HERE.NOW

HARNAAZ HAILS PRIYANKA

Miss Universe 2021 Harnaaz Sandhu recently revealed that she would love to feature in a biopic of Priyanka Chopra LEISURE 22



'OMICRON'LL DISPLACE DELTA'

Omicron infection enhances neutralising immunity against the Delta variant, as per a new research INTERNATIONAL P10

SHAMI STEALS SHOW

Mohammed Shami bags a five-wicket haul against South Africa in Centurion to reach 200-wicket milestone in Tests SPORTS P12

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 268 | www.orissapost.com

BHUBANESWAR | WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 29 | 2021



₹103CR FOR EKAMRA DEVELOPMENT

BHUBANESWAR: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday inaugurated and laid foundation stones for 13 developmental projects worth ₹103 crore in Ekamra area of Bhubaneswar through virtual mode. Many important projects such as 24X7 quality tap water, renovation and beautification of Dhauli Shanti-Stupa and purification of Kedargauri water have been launched for the development of the Ekamra region. Addressing the gathering, Patnaik said the Ekamra scheme has been launched with the help of people to beautify the Lingaraj temple area. The glory of Bhubaneswar will be further enhanced after its completion. Citing the example of 24X7 Drink from Tap in Puri, the CM said people of old Bhubaneswar will also avail clean water like their Puri counterparts.



'YELLOW ALERT' IN DELHI AMID COVID FLARE-UP

NEW DELHI: Restrictions under Level 1 of the Graded Action Response Plan (GRAP) will be imposed in Delhi as its Covid-19 positivity rate continues to be over 0.5 per cent for the past few days, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced Tuesday while declaring a yellow alert in the national capital. "Delhi is mostly recording mild and asymptomatic Covid-19 cases. That is why there is no reason to panic. However, to ensure that the infection rate does not rise exponentially, a few restrictions under level 1 (yellow alert) is going to be imposed as the positivity rate continues to be more than 0.5 per cent for the past two days,' Keiriwal said in a virtual press briefing Tuesday afternoon.

Online classes will

parents/guardians

POST NEWS NETWORK

January 3, 2022.

continue while students

can attend offline classes

in consultation with their

Bhubaneswar, Dec 28: After re-

opening of schools for Class VI to

Class XII students, the state gov-

ernment Tuesday decided to re-

sume classroom teaching for stu-

dents of Class I to Class V from

Speaking to reporters here

Tuesday, School and Mass Education

Minister Samir Ranjan Dash said,

Minister Naveen Patnaik, we are

going to start physical teaching for

Class I to Class V students in about

27,000 schools from January 3.

'With the instruction of Chief





The world famous Sun Temple at Konark witnessed heavy footfall Tuesday. A scuffle ensued at the entrance as many could not avail tickets due to technical glitches



BOOSTER FOR 60+ SANS DOC REPORT

Beneficiaries just need to avail advice from their doctors before availing the

health ministry Tuesday said no

doctor certificates would be re-

quired for persons aged 60 and

above with comorbidities to be

produced at the time of adminis-

tration of precaution doses. Such

persons are expected to obtain the

advice of their doctors before de-

ciding to avail of the precaution

During a workshop with states

and Union Territories to review

the rollout of vaccination for the age

group 15-18 and precautionary third

dose for vulnerable categories,

Union Health Secretary Rajesh

Bhushan emphasised that nine

months or 39 weeks should elapse

since the administration of the

second dose to make the benefici-

ary eligible for the precaution dose.

lined that the government has not

issued any directions on the re-

quirement of the doctor's certificate

to establish comorbidity at the vac-

Bhushan categorically under-

dose, said the ministry.









are not mandated to be produced at the center for administration of

the precaution dose. The CoWIN will send reminder messages to all those eligible for the precaution dose and the dose will be reflected in the digital vaccination certificates, he added. The states and UTs have been exhorted to undertake proper planning in advance for distribution of Covaxin to identified session sites for the 15-18 age group. To avoid the mixing-up of vaccines during administration, the ministry has advised states to manage separate arrangements including separate session sites and queue in case adult vaccination is going at the same place. The states and UTs have also been advised to share their requirement of vaccine doses through district-wise estimation of beneficiaries using CoWIN "All citizens irrespective of their income status are entitled to free Covid-19 vaccination at government vaccination centres. Those who have the ability to pay are encouraged to use private hospitals' vaccination centres. The previously declared price for each vaccine at private CVCs will remain applicable for these beneficiaries," the letter stated.

number of Covid vaccines that have received emergency use authorisation in the country has gone up to 8

With this approval, the



The first summative assessment of Class X students would start January 5 and continue till January 8 at 3,093 centres. Therefore, teaching in these schools having Class I to Class X standard students will begin from January 10, he said.

The minister said interested students will receive classroom teaching from 9 am to 12 noon without lunch break on all working days except Sundays and holidays. Considering the eagerness

among students to attend classes in their schools, this decision has been taken which is applicable for

Corbevax, Covovax, Molnupiravir get nod

> COVID-19, CDSCO, @MoHFW_ INDIA has given 3 approvals in a single day for: - CORBEVAX vaccine - COVOVAX vaccine - Anti-viral drug Molnupiravir For restricted use in emergency situation." With this approval, the number of Covid vaccines which have received emergency use authorisation in the

all government, aided and private educational institutions, Dash said. The department has prepared

12 PAGES | ₹5.00

a fresh Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to be followed while conducting classroom teaching for these students, he added.

While online classes will continue, students can attend offline classes in consultation with their parents/guardians. This apart, cooked mid-day meals (MDM) will not be served to students. Instead, dry ration will be provided to students as they had been provided earlier, sources said.

Physical classes for Class VI to Class XII have already resumed in the state in a phased manner. Since the outbreak of Covid-19

in the state in March 2020, schools have remained shut for primary class students. Only online teaching and classes through TV and radio programmes are being conducted for the students.

Minor's gangrape: **POCSO court acquits** 2 for lack of evidence

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Dec 28: A special POCSO court here Tuesday acquitted two persons who had been charged with raping a teenager for over 22 days at a poultry farm under Chauliaganj police limits in the city in October last year, citing lack of evidence.

in Lucknow instead of Chandigarh! All were talking AAP, AAP, AAP..

MARKET WATCH							
IN	DEX		VARI	RIATION			
RSES	SENSEX	57897.48		477.24			
BOURSE	NIFTY	17233.30		147.00			
CURRENCY	DOLLAR	75.23	₽	₹0.25			
CURR	EURO	84.80		₹0.03			
NOI	GOLD	₹48,019	₽	₹47			
BULLION	SILVER	₹62,500	1	₹199			

WEAT	WEATHER								
	BHUB	СТК							
MAX	28.0°C	28.4°	C						
H MIN	18.8°C	18.0°	C Forecast						
Humidity	89%	91%							
Rainfall	0.2mm	NIL	Light to moderate rain						

precaution dose

AGENCIES



Precaution dose for polling staff

NEW DELHI: Personnel to be deployed on election duty in the five poll-bound states will be included in the category of frontline workers and would be entitled to the precaution dose of COVID-19 vaccine, amid growing indications that the elections may be held on time. The Election Commission is likely to announce the dates of Assembly elections for Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Punjab and Manipur early next month. In a letter to states and UTs, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said Tuesday that personnel to be deployed in election duty in the pollbound states will be included in the category of frontline workers.

cination centre. He said that the doctor's prescription and certificates AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 28: Expanding India's vaccine basket, the Central Drug Authority has approved the Serum Institute of India's COVID-19 vaccine Covovax, Biological E's iab Corbevax and anti-Covid pill Molnupiravir for restricted use in emergency situation.

The announcement by Union Health Minister, Mansukh Mandaviya, Tuesday came a day after the Subject Expert Committee (SEC) on COVID-19 of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) recommended granting emergency use authorisation (EUA) to the COVID-19 vaccines Covovax and Corbevax with certain conditions

It also had recommended granting restricted emergency use approval to the drug Molnupiravir for treatment of adult patients with COVID-19 and who have high risk of progression of the disease.

In a tweet, the minister said, "Congratulations India. Further strengthening the fight against

country has increased to eight.

Six COVID-19 vaccines -- Serum Institute's Covishield, Bharat Biotech's Covaxin, Zydus Cadila's ZyCoV-D, Russia's Sputnik V and the US-made Moderna and Johnson and Johnson -- had already received EUA from the Indian drug regulator earlier. "Corbevax vaccine is India's 1st indigenously developed RBD protein sub-unit vaccine against #COVID19, made by Hyderabadbased firm Biological-E. It's a hattrick! It's now 3rd vaccine developed in India," Mandaviya said in

another tweet

The nanoparticle vaccine, Covovax, will be manufactured by Pune-based Serum Institute of India, he said

"Molnupiravir, an antiviral drug, will now be manufactured in the country by 13 companies for restricted use under emergency situation for treatment of adult patients with COVID-19 and who have high risk of progression of the disease," Mandaviya said.

The minister said the approvals will further strengthen the global fight against the pandemic.



The incident has exposed the poor investigation by the police. While addressing a recent conference of senior police officers, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had expressed concern over the large number of acquittals in courts and exhorted police officials to make all-out efforts to improve the dismal conviction rate in the state.

According to the case diary, the

girl, a native of Tirtol in Jagatsinghpur district, was waiting for a bus at OMP Square to return home when a motorcycleborne Santosh Kumar Behera offered to drop her home. Instead of Tirtol, Behera took the 15-yearold to the poultry farm of Rakesh Rout in Gatiroutpatna under Chauliaganj police limits where the duo took turns on her for over 22 days, it was alleged.

On October 12, the girl was rescued when the farm was raided after locals tipped-off the police suspecting some wrongdoing in the compound. A day later, Chauliaganj police registered a case under relevant Sections of IPC and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act on the basis of a complaint filed by district Child Welfare Committee's Narayan Shukla. Soon after, Behera and Rout were taken into custody.

The incident drew sharp criticism from different quarters with the opposition BJP and Congress launching a scathing attack on the state government. As per the data released by the National Crime Records Bureau, the conviction rate in Odisha stood at a poor 11.2 per cent in 2020 which was the second lowest in the country after Assam.

Mukesh Ambani mulls leadership change at Reliance

I've no doubt Akash, Isha and Anant as the next-gen leaders will lead Reliance to greater heights, says RIL chief at Reliance Family Day

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 28: Richest Indian Mukesh Ambani Tuesday mentioned about leadership transition at his energy-to-retail conglomerate, saying he wants the process to be accelerated with seniors, including him, yielding to the younger generation.

Ambani, 64, who has previously not spoken about succession plans at the country's most valuable company, said Reliance is "now in the process of effecting a momentous leadership transition." Ambani has three children — twins Akash and Isha, and Anant. Speaking at the Reliance Family

Day, which marks the birth anniversary of the group's founder Dhirubhai Ambani, he said Reliance Industries will become one of the strongest and most reputed Indian multinational companies in the world in the coming years, propelled by forays into the clean and green energy sector as well as retail and telecom business reaching unprecedented



heights. The company did not immediately respond to an e-mail seeking comments on Ambani's remarks about succession. "All seniors — myself included should now yield to the highly com-

petent, extremely committed, and incredibly promising young leadership talent at Reliance," Ambani said. "We should guide them, enable them, encourage them and empower them... and sit back and applaud as they perform better than us." He did not elaborate.

Reliance now has three verticals—energy business comprising oil refineries at Jamnagar in Gujarat, petrochemicals plants and new energy factories, the retail business made up of physical stores and online e-commerce unit in JioMart, and telecom and digital business housed in Jio.

"I have no doubt that Akash, Isha and Anant as the next-gen leaders will lead Reliance to even

greater heights." In them, he saw 'the same spark and potential" that legendary industrialist and his father had "for making a difference to millions of lives and contributing to India's growth." "Let us all wish them good luck in their mission to make Reliance ever more successful with even more transformative initiatives and achieving even greater accolades for our Reliance," he said.

At the beginning of the speech, he also mentioned about the spouses of Isha (Anand Piramal) and Akash (Shloka) as well as Radhika, who is rumoured to be bride-to-be of Anant. He also mentioned about Prithvi. one-yearold son of Akash and Shloka.



leisure



JESSICA SAYS PROSTHETICS GAVE HER 'ENERGY' TO PERFORM

Hollywood star Jessica Chastain found wearing prosthetics in her new movie The *Eyes of Tammy Faye* made her bring 'more energy' to her performance. Also, she shared that It's very helpful because you look so much like the character.

SINGER BECKY HILL WANTS TO **WORK WITH DJ CALVIN**

British singer-songwriter Becky Hill wants to work with 'amazing' Scottish DJ Calvin Harris because he's always been a big influence on her. She said the Acceptable in the 80s hitmaker has been a big influence on her career so she'd jump at the chance to get into the studio with him.



FORTUNE FORECAST



Today, you may set out to please your beloved, and maybe even woo him/her all over again. There may be a bit of dissatisfaction regarding friends and relatives, but you can look forward to partying and new friendships this evening, says Ganesha.

TAURUS

Today, Ganesha sees your feelings and emotions running high. There is a strong possibility of an emotional encounter

with some close to you. You are likely to be swayed and influenced by the other in course of this meeting. Avoid getting into any kind or dispute or controversy. Confrontation is most likely to have adverse consequences.

GEMINI

If you have children, they will be a pampered lot today, says Ganesha. Your affection, however, may not have its desired impact. Children are known to be unpredictable, but keep an eye on their activities, especially today. You may entertain your loved ones with a sumptu ous dinner tonight.

CANCER

At work, your ability to forge great partnerships will see to the success of one of your ambitious projects. However, you need to be careful before signing the contract. It's always important to go through the finer details of a deal before closing it

LEO

Friendships are supposed to last forever. But it all depends on whether or not the friend is around when most needed. Today, your pals may turn to you for help, and sure enough, you will be there to extend all the support you can, says Ganesha. Get ready to make new acquaintances today, some of whom may go on to become life-long friends.

VIRGO

Achievement and accomnlishment will be the highlights of the day, notes Ganesha. You will be recognised for your devotion to work and determination to succeed at your workplace. Much awaited promotions may come and financial arrears may also reach your hands.



Harnaaz 'would love to' star in PC's biopic

Mumbai: Miss Universe 2021 Harnaaz Sandhu who has been all praises for Priyanka Chopra, recently revealed that she would

Recently a news portal asked Harnaaz to pick a celebrity, whose biopic she would like to star in. Without thinking much, the diva took PeeCee's name and said that the actress' journey has always inspired her. She also went on to add that Privanka 'will keep inspiring millions' just like herself.

Talking about inspiration, Harnaaz had previously told the portal, "I got inspiration from Lara Dutta, Sushmita Sen and Priyanka Chopra, through them I re-

the way they have been doing.' When quizzed about her major strength that helped her during her journey, Sandhu added, "I think it's just the way you perceive things, it's not about winning or losing but about the challenges that come along. I have always focused on what next rather

that's how you can change your future.' Harnaaz Sandhu from Punjab, represented India at the 70th Miss Universe 2021, held in Eilat, Israel, brought home the crown, 21 years after Lara Dutta won the title in 2000. Previously, the same title was bagged by Sushmita Sen. AGENCIES

love to feature in a biopic of the global icon.

alised that I want to inspire people

than looking behind at what could've happened. One needs to live in the present because SHAHID-STARRER **JERSEY** POSTPONED

RELEASE OF

he makers of the Shahid Kapoor sports drama Jersey have decided to postpone the theatrical release of the film after civil restrictions were reimposed due to fears over the Omicron variant.

The makers issued a statement saying, "In view of the current circumstances and new Covid guidelines we have decided to postpone the theatrical release of our film Jersey. We have received immense love from you all so far and want to thank you all for everything. Until then everyone please stay safe and healthy, and wishing you all the best for the new vear ahead (sic)!!

The film that was supposed to be released 🗕 December 31, tells the story of a middle-aged cricketer, who gets back into the game for the love of his son. In addition to Shahid, the film directed by Gowtam Tinnanuri, also stars Mrunal Thakur, and is a remake of a 2019 Telugu film of the same name

Ananya Panday is in wonderland in her new pics Meanwhile, Ananya's

Mumbai: More often than not, Ananya Panday often best friend Suhana Khan treats her fans with entoo, acknowledged the post dearing photoshoots comby calling it 'perfect'. Earlier plemented with quirky capwhen Suhana had shared a tions. Having said that, the couple of close-up selfies, Khaali Peeli actress recently dropped a bundle of breathtaking pictures from one of her recent photoshoots.

In the pictures, Ananya kept it chic and elegant in an all-white ensemble consisting of a threaded cutout shirt and knee-length shorts. Minimalist makeup, dainty accessories, along her

hair tied to a messy bun. Fans and well-wishers have been showering her posts with lots of love.

Ananya too showered love for her bestie and wrote, 'glowin' in the comments. Meanwhile, on the work front, Ananya will next be seen in Shakun Batra's Gehraiyaan. She will be seen sharing screen space with Deepika Padukone. Siddhant Chaturvedi and Dhairya Karwa. The film has been slated for an OTT release January 25, 2022. AGENCIES

Biopic on Rajesh Khanna to be directed by Farah, produced by Nikhil

THE ACTOR IS KNOWN FOR Khanna.

