



SELF-APPRECIATION
Actor Rhea Chakraborty, in a social media post, says she is proud of what she has become

LEISURE P2



S KOREA'S REVELATION
The man who crossed the eastern inter-Korean border into North over the weekend is a North Korean defector

INTERNATIONAL P10



INDIA BATTERS FALTER
India batters fail to impress as visitors post 202 in the 1st innings of the 2nd Test against SA, who reach 35/1 at stumps on Day 1

SPORTS P12



Fake notes in RBI chest, FIR lodged
Lucknow: Fake Indian currency, with a face value of ₹47,710, has been found in the Reserve Bank of India chest during an audit in Lucknow. RBI Assistant Manager Satyvir Singh has lodged a case with Mahanagar police about the recovery of 454 counterfeit currency notes during the checking of notes. "These fake notes comprised a ₹10 rupee note, 18 notes of ₹50, 443 notes of ₹100, one note each of ₹500 and ₹2,000," he stated in the FIR. Singh wrote to the officials to conduct a checking and also take legal action before returning the notes to the RBI. He said circulation/printing of fake currencies was a serious crime. He added that police may send the fake currencies to the currency printing press or forensic lab during the investigation of the case.



Imran's ex-wife escapes gunshot
New Delhi: Reham Khan, the ex-wife of Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan, narrowly escaped a gun attack in Islamabad late Sunday night, Samaa TV reported. In a tweet, she revealed that on the way back home from her nephew's wedding, her car was shot at and two men on a motorcycle held the vehicle at gunpoint. "I had just changed vehicles. My personal secretary and driver were in the car," the former television presenter said and demanded that the "so-called government should be held accountable for it (the attack)". Reham, in multiple updates on her Twitter handle, complained that she and her staff had to wait for hours to get an FIR registered, the report said.

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Vaccination for 15-18 begins

Over 80,000 adolescents take jabs including 4,107 in the capital city on first day

Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: Amid a rise in Covid-19 cases in the state, 80,129 adolescents in the age group of 15-18 took their first dose of vaccine against Covid-19 on the first day of the drive, Monday.

The teenagers took the jab at 939 dedicated vaccination centres set up across the state. The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) vaccinated 4,107 adolescents out of a targeted 4,350 on the first day of the vaccination. Over 40 lakh children in the country received their first jab on the first day of vaccination drive, said Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya. The 15-18 age group who have registered themselves on the CoWIN portal since January 1 can get their jab at their vaccination centre. Children who have not registered themselves online on the CoWIN portal for the



A girl receiving jab at a govt healthcare centre in Rasulgarh, Monday

vaccination can receive the vaccine by doing on-spot registration at the centres, said health and family welfare director, Bijay Panigrahi. Only Covaxin is given to the children of 15-18 years. Adequate arrangements have been made to deal with any adverse event following immunization (AEFI), he said.

"As there are possibilities that some children may have fever like minor AEFI, we have decided not to vaccinate children who have examinations now. They will be vaccinated after completion of the tests," said Panigrahi. The health official further informed that all teachers have been requested to create awareness among students and parents to ensure 100 per cent vaccination of the eligible students in their schools.

A large number of beneficiaries were seen at the vaccination centres in many parts of the state including in capital city Bhubaneswar. Director of Capital Hospital Laxmidhar Sahoo said vaccination for 15-18 years age group is essential as they are more susceptible to the infection. A target has been set to complete the process in a month, Sahoo said. A total of 23.65 lakh children in Odisha are eligible for vaccination. Meanwhile, the Centre suspended marking of biometric attendance for all its employees till January 31.

WHO pat on VIMSAR back

Sambalpur, Jan 3: The World Health Organisation (WHO) has given its approval to a research undertaken by a medical team of the VSS Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR) at Burla over susceptibility of blood groups O+ and B+ to Covid-19 even after two doses of vaccination.

The research report has found a place in WHO's database on Covid-19. The news has brought cheers to the members of the research team and the VIMSAR authorities. Dr Sanjeeb Mishra, principal author of the study, said he is happy about the development. The team also found a big drop in antibody level six months after the jab, thereby increasing the risk of re-infection, and suggested a booster dose.

"This is a moment of pride for us as it will encourage us to undertake further research. The study was jointly conducted by four researchers from the VIMSAR at Burla and another researcher from the Regional Medical Research Centre at Bhubaneswar.

The five researchers who studied the antibody kinetics of Covishield vaccination six months after the second dose and the factors affecting the kinetics are Dr Sanjeeb Kumar Mishra, Dr Subrat Kumar Pradhan, Dr Rajiv Kumar Nanda and Dr Sumanta Sahu from VIMSAR and Dr Sanghamitra Pati from RMRC, Bhubaneswar.

The team found that the rate of infection is more in O+ and B+ blood groups compared to other groups. Moreover, they found a dip in antibody after the second dose and advised a booster dose. The study covered 122 participants comprising doctors, nurses and other staff. Their blood samples were taken after they were administered the second dose. The blood samples were collected in three rounds – one month after first dose, one month after second dose and six months after the second dose.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

The tip was wrong, sir. He is not posting anything against govt. He is just auctioning women who ask too many questions!

KHERI CHARGESHEET MoS' SON WAS PRESENT AT SITE

Lakhimpur Kheri, Jan 3: The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the Lakhimpur Kheri violence, which claimed eight lives, has filed a chargesheet against 14 accused, including Union minister Ajay Mishra's son Ashish Mishra. The chargesheet was filed in the court of chief judicial magistrate (CJM) Chintia Ram Monday.

In FIR number 219/2021 lodged with Tikunia Police Station, the SIT had identified and arrested 13 accused, including Ashish Mishra 'Monu', Ankit Das, Nandan Singh Bisht, Satyam Tripathi alias Satyam, Latif alias Kale, Shekhar Bharti, Sumit Jaiswal, Ashish Pandey, Lavkush Rana, Shishu Pal, Ullas Kumar alias Mohit Trivedi, Rinku Rana and Dharmendra Banjara.

On Monday, senior prosecution officer (SPO) SP Yadav told reporters that another accused Virendra Shukla's name has been added in the chargesheet under Section 201 (causing disappear-



ance of evidence of offence) of the Indian Penal Code. However, Shukla is yet to be arrested. Yadav said the chargesheet against all 14 accused was filed in the court and the proceedings are on.

Violence had erupted in Lakhimpur Kheri October 3 last year when farmers were protesting the visit of Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya to Mishra's native place.

Four agitating farmers were run over by a vehicle while four others, including a journalist, two BJP workers were killed in the violence that ensued. Ajay Mishra is currently the MP from Kheri Lok Sabha seat.

Junior teachers' pay up by 50pc

Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: The state government Monday enhanced the salary of junior teachers engaged in the primary schools of the state by nearly 50 per cent.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has taken a decision to hike the salary of both 19,714 junior teachers and 13,324 contractual teachers by 50 per cent from January 1, 2022. In total, 33,038 teachers will benefit from this decision.

As per the decision, junior teachers receiving a salary of ₹9,200 per month would now be paid ₹13,800 while the contractual teachers receiving salary of ₹7,400 would now get ₹11,000 per month, officials said.

The government would bear an additional ₹168 crore from the state exchequer every year due to the hike in the salary of the junior teachers.

A day before the New Year day, the government had approved the proposal to provide grant-in-aid to teaching and non-teaching staff of all aided non-government schools, colleges and Madrasas in the state on the basis of the 7th Pay Commission recommendations.

CARNIVAL AT MANALI



Women perform Kulvi Naati dance during the Winter Carnival 2022 in Manali, Monday

Forest land in urban areas to go to slum dwellers

Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: Ahead of polls in urban areas, the state government has decided to divert forest land to create infrastructure for dwellers residing in 253 slums spread across 45 urban local bodies (ULBs) in 22 districts.

This was known from a workshop organised on creation of basic infrastructure for slum habitats in urban forest areas at Lokseva Bhawan Monday. Addressing the workshop, Housing and Urban Development Secretary G Mathivathanan said the government has launched the special campaign for transforming the urban habitats to Biju Adarsha Colonies.

Around 3,000 slum habitats containing 168,141 households were identified through a special survey named Urban Slum Household Areas (USHA) undertaken with geo-spatial technology in NACs and municipalities, he said. Out of this, 70,000 households were granted in-situ land rights and 1,03,328 households given land entitlement certificates. Meanwhile, 550 slums were upgraded and mainstreamed with urban life, the secretary said.

During the USHA survey, 253 slums spread across 45 ULBs in 22 districts were found to be in urban forest land. Because of the forest area, problems cropped up with regard to settlement of land rights and laying of infrastructure for basic amenities, pointed out Director of Municipal Administration Sangramjeet Nayak. To overcome the situation, the forest, environment and climate change and H&UD departments have prepared a standard operating procedure. The SOP would resolve the problems relating to land rights and infrastructure in slum habitats of urban forest areas.

The SOP was successfully piloted in Dhenkanal municipality. The government will implement the SOP in all 253 slums in urban forest areas. The Chief Secretary directed the concerned departments to complete the task in a time-bound manner. Both the administrative departments would nominate senior officers as the nodal officers for smooth implementation of the SOP.

No more My Lord, Your Lordship, only Sir will suffice: Orissa CJ

Cuttack, Jan 3: Orissa High Court Chief Justice S Muralidhar has requested lawyers to avoid using terms like 'My Lord', 'Your Lordship' or 'Your Honour' while addressing judges of the High Court.

"All counsel and parties-in-person are requested to try and avoid addressing the judges of this bench as 'My Lord', 'Your Lordship', 'Your Honour' or with the prefix 'Hon'ble'. Any other form of address, consistent with the decorum of the court, including 'Sir', should suffice," read a note attached to the cause list of cases issued for hear-



Association secretary Jitendra Kumar Lenka said other judges should follow it. "It's a welcome move. Others – judges, advocates and litigants – should follow it. 'Sir' is equally respectful," added Lenka.

Sources said the Orissa High Court had initiated a move to address judges as 'Sir' during the tenure of then Chief Justice Gati Krushna Misra (1969-75). However, the practice of using terms like 'Your Lordship' to address the judges, relics of the colonial past, has continued till date.

The Bar Council of India (BCI) had adopted a resolution to do away with addressing the judges as 'My Lord'..... 'Your Lordship' in 2006.

In 2009, Chief Justice S Muralidhar had requested the lawyers in Delhi High Court not to address him as 'Your Lordship'.

Back in 2009, Justice S Muralidhar had requested the lawyers in Delhi High Court not to address him as 'Your Lordship'. Later in 2020, he requested the lawyers of the Punjab and Haryana High Court to discontinue the practice of using terms like 'My Lord' or 'Your Lordship' while addressing him.

Notably, Justice S Muralidhar was a judge in Delhi High Court from May 29, 2006 to March 5, 2020. He was a judge in the Punjab and Haryana High Court from March 6, 2020 to January 3, 2021. He was sworn in as Chief Justice of the Orissa High Court January 4, 2021.

MARKET WATCH

| INDEX | VALUE | VARIATION |
|--------|----------|-----------|
| SENSEX | 57794.32 | ↓ 12.17 |
| NIFTY | 17204.00 | ↓ 9.60 |
| DOLLAR | 75.12 | ↓ ₹0.34 |
| EURO | 84.50 | ↓ ₹0.21 |
| GOLD | ₹47,650 | ↓ ₹189 |
| SILVER | ₹61,522 | ↓ ₹316 |

WEATHER

| | BHUB | CTK |
|----------|-------------------------|--------|
| TEMP MAX | 26.0°C | 27.0°C |
| TEMP MIN | 12.9°C | 13.0°C |
| Humidity | 73% | 82% |
| Rainfall | Nil | Nil |
| Forecast | Dry weather most likely | |

leisure



'I'M AN ARTISTE, NOT A COVID VARIANT'

R&B singer Omarion has responded to the Covid jokes that have been circulating online. The B2K member playfully reminded his fans that he's "an artiste, not a variant." Making use of TikTok, he shared a video of him wishing his followers a Happy New Year, reports *aceshowbiz.com*.

BRITNEY UNFOLLOWS SISTER ON INSTAGRAM

Pop star Britney Spears, who was recently handed back control of her assets after her father Jamie was removed as her conservator after 13 years, no longer has her 30-year-old sibling Jamie-Lynn on the social media platform.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Sometimes, pressure is a good thing, as it brings out the best in you. You will outshine your colleagues in whatever you choose to do. But your expectations may far exceed the outcome. Ganesh asks that you have patience. Results take time.

TAURUS
Planning your own milestones and celebrating the success of friends is the agenda for the day. Your thoughts will be progressive in business or at work, and any plans you make will make a rock-solid foundation for your future. Social gatherings and parties will beckon with bubbly and bruschetta.

GEMINI
Today will prove to be an emotional and engaging day for you, predicts Ganesh. Fortune will favour you, though your emotions may cloud your reasoning and slow down your progress. Your spare time will be spent on devising methods to make the best use of your knowledge.

CANCER
Today, you will use money to fulfil your needs. If there is anything that according to you needs changing, you will throw some money to get it changed. Your loved ones will celebrate your financial gains and spend some more of it in the process. If there has been any limit to the amount of money flowing in, there is certainly no limit to the money leaving your coffers.

LEO
Maybe it is the weather, or just one of those days, but today, you are extremely prone to wild mood swings, says Ganesh. You must remember that nothing is permanent, except change. So go with the flow and do not get caught in the undercurrent of the changes that are taking place all around you. Take it as a warning that works to your advantage, says Ganesh. All the worrying and sorting out done, do not forget to sit back and relax – you deserve it more than anybody.

VIRGO
Today, your ingenuity will breed ideas like rabbits. You have the healer's hands, and so shall you make right many a wrong, predicts Ganesh. You shall be most understanding, and reading people's mind will do wonders for you and your beloved.

LIBRA
Love is in the air, and passion lurks right around the corner. So keep your eyes and ears open, because you may soon find yourself entrapped in a passionate love episode. But the price of new love is always steep, and your beloved may burn a hole in your pocket. Still, with someone like that, you are always assured of getting good value for your money! So bring on the champagne and the caviar! Ganesh wishes you a splendid time ahead.

SCORPIO
You shall groom yourself all prim and proper today. The thought of how you look dominates your mind today. You are likely to capture the imagination of people – both at work and at social gathering. Cash will exit left, right and centre from your pockets on account of fun and entertainment.

SAGITTARIUS
Dark and gloomy shall be your temperament for most part of the day today. But the afternoon may just see the skies clearing. The apparent mood change, says Ganesh, will mainly be because of good news from abroad and business profits from your partner.

CAPRICORN
Certain revelations about a relationship will draw your attention; you will find it intriguing and will spend a good amount of time trying to solve the mystery, says Ganesh. Besides, your impressive communication power will help dissolve conflicts that may have arisen because of misinterpretation. There is nothing really to worry about, but keeping abreast of the activities of your rivals will help you stay ahead in competition.

AQUARIUS
Your communication skills will work wonders today. Your eloquence will win you precious brownie points, and may prove highly beneficial in meetings. In fact, all your arguments will sound very persuasive. The trick is not to get ruffled, says Ganesh, when people don't agree with you.

PISCES
You are unlikely to be your calm and lucid self today. You will likely catch yourself worrying unnecessarily and putting in more efforts than required at work. However, some leisure time will come your way in the evening wherein you will regain your usual perspective, says Ganesh.

You are your own best support: Rhea

MUMBAI: Actress Rhea Chakraborty has shared a self appreciation post on social media and said that once "you find yourself, you are winning." Rhea posted a beautiful video on Instagram, where in the clip she is seen writing a note to "myself". In the backdrop she is heard saying the lines: "Dear me, thank you for being with me. Thank you for being kind, strong, patient and resilient. I AM SO proud of the woman you have become and I am here with you always. So, chin up baby girl you've got this.. Happy new year.. Your's truly, your inner self." Rhea captioned the clip, which currently has 14,4000 likes: "You are your own best support, once you find yourself, you are #winning #rhe-new #loveyourself #happynewyear." It was in 2020, when Rhea made headlines after she was accused by Sushant Singh Rajput's family for abetment to suicide and also siphoning off funds from the late actor. She was also named in a Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) charge sheet along with her brother Showik in a drug-related probe into Sushant's death case.



AGENCIES

'You've to work the hardest in television'

MUMBAI: Odisha-born TV and film actress Sulagna Panigrahi as Radhamani in historical drama *Vidrohi* is grabbing eyeballs. Radhamani is Buxi Jagabandhu's wife. Sulagna's look from the show is also getting much attention. The actress says she loves her look in the show and prefers to do her makeup on her own. "I do my own makeup so I enjoy the process. It does get me in the mood or gets me in the mindset of Radhamani once I get the hair makeup and costume. It doesn't take me more than an hour to get ready," says the actor. Shooting for this kind of a show takes longer and involves a lot of hard work, shares Sulagna. With this show, the actor made a comeback to TV after a decade. "I've worked in all the mediums, theatre, films, web, ads, but TV is where you've to work the hardest. The hours are never ending, the days are never ending. In fact, I got a day off only after 50 days. That's what scares me about television," she says.

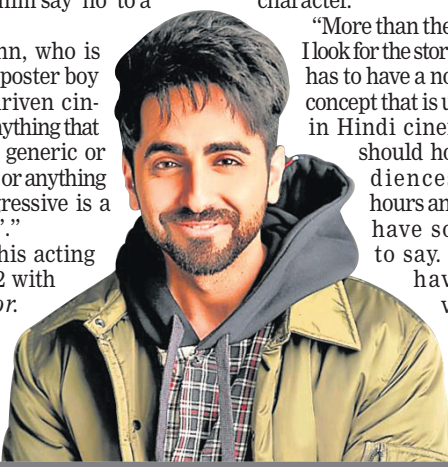


IAN S

What makes Ayushmann decline a project

NEW DELHI: Ayushmann Khurrana has delivered back-to-back hits in his journey in Hindi cinema. The actor has revealed how he picks up his projects and what makes him say 'no' to a script. Ayushmann, who is called as the poster boy of content-driven cinema, said: "Anything that is mundane, generic or done-to-death or anything which is regressive is a complete 'no'." He made his acting debut in 2012 with *Vicky Donor*. Since then, he has been a part of a string of hits such as

Shubh Mangal Saavdhan, Bareilly Ki Barfi, Anhadhun, Badhai Ho, Article 15 and several others. He says while picking up a film, it's the story he looks at and not the character. "More than the character I look for the story. The story has to have a novel idea, a concept that is unexplored in Hindi cinema and it should hold the audiences for two hours and it should have something to say. It should have some value in the end and story," he concluded.



