORY

City lights shine brightly

AGENCIES

London, Jan 31: Thomas Tuchel secured his first win Sunday as Chelsea manager as his team beat Burnley 2-0 in the Premier League thanks to goals by Cesar Azpilicueta and Marcos Alonso.

In an earlier game played Saturday, a ninth-minute goal from Brazilian Gabriel Jesus gave Manchester City a 1-0 win over bottom club Sheffield United. With the win Pep Guardiola's side extended their lead at the top of the table to four points. It got reduced to three later in the evening after second placed Manchester United drew goalless with Arsenal. Both sides have played 20 games. City now have won 12 straight games in all competitions - a club record run of victories.

Jesus slotted home from close range after Ferran Torres took advantage of poor defending to wrig-



CRUCIAL STRIKE: Gabriel Jesus (centre) of Manchester City celebrates with teammates after scoring against Sheffield United

gle free of two players and pick out his unmarked teammate.

Sheffield United had arrived at the Etihad on the back of their shock 2-1 win at Old Trafford against Manchester United and delivered another solid and organised display.

Man City had over 75 per cent possession but struggled to create

many real openings.

Incidentally it was the 500th victory as manager for Guardiola as manager.

"It was so difficult. We knew it would be," said the Spaniard. "It was amazing after this run of 12 wins in a row, still the players run and fight like animals," he added.

Real Madrid slip again in title race

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, Jan 31: Thibaut Courtois' impressive penalty save was not enough to keep an error-prone Real Madrid from stumbling again in their Spanish league title defence. Madrid lost 1-2 at home to Levante Saturday in a match that the defending champions played with 10 men from the eighth minute when defender Eder Militao was sent off. With the score level at 1-1 in the second half, Courtois stopped Roger Marti's penalty. However, it was Marti who got the winning goal for Levante in the 78th minute.

Despite losing a player, Marco Asensio put Madrid ahead in the 13th minute when he rifled home Toni Kroos' excellent pass. However, Levante took advantage of having the extra man. Levante forward José Morales equalised in the 33rd with an exquisite volley to blast a pass from Jorge Miramón inside the far post.

CONVINCING 2-GOAL TRIUMPH FOR NIZAMS

HFC inch towards ISL play-off place

AGENCIES

Margao, Jan 31: Hyderabad FC (HFC) did their chances of making the Indian Super League (ISL) play-offs a world of good with a 2-0 victory over Chennaiyin FC (CFC) at the Tilak Maidan Stadium, here Sunday. Goals from Fran Sandaza (28th minute) and Joel Chianese (82nd) were enough to secure all three points for the Nizams and propel them to third place on the table. They now have 22 points, just two behind ATK Mohun Bagan.

Hyderabad made their intentions clear right from the start, winning a corner in just the fifth minute. They had two clear chances following the corner. However, first Ashish Rai and then Mohammed Yasir shot over.

Hyderabad kept attacking and they got their reward just before



Goalscorer Fran Sandaza celebrates

the half-hour mark when Sandaza broke the deadlock. After receiving the ball from a throw-in, the Spaniard found Joao Victor, who returned the favour with an excellent through ball. Sandaza shook off defender Deepak Tangri before slotting the ball into the back of the net.

Chennaiyin were unlucky in the second half when they hit the bar twice. Hyderabad then sealed the game when Chianese latched on to a through ball from Victor to score.