IN MASS HYSTERIA, **AMONG HIS**

Mumbai: Producer-actor Nikhil Dwivedi is all set to bankroll a film based on the life of superstar Rajesh

The producer has acquired the rights to Gautam Chintamani's book Dark Star: The Loneliness Of Being Raiesh Khanna. The screen adaptation will be directed by Farah Khan, who will also script the film along with Gautam Chintamani. However, the casting of the film is underway.

Shedding light on the development, Nikhil Dwivedi said: "Yes, I've acquired the rights to Gautam Chintamani's book, Dark Star, and I'm in talks with Farah Khan to make the film. That's all I can say for now. As and when any major development happens, I'll be happy to share because I'm



FUN



really very excited about bringing Rajesh Khanna's story to the big screen.'

Born as Jatin Khanna, and affectionately called 'Kaka' by his industry friends, he was quite a complex personality, and unfortunately, misunderstood by many. The actor is known for delivering 17 mammoth blockbusters in succession, which resulted in mass hysteria, especially among his female followers, back in the 1970s.

Talking about the project, Farah Khan said: "Yes I have read Gautam's book and it's very fascinating. It's definitely an exciting story However, she declined to enlist the details of the project, saying, "We are in a conversation over this but I cannot comment more" IANS

DELIVERING 17 MAMMOTH **BLOCKBUSTERS IN**

SUCCESSION, WHICH RESULTED

be your own master and servant. But this day is all set to be animated and eventful and full of life. Expect a few run-ins with the opposite sex, as you are bound to attract guite a few of them, mainly because of your killer good looks.

SCORPIO

You go on a shopping spree and that too with your beloved. This may be quite therapeutic for your for your relationship. You may be just happy to use your bargaining skills to the optimum. Spending lavishly, first on shopping and then on sumptuous dinner to treat your taste buds. What more one wants in life!

SAGITTARIUS

Someone from the opposite sex is likely to get attracted towards you. Enjoy being in the limelight. Today, you main activity becomes hanging around with friends and cherishing their company.

CAPRICORN

Pain and fun, both are the two sides of a coin and today, you will experience both of them in equal amount. You may have to slog yourself to earn money, but be careful and don't drain vourself out. advises Ganesha. You will get what you have wished for, however, you need not trv vour luck too much. Spend money for the happiness of others.

You will receive some good news today. Whatever has been in the pipe line may come out in the open and you'll see the desired output, feels Ganesha. Courageous and patient, you can deal with the toughest of challenges with an ease and Ganesha gives a pat on your back for that.

PISCES

A day filled with socialising awaits you, says Ganesha. You will likely make contact with near and dear ones you haven't met in a while. New associations and friendships could also occur. It is a pleasant and joyous day, so make the most of it.



SNOOPY'S

TYPING MY TERM PAPER

FOR ME.





CALVIN AND HOBBES



BREVITY



	P						С	R)S	S'	WC	ORE)
1		2		3		4		5	Τ		6		7
-					2 9								
8			—					9			_		
0								5					
10						11			T		_		
			ļ										
12		13					14	15	T				
1			*		0	16			1		c		
17		-		18		-		19			20		21
22						23			Т				
24		<u> </u>				25				_			
24						20							
				Copyrig	ht ©20.	21 Puzz	zleJunc	tion.co	m				
Acr					Da						leagi		
1 Figuring out			22 Vocally						allic		bye		
	Ridin	-		23 Two-wh							ppose	ed to	
8	In on	e gro	up			kewi					ight		
	(2,5)			25		ttercu					aunt		
	Publi		sona		fan	nily n	nemb	er			andin		
10	Kitch								15		umer	us, e	.g.
	applia			Do							-4)		
11	Blow			1	Pri	mitiv	e				an, or		
	Well-	being	3		wea	apon					art of		/ fee
14	Kind Refus	of sa	uce			rus fr eck o					eface rusqu		

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.

4					8	1	2	
		7					3	
			3	6			9	
9	4		7	35		Ĩ		3
	1	3	2					
			8					
		6						
	7			9				5
		1				4		7

SOLUTIONS Т B CROSSWORI ANT P A FR С 7 1 2 8 4 5 9 6 3

8	3	6	7	9	2	1	5	4	
4	5	9	3	1	6	7	2	8	_k
1	4	7	6	3	9	2	8	5	- u
9	2	3	5	8	4	6	7	1	
5	6	8	2	7	1	3	4	9	
3	7	4	1	2	8	5	9	6	
								7	
6	9	1	4	5	7	8	3	2	

NDS

SUDOKU



downtown



MEDICOS' STIR

Medical students of SCBMCH in Cuttack take out a rally to protest against delay in NEET PG counselling, Tuesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
rld	28,20,67,247	25,14,94,045	54,26,092
ia	3,47,99,691	3,42,43,945	4,80,290
isha	10,54,160	10,44,278	8,455

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



POST NEWS NETWORK

Konark, Dec 28: The world famous Sun Temple here was shut for visitors for a brief period Tuesday due to heavy rush and jostling at the entrance.

The 13th century marvel has been witnessing huge footfall for last several days as 2021 draws to a close. However, things went out of hand Tuesday afternoon when hundreds of visitors, mainly from outside Odisha, could not get the entry tickets from the counters of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) due to some technical glitches, sources said.

Livid over the shortage of tickets, many visitors tried to enter the temple compound forcefully. Even, some of them tried to scale the boundary walls. They also scuffled with the security personnel when the latter tried to prevent



Denial of entry tickets at Sun Temple rued

Heavy rush at the Konark Sun Temple, Tuesday

the unauthorised entry. This prompted the authorities to shut the shrine for a brief period to disperse the crowd, sources added. "We could not get the tickets

Pagoda. The authorities should introduce some alternative measures to deal with the situation from the ASI counters despite

EEN WITNESSING HU LL FOR LAST SEVER SAS 2021 DRAWS TO A CL

However, things	Livid over
went out of hand	the
Tuesday afternoon	shortage of
when hundreds of	tickets,
visitors, mainly from	many
outside Odisha,	visitors
could not get the	even tried
entry tickets from	to forcefully
the counters of ASI	enter the
due to some	temple
technical glitches	compound

during rush days," rued a tourist from West Bengal while boarding his bus.

When contacted, ASI official Neeraj Singh said, "We could not meet the high demand for tickets as our server was down for several hours."

Over 2cr in state fully vaccinated

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, Dec 28: More than two crore adults in Odisha are now fully vaccinated against Covid-19. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said Tuesday.

Odisha has achieved yet another significant milestone in the fight against Covid-19 as more than 2 crore people have received the second dose of vaccine. Patnaik said in a tweet. "Commend the hard work of our healthcare workers in ensuring swift immunisation

to save precious lives," he said. As per statistics available on CoWIN portal, over 4.92 crore vaccine doses have been administered in the state so far. As many as 2,01,74,795 people in the state have been administered two doses of

vaccine while another 2.90.35.201 have received at least one dose. Data suggests that 2.83 crore people of Odisha in the age group of 18-44 years have received the jab till now while 1.27 crore population in the 45-60 age group and 80.87 lakh beneficiaries aged above 60 years have also been covered under the vaccination programme. Moreover, 4.37 crore doses of Covishield and 54.58 lakh Covaxin doses have been administered in the

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର **GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**

Meanwhile, director of health services Bijay Mohapatra said all required steps have been taken to



156 new cases, 2 deaths "We have not faced any health infrastructure issues during the first and second surge of Covid-19. As experts have predicted that the paediatric population is at risk

to 10,54,160, a Health department bulletin said. Twenty children were among the new patients, it added.

taking the total number of recov eries to 10,44,093. PTI

96-yr-old defeats Covid

Bhubaneswar: A 96-year-old man from the Capital city has defeated Covid-19 and was discharged from the hospital, Tuesday. Gadadhar Das, a resident of Dumduma, was admitted to SUM Covid Hospital after being found positive of Covid-19 December 20. According SUM Hospital officials, the nonagenarian was running high temperature and had congestion in lungs. He was kept in oxygen support.

Uninterrupted quality service delivery state's motto: Naveen

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 28: Not only public satisfaction, but delivery of uninterrupted quality service is also the state government's motto. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik told the administrative officials as he reviewed the ambitious Mo Sarkar initiative Tuesday.

standing in the queues for hours.

We were forced to return home

without visiting the Black

Launched two years ago, Mo Sarkar has been instrumental in strengthening people's confidence on the government, he said.

Responsible and humanitarian approach of the government officials towards the public speaks about the success of state's continuous effort to inculcate professionalism among the public servants, Naveen said expressing satisfaction over the positive feedback from Mo Sarkar about various departments.

"It's high time to ensure all initiatives of the state government meet the highest standards in accordance with Mo Sarkar. To serve the purpose, it's essential that the state should update its citizens' database regularly. This will bolster our zero tolerance policy towards corruption," the CM said.

It was learnt that as many as 222 services of 28 departments have been included under the Mo Sarkar. And feedback on the services has been collected from the public on regular intervals.

Secretary to CM (5T) VK Pandian analysed the reports presented in the meeting and advised officials to make the programme more effective.

NZP WELCOMES BABY CHIMP

Barang: In what could be termed as a New Year gift for animal lovers, Rakhi, a chimpanzee at Nandankanan Zoological Park (NZP) here, gave birth to a female Tuesday, NZP deputy director Sanieet Kumar said both the mother and the baby were healthy. "We've increased the quantity of fruits Rakhi gets. The feed is tailor-made by vets to suit the nursing mother's needs. Rakhi is carrying the baby on her chest throughout the day and feeding it as well," said another zoo official. Sources said it was June 2 this year when zoo authorities found Rakhi pregnant. With this, the chimpanzee count at Nandankanan has reached eight-two females and six males, added the official.

CM asks officials to prepare for 3rd wave

Bhubaneswar: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has directed officials to make preparations on a war-footing to deal with a possible third wave of Covid-19 with at least eight omicron cases detected in the state.

In a meeting Monday, where he took stock of the state's preparedness to deal with the pandemic, Patnaik issued a series of directives to government departments, calling for the same level of readiness as was there during the first and second waves. The Chief Minister said that though only eight omicron cases have so far been detected in the state, there could be a surge in the coming days.

He directed officials to ensure that all eligible persons are provided with the Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) smart health cards within a week. He also told district collectors and superintendents

of police to ensure its success, and especially monitor private hospitals to make sure they treat the beneficiaries of BSKY

infrastructure," he said.

Odisha was an oxygen surplus

state during the second wave of

pandemic and now oxygen plants

are being installed in various parts

of the state, Mohapatra said. Besides,

the state has stored an adequate

amount of the required eight med-

icines identified by the Union gov-

ernment, the director added.

Hospitals should have adequate oxygen supplies, he said. He also instructed the Health Department to ensure adequate facilities to treat children. The chief minister directed the police to enforce Covid-19 protocols among the people and take action against violators.

disha Tuesday logged 156 new Covid-19 cases, 33 more than the previous day, with the tally rising after the second wave, we are strengthening our paediatric care

> The death toll rose to 8,455 as two women, aged 40 and 72, succumbed to the disease, it said. The two fresh fatalities were reported from Khurda and Ganjam districts, the bulletin added. Fifty-three other coronavirus patients died due to comorbidities so far in the state.

The coastal state now has 1,559 active cases, and 167 people recuperated from the disease Monday,

Faecal sludge mgmt gets digital boost OPF flays decision to reopen schools

POST NEWS NETWORK

state till date

Bhubaneswar, Dec 28: As the first milestone towards its mission 'Zero Untreated Waste in 1,000 Habitats in 1,000 Days', the eGov Foundation recently launched the nation's first DIGIT-powered sanitation platform in the urban local bodies (ULBs) of Dhenkanal, Berhampur and Balasore.

The DIGIT (Digital Infrastructure for Governance, Impact and Transformation) platform attempts to bring digital transformation in all the aspects of faecal sludge management (FSM) service deliv-

erv. from on-site containment of the faecal waste to its transport, safe treatment and disposal. It allows ULB administration to keep track of requests raised by citizens and deliver timely services.

CEO of eGov Foundation Viraj Tyagi said, "It's heartening to see the platform being piloted in Odisha and with this, we have achieved the first milestone towards our journey of bringing digital transformation in sanitation space. This is yet another example of technological innovation at work to address the problems around urban governance."

The launch of the FSM application has also been positively received by the Desludging Operators (DSO's) and the Faecal Sludge Treatment Plant operators in the state.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 28: The Odisha Parents' Federation (OPF) Tuesday strongly objected to the state government's decision of reopening schools for Class I to V students from January 3, 2022.

Federation co-chairman Prasanna Bisoi asked, "When the Union government has decided to start vaccination of adolescents in the age group of 15-18 years from January 3, why has the state



government taken the decision so randomly?"

The state government could have waited a little longer to take a call on resuming physical teaching for Class I to V students as the Health dept has said that February may see the peak of the third wave BASUDEV BHATT | OPF CHAIRMAN

He also said that keeping in

view the recent global surge in

Covid-19 cases and detection of Omicron variant that has been categorised 'Variant of Concern', the state government could have taken the decision after thorough consultation with parents.

Outfit's chairman Basudev Bhatt said the state government could have waited a little longer to take a call on resuming physical teaching for Class I to V students as the Health department has said that February may see the peak of the third wave.

SOA ASST PROF WINS **BEAUTY PAGEANT**



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 28: Manisha Praharaj, assistant professor at SUM Nursing College of SOA, has been crowned 'Mrs India One in Million-Odisha' at a beauty pageant held recently.

The national-level contest, which continued for four days at New Delhi, had attracted 70 participants from across the country. The Grand Finale was held December 24 in which eight contestants including Praharaj entered the finale. Praharaj was crowned 'Mrs India One in Million-Odisha'.

Similarly, Asit Kumar Samal, a third year student of BSc (Ag), Institute of Agricultural Sciences, SOA's faculty of agricultural sciences, has won the Mister Odisha title at the 'Miss and Mister Odisha 2021' contest held here recently.

Decongestion of jails ordered

Bhubaneswar: The Prisons Directorate Tuesday issued a circular instructing the jail superintendents in the state to take proactive steps as per Odisha Model Jail Manual for decongestion of prisons. The superintendents have been asked to instruct the prison welfare officers to approach the concerned courts in their area for arranging bail for under-trials. The directorate ordered the officers to approach the Inspector General of Prisons to shift inmates from overcrowding prisons with prior permission of the court for decongestion.

CM inaugurates Sisir Saras–2021

Bhubaneswar: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday virtually inaugurated the national-level fair 'Sisir Saras-2021' at Idco Exhibition Ground here. The fair will continue till January 6, 2022. "The fair provides a big platform for sale and display of products made by SHGs. This aims at creating market linkage for rural producers among urban consumers, said Panchavati Rai and Drinking Water Minister Pratap Jena. This year, more than 300 stalls have been installed at the fair ground showcasing artisans from rural areas of Orissa and 20 other states.

Ayush docs seek job regularisation

Bhubaneswar: A group of Ayush doctors Tuesday swept the road at Lower PMG here as part of their agitation seeking job regularisation. The agitating Ayush doctors claimed that their job regularisation will boost healthcare system in rural Odisha. Around 1,150 Ayush doctors, who have been working in the primary health centres (PHCs) and Community Health Centres (CHCs) on a contractual basis for last 14 years, had earlier written to the Chief Minister for regularisation of their jobs. They launched an agitation in the city December 2 as the state government gave a deaf ear to their pleas, sources said. The monthly salary of Ayush doctors was Rs 8,000 in 2007 while the same for contractual MBBS doctors was Rs 12,000. Now, the MBBS doctors are getting Rs 70,000 for month while the

Ayush doctors are getting only Rs 29,000, the agitators said.





FOCUS RUSSIA & UKRAINE

Our actual enemy is not any force exterior to ourselves, but our own crying weaknesses, our cowardice, our selfishness, our hypocrisy, our purblind sentimentalism **SRI AUROBINDO**



Poll-bound Farmers

The decision of 22 farmers' unions to contest all the 117 seats in the coming Assembly polls in Punjab comes as a big surprise. These were earlier a part of the 32 unions that came together under the banner of Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) to spearhead the farmers' agitation against the three contentious farm laws. The SKM scrupulously avoided political parties during the year-long agitation and did not allow their leaders to join hands with them as they believed this would give a handle to the government to politically corner them and dilute the agitation backed by hundreds of thousands of farmers across the country. The farmers' movement against the farm laws marks a watershed moment in Indian politics for being organised by apolitical outfits forcing a mighty government enjoying an overwhelming popular mandate to repeal the laws. By successfully delinking the agitation from political parties, which were eager to lend support to it, the SKM ensured it was not weakened by devious calculations of different political parties pursuing their respective agenda. In fact, the ruling party failed to break it despite using various methods to discredit and intimidate the farmers because the latter steered clear of political parties with diverse ideologies and narrow electoral interests. They successfully created the impression that they were together only to uphold the interests of the common man, the farmers.

When the country was led to believe how the common man, ordinary farmers can bring a government to its knees for working against their wish without taking help from political parties, the announcement of the 22 farmers' unions to launch a political party - the Sanyukt Samaj Morcha (SSM) and join the fray in the Punjab Assembly elections is a highly welcome step. Prime Minister Modi has been constantly speaking against hereditary or dynasty politics. In this modern age, Indian democracy should not be propagating dynastic rule. However, dynasts are not limited to family names only. If observed on a broader canvas, certain political thoughts perpetuate themselves and thus become dynastic. These old thoughts refuse to die out and do not permit new thinking or allow the youth to evolve. These thoughts are as deplorable and damaging to a democracy as a family. The Prime Minister's statements aimed against dynasts are obviously aimed at propping up the Gandhi family as his only alternative. Thus, he forces people not to acknowledge other political ideas but limits their vision to the unwanted and decrepit Gandhis as the sole alternative. This also emboldens an alternative dynasty which, too, is unhealthy for Indian democracy to blossom.