IAN S

HOLLYWOOD FILMS IN INDIA

Spider-Man turns third highest grosser

THE TOM HOLLAND-STARRER HAS GRABBED THE NO.3 SPOT AMONG HOLLYWOOD FILMS IN INDIA, AFTER *AVENGERS: INFINITY WAR* (2018) AND *AVENGERS: ENDGAME* (2019)

MUMBAI: In just 18 days since its theatrical release, *Spider-Man: No Way Home*, with Tom Holland and Zendaya playing the lead roles, has become the third highest grosser among Hollywood films in India, after *Avengers: Endgame* (2019) and *Avengers: Infinity War* (2018). Till date, the film, which has globally surpassed the \$1-billion mark, has grossed Rs 259.67 crore in India. That makes it No. 3 among all films released in India in 2021, after Allu Arjun's *Pushpa: The Rise* and the Akshay Kumar-led *Sooryavanshi*. Among Hollywood films in India, *Spider-Man* is within leaping distance from the pickings of *Avengers: Infinity War* (Rs 227.43 crore), but is still quite far from *Avengers: Endgame* (Rs 373.22 crore). Analysts expect the global earnings of *Spider-Man* to see a sharp spike after its release in China, the world's largest cinema-going market. The film's unexpected success would have been a cause for celebration, but for the shadow of the Omicron surge, which has made the Delhi government shut down cinema theatres and several state governments reverting to the 50 per cent occupancy rule. Talking about the success of

Spider-Man, independent film trade analyst Sumit Kadel said: "It was bound to do well because it is a Marvel Studios film. Films coming out of the Marvel universe are hugely popular in India. The coming together of all the actors who had previously essayed the title role, namely, Tobey Maguire and Andrew Garfield, also did the trick." Media and internet research analyst Karan Taurani added: "The film offers a large-scale cinema experience. That is why people have gone out to watch the film in large numbers as this experience cannot be replicated on a smart screen or on TV."



IAN S

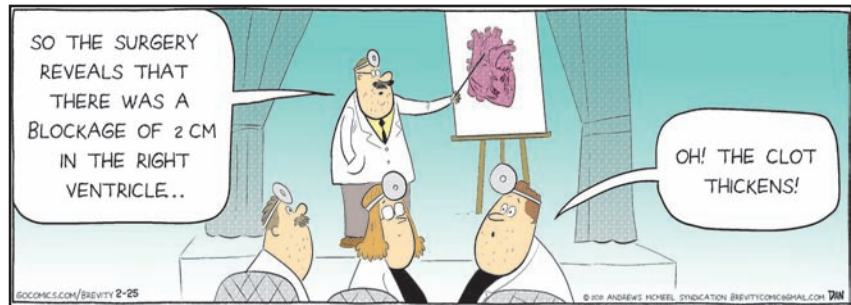
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

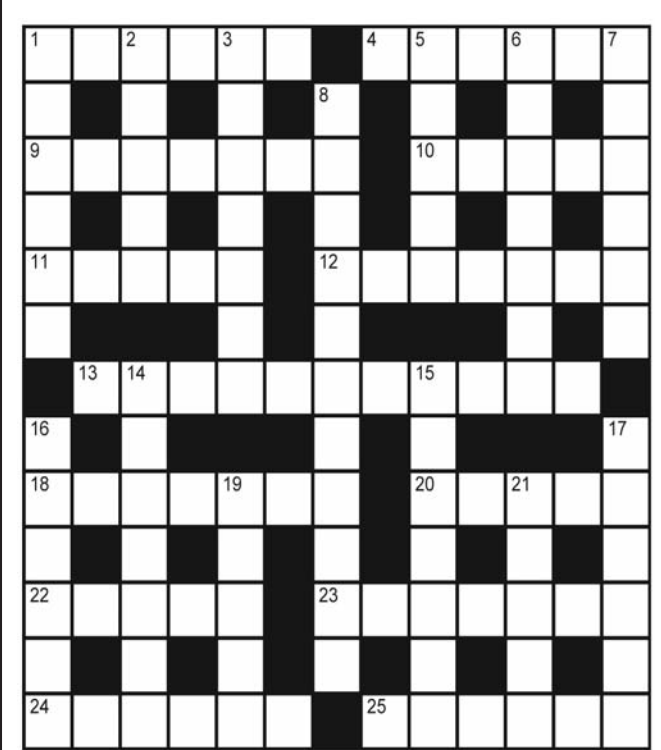


BREVITY



FUN post

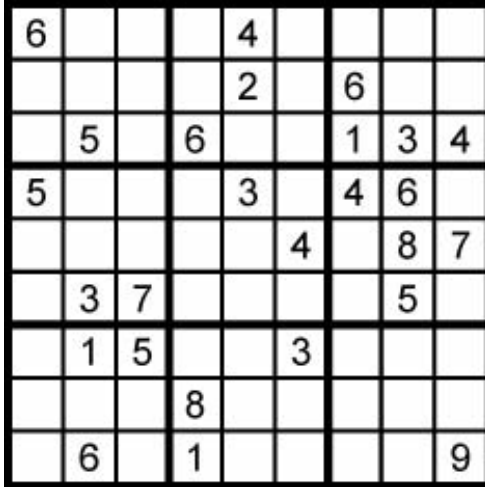
CROSSWORD



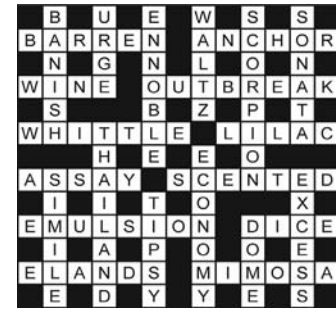
- Across
1 Just manage (4,2)
4 Dust coats
9 One can be personal
10 Beta's follower
11 Gallic goodbye
12 Legislative act
13 Angle (5,2,4)
18 Consultant
- 20 Mania
22 Lasso loop
23 Chef's forte
24 Render harmless
25 Casual top (1-5)
- Down
1 Shared (3,4)
2 Uniform shade
3 Ladies' man
5 Molten rock
6 Travel back and forth
7 Barrel parts
8 Nobility
14 Apparent
15 Brutal
16 Fired
17 Scale reading
19 Look of disdain
21 Cover story?

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.



SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

EXPLORING CAPITAL FOODS

The 'Graduated Panipuri Wala'



BHUBANESWAR: If your idea of evening snacks includes having spicy and tangy gupchup in a corner of the Capital city, then

perhaps 'Graduated Panipuri Wala' is the place to be.

Located across the main road in front of Rama Devi Women's University, Saheed Nagar, this particular stall delivers a wide range of gupchups prepared in a super hygienic environment.

With a unique satirical name coupled

with a mix of flavours, the stall attracts customers from neighbouring districts of Puri and Cuttack too. "They not only offer a large variety of panipuris, but also follow all Covid norms such as wearing mask, gloves and others which is very important during these times," said Debasis Barik, who comes from Puri in weekends to savor the delicacies.



THE SPECIALTIES

Among its different specialties, chocolate, kala khatta, khatta meetha, chilly garlic and bahubali panipuri remain foodies' favourite.

Rolls that rule THE ROOST

BHUBANESWAR: Possibly the most demanded and also ubiquitous, vegetarian and non-vegetarian rolls rule the roost in street-side snacks. Scrumptious, affordable and spicy, the snack comes with a wide range of variations and is a delight for foodies. However, with a quick preparation time and easily available ingredients, the snack seems to have lost its authenticity.

Aiming to bring back its originality, the Kolkata Express situated between Rajmahal and Master Canteen Square along with its unique spices and flavours offering a wide variety of rolls along with a vibe that resonates with Bengali culture.

Run by Kashif from West Bengal and Sinu Prusti from Bhubaneswar, the place aims to make rolls that do not have typical masala, cabbage, and chicken fillings. It rather includes as-

sorted veggies, cheese, meat, paneer, soya and a mélange of spices.

Having a growing consumer base comprising mostly youths between 18-35 years of age, the duo has also introduced multigrain rolls for health conscious individuals.

Among others, the stall also offers Haryanvi Kebabs, Chinese cuisines and Lachcha Paratha.

"I was attracted by the unique name and the ambience a street side stall had. I was even impressed by the lip smacking and distinct taste of the rolls here. Since my mother's nativity is West Bengal, I was able to distinguish the unique tastes and flavours of their snacks and dishes had," said Abhijeet Bhattacharya, a student here.

ROLL IS NOT JUST ANY OTHER STREET FOOD, BUT A BACK-UP PLAN FOR EVERY HUNGRY STOMACH AND LIMITED WALLET TO FALL BACK ON. ONE NEED NOT ALWAYS SPEND A FORTUNE TO SATIATE HIMSELF/HERSELF, AS LONG AS THERE IS A STALL NEARBY, WHICH ALWAYS IS. HOWEVER, SUCH ABUNDANCE HAS TAKEN A TOLL ON THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE DELICACY, ESPECIALLY WHEN A CRAVING TONGUE IS ALSO IN LINE. FOR THOSE FEELING 'THEY'RE ALL THE SAME', KOLKATA EXPRESS PLAYS A SPATULA AND GRIDDLE WIELDING KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOUR, AIMING TO REINFORCE THE ACTUAL TASTE OF THE UNFORTUNATE CLICHÉ.

STORIES: AVIRAL MISHRA
PHOTOS: BIKASH NAYAK

Hygiene my top priority: Pravat

The story begins with a young graduate, the son of an auto-rickshaw driver, who did not have enough money to invest in a big venture but had a vision to go for something which would not only be appreciated by many but also fetch him good returns.

Orissa POST speaks to Pravat Kumar Barik, the 'Graduated Panipuri Wala' at Saheed Nagar...

What prompted you to open a panipuri stall and why not a restaurant or café?

To begin with, we didn't have much capital to start a big business. My father is an auto-rickshaw driver and my brother is still studying. I work in a private bank to arrange money for my business. I utilised my Rs 3 lakh in savings to start the business. Panipuri is my favourite street food but I observed that most of the stalls in Capital city were not hygienic. I even fell sick twice or thrice after eating at the roadside stalls. So, I decided to

wish to bring a spiritual change in the society. Earlier, I had launched a few startups based on morality. I also wish to bring a cleaner and consumer-friendly environment to street foods.

What are the challenges you face?

Since our shop is on an e-rickshaw and we do not have enough money to obtain a proper trade licence, we get threats from the authorities of our rickshaw being confiscated. With fear from the officials, we have to shift our stall from one place to another which affects our customer base as well as business. There are challenges like finding a proper place



Pravat and Subrat at the stall

open a stall of my own to provide people with hygienic food.

What is the story behind the name 'Graduated Panipuri Wala'?

I prepared a lot for competitive exams and burnt midnight oil to secure a government job. However, I couldn't get one because of the intense competition. I eventually got a job in a private bank but then I discovered that a few of my seniors, who had got plum posts, were less qualified than I am. And hence the name.

Your future plans?

I wish to expand my business so that I can fund the studies of my younger brother. I also

while customers from fellow vendors make us feel an outsider.

They not only offer a large variety of panipuris, but also follow all Covid norms such as wearing mask, gloves and others which is very important during these times

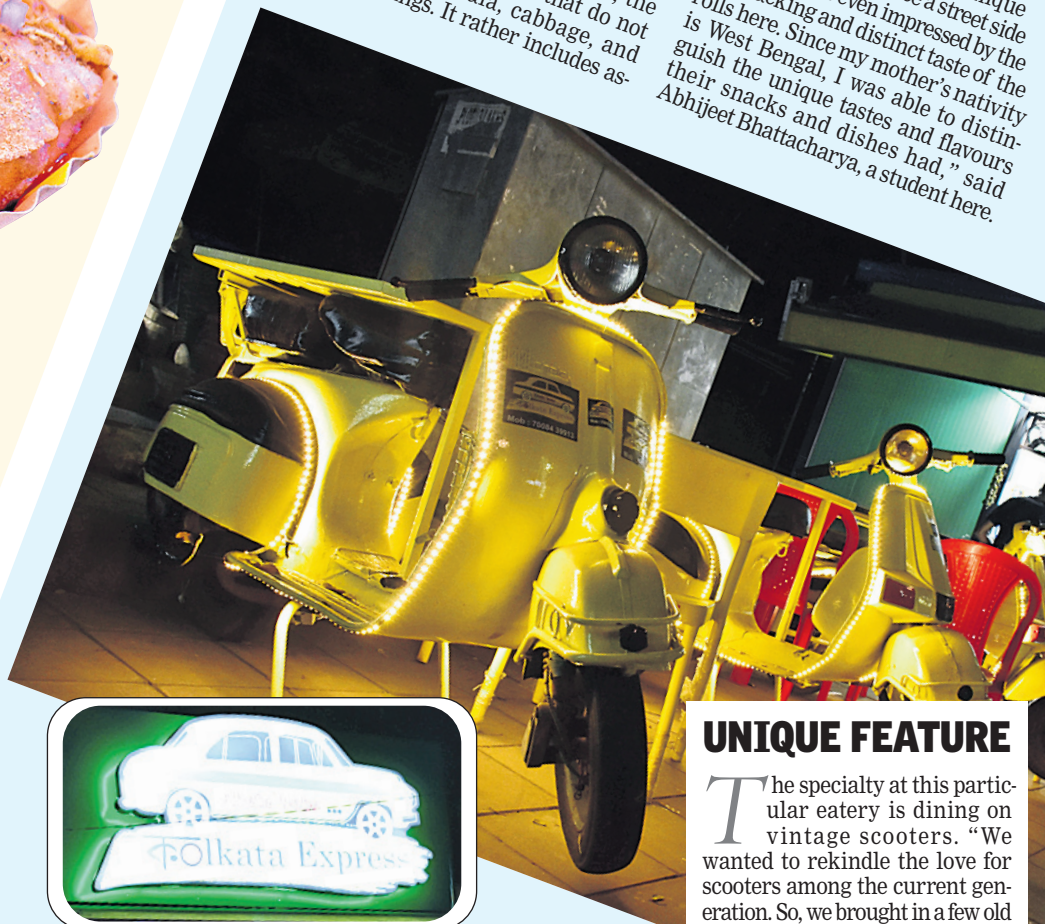
DEBASIS BARIK | CUSTOMER



Run by Kashif from West Bengal and Sinu Prusti from Bhubaneswar, the place aims to make rolls that do not have typical masala, cabbage, and chicken fillings. It rather includes assorted veggies, cheese, meat, paneer, soya and a mélange of spices

Having a growing consumer base comprising mostly youth between 18-35 years of age, the duo has also introduced multigrain rolls for health conscious individuals

The stall also offers Haryanvi Kebabs, Chinese cuisines and Lachcha Paratha



UNIQUE FEATURE

The specialty at this particular eatery is dining on vintage scooters. "We wanted to rekindle the love for scooters among the current generation. So, we brought in a few old Priya scooters and modified them to fit in the dine-in place. Nowadays, they draw more attention than our dishes and sometimes young boys and girls tell us how exciting it is to see such vintage vehicle, only stories of which they had heard from their parents," Sinu said.



State logs 424 fresh nCoV cases

The government has set a target to vaccinate 25.53 lakh beneficiaries by January end

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: Odisha's Covid-19 tally rose to 10,55,980 Monday as 424 more people, same as Sunday, tested positive for the infection, a Health department bulletin said.

The state's coronavirus death toll remained unchanged at 8,463 as no fresh fatality was registered, it said.

Khurda district registered the highest number of 151 new cases, followed by 66 in Cuttack. The administration tested 54,793 samples for Covid-19 Sunday, it said, adding that the daily test positivity rate (TPR) rose to 0.77 per cent.

Fifty-three other patients have died due to comorbidities so far, the bulletin said. More than 2.93 crore people have received the first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine, while 2.1

District Collectors, municipal Commissioners and CDMOs have been directed to coordinate with the School and Mass Education department to achieve the target

Teenagers, who have already registered their names on the Cowin portal, can get the jabs between 8am to 1pm

Students of Class X, who are appearing for assessment tests between January 5 and 8, can take the vaccine after the examination. Similarly, class 12 students will get vaccinated after January 12

crore have been fully vaccinated.

Meanwhile, the vaccination drive for the 15-18 years age group began at 939 special sessions sites across the state, a senior health official said.

Teenagers, who have already

registered their names on the Cowin portal, can get the jabs between 8 AM to 1 PM, he said, adding that the state government has set the target to complete the inoculation drive by the end of this month.

Students of class 10, who are appearing for assessment tests between January 5 and 8, can take the vaccine after the examination. Similarly, class 12 students will get vaccinated after January 12, he said.

Bijay Panigrahi, state Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) Director and nodal officer for vaccination, said that adolescents born on or before January 1, 2007 are eligible for vaccination, and the second dose of Covaxin will be given 28-42 days after the first jab. Teenagers who have tested positive for Covid-19 can get vaccinated three months after recovery, he said.



Newly-appointed Director General of Police (DGP) Sunil Kumar Bansal, along with his wife, returns after offering prayers at Srimandir in Puri, Monday

City woman loses ₹15.40L to fraudsters

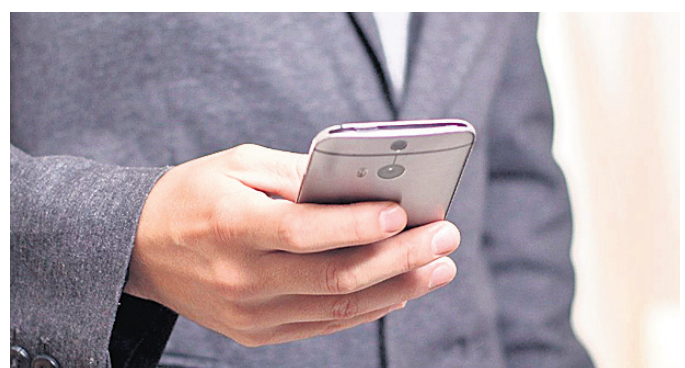
POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: Unknown fraudsters including a New Delhi-based foreigner have duped a woman from the Capital city here of more than ₹15 lakh on the pretext of doubling her investments and by threatening her to make viral her 'objectionable' videos.

The Commissionerate Police has started investigations into the matter after registering a case based on the complaint lodged by the victim lady at Khandagiri police station.

As per sources, the victim had recently received a friend request on social media site Facebook which she accepted. The friendship was cemented as both the sides shared their mobile numbers.

To trap the lady by winning her trust, the fraudsters later deposited some money in her account without her permission. One of the fraudsters allegedly told the victim that he wanted to start real estate business in Odisha with her help.



Subsequently, the accused along with four of his aides including the foreigner reached Bhubaneswar. The accused introduced the foreigner as James Alia Brighton, a native of UK, who owns Trimurti Courier Services in South Delhi.

The person who was in talks with the victim told the latter that Brighton was engaged in construction work in India and that he has four hotel projects in progress in Puri.

The victim was told that if she

was ready to invest ₹5 lakh, she would get double the amount of her investments.

Lured by the offer, the victim failed to make out their motive and gave ₹15.40 lakh to the accused by taking loan and selling her ornaments. They even cleverly took her signature in a blank paper and took away the pin code of debit and credit cards.

A few days later, an unknown person informed the lady over phone that the accused person had links

To trap the lady by winning her trust, the fraudsters later deposited some money in her account without her permission

The victim was told that if she was ready to invest ₹5 lakh, she would get double the amount of her investments.

Lured by the offer, the victim failed to make out their motive and gave ₹15.40 lakh to the accused by taking loan and selling her ornaments

with human traffickers in Pakistan and Bangladesh and used to supply girls from various parts of the country to the above countries for sex trade.

Accused Brighton even threatened to make viral her objectionable videos or kill her if she does not pay them the money and inform the police about the fraud. The victim also switched off her cellphone fearing criminal acts by the accused.

Srimandir reopens after three days



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Puri, Jan 3: After remaining closed for three days since December 31, the iconic Srimandir here reopened for devotees Monday, an official said.

The 12th-century shrine was closed to avoid crowds around New Year amid rising Covid-19 cases in state, the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) official said.

All rituals by priests and servitors continued in the temple during the three-day period, he said, adding that sanitisation exercise was also carried out in the shrine.

Elaborate arrangements have been made to ensure ease for devotees, while adhering to all Covid-19 protocols, the official added.

SC adjourns Panigrahi's corruption case till Jan 12

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Jan 3: The Supreme Court Monday adjourned the hearing of a special leave petition (SLP) filed by Odisha Lokayukta challenging the order of the Orissa High Court in Pradeep Panigrahi corruption case.

A two-judge bench of the apex court comprising justices Ajay Rastogi and Abhay S Oka said that it would hear the case January 12.

During the hearing, the counsel appearing for Panigrahi pleaded the court to vacate its stay on the Orissa High Court order. However, the bench didn't pass any order Monday and adjourned the matter.

Significantly, Odisha Lokayukta had filed the SLP in the Supreme Court challenging the orders of the Orissa High Court which ruled that the Lokayukta cannot order preliminary enquiry against Panigrahi from Vigilance department of the state as the latter is the complainant in the matter.

The SC had April 23 last year stayed the Orissa HC order restraining the Vigilance department from conducting enquiry against Panigrahi in a corruption case and had issued notice in April.

It is to be mentioned here that Lokayukta in December last year



Odisha Lokayukta had filed the SLP in the Supreme Court challenging the orders of the Orissa High Court which ruled that the Lokayukta cannot order preliminary enquiry against Panigrahi from Vigilance department of the state as the latter is the complainant in the matter

The SC had April 23 last year stayed the Orissa HC order restraining the Vigilance department from conducting enquiry against Panigrahi in a corruption case and had issued notice in April

had directed the state Vigilance to probe the corruption charges made against the Gopalpur MLA.

The Lokayukta had also asked the Vigilance Directorate to conduct a preliminary inquiry against Panigrahi and submit a report within two months.

Startup Connect prog held to transform traditional industries



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: In a bid to revive the traditional industries with cutting edge solutions, Startup Odisha under the state MSME department conducted a 'Startup Connect' program with the Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI) clusters of the state at O-Hub in Patia here Monday.

The startups in the field of hyper delivery/e-Commerce, organic foods and super foods, agricultural products and tribal products, handloom and handicrafts demonstrated their innovations and solutions to the traditional enterprises and expressed their interest in exploring opportunities with them.

The MSME Ministry has launched SFURTI in 2005 with a view to promoting cluster development. Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) is the nodal agency for promotion of cluster development for Khadi as well as for village industries products.

Pradhan launches NEAT 3.0, books in regional languages

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: Union Education and Skill Development Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Monday launched the National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT) 3.0, a single platform to provide the best-developed ed-tech solutions and courses to students of the country.

The Minister also launched AICTE prescribed technical books in regional languages.

On the occasion, 12 Lakh NEAT ed-tech free course coupons worth ₹253.72 crore were distributed to socially disadvantaged groups. Odisha received ₹10.70 crore for 33,585 socially and economically disadvantaged students of the state.

Pradhan said that NEAT will be a game-changer in bridging the digital divide, especially among the economically disadvantaged students. It will also fulfill the



knowledge-based requirement of India and the world. The Minister informed that 58 global and Indian start-up ed-tech companies are on-board NEAT and are offering 100 courses & e-resources for bettering learning outcomes, developing employable skills and overcoming learning loss. He hoped that the e-content, resources and digital frameworks like NEAT are steps in the right direction of minimising learning loss.

The Minister encouraged AICTE to integrate courses in NEAT with 'Skill India' to boost employability and prepare the youth for future. He urged AICTE and ed-tech companies to offer e-resources to the least possible cost. Pradhan complimented the global ed-tech companies and Indian start-ups who are a part of NEAT 3.0.

On technical books in regional languages, Pradhan said, "Our diverse languages are our strength

Our diverse languages are our strength and harnessing them is the key to building an innovative society. Learning in regional languages will further develop critical thinking capacity & enable our youth to become global citizens

DHARMENDRA PRADHAN | UNION EDUCATION AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT MINISTER

and harnessing them is the key to building an innovative society. Learning in regional languages will further develop critical thinking capacity & enable our youth to become global citizens".

He also said he will succeed when the literary work of Odia writers and poets such as Bhima Bhoi and Sarala Das will be read by students in Tamil, Marathi and other languages.

Mix-match of different Covid vax safe, more effective: Study

Mix-match of different Covid vaccines is safe and produces higher antibody response, according to a study released by AIG Hospitals in Hyderabad, Monday.

The study, led by AIG Hospitals and researchers from the Asian Healthcare Foundation, sought to determine the safety profile of mixing Covishield and Covaxin, as well as explore the antibody response.

While the study "conclusively showed that mixing of vaccines is absolutely safe", the spike-protein neutralising antibodies in the mixed vaccine groups were found to be significantly higher than the same-vaccine groups.

The team included 330 healthy volunteers who were not vaccinated and had no history of Covid

infection. Of these, 44 (approximately 13 per cent) participants were found to be seronegative, that is, they didn't have Covid-related antibodies, while the rest 87 per cent were found to have Covid-related antibodies.

"One of the incidental findings of the study is the seropositivity among our population. About 87 per cent participants who didn't get vaccinated and never tested positive for Covid had the Covid-related antibodies. This means our population might have developed significant antibodies against the Covid because of the huge Delta wave that we endured," said D Nageshwar Reddy, Chairman, AIG Hospitals, in a statement.

The team divided the 44 participants into four groups: people

who took first and second dose of Covishield, people who took first and second dose of Covaxin, people who took first dose of Covishield and second dose of Covaxin, and lastly, people who took first dose of Covaxin and second dose of Covishield.

The team followed all the participants for 60 days and found none of the participants developing any adverse effect.

The Omicron variant is considered to have more than 30 mutations in the spike protein, which enables it to evade vaccines as well as spread faster.

According to the study, mixing different vaccines can help tackle the new variant much more effectively than two-doses that have shown to be ineffective.

Spike-protein neutralising antibodies are the ones which kill the virus and reduce the overall infectivity. We found that when the first and second doses are of different vaccines, the spike-protein antibody response is four times higher compared to two doses of the same vaccine

D NAGESHWAR REDDY | CHAIRMAN, AIG HOSPITALS, HYDERABAD



"Spike-protein neutralising antibodies are the ones which kill the virus and reduce the overall infectivity. We found that when the first and second doses are of different vaccines, the spike-protein antibody response is four times higher compared to two doses of the same vaccine," Reddy said.

"This is particularly important when considering the third booster

dose. The concept of a booster is to elicit robust antibody response and help in killing the virus. Mixed doses can certainly boost these spike-protein neutralising antibodies and will enhance the vaccines' effectiveness even against the Omicron variant," he said.

The researchers have shared the data from the study with the Indian Council for Medical Research to be considered as a reference study while deciding on the "Prevention" doses starting January 10.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, last week, had announced that healthcare/frontline workers, as well as elderly population (aged more than 60) with comorbidities, will be prioritised for a precautionary dose from January 10 onwards.

IANS

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SHORT TAKES

Sambalpur gets new Collector

Bhubaneswar: In a minor reshuffle in IAS cadre, the state government Monday appointed Dibya Jyoti Parida as the Collector of Sambalpur in place of Shubham Saxena. At present, Parida, a 2016-batch IAS officer, is serving as the Commissioner of Rourkela Municipal Corporation with additional charge of CEO, Rourkela Smart City Ltd, and Secretary of Rourkela Development Authority. Saxena, a 2013-IAS officer, has been transferred and posted as the Joint Secretary to Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment department. He has been directed to get himself relieved immediately by handing over charge to the ADM, Sambalpur and join his new place of posting. Similarly, 2018-batch IAS officer Shubhankar Mohapatra is the new Commissioner of the Rourkela Municipal Corporation. He has been allowed to remain in additional charge of CEO, Rourkela Smart City Ltd, ADM, Rourkela and Secretary, Rourkela Development Authority in addition to his own duties.

Neighbours kill man over dispute

Rayagada: In a shocking incident, a resident of Harijan Sahi in Kumbhikota village under Sadar Police limits of Rayagada district died following a tussle with his neighbours over release of drain water. As per reports, a fight broke out between the families of Ajay Khosla and Gorekha Khora of the village, who were at loggerheads over the release of drain water. During the clash, Ajay fainted on the spot and was rushed to the local Primary Health Centre (PHC) where the doctor declared him 'brought dead'. When informed, police reached the location and started a probe into the matter. Ajay's body was sent to the district headquarters hospital (DHH) for autopsy. Ajay's family members have registered an FIR with the Rayagada police against four persons, sources said.

Covid: Nabarangpur SBI shut for 2 days

Nabarangpur: The main branch of State Bank of India here will remain closed for two days after two of its employees tested positive for Covid-19, reports said. The district administration and the bank authorities took a decision in this regard, Monday. A deputy manager of the bank tested positive for the virus Sunday evening, while another staff tested positive Monday. Later, the bank authorities informed the Collector Kamal Lochan Mishra about the development. The bank will remain closed Monday and Tuesday. The closure of the bank for two days has been notified to the customers. At least five persons in the district have tested positive for the virus. Meanwhile, 18 persons are under home isolation in Nabarangpur.

Fresh move for seat reservation in ULBs

District magistrates are empowered for delimitation of the wards and reservation of seats for SC, ST and women in the municipalities/NACs

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: Following the amendment of the municipal laws removing reservation for OBC people, the state government has initiated a fresh move for delimitation of wards and reservation of seats in the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) for the upcoming rural polls.

Director of Municipal Administration (DMA) Sangramjit Nayak has written to all Collectors and Commissioners of Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Berhampur in this regard.

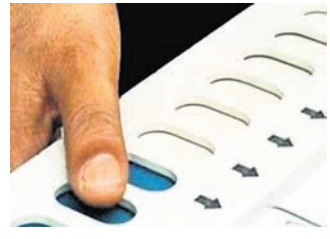
Nayak said that consequent to the judgement of the Supreme Court regarding reservation of seats for backward class of citizens (BCC), the state government has amended the relevant provisions of the Odisha Municipal Act, 1950 and Odisha Municipal Corporation Act, 2003 by way of ordinances.

The government has decided that the delimitation of wards and reservation of seats for the general election to the 107 municipalities and NACs (except those located in Scheduled Areas) and three corporation towns of the state will be made afresh, he said.

Officials have been asked to conduct the delimitation and reservation of seats as per the 2011 Census report and in accordance with the provisions of the two Acts.

Further, reservation of seats will be made in favour of SC, ST and women as per the provisions under Section 11 of the Odisha Municipality Act, 1950.

As per the Act, the district magistrates are empowered for delimitation of the wards and reservation of seats for SC, ST and women in the municipalities/ NACs. The process followed so far related to the municipalities and NACs located in the Scheduled areas will remain valid, pointed out Nayak.



Appeal petitions from the persons aggrieved with the notification of the DMs regarding division of municipal area into wards or assignment of wards will be received in the office of the DM concerned before the stipulated date and time.

Collectors were asked to complete the delimitation process by January 3, while people having any issue with the process can submit his/her plea by January 12. The District Magistrates will publish the list of the reserved seats, January 13.

People who would be aggrieved even after this can submit their grievances to the Housing and Urban Development department between January 13 and 27. Hearing of the grievances will start from January 28, Nayak said in his letter. However, no final date has been set for completion of the entire procedure.

Mom kills infant, dumps body in well

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, Jan 3: A woman allegedly killed her two-month-old son over a fight with her husband at Kanpur village under Marshghai police limits in Kendrapara district late Sunday night. Later, she dumped the body into a well.

The incident has spread shockwaves across the area. The woman has been identified as Laxmipriya.

According to sources, Laxmipriya allegedly had a love affair with a man named Satyaranjan Parida of Kanpur village. The couple got married two years ago, but frequently indulged in altercations over penury. As arguments between



Initially, the woman alleged that some other people had killed the baby, but later admitted to having committed the crime

the couple continued, it disturbed their marital life.

Two months back, Laxmipriya had gone to her father's house, after giving birth to a baby boy. Her brother-in-law brought her back to her husband's house a couple of days back. The couple again had an altercation on the intervening night before going to bed.

At midnight, Laxmipriya suddenly started screaming that her son had gone missing. Unable to trace the baby, Satyaranjan called the police.

Suspecting foul play, police detained the couple. During interrogation, Laxmipriya admitted to her crime and confessed that she had strangled her son and put the

body in a sack. Later, she dumped it in a well, she said.

"She was mentally upset and was complaining of chest pain for not being able to breast-feed the baby. Due to her pain, Laxmipriya wanted to abandon her child and move to her father's house. The incident took place between 12.30 am and 2.30 am on the fateful day. Initially, she alleged that some other people had killed the baby. But later admitted to her crime," Satyaranjan said.

After Fire services personnel recovered the body from a nearby well, police sent it to Kendrapara District Headquarters Hospital (DHH) for post-mortem, an official at Marshghai police station said.

ITI students make beach-cleaning tool

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Jan 3: ITI Berhampur, which has earned a name in the society for its innovations, has developed a new device called "Sand Cleaning Tool" to clean the sea beaches. This manual sea beach cleaner is eco-friendly, easy to use and cost effective.

According to the Ganjam Collector Vijay Amrut Kulange, thousands of such devices can be used throughout the beaches of the state. The students of this ITI have helped a lot in the movement of district administration



to get the Blue Flag Beach tag for Gopalpur beach.

This cleaner is light-weight, easy to handle and cleans up to 1,000 sq ft of the beach in an hour. The manufacturing cost of each device is just

around ₹4,000.

"It is a new innovation by the institute in the new year. It will make the ongoing cleanliness drive at the famous Gopalpur beach easier," said institute principal Dr Rajat Kumar Panigrahy.

Kulange launched the unique sand cleaning device Monday in the presence of Berhampur Sub-Collector, Keerthi Vasan V and Panigrahy. Kulange highly appreciated the efforts of the students in developing the new concept. The cleanliness will attract tourists and increase tourism in the area, he said.

JOB STIR



Members of Paschima Odisha Anganwadi Karmi 'O' Sahayika Sangha taking out a rally demanding government employee status, salary hike and others in Sambalpur, Monday

Minor boy returns 5 hrs after 'kidnapping'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargarh, Jan 3: A nine-year-old boy, who was allegedly kidnapped by two bike-borne miscreants Sunday evening from near his house at Cement Nagar in ACC Colony of Bargarh town, was rescued by some locals nearly five hours after the incident.

According to sources, the victim, identified as Mohammad Muazzam, is a Class III student and son of Jamil Akhtar Khan, chief manager (CSR Head) of ACC cement factory in Bargarh.

According to an FIR lodged with Bargarh Town police, the boy was kidnapped by the two unidentified persons when he was playing in front of his house at around 6.45 pm Sunday.



Muazzam was spotted by some locals near Bargarh High School a few hours after the alleged kidnapping

The kidnapers had dropped a hand-written note in English near the garage of his house, in which they had demanded ₹10 lakh ransom to release his son. Muazzam's father mentioned in the report. Acting on the FIR, Bargarh Town police constituted a special squad and initiated a search operation to trace the minor; the source added. On the other hand, Muazzam

was spotted by some locals near Bargarh High School a few hours after the alleged kidnapping. Later, they contacted the minor's parents and also informed local police about it.

"After receiving the FIR, we blocked all exit and entry roads to Bargarh town. Besides, we conducted raids at several suspected locations. We believe that kid-

nappers left the minor boy near a local high school to escape the eyes of the police. We will nab the abductors soon." Additional SP of Bargarh PK Mishra said while briefing the media.