The active involvement of certain farmers' organisations in electoral politics should be viewed positively as a harbinger of change. It is often a criticism that only scoundrels and criminals enter the political fray. While condemning the average politician, no one ever suggests an alternative way out of the morass. The Punjab farmers' decision could possibly be one of the ways out. This process might, just might, infuse new blood and new ideas into mainstream electoral politics. It is necessary that Indian elections change flavor from false promises and hatred to workable ideas that can involve the average citizen in the task of rebuilding society. A nation like India is not just a geographical boundary guarded by Lines of Actual Control (LAC) or Lines of Control (LOC) with rifle-wielding soldiers guarding them. It is wrong to assume that one religion professed by the majority has been the unifying factor for this nation. Although Hindooism is practiced throughout this country, yet it is not bound by one single concept or even one God. Many may be surprised to learn that there exist more that 300 versions of the Ramayana. If a parallel is drawn then whole of Europe with multiple languages, food and customs but with only catholic Christianity should have been one single country. Looking at India, it is vital to recognise the diversity that surrounds everything here. Electoral politics must necessarily reflect that social diversity with strength and purpose. Therefore, new people with novel ideas must be welcomed into the electoral system which, in turn, would propel them to seats of power.

Historically, every major social movement has produced great political beneficiaries. The freedom struggle brought the Indian National Congress to power and kept it at the helm of the country for a very long time. Similarly, many big and small regional movements such as the Dravida movement created strong regional political outfits which enjoy power even till today. A more recent example would be that of Anna Hazare. While Arvind Kejriwal and his Aam Aadmi Party were a by-product of the so-called anti-corruption movement, the real big beneficiary was the BJP and its ideology. It may be presumed that this tenacious farmers' protest could produce political offspring which may or may not be socially positive

A DIPLOMATIC WAY OUT

uring his annual press conference December 23, Russian President Vladimir Putin railed against NATO enlargement. "How would the US react if we delivered rockets near their borders with Canada or Mexico?" he pointedly asked.

Putin's increasingly combative rhetoric, coupled with Russia's huge troop buildup on its border with Ukraine, suggests that the Kremlin is readying an invasion to pull the country back into Russia's sphere of influence and prevent its accession to NATO. Europe could well be heading toward its deadliest interstate conflict since World War II.



Charles A. Kupchan

WAR IS HARDLY FOREORDAINED, **GIVEN THE COSTS THAT RUSSIA COULD FACE IF IT**

INVADES ITS NEIGHBOUR



But war is hardly foreordained, given the costs that Russia could face if it invades its neighbour. Although Ukraine's military forces are still no match for Russia's. they would be far better at defending the country than they were in 2014, when Russia grabbed Crimea and intervened in the eastern Donbas region to support pro-

Russian separatists. Russian aggression has alienated most Ukrainians, making widespread popular resistance likely if Russia tries to seize a major chunk of the country. Putin can expect not only heavy Russian casualties, but also the severe economic sanctions that the United States and its European allies are currently weighing.

With Russia facing such clear downsides if it opts for war, diplomacy has a reasonable chance of averting conflict. Indeed, Moscow recently released a detailed agenda for broad negotiations over European security. Even though many of Russia's proposals are non-starters, the US and its European partners appear ready to engage, with the US hinting that talks with the Kremlin could begin early next year. In preparation, the Western allies should identify a combination of carrots and sticks that will increase the appeal of a diplomatic route to de-escalation while raising the prospective costs if Putin chooses war.

As for the carrots, NATO should reassure the Kremlin that it is not about to integrate Ukraine or turn the country into a forward outpost of the West's best weaponry. Although Russia's aggression against and coercion of its neighbour is unacceptable, its concern about a militarised Ukraine entering NATO is understandable. Major powers don't like it when



Russian aggression has alienated most Ukrainians, making widespread popular resistance likely if Russia tries to seize a major chunk of the country. Putin can expect not only heavy Russian casualties, but also the severe economic sanctions that the United States and its European allies are currently weighing

other major powers show up on their doorstep.

Even so, US President Joe Biden and his NATO counterparts are right to reject Putin's demand for a guarantee that NATO will not offer membership to Ukraine. After all, one of the alliance's core principles is that sovereign countries should be free to choose their geopolitical alignments.

In practice, however, NATO membership for Ukraine is not in the cards. Admitting it would not only provoke Russia, but also saddle the alliance with defending a nation that has a 1,500-mile (2,414kilometer) border with Russia. Biden has already made clear that 'school's out' regarding Ukraine's potential NATO membership and that sending US combat troops to the country is 'not on the table.'

That reality creates a diplomatic opening. With admission to NATO requiring the consent of all members, Biden can credibly reassure Putin that membership for Ukraine is not up for consideration. And NATO members can provide assurances that they would put quantitative and qualitative limits on the weaponry they provide to Ukraine. Meanwhile, the al-

liance can, at least in theory, stand by its open-door policy. Such understandings may fall short of Putin's demand for a codified guarantee, but they should be sufficient to ease his fears that Ukraine will become a NATO garrison on

Russia's southern frontier. The US should also lead efforts to implement the Minsk Agreements – a roadmap negotiated in 2014 and 2015 to end Russia's intervention in Donbas. That deal envisaged Ukraine granting a measure of regional autonomy to areas now controlled by Russianbacked separatists. In return, Russia would stop its proxy war, and Ukraine would regain control of Donbas.

Despite the best efforts of France and Germany, which helped to broker the Minsk deal, implementation has gone nowhere, as both Ukraine and Russia have dragged their feet. Washington should now team up with Paris and Berlin to push the Minsk process forward. While the West and Russia will probably have to agree to disagree about Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, the Minsk framework holds the promise of ending the conflict in east

ern Ukraine, which has claimed well over 10,000 lives.

Should the Kremlin fulfill its Minsk obligations, the Western allies would scale back the economic sanctions imposed since 2014. And as they lean on Ukraine to uphold its Minsk commitments, they should also press the government in Kyiv to implement anti-corruption measures. Ukraine's long run welfare depends not just on ending Russian aggression, but also on reining in its oligarchs and cleaning up its politics.

Finally, NATO allies should capitalise on Russia's offer to discuss broader issues of European security. Russia's widening rift with the West has pushed it much closer to China, creating a coupling that emboldens both Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping. But Russia is the junior partner and must be silently uncomfortable with China's growing power and ambition, which provides the US and Europe with an opportunity to pull Russia westward. The Kremlin needs to know that improving its relations with the West is an option - provided it stops its predatory behaviour toward Ukraine and its troublemaking farther afield.

At the same time that it pursues this diplomatic plan, the West needs to signal its readiness to impose punishing economic sanctions if Russian forces enter Ukraine. On the agenda are excluding Russia from the SWIFT international payments system, sanctioning major Russian banks, scrapping the Nord Stream 2 Russia-Germany gas pipeline, and targeting oligarchs in Putin's inner circle.

NATO allies should also make clear that they are ready to rein force their eastern frontier and help arm the Ukrainian resistance if Russia invades. Putin tends to pick fights that he can win at relatively low cost. He needs to know that invading Ukraine would be hugely expensive.

The US needs to lead a determined NATO effort to give diplomacy a chance, while readying severe sanctions if diplomacy fails. That approach offers the best way to avert a conflict that would produce no winners.

The writer, Professor of International Affairs at Georgetown University and Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, served on the US National Security Council from 2014 to 2017. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

WISDOM CORNER

All are lunatics, but he who can analyze his delusions is called a philosopher

- People who think they know everything are a great annoyance to those of us who do. ISAAC ASIMOV
- What the caterpillar calls the end of the world the master calls a hutterfly. RICHARD BACH

WORDS**WORTH**

Rambunctious

his is another of those irrepressibly energetic words that came out of the US in the first half of the nineteenth century. It means uncontrollably exuberant or boisterous. It's first recorded in a newspaper report in Boston in 1830: If they are 'rumbunctious' at the prospect, they will be 'riprorious' when they get a taste (The Boston Transcript, 1 Sept. 1830). Riproarious was another bright-eyed and bushy-tailed coinage, also first recorded that year with roughly the same meaning, though the Boston newspaper clearly believed that to be riproarious was to be even more extravagantly uninhibited. Cautious dictionaries say "of unknown origin", an open invitation to strange and inventive suggestions. One such holds that it is a compound of ram (to butt or strike) with bust (to thrash or beat), with the implication that rambunctious individuals went around ramming and busting people. Please don't pass this on. The Oxford English Dictionary argues that it's a variant of the earlier rumbustious, recorded from about 1777, that meant boisterous, turbulent or unruly. This had probably been modified in the turbulent and anarchic language of the new frontier through the influence of a number of nouns and adjectives containing -unct-, such as unctuous, compunction, punctilious and perfunctory. The entry points out that rambunctious has also appeared as rumbumptious and rambumptious, suggesting the influence of bumptious. Rambunctious has been one of the great survivors of the days of American linguistic invention and is still around. It has even crossed the Atlantic to become a British word: So the days of rambunctious rentiers building big portfolios of properties quickly on the never-never are probably behind us. The property business will be duller without this motley crew, whose members ranged from ex-teachers to fast-talking geezers with diamond ear-studs (Financial Times, 19 December 2011).

LOL

inspection.

Inspecting the truck

A young man was walking into town day when a wood hauler gave him a ride After travelling about a mile or two, the truck was stopped by the highway patrol for a weight check and

The truck inspection revealed the truck had slick tires; no horn; no head, tail or signal lights; no windshield wipers. Also, it was overloaded and had bad brakes. "Mister." the patrolman said to the driver, "I think the best way to charge you is 'hauling wood without a truck."



IN JEST THIS

TRUST ME. IT IS BETTER TO FEEL GOOD ABOUT ACHIEVING A SMALL GOAL THAN STRIVING FOR A BIG GOAL THAT YOU CAN'T ACHIEVE

Choose your New Year's resolutions wisely



CONSISTENTLY

T's my favourite time of year, with me?" I start running. the waning days of December. As the New Year approaches, so does the prospect of a fresh start, an opportunity to make resolutions that will transform our lives — or at least improve them significantly.

Over the years, I've experienced both success and failure in trying to keep my New Year's resolutions. I'd like to share five of the most important lessons I've learned:

1. Don't make too many resolutions. Even if you'd like to change your life in 20 different ways, you are better off making two or three changes in 2022, leaving the rest for future years. Better yet, leave the rest for other people. Why must you be the one to do yoga every morning? Let someone else in your family do that. You can't do it all, you know. My wife is the voga person in our family: I'm the running person. Whenever she says, "Do you want to do yoga

Deal & diplomacy

2. Choose your resolutions wisely. Make a list of all the changes you'd like to make and cross off most of them. Think about which resolutions will have the greatest impact on your life. Will giving up sweets make you feel as happy and healthy as running regularly? It certainly might,

especially if diabetes runs in your family or you are running out of teeth 3. Don't aim high - aim low. Aiming high is how most people fail.

Some of them have never exercised in their lives, yet they somehow convince themselves that they're going to run 10 kilometres per day, beginning January 1. This usually results in a long line at the doctor's office January 2

New habits are hard to adopt that's why you should start with something small. If you haven't done much writing, but want to write a novel, don't set a

resolution such as "I will write 1,000 words of fiction per day." You are only setting yourself up for failure. It's better to shoot for 100 words per day. That may not seem like much, but by the end of the year, you can call yourself a novelist, perhaps even a published one.

My running goal is about 12 minutes per day. Once I start, I usually run for twice as long, but what keeps me going is having an easy goal to achieve. Your goal might be even lower: running from your front door to your front gate. That may not seem like much, but you will soon have adopted the habit of running every day. You can always increase your output after the habit is established.

Trust me, it is better to feel good about achieving a small goal than striving for a big goal that you can't achieve consistently. Whether you have a good habit (20 minutes of biking per day) or a bad

habit (20 minutes of smoking per day), consistency is what makes it a habit.

4. Reward yourself. This is every important, especially if you're trying to achieve a goal that doesn't give you instant gratification. Whether vou wrote 100 words or exercised for 15 minutes or studied chemistry for an hour, give yourself a special treat, perhaps a tasty drink while watching your favourite TV show

5. Don't give up. If you succeed in avoiding sweets for five days, but attend a party on the sixth day and eat 10 jamuns, what should you do? Well, like a cyclist who hits a bump and falls off a bicycle, you should get back on the bike and continue your journey. There will always be bumps on the road. Even Kamala Harris sometimes goes an entire day without making any speeches. But the very next day, she's back at it, making 200 of them.



TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 101 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

Orissapost B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

diplomacy to be effective, words must be credible." This statement of former US President George W. Bush seems have to been diluted to a great extent in American politics during the Donald Trump era. Trump's series of egregious policies and isolationist rhetoric including the withdrawals from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Paris Climate Accord and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (the US-Iran nuclear deal) have tarnished the integrity of the US in the recent years. There should be no further delay in rejoining the US-Iran nuclear deal. The US must end the game of who blinks first by removing the sanctions it has imposed on Iran to build back its trust and in due course, Iran

Sir, This refers to the news report "Iran insists on

crude exports" (Orissa Post, December 28, 2021). "For

should also take initiatives for reducing its stock-

Tushar Anand, PATNA

Omicron concern

Sir, Omicron variant is spreading rapidly across the globe. India has reported over 650 Omicron cases to date, as per the Union Health Ministry. This may look small but the rate of growth is rapid. The Omicron variant is reported to be at least three times more transmissible than the Delta variant and is posing a new challenge in the fight against COVID. It is not clear whether infection with Omicron causes more severe disease compared to infections with other variants including Delta, People need to be very careful against this variant because of its high transmissibility. Since the spread of the highly contagious variant, several states have imposed night curfews. With infections spreading across the nation as the New Year approaches, health experts are urging people to get vaccinated or boosted to protect themselves and others before they face greater chances of infection. Researchers are racing to understand how vaccines will hold up against this new variant. The evidence so far indicates that the current vaccines will continue to be effective against Omicron in preventing severe disease and death. As per the reports of the UK Health Security Agency, a third booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine provides 70-75% protection against symptomatic infection from the Omicron variant. Health experts continue to recommend wearing of masks in public places and in indoor settings in areas of high community transmission regardless of the vaccination status and urge everyone to follow COVID appropriate behaviour.

Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD



pile of enriched uranium





state

JE in Vigilance trap for DA

Digapahandi: Vigilance sleuths Tuesday raided the office of the Rural Development department iunior engineer Banshidhar Sethy at Raipur Road here in Ganiam district on charges of amassing disproportionate assets beyond his known sources of income. Sethy is posted as a junior engineer in the office of the assistant engineer of Rural Development department at Raipur Road in Digapahandi. The Vigilance sleuths seized various documents from his office during the raid. Simultaneous raids were also carried out at his parental house at Chirkipada Sasan village under Polsara police limits, his residence at Shaktinagar in Berhampur and at a building in Lochapada. Documents related to 10 housing plots, movable and immovable properties worth over ₹4 crore and gold ornaments were seized during the raid.

Rengali South canal to supply water to farmlands in Athagarh

This was stated by Ranendra Pratap Swain, state Minister of Food Supplies, and Devi Prasad Mishra, Badamba MLA, at a press conference organised at the Athagarh sub-collector here.

A tender for the project was ap proved by the state Cabinet, December 24. The entire cost of the project will be borne by the state government and it has been targeted to complete the project work by December 2024. The two leaders said there is no need for land acquisition for the project.

An initial estimate for the project says it will cost ₹600 crore. The maintenance and repair work for the project will be undertaken on the basis of a survey report.

A sum of ₹443.22 crore has been sanctioned for the project out of which ₹198 crore is for Athagarh, ₹112 crore has been earmarked for Badamba, ₹87 crore for Banki and ₹46 crore for Darpani. This project will help in irrigating 12,696 hectares in Athagarh, 9,406 hectares in Tigiria and 80,107 hectares in Badamba.



Kendu leaf workers under the umbrella of Odisha Kendu Leaf Karmachari Sangha staging a demonstration demanding GST waiver on kendu leaf, outside the office of the Revenue Divisional Commissioner (North) in Sambalpur, Tuesday

Bhitarkanika closed from Jan 2

.....

Kendrapara: Bhitarkanika National Park in Kendrapara district will remain closed for tourists for 10 days from January 2 to 11 owing to the annual census of estuarine crocodiles. Divisional Forest Officer, Rajnagar, Jajnadutt Pati said, "Tourists will be barred from entering the national park for 10 days from January 2 to 11 for smooth conduct of the crocodile counting." Forest officials under the supervision of crocodile expert Dr Sudhaka Kar will undertake the crocodile counting in the creeks and rivers within the park and its peripheral areas.

Jharkhand jumbos on rampage

.....

Sajanagad: A herd of 39 elephants from Jharkhand is on a rampage in Nilagiri area of Balasore while the harvesting season of paddy is underway. According to reports, the animals came through Nadapur route after crossing Budhabalanga in the wee hours of Tuesday. They were spotted moving through Pundala, Kathapala, Durgadevi, Patana and Ayodhya under Nilagiri range. The elephants have damaged paddy at different places in the region. The herd including 12 tuskers and 10 calves has triggered panic among

villagers inhabiting the areas near Gopalpur and Tinikosia forests where solar-powered fences and trenches built spending crores of rupees are in a shambles. Forest officials are reportedly keeping a close watch on the movement of the animals.