"My friends and I were strolling in front of Bargarh High School at around 11.30 pm, when we spotted the minor walking alone near the boundary wall. As we were aware of the kidnapping news, without wasting any time, we rushed to the boy to verify if he was the same minor," a local youth named Sanjit Kumar Chhatraia, who is said to have rescued Muazzam from near the school, said.

After ascertaining that the minor was Muazzam, the locals contacted the police and handed over the kidnapped boy to his parents.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
PHULBANI (R&B) DIVISION, PHULBANI
e-mail-eeplbrb@gmail.com
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)
'e' procurement Notice
No. B-950
Bid Identification No. EE-R&B-PLB-38-2021-22
1) (a) Name of the work : Compound Wall-7 (Seven) Nos.
Estimated Cost : Rs.15.14 lakhs - Rs.56.235 lakhs
2) Period of Completion : As notified in Tender Call Notice.
3) Date & Time of availability of Bid documents in the portal : From 20.01.2022, 10.00 A.M. to 29.01.2022, 5.00 P.M.
4) Last date / time for receipt of bids in the portal : Up to 5.00 P.M. of dated 29.01.2022.
5) Name and address of the O.I.T. : Superintending Engineer, Phulbani (R&B) Division.
Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in
Corrigendum if any shall be published only in the above website.
Sd./- Superintending Engineer
Phulbani (R&B) Division
OIPR-34066/11/0025/2122

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Odisha - 768001
Phone No. 0663-2411316/E Mail: sambalpurm.hud@nic.in
'e' Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No.: 10/SMC_SBP/2021-22
No. C-1771- The Municipal Commissioner on behalf of Municipal Corporation, Sambalpur invites tenders in Single Cover System. Bid documents consisting of specification the Schedule of Quantities and the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in the Govt. Website i.e. <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>
1. Name of work: "Supply, Installation and Commissioning of outdoor Advertisement Hoardings at different locations under Sambalpur Municipal Corporation"
2. Date and time of availability of the bid documents in the portal: From 05.00 P.M. of 31.12.2021 to 05.00 PM of 13.01.2022.
3. Last Date/Time for receipt of bids in the portal: 05.00 PM of 13.01.2022.
4. Bids will be opened on : 11.00 AM of Dt.15.01.2022.
5. Name and address of the officer inviting bid:
Municipal Commissioner,
Sambalpur Municipal Corporation, Sambalpur
Sd./- Commissioner, Sambalpur Municipal Corporation
OIPR-13122/11/0031/2122

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'E' PROCUREMENT SYSTEMS
Tender Notice No. Sr.DMM/KUR/EP/2021-22/13, Dtd : 03.01.2022
The following tenders have been uploaded on website www.reps.gov.in
SL. NO. 01 : TENDER NO. 81205093B, BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS : TRANSFORMER MAIN 5400 KVA FOR WAG-7, QTY.: 02 NOS.
SL. NO. 02 : TENDER NO. 81216139, BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS : MAINTENANCE FREE VRLA BATTERY, QTY.: 19 SETS.
SL. NO. 03 : TENDER NO. 81215985, BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS : TRACK BASED RAIL LUBRICATORS HYDRAULIC TYPE, QTY.: 10 NOS.
SL. NO. 04 : TENDER NO. 81216176, BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS : MILD STEEL FLAT OF SIZE (50 X 5) MM, QTY.: 48000 KGS.
Tender Closing Time & Date : At 1500 hrs. of 31.01.2022 (For Sl. No. 1 & 2) & at 1500 hrs. of 07.02.2022 (For Sl. No. 3 & 4).
Sr. Divisional Materials Manager/ Khurda Road
PR-694/M/21-22

Centenary of Sambalpur students' school boycott

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Jan 3: History is replete with instances of freedom fighters and their struggles against the Britisher rulers for the Independence of the country.

However, students of Sambalpur Zilla School boycotting classes to join the non-cooperation movement of Gandhiji January 3, 1921 was the first such incident in the history of our freedom movement. The non-cooperation movement by the students of this school completed 100 years, January 3, 2022. A memorial committee was formed to observe the day.

Possibly none of the students of the Zilla School who had participated in the non-cooperation movement are alive today. However, the path shown by them still inspires many to think and do something for the country.

Historian Deepak Panda has mentioned about the students' movement in his book 'Sambalpur Itihas'. Many people of undivided Sambalpur district were drawn towards Gandhiji's call for Independence of the country through non-violence and participated in the non-cooperation movement. The non-cooperation movement

NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT

drew widespread support from people of all walks of life.

Reports said that the students first assembled under the foothill of Budharaja January 2, 1921 and decided to boycott classes when the school reopened after their vacation, January 3, 1921. As the school reopened, the students staged a demonstration outside the main gate of the school. Over 200 students participated in this demonstration.

Later, the students boycotted their classes and took out a rally which passed through the main thoroughfares of Sambalpur town. Eminent freedom fighters Lakshmi Narayan Mishra,



Benimadhav Supkar, Nrusingh Guru, Gouri Shankar Sahani, Krutartha Acharya, Arun Das, Md Hussain, Abdul Mazid, Chandra Sekhar Panigrahi, and Jagannath Mishra led the students' rally.

The rally reached Balibandha where the students participated in a meeting. Chandrasekhar Behera, Dasharathi Mishra, Lodhabhai Tharia, Ratan Singhbhai, Seth Ram Pratap, Janardan Pujari, Anandiram Shukla, Ramakrushna Behera, and Mahendranath Verma addressed the students there.

The move by the students spread like wildfire and became the top story in the English daily 'The Servant', which was then published from Kolkata.

The move caught the ad-

ministration rusticated all the students who boycotted classes and participated in the freedom movement.

The non-cooperation movement soon drew widespread support from across the country. The students even opposed the visit of a British Prince to Sambalpur. The locals also observed Sambalpur bandh in support of the students and meetings were organised at various places.

Later, a school named National School was opened at Frazer School where the rusticated students were allowed to study. Teachers including Shankar Prasad Padhi, Sayeed Abdula, and Baladev Bahidar taught the students there.

On being apprised about the students' movement, eminent freedom fighter Pandit Nilakantha Das, who was then working as a lecturer in a Kolkata college, resigned from service and returned to Sambalpur to teach the students. Another teacher Bhagirathi Mishra, after completing his studies in Kolkata, also returned to Sambalpur to teach the students. The school was later renamed as Chandra Sekhar Behera Zilla School to honour the great freedom fighter.

“ Love is the keynote, Joy is the music, Knowledge is the performer, the infinite All is the composer and audience.”
SRI AUROBINDO



Gujarat to India

When Prime Minister Narendra Modi was on the ascendant in Gujarat, there was a lot of talk about the so-called ‘Gujarat model’ that could be applied to the entire country. This of course was talking about the economic model. But not all Indians had learned about the full package that Modi had promised the people of Gujarat. Samruddhi, in the sense of economic prosperity, was only one half of the promised story. The other half was salamati, a Hindustani word that has become a part of the Gujarati language and a way of speaking to denote safety and security.

But now, we appear to dislike anything but a Sanskritised version. So, there are many telling us how saal-mubarak is not Indian and we must instead use nootnvarsh-abhinandan or any other Sanskritised words to wish each other – be it for Diwali or even the turn of the calendar December 31.

After almost seven years of Modi at the national helm of affairs, Bharat has arrived and has taken hold. Every person, or almost every person it may seem, is now consciously religious and the first lesson that has been internalised is that you cannot afford to be tolerant. The call and consensus are to respond violently to any provocation and go to the extent of extinguishing life by taking the law in your hands.

The story of Guru Nanak has receded from folklore and also our collective memory. He travelled with his disciple and follower Mardaana to Mecca. He retired one summer evening in a sarai, or should it be called a dharmashala in keeping with the version of ‘Indianness’ that is in vogue. A moulvi saw Guru Nanak stretching his legs towards the Kaaba. He reprimanded the Guru. The Guru requested him to lift his legs and put them in the direction that may be the right one. But whichever direction the feet of the Guru turned, the Kaaba appeared to move in that direction. The priest then sought forgiveness from Guru Nanak, the message being that the house of the Lord is everywhere and in all directions.

From those roots, we have arrived today, when we are ready to lynch and kill the person who has defiled or misbehaved in a Gurudwara. Zero tolerance for hurt, real or imagined, to religious sentiments. Punishment is swift. Exterminate. This is how we have learned to keep ourselves salamati, or safe, secure, sound, protected!

Welcome to the Gujarat Model, Part II, as it plays out in the Akhand Bharat of today. Let us not blame Gandhi. He practiced non-violence and sarvadharama samabhava- equal respect for all religions. But we have ingrained violence into the Indian fabric. Further, the version of secularism practiced in the country gave space to intolerance and fanatic elements among certain sections, the disease eventually spreading to most sects and religions. We must come to terms with the picture of a distorted idea of non-violence and secularism that has been promoted and supported for decades.

Against this national background, Gujarat came in handy for the Hindu fundamentalists. One can trace how and why Gujarat became a Hindutva laboratory. After the formation of Gujarat State in May 1960, the Patel community that lived largely in rural areas and was engaged in agriculture benefited from the land reforms, especially in Saurashtra. The Patel community is very industrious. With the ownership of land, they could work hard to reap benefits. They did. Agriculture improved significantly and the Patels prospered. They became educated and also entered the world of business that was hitherto in the hands of Banias and Brahmins. The profits from non-farm enterprises were invested in agriculture and agriculture surplus was again invested in expanding non-farm businesses. Patels now wanted social and religious recognition, and space in regional politics. This was difficult as Brahmins and Banias had full control.

Patels then turned to the Swaminarayan sect and carved out their socio-religious space. They were yet to get political space. Whatever chance they might have had, the KHAM (Kshatriya, Harijan, Adivasi, and Muslim) alliance and joint strategy in the early 1980s took away. Congress and secular parties were not open to them either for sharing power. They turned quite easily to the RSS-BJP fold.

The Patels are not meek or mild-mannered. The RSS-BJP combine was looking for precisely this kind of force to kickstart its run. The Patels were offered space. That is how the Hindutva laboratory was set up in Gujarat. Patels and others who were left out in power-sharing arrangements till that time found welcoming space in the BJP. From 1960 to 1990, the Congress ruled Gujarat. Except for Chimanbhai Patel and Babubhai Patel, Patels did not get much space. It was in 1990 when the KHAM strategy threatened to remain strong and upset the entry of the Patels into power structures, Chimanbhai Patel and Keshubhai Patel forged unity and a non-Congress government was formed. Congress returned but only for a brief period, in 1994-95. Since then, the BJP has been ruling Gujarat. With political patronage, RSS and extreme Hindutva forces led by select anti-Gandhi upper caste groups became active and culminated in the Gujarat of 2002.

In 2002, Narendra Modi fought the assembly elections with the promise of providing salamati and samruddhi. In 2014, he fought the national general elections with the promise of samruddhi. It was supposed to be one of a development agenda at work. In the first five years, samruddhi with slogans such as sabka saath, sabka vikaas were made popular. However, the forces that were let loose in the country, especially the cow-belt (now extended to Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka), played out in the open by perpetrating violent suppression of minorities. And the leader maintained his mystical silence.

Come the 2019 general elections, and the theme returned. Akhand Hindustan is now the dream and the leader brought in his infamous lieutenant to command the inner policing and law and order of the country and the team became formidable. Gujarat cooled down after 2002 because the followership was out of fear, and people in Gujarat generally don’t indulge in violence as they focus more on running businesses. The communal violence that was unleashed under the alleged state support by the Gujarat Hindutva laboratory was bad, but its mutation in other states, especially the cow belt, took on even more virulent forms and continues to play havoc. The Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb stands severely damaged and the imagined Akhand Bharat-varsh that is supposed to have existed 1,200 years back under the Hindu sanskriti is now blown to smithereens. If the people of Hindustan do not act now, Sardar Patel’s Akhand Bharat will move toward Balkanisation. The merchant of dreams cannot continue to call the tunes forever. A modern secular state with freedom, justice, equity, and fraternity is under threat and so are its citizens.

The writer is a noted Gandhian economist and a former Vice Chancellor of Gujarat Vidyapith.

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Sudarshan Iyengar

The merchant of dreams cannot continue to call the tunes forever. A modern secular state with freedom, justice, equity, and fraternity is under threat and so are its citizens



Ajit Ranade

THE LINKING OF THE AADHAAR WITH THE VOTER IDENTITY CARD IS A PATH BEST NOT TAKEN, OR ONE THAT SHOULD BE TRODDEN ON VERY, VERY CAREFULLY

India takes great pride in her Election Commission, an independent authority entrusted with the conduct of free and fair elections for the Parliament and State Assemblies. It has the reputation of being independent and impartial, and it ensures people vote without fear, and that there is a level playing field among contestants. The EC was born one day before the Republic of India – January 25, 1950. The EC is bound to act within the legal framework enshrined in the Representation of People Act 1951 (RPA). Only Parliament has the power to amend the RPA which has been done from time to time. It has been amended a few times in the past 70 years. One notable amendment was the transfer of election petitions from tribunals to high courts, which was why Prime Minister Indira Gandhi’s election petition was heard in the Allahabad High Court where her election in 1975 was declared null and void. But major amendments to RPA have been pending for too long.

There are, for instance, the various recommendations of Law Commissions over many years that have not been implemented. The EC itself has written to the Prime Minister and the government to ensure that some important electoral reform laws are passed by Parliament. But this has fallen on deaf ears. One of the most important suggestions has been to disqualify criminal candidates from standing for election. As of now the disqualification criteria in the RPA is too weak, and has failed to check the rising number of elected lawmakers who face serious criminal charges.

In the absence of any action from Parliament the Supreme Court has often stepped in to remedy certain anomalies. This is how the NOTA (none of the above) button came on the ballot. This is how we have instant unseating of convicted lawmakers, even if the criminal case goes for appeal in a higher court. This is how, thanks to a 2003 judgement, the voters get to know criminal antecedents of their candidates through self-sworn affidavits. None of these reforms were brought in by Parliament but are

FOCUS AADHAAR & VOTER ID

A PROBLEMATIC LINKING



The real fear is that Aadhaar linkage can become a powerful tool for voter profiling, wholesale disenfranchisement, gerrymandering and all kinds of electoral mischief, in the hands of those who have the database

in force thanks to the Supreme Court in response to public interest litigations. The desire of the public to bring political parties under the ambit of Right to Information is still languishing in the courts. This reform is also a reform too far.

When Parliament has chosen to act, it has often done so with dubious intention. One example is that of introducing electoral bonds, to increase the transparency of political funding. That law makes it impossible to know the identity of the donor or the recipient negating transparency completely. The word ‘transparency’ is used for this legislation almost in an Orwellian sense! One more recent example of Parliamentary action on the RPA is the amendment passed last month. This is the linkage of Aadhaar with the voter identity card issued by the EC. It was passed in the Lok Sabha December 20 without any discussion. It was passed in the Rajya Sabha the next day with a voice vote, even when there was strong demand for recording the vote. The video of the voice vote clearly shows the resounding vocal opposition to the bill, but it was still passed. Be that as it may, the Aadhaar linkage is very problematic, for several reasons.

Firstly, this amendment directly contradicts, at least prima facie, the Supreme Court judgement of 2018 which clearly said that Aadhaar is

not mandatory for all citizens. Only for those receiving welfare benefits, and for a limited purpose only, can Aadhaar be made a requirement. That was a landmark judgement delivered in what was the second longest case ever heard by the Supreme Court.

Secondly, Aadhaar is meant to be a proof of identity not of citizenship. It was never meant to be a proof of being a citizen and of the eligibility to vote. In fact, the construction of the voter roll is a critical responsibility of the EC and cannot be outsourced to another agency outside its ambit. The Aadhaar authority is not under the control of the EC. The power to add, delete and modify a voter record is with the electoral registration officer, and is circumscribed by the stringent requirement of physical verification. This can’t be outsourced to an authority like the Unique Identity Authority i.e. Aadhaar. When the EC undertook a pilot project, a ‘purification’ exercise in 2015 to link the Aadhaar to voter id, it was struck down by the Supreme Court. But some damage had been done in that pilot project in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. With the Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC) and Aadhaar linkage exercise undertaken by the EC as part of its ‘National Electoral Roll Purification and Authentication Programme’, lakhs of voters were affected. Nearly 30 lakh voters in Telangana and

21 lakh voters in AP had been struck off the rolls due to a ‘de-duplication’ exercise which created a big furore. None of these voters were given a chance for a hearing and neither was the deletion subjected to a rigorous verification exercise, as would have been done under normal EC procedures.

Thirdly, even if the current amendment says linking Aadhaar is voluntary, it is not clear what that means. Will the linking be done at enrolment or at voting time? How is the Aadhaar number going to be verified, if not by the biometric method? But that has been explicitly ruled out. Will the electoral officer just put a tick mark against the voter record or will the Aadhaar number be entered? In which case it would be in the public domain violating a very basic requirement of privacy of the Aadhaar number. The current wording of the legislation says that denial to furnish the Aadhaar number to the electoral officer can only be due to a ‘sufficient cause’. This implies that blanket denial is not to be allowed.

The government itself via an affidavit before the Supreme Court has said that the Aadhaar biometric identification fails on average 12 per cent of the time. That is a huge error margin, especially when elections are keenly fought and winning margins can be as thin as single digits. In Jharkhand, it was found that 88 per cent of the ration cards deleted because of Aadhaar verification failure were genuine cases. So Aadhaar failure invariably is a burden that largely falls on the poor, the vulnerable, the indigent who often live in backward areas lacking in the infrastructure of electricity or connectivity.

Finally, the real fear is that Aadhaar linkage can become a powerful tool for voter profiling, wholesale disenfranchisement, gerrymandering and all kinds of electoral mischief, in the hands of those who have the database. The linking of the Aadhaar with the voter identity card is a path best not taken, or one that should be trodden on very, very carefully.

The writer is an economist and Senior Fellow, Takshashila Institution.

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SPECTRUM BANKING

Corporates can wait; focus on existing set-up



Bikash Narayan Mishra

THE LARGER QUESTION IS WHETHER INDIA IS READY TO ALLOW CORPORATE HOUSES ENTER MAINSTREAM BANKING AND HANDLE THE ASSOCIATED RISKS

It is not well with another private bank, RBL Bank. The CEO has left the bank abruptly and RBI has decided to appoint an additional director on the board. Last month, the RBI superseded the board of Anil Ambani-promoted Reliance Capital Ltd in view of payment defaults and serious governance issues. A similar story played out in March 2020, when the banking regulator placed Yes Bank under moratorium.

Undoubtedly, these concerns would have weighed heavily on the RBI’s decision as to not accept the recommendation of its Internal Working Group (IWG) relating to proposed ownership of banks by large corporate or industrial houses. RBI had set up this working group in June 2020 and the IWG submitted its report in November 2020.

While the recommendation relating to ownership is still under consideration, the larger question is whether India is ready to allow corporate houses enter mainstream banking and handle the associated risks. In the last three decades, private banks have grown substantially, and they now occupy nearly 40% of the banking space as against 10% in 1991, at the time of liberalisation. Private banks have made

significant contribution towards automation, personalised banking and customised new products but at the same time they have been found wanting when it comes to financial inclusion, infrastructure lending and customer inclusiveness.

Take for example the recent report by credit bureau TransUnion CIBIL Limited which states that of the total loan applications received under the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme, public sector banks (PSBs) have led from the front. They reached out more to tiny and small borrowers. PSBs with their extensive network operationalised the scheme as soon as it was launched. The story was no different for opening of Jan-Dhan accounts in 2014, demonetisation management in 2016 or offering of essential banking services during the pandemic.

Will corporate houses with focus on profitability show the same tenacity and determination towards furthering such schemes or whether armed with new banking license they will also compete for the housing and car loan segment? If the latter is the case, why should they have access to low cost deposit of individuals and institutions?

The concerns over corporate governance issues are also not un-

founded. In the recent past, many private banks have been under the radar for various issues and some bigger ones have shown signs of inherent weakness. Banks basically are intermediaries between depositors and loanees, and there are admittedly two lines of defence – the internal bank board and the regulator. The recent failures of some private banks can be termed as governance failure and attributed to lack of independence of their boards.

The fintech companies have already taken the payment space from the banks. The big technology companies are also trying to enter the financial intermediation space. In this backdrop, it needs to be ascertained what kind of new banks we want in India and are corporate houses the right candidates to be picked up for this new journey.

During the last three years, notwithstanding an accommodative monetary policy the credit offtake has not happened on expected lines. This is not on account of absence of corporate/industrial houses-owned banks but due to a variety of factors which include skill shortage, absence of a system of incentivisation for performers, the accountability policy, and HR/leadership issues especially

in the PSBs. For now, it will be more prudent to focus on the existing players and bring about the transformation that is required for sound, transparent and robust banking practices. For a nation under transition like ours profit maximisation and social objectives both should always be part of the strategies for all banks. It is a fact that although Indian banking is over 250 years old, things started happening in the banking space in the country post nationalisation and post liberalisation. While PSBs have been associated with nation-building for the last more than five decades the private banks started making their presence felt after 1991. There are issues with regard to asset quality and governance in PSBs. But most of the private banks; both the old ones and the new generation ones too are having the same issues at the moment. It is also a fact that we need strong PSBs and equally strong private banks to embark on a path of inclusive and rapid progress. The RBI will do well if it comes out with more a stringent framework if it considers letting corporates enter the fray.

The writer is a senior adviser, Indian Banks’ Association.

Same old tactics

Sir, China’s revelation that it has standardised official names for 15 places in Arunachal Pradesh has worsened the already strained relations between India and China. However, the Indian government rejected the renaming of places and declared that the state has always been and will always be an integral part of India. This move comes along with China’s new border law. Eight of the 15 places in ‘Zangnan’ (Chinese name for Arunachal Pradesh) are for inhabited areas, four are for mountains, two for rivers and one for a mountain pass. According to India, assigning invented names to places does not alter reality. It must be noted that this is not the first time China attempted to rename places in Arunachal. After the Dalai Lama’s visit to the state in 2017, China had assigned Chinese names in Arunachal. With the implementation of China’s new border law, India is likely to face more challenges at the northern border. China is likely to come up with more border model villages to be used both for military and civilian purposes. The latest move by China comes against the backdrop of the ongoing standoff between India and China at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh. Although the two troops de-escalated from a few friction points, they continue to face each other in other stand-off points in eastern Ladakh.

Venu GS, KOLLAM (KERALA)

Out of COVID loop

Sir, On the one hand, the spirit of the people has been just amazing and the example is the way people have been venturing out in large numbers to celebrate many recently held festivals and functions. On the other hand, most people have been turning a blind eye to the current COVID status especially in the wake of the Omicron variant by not wearing masks in open places. These people have been posing a great threat to the current state of affairs. Even though vaccination has been a big hit across the board worldwide, people should come out wearing masks. Plus, the governments and all the media houses should come forward to churn out daily local feeds about important COVID protocols through proper means/channels like an ad with a strong message and celebrity voice/word of advice. After all, countries have to look into their economic needs like agriculture activities and industrial operations. For this, the international community must come out of the COVID loop soon.

P. Senthil Saravana Durai, MUMBAI

Letters

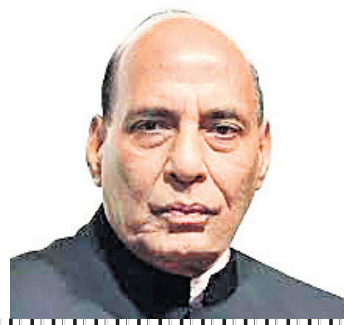
TO THE EDITOR

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WISDOM CORNER

- “ The world is indeed a mixture of truth and make-believe. Discard the make-believe and take the truth.” **RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHANSA**
- “ The degree of freedom from unwanted thoughts and the degree of concentration on a single thought are the measures to gauge spiritual progress.” **RAMANA MAHARSHI**
- “ The water in a vessel is sparkling; the water in the sea is dark. The small truth has words which are clear; the great truth has great silence.” **RABINDRANATH TAGORE**



India is undertaking such reforms in space sector which were not thought about earlier
RAJNATH SINGH | DEFENCE MINISTER

CENSUS UNLIKELY ANYTIME SOON

The decennial census, supposed to be held in 2020-21 but postponed due to the Covid pandemic, will not be held anytime soon. The Centre has directed the states not to alter the boundaries of the districts and other civil and police units till June 2022 -- a mandatory requirement three months prior to the country's biggest enumeration exercise



of the day quote

The risk of Omicron infection is increasing in the country. This virus is the biggest threat to those who have not yet taken the vaccination. It is my humble request to all those people to get their vaccination done at the nearest health centre immediately

Chartered accountants have an onerous responsibility in guiding the business community to follow the rules and regulations

There is a feeling that very little happened in ISRO during 2021. That feeling is primarily due to less number of launches

SHORT TAKES

Boy hit by stray CISF bullet, dies

Chennai: An 11-year-old boy, who was shot accidentally by a bullet from the shooting range of the CISF in Tamil Nadu's Pudukottai district, succumbed to his injuries in a hospital Monday. Puzazhendhi, after being hit in the head by the stray bullet at a distance of 2km from the shooting range while he was at his grandparents' residence on Thursday, was rushed to the Pudukottai medical college hospital and after his condition turned critical, to the Thanjavur medical college.

T'gana BJP chief held

Karimnagar (Telangana): Telangana BJP President and Lok Sabha member Bandi Sanjay Kumar was Monday sent to 14-day judicial remand following his arrest after a foiled protest plan, with the party's national leadership dubbing the police action as "murder of democracy." BJP President J P Nadda said Chief Minister K Chandrababhan Naidu, also the chief of the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) acted out of frustration due to the party's win in a recent bypoll (Huzurabad) and the popular support it has been receiving in the southern state.

Six Naxals surrender

Raipur: Six Naxals, two of them carrying a total bounty of Rs 2 lakh on their heads, surrendered before police in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district Monday, an officer said. These ultras, including a woman, were active in the Malangir Area Committee of Maoists, Dantewada Superintendent of Police Abhishek Pallava said. They turned themselves in before police officials at the Arampur police station as they were impressed by the 'Lon Varratu' rehabilitation drive and disappointed with the "hollow" Maoist ideology, he said.

Two arrested for killing mother-son

Amethi: Two persons have been arrested for the murder of their friend and his mother in this district of Uttar Pradesh. The bodies of Sushila Tripathi, 62, and her son Raju, 27, were found inside their house in Gauriganj area December 23. The arrested have been identified as Raman and Vinod. According to police reports, Raman was a friend of Raju and the latter had slapped Raman's wife during a heated exchange over a trivial issue.

Cong targets Modi after Malik's 'arrogant' remark

Senior Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge shared a video clip on Twitter of Malik, where he is saying that the Prime Minister was 'arrogant' when he went to meet him on the issue of farmers and had a fight with him within five minutes



Mehhalaya Governor Satya Pal Malik

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 3: The Congress Monday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to come clean on Meghalaya Governor Satya Pal Malik's allegation that he was "arrogant" on the farmers' issue and demanded an unconditionally apology if it was true.

Congress general secretary Randeep Surjewala said the Prime Minister should come forward and tell the truth to the nation, and sack the governor, if he is not telling the truth.

The entire nation is shocked with the text of conversation between BJP-appointed Governor Malik and the prime minister on the farmers' agitation. The Congress leader said the "anti-farmer" and "insensitive" face of Prime Minister

Modi, his government and the BJP stands exposed.

"If Governor Malik is lying, he should be sacked and an FIR should be registered against him. But if he is not lying, Prime Minister Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah must come forward and apologise to India's toiling farmers and farm labourers. Otherwise, they will never pardon them," the Congress chief spokesperson told reporters. "We demand that prime minister and home minister apologise unconditionally to farmers and tell them by when will families of farmers who died (during the farm laws protest) will be compensated," he said. Targeting Modi, he said, "Mr Prime Minister, is this the language of the person holding the highest public office and elected by farmers." Senior Congress leader

Mallikarjun Kharge asked Modi whether Malik's remarks were true. Kharge also shared a video clip on Twitter of Malik from a function at Haryana's Charkhi Dadri, where he is saying that the prime minister was "arrogant" when he went to meet him on the issue of farmers and had a fight with him within five minutes.

Malik claimed in the video that Modi was not ready to accept that farmers who were protesting against three agriculture laws of the Centre last year died due to him and instead, asked him to meet Shah.

"Meghalaya's Governor Sri. Satya Pal Malik is on record saying PM was 'arrogant' on the issue of farmers and Home Minister Amit Shah called the PM as 'mad'. Constitutional authorities speaking about each other with such contempt!" Kharge tweeted. "Narendra Modi ji is this true?" the Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha asked. Malik is also heard saying in the video clip that when he met Shah, the latter told him that "people have clouded his (Modi's) vision" and he should keep meeting the Prime Minister.

The Congress also shared Malik's comments on its Twitter handle and alleged that it was due to Modi's arrogance that so many farmers had died.

Terrorist killed in encounter identified



AGENCIES

Srinagar, Jan 3: A foreign terrorist has been killed in an encounter between militants and security forces in Srinagar. The slain terrorist was involved in the killing of two policemen, officials said Monday.

"Second terrorist killed in Srinagar encounter identified as Hafiz alias Hamza of Pakistan. He was involved in the killing of two policemen in Bandipora after which he shifted to the Harwan area of Srinagar," Jammu and Kashmir police tweeted quoting IGP, Kashmir zone, Vijay Kumar.

The police said that the terrorist was killed in an encounter between near the Shalimar area in Srinagar district Monday.

This was the second encounter in Srinagar in quick succession on Monday. Earlier, the police had said that one dreaded terrorist of proscribed terror outfit LeT Salim Parray has been neutralised. **ARMY FOILS INFILTRATION BID:** An infiltration attempt by terrorists was scuttled along the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir in the early hours of Monday, officials said here. Troops guarding the Hamirpur area of Bimber Gali sector picked up movement of a group of suspected terrorists who were trying to infiltrate into this side from across the border under the cover of darkness, they said.

Govt allows WFH for 50% of its staff below under secretary-level



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 3: The Centre has allowed 50 per cent of its employees below the level of Under Secretary to work from home amid rising coronavirus cases, according to a Personnel Ministry order issued Monday.

Persons with disabilities and pregnant women employees have been exempted from attending the offices, it said.

Central government officers/staff will have to follow staggered timing to avoid overcrowding in the offices, the order said.

All the officers/staff residing in Covid containment zones have also been exempted from coming to office till containment zones are de-notified, it said in the order issued to all central government departments.

"Physical attendance of government servants below the level of Under Secretary shall be restricted to 50 per cent of the actual

Reports that expired Covid shots being given false: Centre

New Delhi: Dismissing reports alleging expired Covid vaccines are being administered in India as "false and misleading", the Centre on Monday clarified that the national regulator had approved the shelf life extension of Covishield and Covaxin in February and October, 2021 respectively. "There have been some media reports alleging that expired vaccines are being administered in India under its national Covid-19 vaccination programme. This is false and misleading and based on incomplete information," the health ministry said in a statement.

strength and the remaining 50 per cent shall work from home," the order said.

SKM to meet Jan 15

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 3: Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait, who was one of the main faces of the farmers' movement, said that the issue of Minimum Support Price (MSP) is pending for a long time, and it is time that the government takes early decision on it.

In an exclusive chat with IANS, Tikait said that a meeting of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) will be held January 15 in which further strategy on MSP will be decided. He said all political parties are hungry for votes and they don't care about the welfare of farmers.

Questioning the government's intention, he said that it has not taken any steps to resolve the issue of MSP nor has there been any discussion with farm leaders on the issue. Also, cases registered against the farmers have not yet been withdrawn, while the farmers who died during the agitation have also not been com-

"All political parties are hungry for votes and they don't care about the welfare of farmers," Rakesh Tikait said in an interview

pensated. Stressing that farmers' agitation has been unprecedented and is being discussed everywhere, he said farmers will take out tractor rallies in their own villages and will hoist the flag on the tractor. "No decision has been taken on taking out a tractor rally in Delhi yet. Everything will be discussed in the January 15 meeting. Farmers are ready to fight for their rights," Tikait said. He also ruled out contesting in the upcoming UP polls. Asked which party farmers will support, Tikait said this will also be discussed in the meeting January 15. "Our aim is not to take on the government, but to convey our message to them in the interest of farmers."



Traffic congestion due to 'chakka jam' (road blockade) called by Delhi BJP as part of a protest against Kejriwal government's new excise policy, in New Delhi

Lawyer pursuing Bofors case claims threat to life

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 3: A lawyer who has been pursuing the politically sensitive Rs 64 crore Bofors payoff case has filed a complaint with Delhi Police claiming that he received life threats in an anonymous letter.

Advocate Ajay Agrawal claimed that the letter, received December 31, was sent by an ordinary post and there was no address of the sender on it "The letter said that he

(Agrawal) and his family would face serious consequences if he did not withdraw the case he is pursuing in the Supreme Court," the lawyer said.

Agrawal December 25 had filed an application in the Supreme Court seeking an early hearing on a petition challenging the Delhi High Court's 2005 verdict which quashed all charges, including against the Hinduja brothers, in the case. He said the apex court had November 2, 2018, dismissed

the CBI's plea against the high court verdict and had said the probe agency can raise all grounds in the appeal filed by him against the same judgement.

Agrawal said he had filed the petition in the top court against the high court verdict in 2005 itself and over three decades have gone by since the matter came to light.

The high court in its 2005 judgement had quashed all charges against the three Hinduja brothers - S P Hinduja, G P Hinduja and P P

Hinduja - and the Bofors company. Before the 2005 verdict, the high court had February 4, 2004, exonerated former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in the case and directed the framing of charge of forgery under section 465 of the Indian Penal Code against Bofors company.

The Rs 1,437-crore deal between India and Swedish arms manufacturer AB Bofors for the supply of 400 units of 155 mm Howitzer guns for the Indian Army was entered into March 24, 1986.

Women MPs seek greater say in Parl panel scrutiny

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 3: Women MPs Monday sought greater participation in the scrutiny of a bill that seeks to increase the legal age of marriage for females from 18 to 21 years, expressing dismay over their inadequate representation in the parliamentary panel examining the proposed law.

Trinamool Congress leader Sushmita Dev, a Rajya Sabha member from West Bengal, is the lone woman member in the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports that is scrutinising the Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill.

"This is disheartening to note that a bill so pertinent to women and the Indian society will be deliberated upon in a committee where

the representation is highly skewed," Shiv Sena leader Priyanka Chaturvedi, a member of the Upper House of Parliament from Maharashtra, said in a letter to Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu. Chaturvedi urged Naidu to ensure more participation of women in the discussion around the Bill.

"Therefore, I request you to ensure that there should be more representation and participation of women in the discussion around the bill that concerns the issues faced by women in India," she said in her letter to Naidu. Dev wrote a letter to Committee chairman Vinay Sahasrabudde requesting him to invoke a rule that will allow all the women parliamentarians to testify before the panel

"Under Rules 84(3) and 275 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States



(Rajya Sabha), I wish to propose that any woman member of both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha be empowered to testify either in writing or in person before the Committee on this issue," she said in the letter. She pointed out that Rajya Sabha

has 29 women members, and the Lok Sabha has 81 women members.

"I am sure all my female colleagues will have much to contribute to the discussion on this issue." "I request you to use the powers of your office to open the

meetings of the Committee on this issue to testimonials from any of the Honourable women members, and request you to allot time accordingly," she said.

DMK leader and Lok Sabha member Kanimozhi also expressed her displeasure over the inadequate representation of women in the panel.