CIRB proposal in cold store Four years have passed POST NEWS NETWORK Kendrapara, Dec 28: Incidents of infiltration have been on the

INFILTRATION PUTS COASTAL SECURITY AT RISK

rise in the coastal pockets of the state, including Gahirmatha area of Kendrapara, putting the security of the state at risk In view of this threat, there is

POST NEWS NETWORK

Athagarh, Dec 28: Water from

Rengali South canal will be made

available to the farmlands in the

Athagarh and Badamba Assembly

According to a report, water will

be supplied through underground

pipes in addition to the canals to the

farmlands to enhance irrigation.

Availability of the canal water will help the farmers in the region in

raising dual crops in an agricul-

The canal water is expected to

irrigate over 26,334 hectares. It has

been estimated to irrigate 24,063

hectares in the first phase and the

remaining farmlands in subse-

tural year.

quent phases.

segments in Cuttack district.

need for a Coastal India Reserve Battalion (CIRB) and taking serious note of this, the state government had proposed the Ministry of Home Affairs to approve setting up such a battalion for Odisha in 2017.

According to reports, the then state Additional Chief Secretary, Home, Asit Kumar Tripathy wrote to the Home Minister urging him to establish the CIRB and financial assistance to marine police stations that are looking after coastal security.

Meanwhile, four years have passed by since Tripathy sent the letter to the Home Ministry. The proposal for the CIRB has been shelved into cold store. There has been no positive response from the centre in this regard.

Many marine police stations have been plagued by infrastructure and staff crunch and are unable to maintain proper surveillance along the coast against the infiltrations. According to Matrudatt Mohanty,

a local resident, there are 480-km long coast of the state while 48 km



of it is in Kendrapara. Marine police stations have been

set up at Talachua, Tantiapal and Jambu, but these police stations are affected by shortage of staff and infrastructure. As these police stations do not have adequate number of boats and staff, patrolling the coast has been affected, he added.

Amid these shortcomings, intrusion through sea route has been increasing in this coastal district.

During the Pakistan-Bangladesh war, 1,237 refugees were rehabilitated in Kendrapara. Currently, there are over 76,000 Bangladeshis in the district. Most of them are infiltrators and have set their sight on Bhitarkanika national park. With the deployment of CIRB cases of infiltration can be curbed to some extent, Mohanty noted.

According to Amarbar Biswal, a local intellectual, in 2001 a transmission centre was set up at Banipal in Bhitarkanika. During a police investigation, it was found that defence-related data about the APJ Abdul Kalam Island (Erstwhile Wheeler Island) were being leaked abroad through the transmission centre.

In 2002, Forest officials seized a trawler for illegal intrusion into Rainagar area. Some of the crew members had shot a forester dead In 2019, there was exchange of fire between the Coast guards and fishermen who were fishing illegally in the Gahirmatha area. Police investigations at differ-

ent times in the past revealed gun

by since the state govt sent a proposal of CIRB to the Home Ministry. But. there has been no positive response from the Centre in this regard

smuggling, fake currency note and drug smuggling in the coastal area of the district.

Social activist Pratap Chandra Padhi said that Coast Guards had recently detained 20 Bangladeshis at Paradip police station.

Over the years, scores of Bangladeshis have settled inside the national park. Most of them are involved in wildlife poaching, smuggling of drugs and prawn farming. They are making big buck from such illegal activities, thus posing a serious threat to the state's security as well as the biodiversity of the Bhitarkanika, Padhi added.

As for coastal security ASP Harish Kumar Pandey said that there is need for CIRB. "After establishment of marine police stations, infiltrations have been curbed to some extent. Efforts are on to strengthen the infrastructure of the marine police stations, he added.

irrigation in Balasore POST NEWS NETWORK

₹230cr earmarked for

Khaira, Dec 28: The state government will invest ₹230 crore to ensure irrigation to 9,803 hectares in Oupada and Khaira blocks of Balasore. The irrigation project entails laying of underground pipelines in 22 panchayats.

According to reports, farmers of 132 villages will benefit from this irrigation project. This was revealed by engineer of the Irrigation division here.

The farmers of the both the blocks are enthused over execution of the project, which is expected to be completed in 18 months. They observed that such a project will come handy when rainfall is erratic. In fact, erratic rain has affected farming activities in the region over the last few years.

Cultivation of paddy and vegetables in the region solely depends on rain. The farmers of the two blocks have long been demanding such a project. Local MLA and Tourism Minister Jyotiprakash Panigrahi had been making efforts to bring the irriproject gation to the region

According to sources in the irrigation division, underground

POST NEWS NETWORK



pipelines will be connected with 12 distribution points and minor canals of the Ambahata canal system.

Panchayats that will be benefitted by the project include Nayakhandi, Khaira, Kurunta, Dagarapada, Achyutapur, Jalada, Gaganadhuli and Makhanpur under Khaira block, Fatehpur, Talakia, Rairamchandrapur Gadasahi, Baunsabania and Aghirapada under Oupada block.

Jagabandhu Gahan and Bharat Chandra Pradhan, two farmers in Oupada block, said that this irrigation project would encourage the farmers to taken up various cash crops. They said that delayed and erratic rainfall was responsible for many farmlands to remain fallow. The project has created a new ray of hope for farmers, said Narayan Behera, a farmer from Makhanpur panchayat

lage to inaugurate various projects when he faced the ire of the

BJD MLA manhandled by irate party workers

e-filing station in Malkangiri

Malkangiri: Chief Justice of Orissa High Court Dr. S Muralidhar visited Malkangiri Tuesday and inaugurated e-filing station and a training camp for lawyers on the premises of the district judge court. He also inaugurated a virtual, vulnerable witness deposition centre on the court premises. As many as 60 lawyers in the district received training on e-filing, e-service and e-payment.

Acidic soil a threat to agriculture

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh, Dec 28: In a development that holds serious danger for agriculture in future, soil of over 85 per cent farmlands in this district has turned acidic due to mindless application of fertilisers by farmers without conducting proper soil tests. However, many farmers aware of such problem have started

organic farming in the district. According to reports, if it goes unchecked, all the farmlands in this district may soon turn acidic. This will render the farmlands unfit for cultivation, as acidic soil prevents proper growth of crops. It has also pushed the biodiversity in the area into danger.

The Centre has implemented the Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana from the 2017-18 fiscal with



the aim of promoting cluster-based conversion and development of conventional farms into organic farms. It is part of the Soil Health Management Scheme under the National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture. Reports said that increase in the acid

content of the soil has led to a decline in crop harvest. Reports of the Agriculture department show that 907 farmers in Ranpur block and 300 farmers in Odagaon block had undertaken organic farming in 1,500 acres and 500 acres respectively in the 2017-18 financial year. Similarly, 440 farmers in Ranpur and 173 farmers in Odagaon had taken up organic farming in 770 acres and 300 acres respectively in 2018-19. In 2019-20, 623 farmers had taken up cultivation on 100 acres in Ranpur.

A farmer, Padmanabh Prusty of Godipada, said that farmers should first conduct soil tests before applying fertilisers. However, most of the farmers are unaware of soil tests. A scientist of local Krishi Vigyan Kendra said that plants fail to prepare their food from the acidic soil if it contains more nitrogen, phosphorous, potash calcium and

Bijay Pradhan, chief district agriculture officer, said farmers are being sensitised in this regard.

Uncertainty over NAC status to Chandikhole

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, Dec 28: Chandikhole in Jajpur district lies at the connecting point of National Highways-16 and 53, which pass through this district.

However, uncertainty prevails over the Notified Area Council (NAC) status to Chandikhole. Although the panchavat elections are knocking at the doors, the state government is yet to make any move in this regard. The delay has angered the residents as they fear that this might impact the upcoming panchayat elections in the area in many ways.

According to sources, Chandkhole is a major commercial hub of Jajpur district and the place is of immense importance due to its topography as well as the social aspect. The area has been neglected and the state government's reluctance to up-grade it to a NAC is a case in point. The then government led by Biju Patnaik had proposed to upgrade Chandikhole into a NAC. Since then the proposal is caught in red-tape.

Narasinghpur, Dec 28: Ruling BJD MLA from Badamba Assembly segment, Debi Prasad Mishra was allegedly manhandled by some irate party workers and villagers at Baselihata village under this block in Cuttack district Tuesday. Mishra was on a visit to the vil-

party workers and villagers. Sources said a group of party workers led by former Samiti member Bira Kishore Dhal and hundreds of villagers pushed and heckled Mishra near Baselihata Chhak on Cuttack-Narasinghpur state highway-65.

	one/Fax: (06821) 241133		vision, Bhanja	
			td.24.12.2021	ano
			OR BIDS (I	3
E-P	rocurement Bid Identificat			
1.	Name of work		No. of work.	
2.	No. of Works		One No. building work	
3.	No. of Covers		Single Cover	
4.			Rs.31.37	
	Period of Completion	:- S	Six Calendar Months.	
6.				ed
	bid document in the portal		31,12,2021 to 5,00 PM o	
			lated 10.01.2022	92)
7.	Last date/time for receipt of	100		
			0.01.2022	
8.	bids in the portal Date of opening of bid		At 11.00 A.M of 11.01.20	22
•.	documents	0.00		
9.	abbannonto	:- "(C" to "B" Class Contrac	tor
	Name and address of officer			
1.71	inviting Bid		R&B) Division, Bhanjan	
Furth	ner details can be seen from the e-F			
	Addendum/Corrigendum if any will b			arona



OIPR-25058/11/0014/2021

Nabarangpur tribal women beat lockdown blues

POST NEWS NETWORK

Umerkote, Dec 28: Working as casual labourers for a living is the mainstay of women in the tribaldominated regions of the state. However, with change in time, tribal women living in forest areas of Siraguda village under this block in Nabarangpur district have found a new way to live their life with dignity - thanks to the efforts of the Forest and Horticulture departments.

With the help of these two departments, tribal women in this region have become self-reliant through poultry farming and mushroom cultivation. These activities have earned them a special identity and they have become role models for others to emulate.

Women in Siraguda village under Beheda panchayat of Umerkote block have formed selfhelp groups to achieve this feat.

MUSHROOM FARMING FETCHES GOOD EARNINGS



They have come together to form them to lead a decent life. three self-help groups and un-According to reports, this bedertook mushroom cultivation came possible after the Forest deduring the Covid pandemic. partment included their names The women members of Maa under 'Ama Jungle Yojana', while the Horticulture department pro-

Pendrani, Maa Triveni and Maa Gadighasen self-help groups in the village have taken up mushroom cultivation with financial assistance provided by the state government. This has not only helped uplift their lot, but also enabled

leader of Gramya Vikash Sangathan.

Currently, they are producing 3 to 5 kg mushroom per day and selling it at the local market at ₹200 per kg. Some SHG members said the money they earn from the sale of mushroom is spent on meeting the expenses of their families. They also save something for future.

This has come as a blessing at a time when the Covid pandemic has led to dramatic loss of human life worldwide and caused economic and social disruptions by pushing tens of millions of people into extreme poverty.

When contacted. Purna Chandra Nayak, DFO, Umerkote said that three women self-help groups have been provided with financial help and training to take up mushroom cultivation. Some women have also been provided with ₹2 lakh assistance for poultry farming, he added.





vided them with financial assis-

tance of ₹10,000 each to take up

mushroom cultivation. Later, these

women underwent training for

mushroom cultivation under the

guidance of Saroj Dalei, the team





THE HIGH & MIGHTY

It isn't just wealth. And it isn't just control over people or resources. True power is a potent combination of money and influence that enables people to help shape the world. Only a select group of people really possesses the economic and political clout to effect global change. In a year when a virus locked down the world and touched all aspects of its daily life, it was the process of recovery and fightback that tested how the levers of power moved. Orissa POST has compiled a list of the world's most powerful people - heads of state, billionaires, CEOs, and entertainers in 2021













national



Most MLAs of the Aam Aadmi Party have left the party as their fake propaganda of projecting themselves as common man is exposed CHARANJIT SINGH CHANNI PUNJAB CM

DEREK O' BRIEN TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID

Trinamool Congress leader Derek O' Brien Tuesday said he has tested positive for Covid and is presently at home isolation



Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB)

have been planning to carry out ter-

ror attacks not only in Bangladesh

but also in India. They have also re-

ported that on behest of Pakistan's

ISI, the JMB also planning to desta-

bilise the Sheikh Hasina govern-

ment which has also adopted zero

government that the ISI has been

supplying terror outfits in

Bangladesh with arms and am-

munition, the sources in the se-

curity set up said, adding that all

this was duly shared with

Bangladesh intelligence on a reg-

The Bangladesh CTTC is also

The security agencies in the

probing the target of these arms and

explosives and sharing details with

neighbouring country have a close

coordination with Indian agen-

cies and they have always acted

swiftly on the Indian inputs on

terrorism, drug trafficking and

smuggling of the counterfeit cur-

ular basis.

Indian agencies.

The agencies also alerted the

tolerance to the terrorism.

uote 🦅 PM takes dig at SP over cash seizure Indian security

You may say anything to grab headlines, and provoke people and divert their attention from the core issues. However,

people understand everything. They won't let divisive elements come into the play, and will cast votes over the issues that matter

SACHIN PILOT CONGRESS LEADER

Harmony, tolerance. 'Sarva Dharma Sambhay' (equal respect for all religions) is the soul of India and 'Unity in Diversity' is the strength of the

MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI UNION MINISTER FOR MINORITY AFFAIRS

country

A few days ago, there were income tax raids. Why was (SF chief) Akhilesh having an upset stomach over raids. and he said that the raids were done with political malice AMIT SHAH UNION HOME MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Woman gangraped

Bhopal: A 35-year-old woman was abducted, gangraped and brutalized in Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh, police said Tuesday. According to police, the incident occurred on Saturday night when the woman and her husband were returning home on a bike. As the couple reached at a bridge in Manawar town in Dhar district, three unidentified persons started pelting stones at them and forced them to stop. They overpowered the couple, tied up the man (husband) and snatched their wallet and jewellery.

12 arrested

Patna: The Patna Police have arrested 12 people for violating the liquor prohibition rules. All the arrests were made on Monday night from different hotels, the police said. Among the arrested was a couple, who were held when "The alleged person, named Purnendu Kumar who is having a tour and travel business, was celebrating a party with his girlfriend Julie Kumari in a room. We raided the hotel. During the search, we found liquor in a bottle of soft drink. During breath analysis, he turned positive. Though, Julie did not consume liquor. We have arrested both," said Rama Shankar, SHO of Shastri Nagar police station.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kanpur (UP), Dec 28: Prime Minister Narendra Modi took a swipe at the SP Tuesday over the seizure of crores of rupees in cash from a Kanpur-based perfume manufacturer and mockingly said it was the "achievement and reality" of the opposition party.

He also accused the political parties that ruled Uttar Pradesh in the past of spreading crime, which ruined all the businesses in the most populous state of the country."Boxes filled with notes have stumbled out. I was thinking they will say that this was also done by us. The people of Kanpur understand business and trade well. Before 2017, the perfume of corruption that they had sprinkled all over Uttar Pradesh is there for everyone to see," Modi said addressing a rally here after inaugurating a metro rail project and the 356-km long Bina-Panki multiproduct pipeline project, without taking any name."But now, they are sitting with their mouths shut. They are not coming forward to take credit for the mountain of currency notes seen by the entire country. This is their achievement and their reality."The people of Uttar Pradesh are seeing and understanding everything and hence,



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressing a rally in Kanpur

they are with those who are working to take the state forward," he said. The prime minister was referring to the seizure of over Rs 177 crore in cash from perfume trader Piyush Jain's house in Kanpur, which has been described by the Union finance

ministry as the "biggest ever seizure of cash" by an enforcement agency. Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav categorically denied any links between his party and Jain on Tuesday, and mockingly said the ruling BJP got "its own businessman" raided "by mistake".

Stressing the importance of sound law and order, Modi said for the development of any state or improving its investment and industry scenario, the rule of law is the most important aspect.

PTI PHOTO

'The previous government had spread the tree of mafiawad so much that all industry and businesses got ruined. Now, the Yogi Adityanath government has brought the rule of law back and so investment is increasing and criminals are going back to jails,' he said.

The "double-engine" government

of the BJP is encouraging an in-dustrial culture in Uttar Pradesh, the prime minister said, citing the projects already sanctioned for Kanpur as well as other schemes that will benefit the locals.

"Political parties with a policy of corruption and honouring bahubalis cannot develop Uttar Pradesh. Therefore, they have a problem with every move that strengthens the society. They also oppose moves that are aimed at empowering women, whether stern laws against triple talaq or bringing the age of marriage for women at par with men," he said in an apparent dig at the SP, which ruled the state from 2012 to 2017. Modi also said the opposition parties claim credit for the projects conceived and implemented by the current government. Citing various projects like the Kanpur Metro and the Purvanchal Expressway, he claimed that the BJP government laid the foundation stones as well as inaugurated those.

Yadav has often attacked the Adityanath government for allegedly claiming credit for projects conceived by the SP government. Modi said before 2014, metro trains used to run for a distance of only nine kilometres in Uttar Pradesh. It went up to 18 kilometres between 2014 and 2017. he said.

agencies worried

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 28: Indian security agencies are concerned after a recovery of huge quantity of military-grade explosives and arms in Bangladesh, abutting Tripura, and are in contact with their Bangladeshi counterparts to know where these explosives were planned to be used, sources said Tuesday.

According to the reports, the Bangladesh Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit on Monday recovered the large cache of military-grade explosives and ammunition at Satchhari National Park in Habiganj, a spot four km away from India-Bangladesh border in Tripura.

"Around 15 rocket-propelled grenades (RPG), 510 rounds of machine gun ammunition and 25 boosters which is used as a propelling charge in RPG launchers, were found during the special drive at a place that is around 3-4 km off the border with Tripura," a source in the Indian security grid said.

rency, the sources said. Indian intelligence agencies Meanwhile, the Indian security have recently already submitted agencies have tightened the vigil a report to the government that on the border, especially the sections terror outfits like Jamaat-ulwhere the fence is yet to come up.

2 PUNJAB CONG MLAs JOIN BJP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 28: Ahead of the Punjab assembly polls early next year, former India team cricketer Dinesh Mongia and Congress MLAs Fateh Singh Bajwa and Balwinder Singh Laddi joined the BJP here Tuesday.

Bajwa is the MLA from Qadian constituency and the brother of Rajya Sabha MP and former Punjab Congress chief Partap Singh Bajwa, while Laddi is the legislator from Sri Hargobindpur. They joined the BJP in the presence of the party's state incharge and Union minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat.

Besides the two sitting MLAs, former MP Rajdev Singh Khalsa, former MLA Gurtej Singh Ghuriana and United Christian Front of Punjab president Kamal Bakshi were among those who joined the BJP.

These joinings came a day after Amarinder Singh and Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa met the BJP top

brass and announced a formal al-

liance for the assembly polls.

'BJP offering money to AAP councillors'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Dec 28: The Aam Aadmi Party Tuesday accused the BJP of offering money to its municipal councillors and said it will install CCTV cameras at their homes to prevent any poaching attempt.

AAP leader Raghav Chadha claimed that some BJP leaders approached his party's three newlyelected councillors and some even visited them to make them defect to the saffron party for Rs 5 Lakh to Rs 75 lakh.

Chadha made the allegation a day after the results of the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation polls threw up a hung verdict, with AAP winning 14 of 35 wards and BJP bagging 12. The Congress got eight seats and the Shiromani Akali Dal one. Addressing the media here on

Tuesday, Chadha claimed that some BJP leaders have contacted and even visited the houses of winning AAP candidates and offered them money. "Two of them were offered Rs 50 lakh and one was offered Rs 75 lakh by BJP's senior leaders on Monday evening" for leaving AAP and joining the BJP, claimed Chadha without disclosing the names of the councillors. He said as a "precautionary measure", AAP has decided to install cameras at the residences of his party's councillors, who have also been directed to record the conversation if any BJP leader visits or contacts them. He said they would make camera footage and call recordings public if any BJP leader approaches or contacts AAP councillors. Chandigarh BJP president Arun Sood has dubbed Chadha's claims as "baseless ing ultra. and lies. AAP leader Chadha even claimed that some central ministers called up AAP's councillors for fixing a meeting with the Union Home Minister and the BJP president. The AAP leader said his party would not allow the BJP to succeed in its attempt to "steal" the mandate of the people of Chandigarh.

IN HIGH **Spirits**



I-T raids in Maharashtra

New Delhi: The Income Tax Department Tuesday conducted searches at 25 premises of two business groups in Maharashtra's Nandurbar and Dhule districts for their alleged involvement in tax fraud. The preliminary investigation indicated that these two groups have evaded income to the extent of Rs 150 crore. The I-T officials said that they recovered more than Rs five crore in cash and iewellerv worth Rs 5 crore. A senior income tax official said that these groups were engaged in the business of civil construction and land development.

3 children drown

Nashik: Three children drowned while swimming in a canal in Maharashtra's Nashik city on Tuesday, police said. The incident took place near Samarth Nagar in Makhamalabad Road area of the city in the afternoon, an official said. Nilesh Kashinath Mulay (14), Pramod Baban Jadhav (13) and Siddhesh Ramnath Dhotre (13), all residents of Ashwamedh Nagar in Panchavati, had ventured into the canal for a swim, he said.

PM MODI WAS FIRST VISIT TO INDIA



Women participate in a marathon organised by Congress at Ekana Sports Stadium in Lucknow

Hyderpora encounter: SIT rules out foul play

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Dec 28: The Special Investigation Team (SIT) of Jammu and Kashmir Police, probing the Hyderpora encounter, on Tuesday said while one civilian was killed by the foreign terrorist, the owner of the building and a local militant died in "crossfire" after being used as a human shield by the hid-

A Pakistani terrorist and three other persons were killed in Hyderpora here on November 15 and police claimed that all the slain men had links to militancy. The families of the three had, however, claimed that they were innocent and had alleged foul play, prompting the police to order the inquiry.

On Tuesday, the head of the SIT, DIG Sujith K, virtually gave a clean

terrorist and three other persons were killed in Hvderpora November 15 and police claimed that all the slain men had links to

A Pakistani

REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE militancv

alleged foul play, prompting the police to order the inquiry

chit to the security forces but added the team was open to reviewing its findings if any other evidence comes to light.

"Our investigation so far has revealed that Dr Mudasir Gul was killed by the foreign terrorist hid-

ing inside the building as his body was recovered from the attic. The security forces did not go to the attic at all during searches or subsequent operation, " head of the SIT, DIG Sujith K Singh, told reporters here

Giving details of the investigations, Singh said the probe has revealed that Amir Magray, the employee of Dr Gul, was closely associated with the foreign terrorist 'Bilal Bhai', who was killed in the operation while trying to flee.

'Mohammad Altaf Bhat (building owner) and Amir were killed in the crossfire with security forces as they were used as a human shield by the foreign terrorist. It is substantiated by the fact the Altaf fell (after being hit by bullets) outside the door, while Amir had managed to run few more steps and the foreign terrorist's body was found 83 feet away," he said.

The officer said besides examining the CCTV footage and call detail records, the SIT has also examined more than 20 witnesses so far. "Statements of six of these witnesses have been recorded before the magistrate at well," he added.

Asked why the civilians were sent in for house searches if the security forces had information about the presence of terrorists inside. the officer said Bhat had volunteered to go inside as "he was very sure that there was no one hiding inside". "At no point of time did any of them tell the security forces about the presence of the terrorist inside or seek any help, "he added. The SIT chief said the investigation was still going on and the team was open to reviewing its findings if any evidence, suggesting so, comes to light.

On Amir's involvement, Singh said the recoveries made in the building like codeine bottles and winter apparel pointed to the existence of a hideout.

Car that can survive bullets, blast added to PM's cavalcade

SPOTTED WITH THE NEW CAR AT HYDERABAD HOUSE IN DELHI WHILE WELCOMING **RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN,** WHO WAS ON A **TWO-DAY**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 28: In a massive security upgrade of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a highly sophisticated car Mercedes-Maybach S650 Guard has been included in his cavalcade that can survive bullets and explosive blast, the sources in the security set up said.

PM Modi was first spotted with the new car at Hyderabad House in Delhi while welcoming Russian President Vladimir Putin, who was on a two-day visit to India on December 6 this year and also it was spotted in the convoy in the rally recently. According to reports, the new ve-



hicle is certified with VR10-level protection providing the highest level of protection and the car windows are coated with polycarbonate which can withstand hardened

steel core bullets. Laced with the 2010 Explosion Proof Vehicle rating, it is a specialised vehicle which offers protection of occupants from a 15 kg TNT explosion within the perimeter of only two meters.

The S650 Guard has a 6.0 litre twin-turbo V12 engine that produces 516 bhp and a peak torque of approximately 900 Nm while the maximum speed has been capped to 160 kmph. The vehicle's lower part is heavily armoured to protect the occupants from direct explosions while the cabin of the car has been designed in such a way that during a gas attack, the occupant will get air supply.

This armoured car is also equipped with special run-flat tyres that will continue to function in case of damage or puncture to ensure a quick escape from the danger areas. This car has been designed

on the order and the cost of car is unknown but assumed that it is equipped with sophisticated gadgets and comfortable seating arrangements, the sources further said.

The decision to get a new armoured car was taken after the security review of the Prime Minister by the elite Special Protection Group (SPG) which decided to add this highly acclaimed Mercedes-Maybach S650 Guard. PM Modi used to travel in the Range Rover Vogue and the Toyota Land Cruiser since he assumed office of the Prime Minister while he used modified Mahindra Bolero when he was the Chief Minister of Gujarat.



national



Students in Goa's rural areas are losing interest in the science stream after matriculation. There is a need to create a curiosity among students in villages in the field of science PRAMOD SAWANT GOA CHIEF MINISTER

PLAY INDIAN MUSIC: GOVT

The Ministry of Civil Aviation Tuesday asked all airlines and airports to consider playing Indian music in their flights and terminal premises



Security Force (BSF) had recov-

ered a huge cache of weapons near

the India-Pakistan border in the

Khemkaran area on October 20.

They had recovered 22 pistols, 44

magazines and 100 rounds of am-

munition and also a kg of heroin.

Inter Services Intelligence (ISI)

were in touch with Multan. On

December 23, the explosion took

place in a washroom on the second

floor of the District and Sessions

court complex in Ludhiana at

probing the incident had claimed

that it was the former Head

Constable of Punjab Police,

Gagandeep Singh, who planted the

bomb at the court complex and

died as it suddenly went off killing

him on the spot. Gagandeep Singh,

a former police head constable

who was dismissed from the serv-

ice for having links with durg

dealer. He was booked under NDPS

act and lodged in jail for two years

The counter-terrorism agencies

around 12.22 p.m.

The source said that Pakistan's



We are not concerned about political parties which are outsiders. There are people coming here from Bengal. Bengal

is known for football. Goans can play football too

DIGAMBAR KAMAT FORMER GOA CM

By mistake, the BJP got its own businessman raided. Instead of SP leader Pushprai Jain. it got Piyush Jain raided

AKHILESH YADAV SP PRESIDENT

The dedicated service of health workers and the government's policy that focuses on strengthening the

public health system have helped the state emerge as the best performing large state in the NITI Aayog's Health Index for the fourth consecutive time

PINARAYI VIJAYAN KERALA CM

SHORT TAKES

Tiger captured

Kultali (WB): A Royal Bengal tiger, which strayed into a locality in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district, was captured on Tuesday after nearly a week-long chase, in a relief to the locals, officials said. From clearing a forest and wrapping an area with nets to flying drones for surveillance and clamping prohibitory orders under section 144 of the CrPC, forest personnel chased the tiger for six days as it prowled from one village to the other, besides crossing a river to evade being captured, they said.

Two arrested

Pune: Continuing its action against alleged irregularities in various recruitment exams, the police in Maharashtra's Pune have arrested two people and registered a fresh case in connection with the paper leak in the Group C recruitment examination of the health department, an official said Tuesday.

COVID CASES Yelow alert in Dehi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 28: Amid a spike in COVID-19 cases following the emergence of Omicron variant, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal Tuesday declared a 'yellow alert' under which schools, colleges, cinemas and gyms will remain closed, shops dealing in non-essential items will open on oddeven basis, and metro trains and buses will run with 50 per cent of seating capacity in the city.

In accordance with 'Level-1' alert under the graded response action plan (GRAP), there would be night curfew between 10 pm and 5 am and private offices will function with physical attendance of 50 per cent of the staff, barring essential categories. Marriages and funerals will be allowed attendance of 20 people while all other types of gathering related to social, political, cultural, religious and festival events will be prohibited under the 'yellow alert' that came into force with immediate effect.

Shops of non-essential goods and services in markets and malls can open based on odd-even formula from 10 AM to 8 PM. Restaurants will be permitted with 50 per cent of capacity from 8 am to 10 pm while bars can also operate with the same capacity, but from 12 noon to 10 pm.

The new restrictions follow the online briefing. national capital's biggest singleday spike in infections in over six months on Monday when 331 new cases were reported with a positivity rate of 0.67 per cent. The total number of cases of new Omicron variant of COVID-19 recorded in the national capital has mounted to 165,



A health official takes swab sample at a market for Covid test in New Delhi PTI PHOTO

according to data shared by the Union Health Ministry on Tuesday. There were 67 Omicron cases in the national capital on Friday.

Addressing an online press conference, Kejriwal said cases were rising fast in Delhi, but there was no need to panic as most people have mild symptoms. The yellow alert is imposed when the Covid pos-

itivity rate stays above 0.50 per cent for two consecutive days. "The cases have risen but there has been no increase in consumption of oxygen or use of ventilators. Most of the patients are getting cured without hospitalisation as they have minor symptoms or are asymptomatic," he said during the

The chief minister assured Delhiites that his government is 10 times more prepared than before to tackle the rising Covid cases. Kejriwal, however, said it was unfortunate that people were visiting markets and malls without masks and appealed to them to folShops of non-essential goods and services in markets and malls can open based on odd-even formula from 10 am to 8 pm

- Restaurants will be permitted with 50 per cent of capacity from 8 am to 10 pm while bars can also operate with the same capacity, but from 12 noon to 10 pm
- In accordance with 'Level-1' alert under the graded response action plan (GRAP), there would be night curfew between 10 pm and 5 am and private offices will function with physical attendance of 50 per cent of the staff, barring essential categories

low Covid-appropriate behaviour. He also said that restrictions are being imposed to avoid this virus from entering anyone's home and the government doesn't want anyone to catch even fever or cold. The GRAP had been approved by the Delhi Disaster Management Authority in July, in anticipation

of a third wave of COVID-19 in Delhi. It was meant to have a clearer picture of imposition and lifting of restrictions according to the prevailing situation. Under the vellow alert, banquet halls, spas, outdoor yoga activity, amusement parks, stadia, swimming pools are also not allowed to function. Only one weekly market per municipal zone with 50 per cent vendors is permitted to function.

The Level-1 alert allows construction, manufacturing activities and the opening of shops and establishments of essential goods. The next level of alert, following 'Yellow', is coded with 'Amber' (L-2). It will come into force if the positivity rate rises above one per cent or new cases number 3,500 or oxygenated bed occupancy reaches 700.

This alert will invoke the same responses mostly as 'yellow' one except that malls and shops of nonessential goods and services will be allowed to open from 10 AM to 6 PM. The Delhi Metro will run at 33 per cent of its seating capacity under 'amber' alert under which dining facility in restaurants will not be allowed, but home delivery or take away service will continue.

The 'Orange' or L-3 alert will kick-in if the positivity rate crosses two per cent or new cases number 9,000 or oxygenated bed occupancy becomes 1,000. Construction activities will be allowed with onsite labourers while industrial activities will be restricted except those related to essential commodities and defense production. Malls and weekly markets will be closed. Only standalone non-essential shops will open from 10 am to 6 pm, the plan stated.

LUDHIANA COURT BLAST Key conspirator arrested in Germany



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 28: Jaswinder Singh Multan, a top member of Sikhs for Justice (SFJ), has been arrested in Germany for allegedly being the main conspirator of the December 23 blast in the Ludhiana district court complex which killed one person and injured five others, sources said.

He was arrested in the city of Erfurt after India shared evidence to counter-terror agencies in Berlin. 'We shared all the evidence that we gathered from the blast spot and also how the conspiracy by Multan was hatched," said one of the sources. Multan was conspiring to bring in more explosives from Pakistan

in India through the international boundary and was also planning to carry out similar blasts in other parts of the country. It is also alleged that Multan was also behind pushing arms in the Khemkaran area of Punjab's Tarn Taran district in October this year. The Punjab Police and the Border

in this connection in 2019.

Sonia takes veiled dig at BJP



country is feeling insecure and afraid. There is reign of dictatorship in the country, bypassing democracy and constitution," the Congress president said in a video message in Hindi.

She vowed that the Congress will not remain a mute spectator and will not allow anybody to destroy the rich heritage of the country."Electoral ups and downs are inevitable but what is enduring and lasting is our commitment to the service of all people of our diverse society," Sonia Gandhi said.

Her remarks come at a time section of fringe Hindu religious leaders have hurled abuses at Mahatma Gandhi and hailed his assassin Nathuram Godse as the symbol of truth and religion. "Divisive ideologies anchored in hate and prejudice and which had no role whatsoever to play in our freedom movement are now causing havoc on the secular fabric of our society," Sonia Gandhi said

Telangana achieves 100% first-dose Covid vaccine coverage

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hvderabad. Dec 28: Telangana Tuesdav achieved 100 per cent coverage of the first dose of Covid-19 vaccine.

Health Minister T. Harish Rao announced told a news conference that Telangana is the first among states with large population to give first dose of the vaccine to all eligible beneficiaries among the targeted population.

He said so far only states with smaller population or Union Territories had

WOMAN GETS DAUGHTER KILLED

Hardoi (Uttar Pradesh): In a shocking incident, a woman provoked her husband to kill their daughter after the latter saw her with her paramour. The accused, Kamla, apparently panicked after her daughter Pratibha saw her with her lover Ram Naresh. She later told her husband Nagendra that she had seen Pratibha with Ram Naresh in an objectionable state. Later, during sustained grilling by the police. Kamla confessed to her crime and revealed how she misled her husband and provoked him to murder their daughter.