"There are a total of 110 female MPs but the govt. Chooses to assign a bill that affects every young woman in the country to a panel that has 30 men and only one woman. Men will continue to decide the rights of women. And women will be made mute spectators," she wrote on Twitter. "The much-lauded change in the legal age of marriage for women glides through the rocks of underrepresentation, inadequate stakeholder consultation and ignoring expert opinion,"

Rajya Sabha member from NCP Fauzia Khan said "We can keep making committees to ensure granularity in focus but if the democratic values are compromised, it's never really welfare," Khan said. Chaturvedi said it was of utmost importance that the interests of all stakeholders were taken into account and that the voices of all, especially women, are heard and understood by the committee.

The Bill will apply to all the communities and once enacted, supersede the existing marriage and personal laws. The introduction of the bill in Parliament was opposed by some members, who had contended that the move infringed upon several personal laws in violation of the fundamental rights and demanded that it be referred to a parliamentary panel for greater scrutiny.

Pro-talks ULFA doubtful over Centre's 'sincerity'

THE ULFA FACTION CLAIMS THAT NO DIALOGUE HAS BEEN HELD IN THE LAST TWO YEARS AND THERE WAS NO GOVERNMENT INTERLOCUTOR AT PRESENT TO TAKE THE PROCESS FORWARD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dibrugarh (Assam), Jan 3: The pro-talks faction of ULFA has expressed doubts over the Centre's 'sincerity' in taking forward the decade-long peace parleys with it, claiming that no dialogue has been held in the last two years and there was no government interlocutor at present to take the process forward.

The faction alleged that there has been 'not much progress' in the peace talks with it since the Narendra Modi government came to power; though the negotiations had reached the final stages during former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's tenure.

It also maintained that the hard-liner ULFA(D) chief Paresh Barua is unlikely to come forward for negotiations until the parleys with the pro-talks faction are completed.

The allegations come at a time when Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma is trying to bring Barua to the negotiating table for a settlement with all factions of the group.

Talking to PTI, former self-styled general secretary of ULFA and



pro-talks faction leader Anup Chetia said, "The last round of talks with the government was held in January 2020. The term of the government interlocutor had ended in March that year."

"After that, there has been no contact with us. Still, we are waiting with hope that our issues will be addressed and resolved by the government," he said.

Maintaining that the government is 'more responsible' for taking forward the peace talks than the

“Sincerity of the government seems to be lacking. Discussions were almost over and in the final stages during Manmohan Singh's tenure. But there has not been much progress after Narendra Modi's government came to power”

MRINAL HAZARIKA | PRO-TALKS ULFA LEADER

militant group, Chetia added, "There are reasons for us to doubt

the sincerity of the government."

Another senior pro-talks ULFA leader Mrinal Hazarika said, "Sincerity of the government seems to be lacking. Discussions were almost over and in the final stages during Manmohan Singh's tenure. But there has not been much progress after Narendra Modi's government came to power."

He also maintained that the government was indulging in 'delaying tactics' in resolving the ULFA pro-talks faction's demands, which were broadly based on ensuring economic, cultural, political and linguistic safeguards for the indigenous people of Assam.

"The BJP supports 'Ek Bharat, Shrestha Bharat' (one India, greatest India) policy, through which they want to paint everyone with the same brush. That's why they are trying to delay granting our safeguards," Hazarika said.

On the government's overtures to Paresh Barua to come for talks, Chetia said, "I have heard Barua tell media that he wants the government to complete the negotiations with us first."

"He also perhaps fears that his condition will be like ours and no

progress will be made towards an actual resolution of all issues," he added.

A top Assam Police officer privy to the ULFA-government talks, speaking to PTI on condition of anonymity, accepted that there has been some 'stagnancy' in the process.

"The interlocutor is yet to be appointed. Yes, there has been some stagnancy, but various factors contribute to it," he said.

The officer added that change in government and top positions also lead to delay in such peace talks.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had January 1 said that bringing ULFA(D) to the negotiation table is the 'last hurdle' in bringing peace to the state.

Sarma said he has learnt from his personal interactions with the people who are directly or indirectly in touch with ULFA(D) chief Barua that the militant wants a negotiated settlement with the government.

"The stumbling block is 'sovereignty'. The ULFA(D) will want a discussion over it, which we cannot hold. We are working on breaking the deadlock," Sarma said.

Iron ore dumps new battleground in poll-bound Goa



The mammoth mountains of what was once rejected iron ore are now in crosshairs of BJP-led coalition government, which is under pressure to make efforts to restart the beleaguered mining industry ahead of the 2022 Assembly polls

claim is an eyewash.

"The policy for dump mining is an eyewash to hoodwink the people of Goa before the elections and will remain a non-starter since no such permits can be issued until the Supreme Court hears the issues related to dump mining pending before it," Alvares said.

"In the absence of an approval from the Supreme Court and in the absence of any valid leaseholders in Goa, such permits to export dump material are illegal unless the dumps themselves are auctioned instead of being handed out in exchange for royalty," he added, calling the state government policy 'completely illegal'.

"The new policy is completely illegal since the issue of the disposition of the dumps is still pending before the Supreme Court. The Advocate General of the state had also advised the Goa government against any removal or working on dumps," he said.

Sawant had said that the harvesting of dumps for iron ore alone would restart mining in the state for five years. "This is why I have been saying there is scope to see the resumption of activity for the next five years. Today we have finalised the ore rates for auction depending on various grades," Sawant said.

Interestingly, while Sawant has claimed that there is around 10 to 20 million metric tonnes of iron ore in Goa's mining dumps, the state government's Goa Mineral Policy 2013, states that according to undertakings submitted to the authorities at the time, the total ore stock in the dumps was in excess of 700 million tonnes.

The Opposition has however raised red flags over Sawant's new initiative, which former Deputy Chief Minister and Maharashtra Gomantak Party leader Sudin Dhavalikar has said is more oriented towards elections rather than restarting the mining industry in Goa, where fresh iron ore extraction has been banned since 2018.

"Chief Minister took a cabinet decision to allow extraction of 10 to 20 million tonnes of ore from dumps. I challenge the government that these are not 10 to 20 million tonnes, it is more than 100 million tonnes. These dumps could be a source of a new scam," Dhavalikar said.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Panaji, Jan 3: Massive mountains of low grade iron ore, many of them several hundred feet high, have now emerged as the latest flash point between the establishment and activists in Goa.

Referred to colloquially as dumps - on account of the fact that the uneconomical, low grade ore is dumped alongside mining leases - the mammoth mountains of what was once rejected iron ore are now in the crosshairs of the BJP-led coalition government, which is under pressure to make efforts to restart the beleaguered mining industry in Goa ahead of the 2022 Assembly polls.

Last Wednesday, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said that his government had formulated a policy for regularisation of mining dumps on government and private land.

Sawant said that in fiscal 2013-14, the state government had collected nearly Rs 200 crore in fines from mining leaseholders who had dumped reject ore outside the mining lease areas. He added that valid lessees who had paid the fines would be allowed to harvest the ore and export it after taking permission from the Indian Bureau of Mines, on paying royalty. Unclaimed ore, the Chief Minister said, would be auctioned by the government, adding that the dump mining policy was in sync with the Supreme Court directives on the subject.

Sawant added that fresh environment clearances were not mandatory for harvesting the dumps, a point which has enraged green activists in the state.

According to Claude Alvares, director of green NGO Goa Foundation, the Chief Minister's

66 on board cruise ship test Covid +ve



AGENCIES

Panaji, Jan 3: As many as 66 of the over 2,000 people on board the Cordelia cruise ship, which came to Goa from Mumbai, have tested positive for COVID-19, state Health Minister Vishwajit Rane said Monday.

The cruise liner, where the NCB busted a high-profile rave party in October last year, was carrying hordes of New Year revellers. A medical team in PPE kits came on board to conduct RT-PCR tests of the passengers and crew members, and the sample testing process continued till Monday afternoon. The testing of those on board the vessel was necessitated after a crew member was found infected with the coronavirus

Sunday, an official said.

Officials had instructed that no one should disembark from the ship till the result of the RT-PCR tests was declared. The liner is anchored close to Mormugao Port Trust (MPT) cruise terminal. In the afternoon, Rane tweeted, "Out of 2000 samples tested from Cordelia cruise ship, 66 passengers tested positive for #COVID19. Respective collectors and MPT staff have been informed. The authorities will decide whether to allow disembarking of passengers from the ship."

The ship, operated by a private firm, had arrived at Mormugao Port Trust in Goa Sunday. A day ago, Goa had reported 388 new COVID-19 cases, taking the infection tally to 1,81,570, while one death raised the toll to 3,523, as per official data.

HC seeks details of police encounters from Assam govt

According to the PIL, more than 80 'fake' encounters between Assam Police and the alleged accused had taken place since May this year when CM Himanta Biswa Sarma took charge, resulting in 28 deaths and over 48 injuries

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Jan 3: Gauhati High Court Monday asked the Assam government to furnish all case details of encounters that have been taking place since BJP returned to power in the state in May 2021.

Hearing a public interest litigation filed by advocate Arif Md Yeasin Jwadder, a High Court bench comprising Chief Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia and Soumitra Saikia asked Assam Advocate General, Devajit Lon Saikia to submit all details related to the encounters.

The Court asked if there was any FIR registered on each encounter as mandated by law or if any internal enquiry had been conducted about the encounters. Saikia did not have any information and the court asked him to submit the details in the next hearing.

The HC has fixed January 11 for the next hearing of the case.

Noted rights advocate Indira Jaising argued in the case on behalf of the petitioner.

Jwadder claimed in the PIL that more than 80 'fake' encounters between Assam Police and the alleged accused had taken place since May this year when Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma took charge. It had resulted in 28 deaths and more than 48 injuries. The people



killed or injured were not dreaded criminals and the modus operandi of the police has been the same in all the encounters, the PIL claimed and sought enquiry by an independent agency like the CBI, SIT or police teams from other states under the supervision of the Court.

It also sought a judicial enquiry into the encounters by a sitting judge of Gauhati High Court and monetary compensation to the victims' family after due verification.

The petition doubted the police statement published in newspapers which said that the force had to retaliate and kill or injure the accused in self defence as they had tried to snatch service revolvers of

the police personnel.

The injured or dead persons were not militants and were not trained to use pistols and it cannot be the case that all the accused could snatch a service revolver from a trained police officer: The pistols of the police officers are normally tied to a rope to the waist belt of the officer.

Jwadder had filed a complaint on the alleged fake encounters with the National Human Rights Commission July 10. The Assam Human Rights Commission had taken suo motu cognisance of the alleged fake encounters and asked for report from the Assam government.

Shiv Sena to replicate MVA formula in Goa

AGENCIES

Panaji, Jan 3: The Shiv Sena will try to replicate Maharashtra's 'successful' Maha Vikas Aghadi alliance formula for the upcoming Goa polls, Shiv Sena Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut said Monday.

Raut, who arrived in Goa for a four-day visit to the poll-bound state, also said that he would be speaking to the Congress and Nationalist Congress Party leaders in the state Tuesday to discuss the formation of the alliance.

"Definitely Shiv Sena will fight some seats in Goa and we are trying to make an alliance. Tomorrow we will be speaking to Congress leaders, NCP leaders and we will try to make a new alliance," Raut told reporters after his arrival at Goa's Dabolim international airport.

"It is a successful formula in Maharashtra, we will use it in Goa," Raut also said, adding that the seat sharing modules would be discussed in his meetings with state Congress and NCP leaders beginning Tuesday.

SELA: DECODING CHINA'S SHADOW CHESS

The pass was last Friday 'renamed' as Se La (not very different from the Indian map spelling) by the Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs in accordance with a new law 'on the protection and exploitation of land border areas' which came into effect from January 1, 2022

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sela (Arunachal Pradesh), Jan 3: The snow-covered epitaph put up by India's Border Roads Organisation at the top of the 13,700 feet-high Sela Pass reads: "When you come to the end of the road, oh my old friend there is always a hill to be climbed just ahead..."

The black granite marker, which must have been hauled from many hundred kilometres away, was put up December 14, 1972, some 10 years after the 1962 war in memory of the men of the 'Fikar (Worry) Not' 14 Border Roads Task Force who died while constructing the road from Sela to Tawang.

The pass was last Friday 'renamed' as Se La (not very different from the Indian map spelling) by the Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs in accordance with a new law 'on the protection and exploitation of land border areas' which came into effect from January 1, 2022.

The 'renaming exercise' also involved eight villages and towns, four mountains and two rivers in 'Zagnan' or South Tibet, the name Beijing used for Arunachal Pradesh, as part of a cartological war China has been waging to lay claim on portions of Himalayan India.

"The Chinese name change does not change the fact that these places are part of India. But it does underline their focus on psychological warfare and Sela Pass being of strategic importance as the gateway to the Brahmaputra Valley. In a way, it's like playing a sort of shadow chess, without moving any piece on the board...in the 1962 border war too, they had targeted Sela pass," Maj Gen (Retd) Biswajit Chakravarty, a military analyst with long experience in the Eastern Command, told PTI.

In November 1962, the men of the Indian Army's 62 Brigade, part of the 4th Corps, were tasked to hold the pass against Chinese invaders



who laid siege to it.

Unfortunately for the defenders, November 18, 1962, Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops discovered a yak trail used by local herdsmen and simply by-passed fortress Sela to take the next important towns - Dirang and Bomdila. The road to Tezpur and mainland India was wide open.

Two days later as deepening snows threatened to shut off the Himalayan passes connecting Tibet

with India, the Chinese announced a dramatic withdrawal.

Today, though the road to and from Sela remains heavily militarised with troops camped at every turn, the top of the pass has a humble tea shop run by a lady in a Tibetan 'Chuba' (wrap-around dress) with a 'pangden' or an apron.

Road workers and the occasional tourist walk past the BRO's epitaph to stop by for a 'chai' or coffee which many lace with liquor from

“The Chinese name change does not change the fact that these places are part of India... In a way, it's like playing a sort of shadow chess, without moving any piece on the board...in the 1962 border war too, they had targeted Sela pass”

MAJ GEN (RETD) BISWAJIT CHAKRAVARTY, MILITARY ANALYST

their hip flasks to beat the cold which can go up from minus 5 degrees Celsius at midday to minus 16 degrees Celsius late at night.

Lt Gen (Retd) Utpal Bhattacharyya, a defence analyst specialising in the India-China conflict, told PTI, "We have come a long way since then and our defences are far stronger. Overcoming either the first line of defence at Bumla-Thagla ridge or the second strategic line at Sela would be very, very difficult."

India has bolstered forces in the region and built border infrastructure over the decades. The speed of work quickened ever since the threat from China resurfaced

in 2013 when a PLA unit crossed over and camped at Raki Nala near Daulat Beg Oldi (in Ladakh), where India has an airfield.

Known as the Depsang incident, it became the first of a series of face-offs and clashes along the 3,488 km-long border between the two countries over the last eight years.

The 1.5-km all-weather tunnel being built by the BRO through the rockface of the mountain range at Sela is a key component of those infrastructure plans.

Tsewang Dhondup, a former legislator of Tawang, said, "Work on the Sela tunnel started when I was an MLA and should be completed by June 2022. It will avoid the road stretches which used to get snowed in."

"The tunnel will render the road from Tezpur to Tawang to an all-weather status reducing travel time by almost 80 minutes. It also, to an extent, precludes observation of our movements across the Sela Pass," Maj Gen Chakravarty said.

"Regardless of who rules China, their national security goals have been consistent. The Chinese always play their game with an eye on their past - regardless of whether it was real or imagined," Maj Gen Chakravarty added.

of the day quote

We are monitoring both Covid and Omicron situation, it is spreading at a very fast pace in the country, in the state and in neighbouring states, so we need to have a discussion with experts. In this regard I will have a discussion with experts tomorrow evening

This is not a romanticism formula. We are doing it considering education as the most fundamental requirement. The credit for the education revolution goes mostly to the teachers

A lockdown will be the last option. As of now, efforts are being made to increase testing at airports, railway stations and bus stands as well as adherence to quarantine and isolation practices. If the cases continue to rise even after such efforts, then in the last stage we will head for a lockdown



The BJP has done nothing to improve generation and transmission of power in the state (Uttar Pradesh)

MOCKERY OF COVID NORMS

Commuters were seen travelling in West Bengal's crowded local trains Monday, thumbing their noses to the restrictions imposed by the state government a day ago to curb the spread of Covid. Metro Railway coaches also ran almost jam-packed in the peak hours, with people barely maintaining distance from one another



Vaccination for 15 to 18 age group starts

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 3: Over 41 lakh children in the age group of 15 to 18 years received Covid vaccine doses till 8 pm on the first day of the inoculation drive for this group of beneficiaries.

The cumulative Covid vaccine doses administered in the country crossed 146.61 crore with more than 98 lakh shots being administered Monday till 10.15 pm.

According to the Health Ministry, the daily vaccination tally is expected to increase with the compilation of the final reports for the day by late in the night.

"Well done Young India! Over 40 lakh between 15-18 age group received their first dose of Covid-19 vaccine on the first day of vaccination drive for children, till 8 pm. This is another feather in the cap of India's vaccination drive," Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya tweeted.

Over 53 lakh youngsters have registered on the CoWIN portal till 10.15 pm after the process began January 1 for this category.

During the day, Mandaviya visited the Covid vaccination site for children at the Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital and interacted with some of the beneficiaries. "Visited RML Hospital and took stock of the vaccination campaign for children in



the age group of 15-18 years. Interacted with the children and asked them to motivate their friends for the vaccine," he said in a tweet.

Co-WIN Chief and CEO of National Health Authority Dr R S Sharma said, "We have received a good response. Children are coming forward to get vaccinated and the numbers today itself are very significant."

Sharma said necessary provisions and changes have been made on the digital platform to include the new category of beneficiaries.

The health ministry in a tweet said, "Only Covaxin approved for less than 18 yrs. Eighteen plus (ie born in 2004 or before) are eligible for all vaccines, including Covishield. For 15-17 years (born in 2005, 2006, 2007) eligible only for Covaxin. Validations in place in

veloped Bharat Biotech's Covaxin for children above 12 years with certain conditions on December 24.

The registration for this category of beneficiaries opened Saturday. According to the guidelines, they can self-register online through an existing account on CoWIN or can also register by creating a new account through a unique mobile number as is the case with all other categories of beneficiaries.