Man found dead

Bijnor: Shahbaz Jhojha, a resident of Kalyanpuri in New Delhi, was found dead in a hotel room in Najibabad in Uttar Pradesh's Bijnor district. His throat was slit and a part of his hand was chopped off.

Congress party's flag falls off the pole while being hoisted by Sonia Gandhi on the party's 137th Foundation Day in New Delhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 28: In a veiled attack on the BJP, Congress president Sonia Gandhi Tuesdav said divisive ideologies anchored in hate and prejudice were making every effort to weaken the strong foundation of

PTI PHOTO India. In a message to Congress workers on the party's 137th

Foundation Day, Sonia Gandhi said history was being falsified and detestable efforts were being made to erase the "Ganga-Jamuni' heritage of the country. "The common citizen of the achieved this milestone, and the national average in vaccination of dose is 90 per cent.

The health authorities on Tuesday administered the first dose to 87,039 individuals, reaching the target of 2.77 crore.

The minister cut a cake along with Secretary, Health, S.A.M. Rizvi, Director of Public Health Dr G. Srinivasa Rao and other officials to mark the occasion.

cable for the contract and required necessary docume in Phulhani Mun

1.	Name of the works	:	Civil works as mentioned in the office.
2.	No. of works	:	34 (Thirty four) only
3.	Tender amount	:	79,000.00 to 14,65,000.00
4.	Date & time of availability of bid documents on the portal		From date 25.12.2021, 10.00 A.M. to date 02.01.2022, 5.00 P.M.
5.	Last date & time of availability of bid documents on the portal		02.01.2022, 5.00 P.M.
6.	Bid opening date and time	•	03.01.2022, 11.00 A.M.
7.	Name and address of bid inviting officer	:	Executive Officer, Phulbani Municipality
	ce in working hours.		ocuments can be seen from municipalit
	Sd./- I	E)	kecutive Officer, Phulbani Municipality
			OIPR-13195/11/0005/2122

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE -ENGINEER, L.I. DIVISION, CUTTACK e-mail- eeolic_ctc@yahoo.in e-Procurement Notice

Bid Identification No.14/OLIC (CTC) / Dt.24.12.2021 No.CAD-2539:- The Executive Engineer, Lift Irrigation Division, Cuttack on behalf of odisha Lift Irrigation Corporation Limited, Bhubaneswar nvites Percentage Rate bids in online mode for Drilling & Installation of 150 mm dia Cluster Shallow Tube Wells in different Blocks of Cuttack & Jagatsinghpur Districts from reputed drilling Contractors having OWN RIG & experience in similar nature of works. The proof of registration rom the appropriate authority shall be enclosed along with the bid

1.	Numbers of package	3 (Three)
2.	Estimated cost	Rs.22.37 lakh to Rs.28.95 lakh
3.	Cost of tender paper	Rs.6000/- (In online mode) + 5% GST as reverse charge basis vide challan No. 21AAACO5986G1ZF of OLIC
4.	Date & time of publication	Dt.29.12.2021 from 10.00 A.M.
5.	Date & time of closing	Dt.04.01.2022 at 5.00 P.M.
6.	Date & time of opening of bid	Dt.05.01.2022 at 10.00 A.M.
7.	The bidders have to participate	e in online bidding only.
<u>in</u> .		ne website <u>www.tendersorissa.gov</u> cellation of tender if any, can be seen
		Sd./-Executive Engineer
		OIPR-32238/11/0019/2122

Is it end of the road for some in G-23 or revival ahead?

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 28: The members of the G-23 group, who wrote the letter of dissent to Sonia Gandhi seeking sweeping reforms in the Congress party, are fighting for survival as team Rahul is taking key party decisions and have full say in the appointments and nominations. The G-23 has now reduced

to a few in numbers but the still evident force are Ghulam Nabi Azad, Anand Sharma, Kapil Sibal, Bhupinder Singh Hooda and Manish Tewari who have been at the forefront and have advocated reforms within the party.

However, many leaders who had signed the explosive letter, have been adjusted within the former Jammu Kashmir Chief party or have brought down Minister is addressing raltheir opposition and one of lies in his home state while his the signatory Veerappa Moily supporters have resigned from had openly said that "there is the party to push him as CM no G-23", while one of the sigcandidate in the state.

natories Jitin Prasada has left Some of the G-23 leaders Congress to join the BJP. feel and privately admit that But on the party foundait's the end of the road for tion day on Tuesday, the presthem in the party till Rahul ence of Anand Sharma and Gandhi is at the helm, but Bhupinder Singh Hooda at party headquarters are giving mixed signals as the members of this group have been comfortable with Sonia Gandhi but have concerns on the working style of Rahul Gandhi. Ghulam Nabi Azad, while addressing a meeting recently, had categorically denied of

leaving the party, saying, "I am 24 carat Congressman". The keep up the fight.

keep up a good strike rate in upcoming elections but Sonia Gandhi on Tuesday while addressing the party workers said, "Though there have been electoral losses, the party will

some say they will be in the party and not as a tenant as they have given their prime years to the party. However, the party is working hard to

Nominated Authority 120, 'F' Wing, 1st Floor, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi Email: nomauthority.moc@nic.in Website: http://www.coal.nic.in/welcome.html NOTICE FOR SUBMISSION OF CLAIMS IN **RELATION TO SCHEDULE I COAL MINES**

In accordance with the provisions of Section 9 of The Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act, 2015 and Rule 15 of The Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Rules, 2014, claims are invited afresh from the Central Government, State Government and local authorities for dues from the prior allottee in relation to the Schedule I Coal Mines as on 01.04.2015 (in respect of Schedule-II coal mines) and 24.09.2014 (for remaining Schedule-I coal mines) and having become due and payable within twelve months immediately before that date.

Detailed notice regarding submission of claims can be downloaded from the website of Ministry of Coal (http://www.coal.nic.in).

Last date and time for submission of claims is 5.00 P.M. of 19.01.2022. Claims lodged by Central Government. State Government & Local Authorities against earlier advertisements in respect of Schedule I coal mines are also required to be lodged afresh. For any query/ clarification kindly contact the Nominated Authority at contact details mentioned above in the Advertisement. davp 04107/11/0001/2122

RTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING ASSIFIED STATIONS

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













international

Covid-19 continues to demonstrate how quickly an infectious disease can sweep across the world, pushing health systems to the brink and upending daily life for all of humanity ANTONIO GUTERRES UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

SHOCKING REPORT

A team of international researchers have shown that SARS-CoV-2, the virus causing Covid-19, infects the kidneys and contributes to tissue scarring, possibly impacting kidney outcomes in the long term

space warfare weapons" and "Musk

is a new 'weapon' created by the

US government and military",

others said. Another posted: "The

risks of Starlink are being grad-

ually exposed, the whole human

race will pay for their business ac-

tivities." SpaceX has already

launched almost 1,900 satellites

as part of the Starlink network,



Yemen's Houthis temporarily resume

UN flights into Sanaa

Cairo, Dec 28: The Iran-backed

rebels in Yemen said Tuesday they

are temporarily allowing UN hu-

manitarian flights to land at the air-

port in the capital, Sanaa, follow-

uote

China slams Musk over near satellite collision in space

We will continue to monitor the data carefully, but there will be no new restrictions introduced in England before the New Year

BORIS JOHNSON BRITISH PRIME MINISTER

There are enough vaccines for everyone. It is vital to be vaccinated. because it is related to people's life and death. Those who do not get vaccinated have a greater chance of falling into critical (care) units and dving

ENRIQUE PARIS MINISTER FOR HEALTH OF CHILE



VLADIMIR PUTIN RUSSIAN PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Plane clips another aircraft at airport

Punta Gorda: The wingtip of a plane loaded with passengers clipped the auxiliary power unit of a parked empty aircraft nearby as it pushed back from the gate at a small Florida airport Monday. Both planes at Punta Gorda Airport are owned by Allegiant Air, according to a statement from the airline, which said there were no injuries.

Israeli missile attack targets Syrian seaport

Damascus: A fresh Israeli missile attack targeted the commercial seaport of Syria's coastal city of Latakia Tuesday, state media reported. The Israelis fired their missiles from the Mediterranean against the commercial port of Latakia. hitting the container terminal and igniting a fire. Xinhua news agency quoted the state media report as saying.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

AGENCIES

Cape Town, Dec 28: Research by

South African scientists suggests

that Omicron could displace the

Delta variant of the coronavirus be-

cause infection with the new vari-

ant boosts immunity to the older one.

group of people and has not been

peer-reviewed, but it found that

people who were infected with

Omicron, especially those who were

vaccinated, developed enhanced

The analysis enrolled 33 vacci-

nated and unvaccinated people

who were infected with the Omicron

neutralisation of Omicron increased

14-fold over 14 days after the en-

rolment, they also found that there

was a 4.4-fold increase in neutral

neutralization in individuals in-

fected with Omicron may result

in decreased ability of Delta to re-

infect those individuals," the sci-

entists who conducted the study

said. The results of the study are

"consistent with Omicron dis-

placing the Delta variant, since it

can elicit immunity which neu-

tralizes Delta making re-infection

with Delta less likely," they said.

plications of this displacement

would depend on whether or not

Omicron is less pathogenic com-

pared to Delta. "If so, then the in-

cidence of Covid-19 severe disease

would be reduced and the infec-

According to the scientists, im-

"The increase in Delta variant

isation of the Delta variant.

While the authors found that

variant in South Africa.

immunity to the Delta variant.

The study only covered a small

Beijing, Dec 28: Chinese web users slammed Tesla founder Elon Musk's space ambitions after China complained that its space station was forced to take evasive action to avoid collision with satellites launched by Musk's Starlink programme.

"A close encounter occurred between the Starlink-1095 satellite and the China Space Station 1 July 2021. For safety reasons, the Chinese space station July 1 and China Space Station took the ini-

'Omicron could

displace Delta'

noeuvre in the evening of that day to avoid a potential collision between the two spacecraft," China said in a document published on the website of the UN space agency According to a document sub-

mitted by China earlier this month to the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), the satellites from Starlink Internet Services, a division of Elon Musk's SpaceX aerospace company, had two "close encounters" with the

October 21. reports BBC. After the complaint was made tiative to conduct an evasive ma-

CHINA SHUTS

DOWN 2ND CITY

worsening outbreak of Covid-19.

another city Yan'an, about 300

km from Xi'an - the first city to

go under lock down, the media

reported. Authorities in Yan'an

businesses and told hundreds of

thousands of people in one

district to stav indoors. The

Guardian reported. China has

followed a "zero-Covid" strategy

thousands of overseas visitors to

South Africa, said on Twitter

Monday that if Omicron was less

pathogenic as it looked to be from

the South African experience, "this

According to an earlier South

African study, there is reduced risk

of hospitalisation and severe dis-

ease in people infected with

Omicron compared with the Delta

variant, though the authors say

some of that is likely due to high

tected in southern Africa and Hong

Kong in November, has since spread

worldwide and threatened to over-

whelm hospitals in some coun-

tries. The WHO warned Tuesday

that the Omicron coronavirus vari-

ant could lead to overwhelmed

healthcare systems even though

will help push Delta out".

population immunity.

as Beijing prepares to welcome

February's Winter Olympics.

Beijing: In the wake of a

China Tuesday shut down

ordered the closure of

SPACEX HAS ALREADY LAUNCHED ALMOST **1.900 SATELLITES AS** PART OF THE STARLINK NETWORK, **AND IT IS PLANNING TO DEPLOY MORE SOON**

public, Musk and the US were heavily criticised on China's microblogging platform Weibo. One



user described Starlink's satellites as "just a pile of space junk". The satellites are "American

DEMANDING THEIR RIGHTS

Afghan women chant during a protest in Kabul. Around 20 members of Afghanistan Women Political Participation Network protest holding signs asking the country's new Taliban leadership for education, food, jobs, security, political participation and equality with men

Indonesia to lift ban on Boeing 737 MAX

AGENCIES The Omicron variant, first de-

Jakarta, Dec 28: Indonesia will lift a ban on the Boeing 737 MAX, the Southeast Asian country's transportation ministry said Tuesday, three years after local carrier Lion Air lost one of the planes in a fatal crash during a routine domestic flight.

early studies suggest it leads to 189 people were killed when the flight plunged into the Java Sea shortly after take off in October, 2018.



and it is planning to deploy more ing a weeklong halt in flights into soon. China began constructing the the northern, rebel-held territory. space station in April with the The rebel Houthis, who control launch of Tianhe, the largest of its Sanaa and much of Yemen's north, had barred UN and other humanthree modules and it is expected itarian flights from landing at the to be completed by the end of 2022. airport amid heavy airstrikes by the Saudi-led coalition on the capital and Houthis' cross-border missile and drone attacks on the kingdom. At the time, the UN food programme said the Houthis claimed

ASSOCIATED PRESS

the airport had become "unserviceable due to technical issue" The rebels accused the Saudi-led coalition of blocking the arrival of new air traffic control equipment. The coalition has been fighting to restore Yemen's internationally recognised government to power and maintains an air, land and sea blockade of Sanaa and the north. The Sanaa airport "is ready to re-

ceive flights" from the UN and other international humanitarian agencies, the Houthis said Tuesday. They also urged the United Nations to help facilitate the arrival of the air control equipment from Djibouti.

Yemen's war erupted in 2014 when the Houthis seized Sana and forced the government into exile in Saudi Arabia. The coalition entered the conflict in March 2015. The UN envoy to Yemen, Hans Grundberg, denounced the latest uptick in fighting in Yemen, particularly the continued Houthi offensive on the government-held city of Marib.

Pakistan unveils first-ever national security policy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, Dec 28: Pakistan's Cabinet Tuesday endorsed the country's first-ever National Security Policy that emphasised that economic progress should be at the center of national security, a move criticised by the Opposition parties who accused the government of ignoring the parliament while formulating the new policy.

In a series of Tweets, National ecurity Adviser Dr. Moeed Yusuf called it a "historic moment" for the country, saying the Cabinet has adopted the document which was approved by the high-powered National Security Committee (NSC) Monday. "It is a truly historic achievement; a citizen-centric comprehensive National Security Policy with economic security at the core will now be pursued in earnest. This umbrella document will, overtime, help guide sectoral policies for the fulfillment of our national security objectives," he said.

5 dead after shooting

ASSOCIATED PRESS

said Monday.

Japan's jobless rate rises to 2.8%

Tokyo: Japan's jobless rate in November increased slightly to 2.8 per cent compared to the previous month, as people were encouraged to leave their jobs in search of better ones during the economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, the government said.

Gas leak kills 6 in Pakistan

Islamabad: Six people, including three children, were killed due to a gas leak in Hangu district of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, local media reported Tuesday. According to the reports, the incident took place in a house at Gulshan Colony due to gas leakage from a heater, reports said.

Snow freezes **Pacific NW**

Washington: Thousands of people in the US' Pacific Northwest were without power after a massive winter storm slammed the region, dumping nearly 30 inches of snow in the Sierra Nevada region and leading to road closures in Northern California

6 killed in Nepal road accident

Kathmandu: A speeding vehicle bearing an Indian registration number skidded off the road near the Indian border in Southern Nepal Tuesday, leaving at least six people dead, including two children, and wounding three, a senior police officer said.

tion may shift to become less disruptive to individuals and society." Alex Sigal, a professor at the Africa Health Research Institute in

milder disease, as China and Germany brought back tough restrictions to stamp out new infection surges



A similarly deadly incident with an Ethiopian Airlines 737 MAX the following March prompted aviation authorities around the world to ground the aircraft.

The approval for its return comes months after the model returned to service in the United States and Europe, and follows more recent lifting of grounding orders in other countries, including Australia, Japan, India, Malaysia, Singapore and Ethiopia.

Indonesia will follow other countries in lifting the ban after an evaluation of changes to the aircraft's system, its transportation ministry said in a statement.

The suspect also died Monday Lakewood police said. Officers had exchanged gunfire with the suspect, KDVR reported.

The shootings started shortly after 5 pm in central Denver, where two women were killed and a man was injured, Denver Police Chief Paul Pazen said at a news conference. A short time later, a man was fatally shot several blocks away, Pazen said. During that pursuit police officers exchanged gunfire with a suspect. The suspect then fled to the nearby city of Lakewood, Pazen said. Just before 6 pm the Lakewood Police Department received a report of shots fired at a business said John Romero, a spokesman for that department. A gunshot victim was later found and pronounced dead at the scene, Romero said. Police of-



ficers identified the car and the shooting suspect, Romero said. The suspect was not identified at the joint news conference.

Romero said that when the officers found the car, the gunman opened fire and officers shot back. The gunman then fled on foot to a Hyatt hotel, where he is believed to have shot a clerk. He also shot and wounded a Lakewood police officer after he left the hotel.

The suspect was later shot in Lakewood and pronounced dead at the scene, Romero said. It was not immediately clear if police officers had shot him.

"This one individual was responsible for this very violent crime spree that took place this evening," Pazen said.

Yusuf thanked the civil and military leadership for all their support and input in preparing the Policy which, he said, "would not have seen the light of day without the Prime Minister's constant lead ership and encouragement".

Nepal trying to reset bilateral ties with India

The bilateral ties had seen new lows in 2020 after Nepal released a new map showing Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura as its territories, prompting India to caution Kathmandu that such "artificial enlargement" of territorial claims will not be acceptable to it

AGENCIES

Kathmandu, Dec 28: In a year fraught with political turbulence and the coronavirus pandemic tightening its grip in Nepal, 2021 saw Kathmandu making efforts to reset its bilateral ties with India with high-profile talks and visits, amidst a change in guard in the top leadership in the Himalavan nation.

Coming out from the shadow

of the border row that engulfed the Indo-Nepal bilateral ties in 2020, the year 2021 opened with India gifting one million domestically manufactured Covishield vaccines to Nepal in January as it struggled to contain the spread of the coronavirus pandemic. The deadly virus has so far infected over 825,000 people and claimed nearly 12,000

In the same month, India provided a grant assistance of NRs 30.66 crore (INR 19.21 cr) to Nepal as part of its commitment towards reconstruction of educational institutions damaged during the devastating 2015 earthquake, which claimed nearly 9,000 lives and wounded nearly 22,000. With this, India reimbursed NRs 81.98 crore (INR 51.37 cr) to Nepal towards educational sector reconstruction projects

The bilateral ties had seen new lows in 2020 after Nepal released a new map showing Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura as its territories, prompting India to caution Kathmandu that such "artificial enlargement" of territorial claims will not be acceptable to it. On the domestic political front,

Nepal in 2021 saw a change in top leadership with Nepali Congress



(NC) chief Sher Bahadur Deuba becoming the prime minister for a record fifth time in July, following a months-long high-voltage drama. In a landmark verdict July 12, the Supreme Court directed President Bidva Devi Bhandari to appoint

Opposition leader Deuba as prime

minister and dismissed her "unconstitutional" move to dissolve the House of Representatives that plunged the country into a major political crisis.

President Bhandari dissolved the 275-member lower house for the second time in five months on

May 22 at the recommendation of embattled Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli and announced snap elections on November 12 and November 19

On July 13, Deuba formally became Nepal's prime minister. However, just four days after on July 18, the 75-year-old new premier sprang a surprise by seeking a vote of confidence in the reinstated lower House of Representatives and comfortably won it, averting a general election in the Himalayan nation amidst the Covid-19 pandemic.

A day after, on July 19 Deuba, during a telephone conversation with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi, shared his views on further strengthening the bilateral ties, founded on the age-old connection of history culture, tradition and religion. The year also saw the main opposition and Nepal's largest communist party CPN-UML being officially split in August when senior leader Madhav Kumar Nepal quit Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) and floated CPN-Unified Socialist.

Meanwhile, Oli continued with his streak of stoking controversy by making remarks related to India. In June, while he was still the prime minister, Oli at an event to observe the International Yoga Day claimed Yoga originated in Nepal, and not in India.

However, the remarks of Oli -- who in 2020 had also stirred a controversy after claiming that Lord Ram was born in Madi area in Nepal's Chitwan district and not in India's Ayodhya - failed to make any major dent in the bilateral ties, which was witnessing an upward trajectory.



deaths in Nepal.











business



'INTEL-WELCOME TO INDIA'

IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw Tuesday took to Twitter to "welcome" Intel to India following a post by Intel Foundry Services president Randhir Thakur lauding the semiconductor design and manufacturing incentives announced by the government recently. This was in response to a tweet by Intel's Thakur which said, "Glad to see a plan laid out for all aspects of the supply chain: talent, design, manufacturing, test, packaging & logistics"





We expect 124-125 million tonnes of crude steel output by 2022end. Economies have been affected globally by the pandemic and India has been no exception

ALOK SAHAY SECRETARY-GENERAL, ISA

The rally in global equity markets, low interest rates and abundant liquidity due to the easy monetary policies of global central banks has aided in impressive fund raising through the IPO

SAMEER KAUL MD AND CEO TRUSTPLUTUS WEALTH

The Indian industry has made important progress in reducing energy emissions but to attain (long) term sustainable growth more fundamental changes are required

SHORT TAKES

Rupee logs 9th straight surge

Mumbai: Rising for the ninth straight session, the rupee surged 30 paise to close at a one-month high of 74.70 against the US dollar Tuesday, tracking positive domestic equities and a weak greenback in the overseas market. However, Omicron worries and firm crude oil prices restricted the appreciation bias of the local unit to some extent. At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened at 74.95 against the greenback and witnessed an intra-day high of 74.60 and a low of 74.95. Its finally settled at 74.70, registering a rise of 30 paise over the last close.

Over 4.67cr ITRs filed in Dec so far

New Delhi: Over 4.67 crore Income Tax Returns (ITRs) have been filed including over Sebi tightens norms for **IPO proceeds utilisation**

HESEL

ANASar

AVABSERVE

The latest decisions also assume significance against the backdrop of many new-age companies raising funds or seeking to mop up money through initial share sales

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 28: Markets watchdog Sebi Tuesday decided to tighten norms for utilisation of Initial Public Offers (IPOs) proceeds by companies, introduce special situation funds to invest only in stressed assets and amend various regulations, including those on mutual funds and settlement proceedings

The board of Sebi, which met Tuesday, also gave its nod for amending Foreign Portfolio Investor (FPI) regulations and introducing a provision for appointment or re-appointment of any person, including as a Managing Director or a Whole Time Director or a Manager, who was earlier rejected by the shareholders at a general meeting.

Amendments will also be effected to cap the number of shares that can be offered by selling shareholders and to increase the

ing settlement ap-

plications by enti-

ties will be made 60

lock-in period for shares Price subscribed by anchor discovery is a investors. function of the market Further, the and that is how it works time period for fil-

globally as well AJAY TYAGI CHAIRPERSON, days from the date of receipt of the show cause

notice or a supplementary notice, whichever is earlier. This is part of rationalising the norms governing settlement proceedings. In a release after the board Reconstruction Companies (ARCs), securities of companies in dismeeting, Sebi said Special Situation Funds (SSFs) will "intress and any other "asset/secu-

rity as may be prescribed by the board from time to time" In a move to further safeguard

the interest of mutual fund investors, Sebi has decided to mandate trustees of mutual funds to obtain the consent of unit holders when the majority of trustees de cide to wind up a scheme.

As part of amending the mutual 24 financial year onwards.

existing investor Oikocredit is the third fundraising during 2021. After attracting a \$30 million investment from Nuveen Global Impact

1811

At the same time, the lock

in period for preferential

issue has been halved for

both promoters and

non-promoters

Fund in March and a \$20 million from DEG in November, the total fundraise this year has reached \$85 million, the company said in a release. The MFI lender has a pan India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 28: Odisha-based

microfinance lender Annapurna

Finance has raised Rs 260 crore

(\$35 million) from a clutch of in-

vestors to mainly fund its digital

transformation and green financing

\$35 million investment from

Encourage Capital, Accion, and

Annapurna Finance said the

rural distribution network, offering micro-credit loans, home improvement, and MSME loans to individuals and small businesses.

As part of its larger vision, Annapurna is adding green finance products to its offering and also advancing its digital transformation journey, it added.

"Annapurna Finance is working towards transforming itself into a fully digital financial services entity with the help of Accion's investment and advisory services. This focus on digital strategy will further boost the financial inclusion objectives of Annapurna," the company said.

Gobinda Chandra Pattnaik. Managing Director, Annapurna Finance, said "Set up with a focus of bringing economically weaker sections of society into the mainstream by providing need-based financial services. Annapurna's vision will be further emboldened by this round of investment".

Annapurna has a gross loan portfolio of Rs 5,128 crore as of September 2021, with microfinance operations spread across 336 districts in 19 states.

Govt sets new rules for Odisha-based MFI raises ₹260 crore direct selling industry

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 28: To protect consumers, the Centre Tuesday banned direct selling companies like Tupperware, Amway and Oriflame from promoting pyramid or money circulation schemes, as it notified new rules for the industry to be complied with within 90 days.

Now, such companies will also be liable for the grievances arising out of the sale of goods or services by its direct sellers.

The Consumer Protection (Direct Selling) Rules, 2021, as notified by the nodal consumer affairs ministry are to be complied with by both direct selling entities and direct sellers using e-commerce platforms for sale.

Speaking with PTI, a senior consumer affairs ministry official said: "This is for the first time that the rules for the direct selling industry are notified under the Consumer Protection Act. If these rules are not complied with, the penal provisions under the Act will apply to them." According to the rules, direct selling entities and direct sellers are prohibited from promoting a pyramid scheme or enrolling any person to such scheme or participating in such arrangement in any manner whatsoever in the garb of doing direct selling business. They are also banned from par-

ticipation in money circulation schemes in the garb of doing direct selling business, the new rules said. These rules will apply to all goods and services bought or sold through direct selling, all models of direct selling and all direct selling entities to consumers in India. These rules apply to those direct selling entities also that are not established in India but offer goods



As per the new rules. state governments will have to set up a mechanism to monitor or supervise the activities of direct sellers and direct selling entities

or services to consumers here. According to the new rules, a direct seller should not visit a consumer's premises without an identity card and prior appointment or approval.

The seller should not provide any literature to a prospect that has not been approved by the direct selling entity. The seller in pursuance of a sale should not make any claim that is not consistent with claims authorised by the direct selling entity.

In the case of direct selling companies, they should be incorporated under the Companies Act, 2013, or if a partnership firm, be registered under the Partnership Act, 1932, or if a limited liability partnership, under the Limited Liability Partnership Act. 2008.

TRADERS SEEK RBI SUPPORT 10-year bond yield at 20-month high REUTERS

Mumbai, Dec 28: India's benchmark 10-year bond yield rose to its highest level since April last year as investors grew cautious of the

Traders said the rising global oil prices, heavy supply of bonds at the weekly auctions, and high domestic retail inflation will all sustain the upward pressure on vields

REUTERS

12

BOO

Z

Mumbai, Dec 28: Indian banks need to bolster their capital to absorb potential stress and augment credit flow when policy support is phased out, the Reserve Bank of India said in a report on 'Trends and Progress of Banking' Tuesday.

'Credit growth is muted, indicative of pandemic scarring on aggregate demand as also risk aversion of banks. Banks' asset quality may get dented, going forward. the RBI said. Due to the pandemic, credit growth of commercial banks had been subdued in 2020/21 but nonbanking finance companies filled up the space, RBI said. However, though there was an uptick in bank credit growth in the first half of 2021/22, concerns are emerging over NBFCs' asset quality. "Going forward, the sector may have to grapple with higher delinquency as and when policy

FREND OF BANKING

'Banks need to tighten corporate governance'



measures unwind," the RBI said NBFCs also need to be better

buffers and being vigilant of evolv-

During 2020/21, the total reported

number of fraud cases declined

while in the first half of 2021/22,

private sector banks accounted for

more than half the reported fraud

ing risks, the report said.

Basic model of CBDT needed: RBI

India needs to initially go in for the basic model of central bank digital currency (CBDC) and use the payment system architecture as a backbone to make a state-of-the-art CBDC, the Reserve Bank said Tuesday. In its basic form, a CBDC provides a safe, robust, and convenient alternative to physical cash. Depending on various design choices, it can also assume the complex form of a financial instrument. "Given its dynamic impact on macroeconomic policy making, it is necessary to adopt basic models initially, and test comprehensively so that they have minimal impact on monetary policy and the banking system. India's progress in payment systems will provide a useful backbone to make a state-of-the-art CBDC available to its citizens and financial institutions." the RBI said in its report.

vest only in stressed assets' such as stressed loans available for acquisition in terms of the RBI norms or as part of a resolution plan approved under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code.

Under the new rules, the lock-in period of

anchor investors has now been extended

to 90 days from the date of allotment

The regulator approved the introduction of SSFs that will invest only in

stressed assets. SSFs will be introduced as a sub-category under

Category I Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs)

SEBI also stated that the appointment or reappointment of any person as

director of a company, including as whole-time director or MD or manager

can now happen only with the prior approval of shareholders

These funds will also invest in security receipts issued by Asset

fund regulations, the watchdog will make it mandatory for the funds to follow Indian Accounting Standards (Ind AS) from the 2023

VIBHA DHAWAN DIRECTOR GENERAL, TER





15.49 lakh ITRs filed December 27 alone, the I-T department said Tuesday. The last date for filing ITRs for 2020-21 fiscal ended March 31, 2021, by individual taxpayers is December 31, extended from the original date of July 31, 2021. "A total of 4,67,45,249 #ITRs have been filed up to 27.12.2021 including 15,49,831 #ITRs filed on the day itself," the department tweeted giving details of ITRs filed for Assessment Year 2021-22. This includes over 2.50 crore ITR-1 and over 1.17 crore ITR-4.

Airtel, TCS partner for 5G-based ops

New Delhi: Telecom operator Bharti Airtel and IT major Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) have joined hands to build a 5G-based remote working technology using robotics. according to sources. Both the companies are currently running the trials in Airtel's 5G lab at Manesar, Harvana. "Indian companies are looking to adopt indigenously developed technology for 5G," said a source. These solutions will enable remote robotic operations in potentially hazardous environments like mining, oil & gas fields etc. the source said.

Amazon Web holds re:Invent

.....

New Delhi: Amazon Web Services organised its 10th re:Invent conference to address new services, use cases, and applicability for customers in India. The event was led by Santanu Dutt, Director of Technology for South East Asia with Amazon Web Services (AWS) and Anupam Mishra, Head of AWS **Technology and Solutions** Architecture - India, Amazon Internet Services Pvt Ltd.

heavy government debt pipeline, rise in global oil prices, and lack of direct support from the central bank.

Traders said the absence of a new 10-year bond as part of the papers on sale at the upcoming debt auction Friday also weighed on sentiment as the outstanding stock on the existing benchmark is already at Rs 1.48 trillion.

India is selling bonds worth Rs 240 billion, including Rs 130 billion of 10-year paper Friday. Traditionally, the government has issued a new bond when the existing paper has reached an outstanding of around 1.5 trillion rupees. The benchmark 10-year bond yield was at 6.49 per cent, after touching 6.50 per cent, its highest since April 13, 2020.

"Sentiment has turned somewhat despite dovish RBI (Reserve Bank of India) commentary," said Suyash Choudhary, head of fixed income at IDFC Asset Management Company. This is largely on account of two reasons the shorter

term variable rate reverse repo auctions which have further driven up yield on effective overnight deployment by banks and the secondary market selling of government bonds by RBI.

The central bank held rates steady earlier in the month, saying it would remain accommodative to support a recovery amid rising Covid-19 cases driven by the new Omicron variant of the virus. The RBI sold Rs 20.35 billion under open market operations in

the week to Dec 17, it said in its weekly statistical supplement released Friday

Oil prices extended gains Tuesday, trading near the previous day's one-month high on hopes that the Omicron variant will have a limited impact on fuel demand.

Shema unveils two new EVs

Bhubaneswar: Shema E-vehicle And Solar Pvt Ltd (SES), EV manufacturer from Odisha, displayed its stunning array of electric two wheelers at EV India Expo 2021. The company also unveiled its SES TUFF (High Speed) and SES HOBBY (Low Speed) categories of EVs. It launched SES Zoom, SES Bold, SES Eagle and SES Tuff. Founder Yogesh Kumar Lath said, "EV market is new in India, and the nation has put huge targets for itself. In order to achieve the same, it is imperative that all the players actively participate towards its holistic growth. We are aggressively manufacturing EV two-wheelers keeping in mind the users' expectations and requirements."

equipped and focused on cyber cases. The central bank said banks fraud prevention as customers' need to prioritise upgrading their adoption of digital lending gathers IT infrastructure, improving customer services and strengthening pace, it added. As the economy revives, renewed focus may need to cybersecurity. be placed on building up adequate

Gross non-performing assets (GNPA) ratio of commercial banks declined to 6.9% as of end-September compared to 7.3% at end-March. Banks return on assets (RoA) also improved to 0.7% at end-March compared to 0.2% a year ago, aided by stable income and

a decline in expenditure.

RBI said overall the capital position of banks has improved aided by recapitalisation by the government as well as the raising of funds from the market.

"Nonetheless, incipient stress remains in the form of increased proportion of restructured advances and the possibility of higher slippages arising from sectors that were relatively more exposed to the pandemic," RBI said.

EVRE signs pact with Zyngo

New Delhi: Electric vehicle charging service provider EVRE Tuesday said it has partnered with EV logistics platform Zyngo for parking and charging infrastructure solutions. Under this partnership. EVRE will offer 5,000 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations across India within the next 24 months, which will be utilised by Zyngo and other EV fleet owners, the company said in a statement. Zyngo will use these chargers to extend its last-mile access as it looks to leverage increased growth opportunities through geographical expansion, while EVRE will design. manufacture and execute the operation and maintenance of the EV charging infrastructure.

India's Tech stock bubble is poised to deflate

A pandemic-induced flood of easy money and mom-and-pop investors have lifted stocks around the world, but Indian tech companies hit extremes in 2021

REUTERS

London, Dec 28: India's newly listed startups are set to discover their limits. Buyers of stocks in the giant emerging market will increasingly give money-losing digital companies a short leash on dizzying valuations. Some mix of rampant competition and higher mobile data tariffs will crash the party.

A pandemic-induced flood of easy money and mom-and-pop investors have lifted stocks around the world, but Indian tech companies hit extremes in 2021. One97 Communications' financial superapp Paytm, Falguni Nayar's online beauty retailer Nykaa, and food delivery giant Zomato fetch more than 30 times sales as of Dec 8, per

Refinitiv, after listing their enterprises in Mumbai.

Peers elsewhere point to rich valuations in India as a benchmark to insist their businesses are cheap. Other companies, including ride-hailing giant Ola Mobility, budget lodging chain Ovo Hotels & Homes, and Delhivery are eveing debuts. All three are backed by SoftBank, the Japanese investor arguably most responsible for bidding up private company share prices.