They can also get themselves reg-

84% of Delhi's Covid cases of Omicron variant: Jain

New Delhi: As many as 84 per cent cases of Covid seen in the last two days of December 2021 are of the Omicron variant, Delhi Health Minister Satyendra Jain said Monday, but stressed that there was no need to panic. Of total genome sequencing reports from Delhi's three labs - ILBS, LNJP and NCDC, 84 per cent have reported the Omicron variant, he said at a press conference. He said that Delhi had reported 3,194 Covid cases Sunday and the Covid positivity rate has gone to 4.59 per cent. "Today, around 4,000 Covid cases are expected by the evening, taking the positivity rate rising to 6.5 per cent," he said, adding that according to the experts, Delhi can see a Covid peak within the week.

Co-WIN." The vaccine option for this age group is only Covaxin, according to guidelines issued by the Union Health Ministry December 27. The Drugs Controller General of India granted emergency use authorisation to indigenously-de-

veloped Bharat Biotech's Covaxin for children above 12 years with certain conditions on December 24. The registration for this category of beneficiaries opened Saturday. According to the guidelines, they can self-register online through an existing account on CoWIN or can also register by creating a new account through a unique mobile number as is the case with all other categories of beneficiaries. They can also get themselves reg-

Wankhede's tenure with Mumbai NCB ends; sent back to DRI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 3: The tenure of controversial NCB Mumbai zonal director Sameer Wankhede with the federal anti-narcotics agency has ended and his services have been put at the disposal of his parent organisation DRI, officials said.

The charge of the NCB Mumbai zonal unit will be handled in an additional capacity by its Indore zonal director Brijendra Chowdhary, a 2009-batch IRS officer of the Customs and Indirect Taxes cadre.

Wankhede, an Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer of the 2008 batch, was deputed to the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) Mumbai zone in August, 2020 "on loan" from the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) in the wake of the drugs probe being conducted by the agency linked to the death of 34-year-old actor Sushant Singh Rajput.

The 42-year-old officer served as the head or the zonal director of the NCB Mumbai unit beginning August 31, 2020 with an initial tenure of one year. He was given a four months extension in the post



beyond August, 2021. Wankhede's tenure with the NCB finally ended December 31, 2021 and as there has been no government order for his extension, he has been sent back to his parent organisation DRI, officials said. Officials said the NCB did not seek the officer's extension.

Wankhede has been in the limelight following the high-profile October, 2021 raids by the NCB on a Mumbai cruise after which the agency arrested Aryan Khan, the son of actor Shah Rukh Khan, and around 19 others and claimed to have seized some narcotics too.

Soon after this action, Maharashtra minister and NCP leader Nawab Malik levelled multiple charges of alleged misconduct and corruption against the officer.

Plea against ILP, top court notice to Centre, Manipur

Manipur is the fourth state after Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Mizoram where the ILP regime is applicable. To visit ILP-regime states, outsiders, including people from other states of the country, need permission

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 3: The Supreme Court Monday sought response from the Centre and the Manipur government on a plea questioning validity of Inner Line Permit (ILP), which restricts entry of non-indigenous people into the state.

The petition, filed by organisation Amra Bangalee, argued that system was draconian, and fundamentally opposes policies of social integration, development, and technological advancement in the area outside the Inner Line. It further argued that ILP hampers tourism within the state, which is a major source of revenue generation for these areas. After hearing the plea, a bench of Justices Abdul Nazeer and Krishna Murari sought a response from the Union and Manipur government. The petition said: "The effect of ILP system in the state of Manipur is that no person who is not a resident of the said state is permitted to enter the state or engage in business there without applying for a special permit



known as Inner Line Permit."

It contended that the system violated fundamental rights of citizens guaranteed under the Constitution, while granting unqualified power to the state government to restrict the entry and exit of non-indigenous persons.

The plea contended that permit system was introduced by way of the Adaptation of Laws (Amendment) Order, 2019 (2019 order) which extends 140-year-old "colonial legislation" Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulations, 1873 (BEFR), which was enacted by the British to create monopoly over the tea plantations in Assam.

Manipur is the fourth state after Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Mizoram where the ILP regime is applicable. To visit ILP-regime states, outsiders, including people from other states of the country, need permission. The plea further added that by virtue of the 2019 order, the ILP system has effectively been made applicable to Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, and districts of Nagaland, which are notified from time to time.

FEARLESS ACT



Nihang Sikh warriors display their martial art skills during a religious procession on the occasion of the 355th birth anniversary (Pakash Parv) of Guru Gobind Singh in Jammu, Monday

EC asks poll-bound states to rev up vaccination

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 3: Days after assessing the Covid-19 situation in the five poll-bound states, the Election Commission (EC) has asked them to step up the inoculation drive against the viral disease and ensure that the personnel to be deployed on election duty are "double vaccinated".

In a recent letter to the chief secretaries of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Manipur and Punjab, the EC has also reminded the five states that polling personnel come under the category of



The EC is likely to announce the poll dates for the five states in the first half of this month

frontline workers and are eligible for the "precaution dose" of the Covid vaccines, sources said.

The commission has said the polling personnel to be deployed in these states should be fully vaccinated and those eligible for the second dose of the vaccines

should be administered the jabs on a priority basis, the sources said citing the letter.

While the tenure of the Uttar Pradesh legislative assembly ends in May, the terms of the legislative assemblies of Goa, Manipur and Punjab end on different dates in March.

Existing vax not effective, boosters may help: Experts

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 3: Existing vaccines are not as effective against Omicron as they were against the original virus, and thus boosters may help enhance immunity, health experts said here.

Data from various countries like South Africa and the UK has shown that it causes only mild illness. But as Omicron can surge infection cases, it can overwhelm an already burdened medical system.

"Vaccines bypass natural immunity. The efficacy of existing vaccines is not as effective as it was against the virus that originated from Wuhan," Dr Sanjay Kumar Rai, Professor, Department of Community Medicine, AIIMS, New Delhi, said at a weekly health show by the New-Delhi-based HEAL Foundation on Sunday.

"However, there might not be any severity if an Omicron infection happens," he said. The Indian Council of Medical

Research also said recently that all Covid vaccines do not prevent infection and are primarily disease-modifying. "All Covid vaccines, whether they are from India, Israel, the US, Europe, the UK or China, are primarily disease-modifying. They do not prevent infection. The precautionary dose is primarily to mitigate the severity of infection, hospitalisation and death," said ICMR Director General Dr Balram Bhargava, at a recent press conference. At the same time, natural infection from Covid has can provide "long-term protection against the virus", Rai said. This has been consistent with several studies from across countries which showed that the durability of immunity post the Covid infection persists for about 9 months.

Boosters may also help as they "enhance the quality of immunity," said Dr Nimesh Gupta, Chief, Vaccine Immunology Laboratory, National Institute of Immunology, under the Centre's Department of



Biotechnology at the health show. "Persons vulnerable might fight Omicron with the current vaccines, but the elderly with compromised immunity won't be able

to combat the infection," he added. With Omicron threatening vaccine efficacy, many countries pressed for booster doses. In India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi,

OMICRON DRIVING COVID CASES, THIRD WAVE IN INDIA: EXPERTS

New Delhi: The sudden spike in the number of Covid cases in India is driven by an increased spread of Omicron variant in the country, which may have already started the third wave, experts said Monday. Most states and large cities in India have observed a sharp increase in Covid cases, which was not noticed even during festival seasons. On December 31, India recorded 16,764 new Covid cases, up 27 per cent from the previous day. The average number of cases increased in the last week of December after dropping steadily since mid-May. On December 29, 13,187 cases were reported, representing a 76.6 per cent rise over the previous week's infections. "As per the emerging scientific evidence, experts believe that the Omicron variant, first detected in Botswana, is the main reason for the recent rise in infections in India," Dr Dipu T.S., Associate Professor, Division of Infectious Diseases, Amrita Hospital, Kochi, told IANS. "According to statistics from Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data (GISAID) - an open-access resource for viral genomic data - Omicron has surpassed all other variants as the most common in India. The Omicron variant was discovered in almost 60 per cent of the samples sequenced in India during the last few days of December," he added.

last week, announced that healthcare/frontline workers, as well as elderly population (aged more than

60) with comorbidities, will get a precautionary dose from January 10 onwards next year.

international



Pakistan is ready to host the 19th SAARC Summit and India can join it virtually if the leadership in New Delhi is not willing to visit Islamabad
SHAH MAHMOOD QURESHI | PAKISTAN FOREIGN MINISTER

BOLSONARO HOSPITALISED

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro was taken to a Sao Paulo hospital Monday with a suspected intestinal obstruction, the country's media reported



of the day quote

Singapore must be prepared for an imminent wave of Omicron infections that have crept up recently and currently make up around 17 per cent of the local coronavirus cases

I will not stop efforts to institutionalise sustainable peace

Rising case numbers is part of the Omicron period, it's part of the new phase of the pandemic we're in. That doesn't mean to say it can't put pressure on the hospital system. It can and that's why we're working very closely with the (state) premiers and chief ministers to make sure those resources are there

SHORT TAKES

2 armed drones shot down

Baghdad: Two armed drones were shot down at the Baghdad airport on Monday, a US-led coalition official said, an attack that coincides with the anniversary of the 2020 US killing of a top Iranian general. There were no reports of damage or injuries from the incident, which was also confirmed by an Iraqi security official. The official with the US-led international coalition fighting the Islamic State group in Iraq said that the C-RAM defense system at the Baghdad Diplomatic Support Center engaged two fixed wing so-called "suicide drones." The C-RAM system protects American installations in Iraq.

21 abducted children rescued

Abuja: At least 21 schoolchildren in Nigeria have been rescued hours after they were abducted by armed groups in the West African country's troubled northwestern region, police said. The schoolchildren were abducted on Friday while they were travelling with their teacher from the Bakura area to an Islamic school in neighboring Katsina state, police spokesman Mohammed Shehu said in a statement over the weekend. Security forces responded and rescued the 21 students and are "currently working to rescue the remaining victims and apprehend the perpetrators," Shehu said.

10 terrorists held

Lahore: Ten terrorists belonging to the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Al-Qaeda and Islamic State, have been arrested from various parts of Pakistan's Punjab province, police said Monday. In a statement, the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) said that a huge cache of weapons to be used for terrorism in Punjab has also been recovered from them.

Two missing

Louisville: Search teams looked for two missing people in the smoldering debris from a massive Colorado wildfire while people who escaped the flames sorted through the charred remnants of their homes to see what was left. Investigators were still trying to determine what caused flames to tear through at least 9.4 square miles (24 square kilometers), leaving nearly 1,000 houses and other buildings destroyed in suburbs between Denver and Boulder. The inferno broke out Thursday, unusually late in the year following an extremely dry fall and amid a winter nearly devoid of snow.

Yemen rebels seize UAE ship; hackers hit Israeli newspaper

NO GROUP IMMEDIATELY CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE HACKING OF THE JERUSALEM POST

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dubai, Jan 3: Yemen's Houthi rebels seized an Emirati-flagged ship in the Red Sea, officials said Monday, the latest sign of Mideast tensions as hackers targeted a major Israeli newspaper's website to mark America's 2020 killing of a top Iranian general.

The seizure of the Rwebee marks the latest assault in the Red Sea, a crucial route for international trade and energy shipments. The Iranian-backed Houthis acknowledged the incident off the coast of Hodeida, a long-contested prize of the grinding war in Yemen.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the hacking of the Jerusalem Post. The hackers replaced the Post's homepage with an image depicting a missile coming down from a fist bearing a ring long associated with Qassem Soleimani, the Iranian general killed by a US drone strike in Iraq two years ago.

First word of the Rwebee's seizure came from the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations, which only said an attack targeted an unnamed vessel around midnight. The coordinates it offered corresponded to the Emirati-flagged landing craft Rwebee, which hadn't given its location via satellite-tracking data for hours, according to the website MarineTraffic.Com.

A statement from the Saudi-led



A view of the Jerusalem Post website after it was hacked is shown in this screen grab obtained January 3, 2022 (JERUSALEM POST VIA REUTERS)

coalition, carried by state media in the kingdom, acknowledged the attack hours later, saying the Houthis had committed an act of "armed piracy" involving the vessel. The coalition asserted the ship carried medical equipment from a dismantled Saudi field hospital in the distant island of Socotra, without offering evidence.

"The Houthi militia must immediately release the ship, otherwise the coalition forces shall take all necessary measures and procedures to deal with this violation, including the use of force," Brig. Gen. Turki al-Malki said in a statement.

A Houthi military spokesman, Yahia Sarei, announced that rebel forces had seized what he described as an Emirati "military cargo ship"

carrying equipment into Yemen's territorial waters "without any license" to engage in "hostile acts" against Yemen's stability. He said the rebels would offer more details on the seizure later.

An employee at the vessel's owners, Abu Dhabi-based Liwa Marine Services, told The Associated Press that the Rwebee appeared to have been the target but said they had no other information and declined to comment further. The employee did not give her name and hung up.

A similar incident happened in 2016 involving the Emirati vessel SWIFT-1, which had been sailing back and forth in the Red Sea between an Emirati troop base in Eritrea and Yemen. The vessel came under attack by Houthi forces in 2016.

Kenyan conservationist Richard Leakey dies

REUTERS

Nairobi, Jan 3: Richard Leakey, a Kenyan conservationist and paleoanthropologist who spearheaded campaigns against the ivory trade to save the dwindling African elephant population, has died, the Kenyan presidency said Sunday. He was 77.

For years Leakey served in various roles in the government including as director of the state-run National Museums of Kenya and twice as board chairman at the Kenya Wildlife Service. President Uhuru Kenyatta said Leakey had "served our country with distinction".

"Besides his distinguished career in the public service, Dr. Leakey is celebrated for his prominent role in Kenya's vibrant civil society where he founded and successfully ran a number of institutions."



Leakey was the son of palaeontologists Louis and Mary Leakey, whose work helped demonstrate that human evolution began in Africa. He was celebrated for his work to save wildlife from poachers and for leading campaigns against the ivory trade.

Paula Kahumbu, a wildlife conservationist who heads WildlifeDirect, said she had been mentored by Leakey, as had many other young Kenyans.

Hong Kong welcomes pro-Beijing lawmakers



Lawmakers have their group photos taken after their oath-taking ceremony of the legislative council in Hong Kong, Monday (AP/PTI PHOTO)

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hong Kong, Jan 3: Hong Kong welcomed a new batch of pro-Beijing lawmakers in its Legislative Council Monday who were chosen in an election without opposition candidates, as the editors of one of the city's last remaining pro-democracy news outlets announced its closure.

They are the latest in a series of events in the past year in which the local government has been reshaping Hong Kong, with Beijing's backing, in an effort to stamp out dissent in a city once renowned for its freedoms of expression.

The founders of news outlet Citizen News said Monday that although they have not been contacted by the Hong Kong national security police, the deteriorating media freedoms in the financial hub make it unclear whether their reporting violates the law. They said the news site will stop publishing on Tuesday.

"We all love this place, deeply.

Regrettably, what was ahead of us is not just pouring rains or blowing winds, but hurricanes and tsunamis," Citizen News said in a statement on Sunday, when it originally announced the closure. Citizen News is the third news outlet to close in recent months, following pro-democracy newspaper Apple Daily and online site Stand News.

The outlet was founded in 2017 by a group of veteran journalists. While small, it focused on political news and analysis pieces, as well as investigations.

The space for doing those types of stories has shrunk since China's central legislature imposed a sweeping National Security Law in Hong Kong in 2019 following massive anti-government protests. As authorities stepped up arrests of political activists, civil rights groups and unions disbanded, and some activists fled.

Independent media have been one of the more prominent casualties of the ongoing crackdown.

'Border crosser is N Korean defector'



The man crossed the barbed wire fence to enter the Demilitarized Zone separating the two Koreas and then raced across the Military Demarcation Line despite efforts to stop him

The incident on January 1 brought the South Korean Army's 22nd Division in charge of the eastern front-line area under renewed criticism for the latest border breach

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Seoul, Jan 3: The man who crossed the eastern inter-Korean border into North Korea over the weekend was found to be a North Korean defector, an official at South Korea's Defence Ministry said Monday.

Citing surveillance footage, the official said the man is the 30-something defector who had also used an eastern front-line route to reach the South in November 2020 but stressed no evidence of espionage has been found, reports Yonhap News Agency.

The incident on January 1 brought the South Korean Army's 22nd Division in charge of the eastern front-line area under renewed criticism for the latest border breach. "In the footage, the man was recognized to be the same as the defector so we can call him the same person," the official told re-

porters on condition of anonymity. The man crossed the barbed wire fence to enter the Demilitarized Zone separating the two Koreas and then raced across the Military Demarcation Line despite efforts to stop him.

After the defection to the South, the man is known to have worked as a cleaner here, an indication that he might have had economic difficulties here.

Other details about him were not immediately known.

The defector had been out of contact since December 30, while a surveillance camera installed in the Civilian Control Line near the land border captured him hours before his border crossing, the official said.

Sunday, South Korea's military sent a message to the North twice regarding the border crossing through a western cross-border communication line.

PRAYERS FOR THE NEW YEAR



Visitors pray for good luck during hatsumode, or their first visit of the year to a shrine or temple, at Kawasaki Daishi Buddhist temple in Kawasaki, near Tokyo (AP/PTI PHOTO)

Sudan PM resigns amid political deadlock

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cairo, Jan 3: Sudan's Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok announced his resignation Sunday amid a political deadlock and widespread pro-democracy protests following a military coup that derailed the country's fragile transition to democratic rule.

Hamdok, a former UN official seen as the civilian face of Sudan's transitional government, had been reinstated as prime minister in November as part of an



agreement with the military following the October coup. In that time he had failed to name a Cabinet and his resignation throws Sudan into political uncertainty amid uphill security and economic challenges.

In a televised national address Sunday, Hamdok called for a dialogue to agree on a "national charter" and to "draw a roadmap" to complete the transition to democracy in accordance with the 2019 constitutional document governing the transitional period.