Newcomers will find it harder to maintain premium valuations than traditional consumer-facing giants like Indian lender HDFC Bank and Hindustan Unilever: both are richly rewarded for their healthy margins, consistently trading on close to 4



OBSTACLES AHEAD

Ithough there's plenty of room to grow online, India's fierce competitive landscape contrasts with China

Dising tariffs for using mobile data Kon Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea's networks will hurt video streaming and online gaming the most

NEWCOMERS WILL FIND IT HARDER TO MAINTAIN PREMIUM VALUATIONS THAN TRADITIONAL CONSUMER-FACING GIANTS LIKE HDFC BANK AND HINDUSTAN UNILEVER

times trailing book value and over 60 times earnings, respectively, per Refinitiv.

One obstacle is the sheer raft of newcomers jostling for users. Although there's plenty of room to grow online, India's fierce com-

petitive landscape contrasts with China, where Alibaba and its affiliates dominate in e-commerce and payments, or Southeast Asia where all-singing super-apps like Grab and GoTo dominate in ride hailing, delivery and digital financial services. Just-profitable Nykaa competes with Walmart's Flipkart, Amazon.com and Goldman Sachs-backed Purplle for example.

Maintaining the current growth rates will become costlier as on

boarding customers and merchants in far-flung towns can be a painstaking process requiring boots on the ground. A difficult regulatory environment, which bans charges for basic retail money transfers, is one reason read more adoption of digital payments by customers is slowing.

And while rising tariffs for using mobile data on Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea's networks will hurt video streaming and online gaming the most, higher subscription charges of up to one quarter will prompt customers in the value-conscious market to think twice before spending hours browsing for products online. India's tech story is strong, but itsvaluation bubble is poised to deflate.





SHAMPS DAY OUT MCG turns Bo-land for Oz PACER'S DREAM DEBUT WITNESSES KANGAROOS RETAIN ASHES

India pacer bags five-wicket haul to complete 200-wicket milestone in Tests as the visitors take 146-run lead after dismissing South Africa for 197 in the first match in Centurion



MAN OF THE MOMENT: Mohammed Shami is mobbed by his teammates after getting a wicket in Centurion, Tuesday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Centurion, Dec 28: Mohammed Shami's (5/44) sheer artistry with new and old ball fetched him another five-wicket haul as India seized control of the first Test against South Africa on the third day by extending their overall lead to 146

runs that could prove to be decisive. Shami and his pace bowling colleagues Jasprit Bumrah (2/16), Mohammed Siraj (1/45) and Shardul Thakur (2/51) further enhanced their reputation as world beaters by dismissing the Proteas for mere 197.

The quartet neutralised Lungi Ngidi's (6/71) lion-hearted morning spell as India lost seven wickets from 55 runs to be all-out on 327.

The wily old Shami, manfully shouldered the duties of a pace spearhead for the better part of the 62.3 overs because of Bumrah's twisted ankle. He also completed a satisfying personal milestone of 200 Test wickets.

With a first innings lead of 130, India at stumps reached 16/1 losing Mayank Agarwal's wicket.

The Supersport Park strip after If Shami didn't get wickets, then all the rain on the second day was Siraj did and when Siraj went at its spiciest best with all the unthrough a dry spell, Shardul chipped derlying moisture aiding seam and in and by the time Bumrah got fit, swing bowling as 18 wickets fell he helped the team in wrapping up the opposition tail. In between

out. Temba Bavuma (52, 103b, 10x4)

and Quinton de Kock (34) added

72 runs for the fifth wicket.

on the day. While Ngidi and Kagiso Rabada (3/72) did well in the morning, Shami did way better in the afternoon in company of Bumrah, Siraj and Shardul.

If the Proteas pacers relied on steep bounce off good length to trouble the Indian middle and lower-order which caved in meekly, Shami used the angles of the crease very effectively and the movement off the pitch did the rest.

What worked for India wonderfully well was the fact that the freshness and juice in the track was there till the middle part of the second session. Once the top half was blown off, India didn't have problems even as the pitch eased Ravichandran Ashwin despite not getting a wicket, kept things tight and over-rate in check

If Shami bowled some of the best deliveries in the South African innings. Bumrah too bowled a beauty with tiniest of movement that forced rival skipper Dean Elgar forced edge one to Rishabh Pant, who touched the milestone of 100 victims behind the wicket.

The morning belonged to Ngidi and Rabada as the Supersport Park track stayed true to its reputation of quickening up as time progressed. It was Rabada, who drew the first blood on the day with a well directed short ball aimed at Rahul's rib-cage. The batter simply couldn't manage the pull-shot and the tickle landed in de Kock's gloves.

In case of Rahane, Ngidi hadn't provided enough length for the drive and the ball reared up from length to take his edge and into keeper's gloves

Pant's (8) dismissal was a carbon copy of Cheteshwar Pujara's where an angular delivery climbed up and it was an easy bat-pad catch for forward short leg. Bumrah (14) did hit a few boundaries to take the score past 325 which was at least 75 runs short of what India had envisaged at the start.

BRIEF SCORES: India 327 (KL Rahul 123, Ajinkya Rahane 48; Lungi Ngidi 6/71, Kagiso Rabada 3/72) & 16/1 (Marco Jansen 1/4); South Africa 197 (Temba Bavuma 52, Quinton de Kock 34, Kagiso Rabada 25; Mohammed Shami 5/44 Jasprit Bumrah 2/16, Shardul Thakur 2/51). Match to continue.



BRILLIANT SPELL: Lungi Ngidi celebrates a wicket with Rassie van der Dussen

PACER'S DREAM DEBUT WITNESSES KANGAROOS RETAIN ASHES WITH COMPREHENSIVE WIN OVER ENGLAND



MOMENT TO CHERISH: Scott Boland shows off the match ball and leads his team off the field after their win in Melbourne

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Melbourne, Dec 28: It was quite a Test debut for Australia fast bowler Scott Boland. The 'Player of the match' Boland claimed a remarkable bowling figure (6/7) as Australia beat England by an innings and 14 runs before lunch on the third day of the third Ashes Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) Tuesday.

The massive victory means Australia retain the Ashes, with a 3-0 lead in the five-match series. Resuming Tuesday on 31/4, England were bowled out for 68.

Ben Stokes, on 11, was bowled by Mitchell Starc (3/29) in the fifth over of the day. The 32-year-old Boland removed Jonny Bairstow for 5 in his first over of the day, then World No.2-ranked batter Joe Root for 28 in his second over, before

FORMER CRICKETERS' REACTIONS

RICKY PONTING: They've out-thought themselves with their selections for Brisbane, looking forward to Adelaide and then looking forward to the MCG. Pick your best team from the start and then see how far that group can take you. All their planning, their thoughts and their structures have just been completely wrong, and it's come back to bite them. So, they've got some really, really deep thinking to do.

MICHAEL VAUGHAN: It's not easy in these times, the England side didn't have a great preparation but if you want to look for excuses, you can. For some time now, this Test match team has not been good enough. They've not focused enough on the Test

Scott Boland equalled the record for the fastest five-wicket haul in Test history, in 19 deliveries, alongside England's Stuart Broad in 2015 and Australia's Ernie Toshack in 1947

dismissing Mark Wood and Ollie Robinson without scoring in his third over.

When James Anderson was bowled by Cameron Green (1/8) for 2, England's resistance had lasted just 27.4 overs.

Boland, who claimed match figures of 7/55 and is only the second Indigenous player to represent

match team. the focus has been more on white-ball cricket - and it delivered a World Cup (2019). I would say with the group that I've seen and the way they're playing, I'd be amazed if (Australia) don't beat England in English conditions in 2023.

IAN BOTHAM: I'm a little embarrassed. To lose the Ashes in 12 days. I don't know if that's the fastest, but it's got to be very close to it. I just think that England have lost their way. The performance today summed it up for me. I think you've got enough time to get a couple of players in from the Lions tour because we need to freshen it up, at the moment, it's stagnating

Australia's men's Test-cricket side, was awarded the Johnny Mullagh Medal for player of the match. The award honours Australia's Indigenous team which toured England in 1868.

Australia captain Pat Cummins said his side had been relentless and would now aim for a 5-0 sweep of the series.

Play resumed as scheduled Tuesday after players from both teams were tested for COVID-19 overnight. The start of Monday's second day of play was delayed by 30 minutes due to a COVID-19 scare involving two members of England's support staff.

Australia were bowled out for 267 Monday as the home side grabbed a first-innings advantage of 82 runs. England could not even reach that figure to make Australia bat a second time.

The fourth Test is scheduled to begin January 5 in Sydney, with the fifth from January 14 in Hobart. Brief scores: England 185 & 67

(Joe Root 28; Scott Boland 6/7, Mitchell Starc 3/29) lost to Australia 267 by an innings and 14 runs

CAPTAINS' TAKES

Any Ashes series is when you try to make a mark on your Test career, so a chance to start cementing our identity PAT CUMMINS

We have to stay strong and look at the next two games to take something from the tour **JOE ROOT**

goalscorer - and the fans player

duty with Manchester United

against Newcastle at the time of the

ceremony Monday - sent a video message in recognition of his award

Kylian Mbappé was honoured as

the men's player of the year - Alexia

Putellas lifted the women's title.

as top goalscorer of all time.

Cristiano Ronaldo - who was on

of the year award.

DUBAI GLOBE SOCCER AWARDS

ICC TEST CRICKETER OF THE YEAR AWARD

United the blushes

Cavani saves Man



Super sub: Edinson Cavani is ecstatic after scoring the equaliser against Newcastle United, Monday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Newcastle, Dec 28: Edinson Cavani came off the bench to salvage a point for Manchester United from a sloppy display in a 1-1 draw at Newcastle in the Premier League.

Playing their first game in 16 days after coronavirus cases in the squad led to two games being postponed, United was outplayed Monday in the first half and Allan Saint-Maximin gave Newcastle the lead in the seventh minute following a swift break after Raphael Varane was dispossessed.

Cavani entered as a halftime substitute, injected some urgency and pressing into United's attacking play, and scored an equaliser in the 71st minute by poking home a rebound after his initial shot was blocked.

Newcastle, which hit the post in the final minutes through substitute Dwight Gayle, was denied just a second win of the campaign and stayed in next-to-last place, while seventh-place United missed a chance to jump to fifth with a display that showed the team still has plenty of work to do under re-

cently hired coach Ralf Rangnick.

His team was so off the pace in the first half — perhaps due to the extended COVID-enforced break — that Rangnick opted to make two substitutions at halftime, with Fred and Mason Greenwood coming off. Any of the outfield players could easily have been replaced.

Bruno Fernandes was often seen waving his hands in the air, complaining at the referee and his teammates. Marcus Rashford looked lost out on the right wing. Varane and Harry Maguire were being hounded in possession at center back.

United, back playing after having games against Brighton and Brentford called off, was lucky to go to the break only 0-1 down. That goal came after Sean Longstaff pressurised Varane, picked him off and played in Saint-Maximin, who cut inside Maguire and poked

a finish into the corner. Saint-Maximin then squandered a brilliant chance from point-blank range to make it 2-0 in the 47th minute, mishitting a finish from Emil Krafth's cross to allow David De Gea to claw away the ball when he should have been well beaten.

Ashwin among four nominees LEWANDOWSKI, MBAPPE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Dec 28: Seasoned India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin was Tuesday shortlisted as one of the four nominees for the ICC Test Cricketer of the Year award. The winner of the award will be announced January 24.

The 35-year-old from Chennai snapped 52 wickets from eight Tests at an average of 16.23 and also contributed 337 runs with the bat at 28.08 with one century in the last one year.

Besides Ashwin, England skipper Joe Root, New Zealand pacer Kyle Jamieson and Sri Lanka opener Dimuth Karunaratne were the others to be nominated for the prestigious award, which recognise the outstanding achievements and feats in cricket over the past year.

"One of India's greatest matchwinners in the longest format, R Ashwin again asserted his authority as one of the world's finest spinners in 2021. Apart from his wizardry with the ball, Ashwin also made invaluable contributions with the bat." the ICC said in a release. Ashwin started the year on a

high, scoring a patient 128-ball 29 against Australia in the Sydney up four wickets in the ICC World Test Championship final against New Zealand on a seam-friendly wicket in Southampton. After sitting out of all four Tests in England, Ashwin shone bright in the home series against New Zealand, winning another Player of the Series award after picking up 14 wickets in two matches at 11.36 while also chipping in with a couple of handy knocks in the Kanpur Test.

The ICC Awards will comprise a total of 13 individual recognitions in all, as well as five Team of the Year announcements for each format across both men's and women's cricket.

The other individual categories include Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for men's Cricketer of the Year, Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy for Women's Cricketer of the Year, men's ODI Cricketer of the Year women's ODI Cricketer of the Year, men's T20I Cricketer of the Year, women's T20I Cricketer of the Year, Emerging men's Cricketer of the Year, Emerging women's Cricketer of the Year, Men's Associate Cricketer of the Year. women's Associate Cricketer of the Year, Spirit of Cricket Award and Umpire of the Year.

CR7 AMONG BIG WINNERS

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dubai, Dec 28: The 12th edition of the Dubai Globe Soccer Awards took place in the Burj Khalifa with Robert Lewandowski among the nights big winners.

The Poland and Bayern Munich striker capped a record-breaking year by securing the Maradona award for the year's best

AWARD WINNERS	Goalkeeper of the Year:				
Fans Player of the Year:	Gianluigi Donnarumma (Italy/PSG)				
Robert Lewandowski (Poland/Bayern Munich)	Coach of the Year: Roberto Mancini (Italy men's team)				
Men's Player of the Year: Kylian Mbappé (France/PSG)	National Team of the Year: Italy Agent of the Year: Federico Pastorello				
Maradona Award: Robert Lewandowski					
Top best scorer of all time: Cristiano Ronaldo	Sports Director of the Year: Txiki Begiristain (Man City)				
(Portugal/Man United)	Esports Player of the Year:				
Women's Player of the Year:	Musaed Al-Dossary 'Msdossary7'				
Alexia Putellas (Barcelona)	Player Career Award:				
Men's Club of the Year: Chelsea	Ronaldinho				
Women's Club of the Year: Barcelona	Best Youth Academy in Africa:				
Defender of the Year:	ZED FC				
Leonardo Bonucci (Juventus/Italy)	Special Innovation Award: Serie A				

The off-spinner had also picked

Dada admitted to hospital after testing Covid positive

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Dec 28: BCCI president Sourav Ganguly has been admitted to a city hospital after testing positive for COVID-19 but the former India captain is "stable", the medical institution, where he is undergoing treatment, said Tuesday. Ganguly, who is double vaccinated,

was rushed to Woodlands Hospital Monday evening as a precautionary measure after his RT-PCR test returned positive. The 49-year-old had undergone an emergency angio-

plasty earlier this year, thus a panel of the doctors is keeping a close watch on his health status.

Test. His partnership with Hanuma

Vihari helped India achieve a mem-

orable draw that kept the series

At home against England,

Ashwin was adjudged the Player of

the Series after he claimed 32 wick-

ets from four matches at 14.72,

while also contributing 189 runs

level at 1-1.

with the bat.

"He received Monoclonal Antibody Cocktail therapy on the same night and is currently haemodynamically stable," Dr Rupali Basu, MD & CEO of Woodlands Hospital, said in a statement.

"A medical board comprising Dr Saroj Mondal, Dr Saptarshi Basu and Dr Soutik Panda in consultation with Dr Devi Shetty and Dr Aftab Khan is keeping a close watch on his health status," Basu added

HYDERABAD HAMMER ODISHA FC

POST NEWS NETWORK, ISL

Goa, Dec 28: Bartholomew Ogbeche scored a crackling brace on either side of halftime as Hyderabad FC recorded an emphatic 6-1 win over Odisha FC in the ISL at the Athletic Stadium in Bambolim Tuesday.

Ogbeche scored in the 39th and 60th minute after Hector Rodas turned one in his own net in the ninth minute to hand Hyderabad an early lead. Edu Garcia (54th), Javier Siverio (72nd) and Joao Victor (86th) got on the scoresheet for Hyderabad in a mind-blowing second-half display.

For Odisha, Juanan scored an own goal in the 16th minute to make it 1-1, but after that, it was oneway traffic till the final whistle.

The result means Hyderabad remain second in the points table with 15 points from eight games while Odisha are seventh in the table having 10 points from eight matches. Ogbeche is now the top-scorer with eight goals to his name.

The game got off to an eventful start as Hyderabad FC went ahead when Edu swung in a delightful free-kick at the near post with Joao

Victor flicking it on as the ball took a deflection off Rodas and went in.

Hyderabad's joy was short-lived as Odisha equalised. Ogbeche made it 2-1 with a thumping header from an Edu cross. After the change of ends, Edu extended the lead before Ogbeche made it 4-1 for the Nizams.

Siverio found the back of the net minutes after coming on, tucking in a Juanan ball into the net. Siverio won a penalty five minutes to full time after Gaurav Bora brought him down inside the box. -(Victor slotted it past the keeper from the spot.

Printed and published by Tathagata Satpathy on behalf of Navajat Printers and Media Pvt. Ltd. and printed at Navajat Printers, B-15 Industrial Estate, Rasulgarh, Bhubaneswar -751010, Odisha; Phone: 7894447142 (Marketing). Editor: Tathagata Satpathy. RNI No. ORIENG/2011/37159