China building bridge on its side of Pangong lake in Ladakh: Sources

JANUARY 1, INDIAN AND CHINESE TROOPS EXCHANGED SWEETS AND GREETINGS AT 10 BORDER POSTS ALONG THE LAC INCLUDING IN EASTERN LADAKH TO MARK THE NEW YEAR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

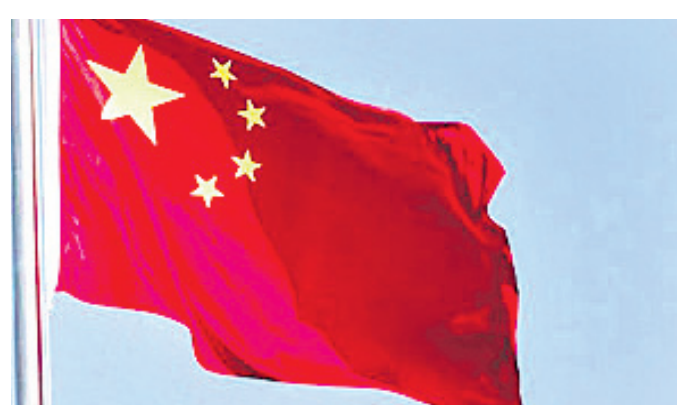
New Delhi, Jan 3: A new satellite image showing China building a bridge on its side of the Pangong lake in eastern Ladakh emerged Monday amid the pro-

longed Sino-India military standoff in the border area.

People familiar with the development said the satellite imagery is of an area on the Chinese side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) near the Galwan valley region. The armies of India and China had created a buffer zone in Galwan valley following their deadly clashes on June 15, 2020.

January 1, Indian and Chinese troops exchanged sweets and greetings at 10 border posts along the LAC including in eastern Ladakh to mark the New Year. The sources said the bridge is at a distance of around 40 km from the alignment of the LAC in the region and that India has also been developing infrastructure in the region at a rapid pace.

Geo-intelligence expert Damien Symon posted a satellite image on Twitter suggesting that the new



bridge was being constructed by China to link the North and South banks of Pangong lake. Military experts said the aim of constructing the bridge in the Khurnak area could be to ensure that the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) is

able to quickly mobilise its troops in the region.

The Indian military sources said India has been developing infrastructure in all key areas along the LAC and that India is aware of Chinese activities in the region.

Last week, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the Chisumle-Demchok road at Umiling La Pass at over 19,000 feet in Ladakh that is considered as a key stretch for military purpose.

China has been focusing on strengthening its military infrastructure after Indian troops took control of several strategic peaks on the southern bank of Pangong lake in August 2020 after the Chinese PLA attempted to intimidate them in the area.

The eastern Ladakh border standoff between the armies of India and China erupted on May 5, 2020, following a violent clash in the Pangong lake area. Both sides gradually enhanced their deployment by rushing in tens of thousands of soldiers as well as heavy weaponry.

As a result of a series of military and diplomatic talks, the two sides

completed the disengagement process last year in the north and south banks of the Pangong lake and in the Gogra area. Each side currently has around 50,000 to 60,000 troops along the LAC in the sensitive sector.

The 13th round of Corps Commander-level military talks in October ended in a stalemate with the Indian Army saying that the "constructive suggestions" made by it were not agreeable to the Chinese side. The defence ministry last Friday said it held several rounds of military talks with the Chinese side to deescalate the situation in eastern Ladakh without compromising on its stand of "complete disengagement and immediate restoration of status quo ante". India has been insisting on returning to the status quo that existed before the face-off erupted.



The consistently strong export performance is the outcome of Bajaj Auto's leadership position in several global markets, many years of commitment to building the international business, and outstanding work by the team

RAKESH SHARMA | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BAJAJ AUTO LTD

INDIA SEEKS URGENT MEETING OF WTO'S GENERAL COUNCIL

India has sought an emergency meeting of the General Council of the World Trade Organization (WTO) this month in Geneva to deliberate upon the world trade body's proposed response package, including patent waiver proposal, to deal with the pandemic amid rising coronavirus infections globally, an official said



of the day quote

With our EV megasite in Ranipet and the newly opened Experience Centre, we hereby strengthen our resolve to provide clean mobility for all. We are also committed to elevate overall customer experience with best-in-class products and other ecosystem support requirements

NAGESH A BASAVANHALI | MD AND GROUP CEO, GREAVES COTTON LTD

Tata Motors PV business growth journey continued and set several new milestones during the quarter despite witnessing a shortfall in production due to the ongoing semi-conductor crisis

SHAILESH CHANDRA | PRESIDENT, TATA MOTORS

We are extremely excited about Bike Bazaar's expansion and achievement of Rs 100 crore-loan disbursal in a month

NAVEEN CHAUHAN | HEAD OF SALES AND AFTER-SALES, HERO MOTOCORP

CryptoWire unveils India's first crypto index

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 3: With a view to empowering knowledge on crypto and blockchain ecosystem, CryptoWire, a global crypto super app which is a special business unit of TickerPlant, Monday announced the launch of India's first index of Cryptocurrencies - IC15, which is a rule-based broad market index by market capitalisation.

Over the past years, cryptocurrencies have emerged as an asset class in themselves, gaining wider acceptance and drawing people's in-

terests. An index that captures over 80 per cent of market movement is, thus, a fundamental market tracking and assessing tool to base decisions on and enhance transparency.

CryptoWire's Index Governance Committee, comprising domain experts, industry practitioners, and academicians, will maintain, monitor, and administer the index while rebalancing it every quarter. The Base Value of the index is set at 10,000 and the base date is April 1, 2018.

Bitcoin, Ethereum, XRP, Bitcoin



Cash, Cardano, Litecoin, Binance Coin, Chainlink, Polkadot, Uniswap, Dogecoin, Solana, Terra, Avalanche, and Shiba Inu will be the constituents of IC15. Launching IC15,

The IC15 tracks and measures the performance of the top 15 widely traded liquid cryptocurrencies listed on leading crypto exchanges of the world, the company stated

CryptoWire Managing Director and CEO Jigish Sonagara said, "With the launch of India's first

index of crypto IC15, we intend to complete the knowledge circle for the entire crypto and blockchain eco-system. This will not only push the 'learn before earn' initiative but also serve the industry with yet another powerful intervention."

The Mumbai-based company said IC15 has been designed to provide insights into crypto mining and the true benchmark and a mirror of the underlying crypto market, a barometer of the industry in a sense, with a diversified representation of overall market sentiments.

Sebi notifies vault managers' rules

In a notification dated December 31, the regulator said the vault manager will be registered and regulated as a Sebi intermediary for providing vaulting services meant for gold deposited to create EGRs

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA



- Sebi said the applicant shall be a body corporate incorporated in India and shall have the minimum net worth of Rs 50 crore
- Every certificate of registration granted will be valid unless it is suspended or cancelled by Sebi
- The vault managers are required to have systems for recording all transactions in electronic form pertaining to vaulting services

FURTHER, THEY NEED TO PRESERVE THESE RECORDS AND DOCUMENTS FOR A MINIMUM PERIOD OF FIVE YEARS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 3: Markets regulator Sebi has notified rules for vault managers that allow bourses to set up a gold exchange in the country.

This comes after the board of Sebi cleared a proposal in September for setting up a gold exchange, wherein the yellow metal will be traded in the form of electronic gold receipts and the bourse will help in having a transparent domestic spot price discovery mechanism.

The instruments representing gold will be called electronic gold receipts (EGRs) and will be notified as securities. These EGRs will have trading, clearing and settlement features akin to any other securities.

The gold exchange, encompassing the entire ecosystem of trading of EGR and physical delivery of gold, is expected to create a vibrant gold ecosystem in India.

The obligations of the vault manager include accepting deposits, storage and safekeeping of gold, creation as well as withdrawal of EGR, grievance redressal and periodic reconciliation of physical gold with the records of depository.

Any person intending to carry on the business as a vault manager can make an application to Sebi for grant of a certificate of registration.

With regard to the creation of EGR, Sebi said every vault man-

ager will have a common interface with the depository for the creation and extinguishment of EGR.

Upon acceptance of the gold from the depositor, the vault manager will create an EGR in the name of such depositor as beneficial owner by entering details in the common interface.

In respect of withdrawal of gold, the regulator said the beneficial owner seeking to withdraw gold from the vault will have to place a request with the depository.

The depository, after satisfying the payment of charges due to the vault manager, will intimate its approval for withdrawal of gold to the concerned vault manager.

HIGHEST-EVER MONTHLY FIGURE

Exports zoom 37% to \$37.29bln in Dec

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 3: The country's exports in December 2021 surged 37 per cent on an annual basis to \$37.29 billion, the highest-ever monthly figure, on the back of healthy performance by sectors like engineering, textiles and chemicals, even as the trade deficit widened to \$21.99 billion.

Imports in December too rose by 38 per cent to \$59.27 billion on account of an increase in oil imports, which soared 65.17 per cent to \$15.9 billion, government data showed Monday. Gold imports expanded by 4.5 per cent to \$4.69 billion.

Exports in December 2020 stood at \$27.22 billion, while imports aggregated to \$42.93 billion. Trade deficit was at \$15.72 billion.

Cumulatively, during April-December 2021-22 exports rose by 48.85 per cent to \$299.74 billion.

Imports during the period increased by 69.27 per cent to \$443.71 billion, leaving a trade deficit of \$143.97 billion.



In December 2021, exports of engineering goods grew by 37.27 per cent to \$9.7 billion, followed by petroleum products (140 per cent to \$5.6 billion), gems and jewellery (15.8 per cent to \$2.98 billion), chemicals (26 per cent to \$2.64 billion) and ready-made garments of all textiles (22 per cent to \$1.46 billion).

Addressing a press conference, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said India's merchandise exports will cross \$400 billion this fiscal.

"With \$300 billion in the first nine months of 2021-22 we are on track to achieve our target. This growth is satisfying and we must aspire for more," Goyal said.

SHORT TAKES

Reliance becomes promoter in SWREL

New Delhi: Sterling and Wilson Renewable Energy Ltd (SWREL) Monday said that Reliance New Energy Solar Ltd (RNESL) has become its promoter post payment of balance Rs 1,583 crore for acquisition of 25.90 per cent equity in it. With this transaction, RNESL and other group firms together hold over 40 per cent stake in SWREL. Earlier, RNESL (acquirer), Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) and Reliance Ventures Ltd (RVL) had made initial payment of Rs 259 crore for acquisition of 4.91 crore shares or 25.90 per equity stake in the SWREL, showed a BSE filing.

Sugar output rises 4.75% in Oct-Dec

New Delhi: The country's sugar production is estimated to have risen by 4.75 per cent to 115.70 lakh tonne during the October-December period of the 2021-22 season, sugar cooperatives body NAFSU said Monday. Sugar output stood at 110.45 lakh tonne in the same period of 2020-21 season. Sugar season runs from October to September. About 491 mills had crushed 1227.17 lakh tonne of sugarcane as December 31, 2021, higher than the year-ago period, as per the latest data released by the National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories Ltd (NFCFSFL).

ICICI Pru unveils first auto ETF

Mumbai: ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund has announced the launch of the country's first auto ETF (exchange-traded fund) based on the Nifty auto index. The new fund will open January 5 and will close January 10, the AMC said without offering how much it plans to collect during the NFO phase despite claiming that it is an industry-first.

Audi posts 2-fold rise in sales in '21

New Delhi: German luxury carmaker Audi Monday reported a two-fold jump in retail sales at 3,293 units in India in 2021. The company had sold 1,639 units in 2020. The uptick was propelled by these electric cars - e-tron 50, e-tron 55, e-tron Sportback 55, e-tron GT, RS e-tron GT and the petrol powered Q-range along with A-Sedans, Audi India said in a statement.

Over 500 employees, ex-staff of OYO buy around 3cr shares

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 3: More than 500 employees and ex-employees of IPO-bound OYO have exercised their stock options grants to purchase over three crore shares of the company, according to regulatory filings by the hospitality chain.

These shares have been purchased by the employees and alumni by exercising their vested Employees' Stock Option Plan (ESOPs), as per the filings.

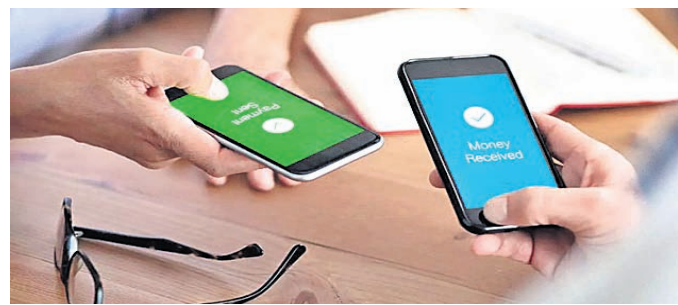
OYO had offered deeply discounted ESOPs to both current and former employees when the impact of Covid-19 led to pay cuts and furloughs. On the basis of the last valuation of OYO of \$9.6 billion when the company raised \$5 million from tech-giant Microsoft in August last year, the total value of the shares purchased by the current and former employees of Oravel Stays Ltd, which runs OYO, would be around Rs 330 crore.

OYO had expanded its ESOP pool by 41 per cent and it is estimated that around 80 per cent of current employees at OYO have been granted ESOPs.

As of March 31, 2021, OYO had 5,130 employees around the world, and 70.9 per cent of the total employees are based in India.

RBI allows offline digital payments

Under the offline mode, payments can be carried out face-to-face (proximity mode) using any channel or instrument like cards, wallets, and mobile devices



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 3: To push digital transactions in rural and semi-urban areas, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Monday issued a framework allowing offline payments up to Rs 200 per transaction, subject to an overall limit of Rs 2,000.

An offline digital payment means a transaction that does not require internet or telecom connectivity. These transactions will not require an additional factor of authentication (AFA), the Reserve Bank of India said, adding that since the transactions are offline, alerts (by way of SMS and/or e-mail) will be received by the customer after a time lag.

"Transactions are subject to a limit of Rs 200 per transaction and an overall limit of Rs 2,000 for all

transactions until the balance in the account is replenished. Balance replenishment can only occur in an online mode," said the Framework for Facilitating Small Value Digital Payments in Offline Mode.

"Offline transactions are expected to give a push to digital transactions in areas with poor or weak internet or telecom connectivity, particularly in semi-urban and rural areas. The new framework is applicable with immediate effect," the RBI said.

The offline mode of payment, it said, can be enabled after obtaining the specific consent of the customer.

The customers, it added, will continue to enjoy protection under the provisions of circulars limiting customer liability and will have recourse to the Reserve Bank -

RBI nod to Fino's int'l remittance biz

Customers of Fino Payments Bank will be able to receive remittance money sent from overseas as it has been granted approval by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to offer the international money transfer service. Fino Bank has received the RBI approval to commence the international remittance business under the Money Transfer Service Scheme (MTSS), the bank said Monday. The lender will undertake inward cross-border money transfer activities in association with an overseas principal, the details of which are being worked out. The customer segment of Fino Bank at the middle of the pyramid is targeted to families of many of the people working in foreign countries, Fino Bank said.

Integrated Ombudsman Scheme for grievance redress.

The RBI has asked all the authorised payment system operators (PSOs) and payment system participants (PSPs) - acquirers and issuers (banks and non-banks) - to ensure compliance with the instructions.

Rutaparna bags 29th Ekalabya Puraskar



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: Indian Metals Public Charitable Trust (IMPACT), the charitable wing of Indian Metals & Ferro Alloys (Imfa) group of industries, Monday organised "29th Ekalabya Puraskar 2021", the annual sports award for outstanding young sportsperson of Odisha at Hotel Mayfair Convention in the city Monday.

Badminton player Rutaparna Panda was conferred the prestigious Ekalabya Puraskar for the year 2021 and received a cash award of ₹5,00,000. Besides the main award, two citation awards were also given which carry a cash prize of ₹50,000 each to Swasti Singh for cycling and Pyari Xaxa for football.

The Chief Guest for the event was

Governor of Odisha, Ganeshi Lal who congratulated the winners for their remarkable performances at international and national levels. Chairperson, Baijayant Panda, who is also a trustee of IMPACT, wished for a great future of the sports personalities.

The members of the Ekalabya Puraskar Committee 2021 also included Dibbanjan Roy (IRTS), Paramita Panda (Trustee), Aparajita Chowdhury (VC, Ramadevi Women's University), Sanatan Sahu (Under Secretary, Sports & Youth Services), Anuradha Biswal (Olympian & Senior Manager, Nalco), Aditya Kumar Nayak (Director of Postal Services), Sambit Mohapatra (Senior Sports Journalist) and Manoranjan Rath (IRS) and S Maqbool Ali (Management Consultant).

Manufacturing sector ends '21 well despite momentum dip

Despite easing in December, input cost inflation was still running at one of its highest rates in around seven-and-a-half years

AGENCIES

Bangalore, Jan 3: India's manufacturing sector ended 2021 on a solid footing with growth in new orders and output remaining sharp despite losing some momentum in December, but elevated price pressures were still a concern, a private survey showed.

The Manufacturing Purchasing

Managers' Index, compiled and collected by IHS Markit December 6-17, fell to 55.5 in December from November's 57.6 though it stayed above the 50-mark that separates growth from contraction for a sixth month.

The survey results reinforce evidence of a continued recovery in Asia's third-largest economy from the coronavirus pandemic-induced slump. That and rising price pressures may add to expectations that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will tighten monetary policies earlier than thought, like some other central banks.

The last PMI results of 2021 for the Indian manufacturing sector were encouraging, with the economic recovery continuing as firms



were successful in securing new work from domestic and international sources, Pollyanna De Lima, economics associate director at IHS Markit, said in a release.

Higher sales underpinned a further upturn in production and companies carried on with their restocking efforts. While the lat-

est survey showed the new orders sub-index, a proxy for domestic demand, slipped to 58.4 in December, it remained above the long-term average since the gauge was introduced in March 2005. That encouraged firms to maintain solid output.

Optimism about future output

The survey results reinforce evidence of a continued recovery in Asia's third-largest economy from the coronavirus pandemic-induced slump

That and rising price pressures may add to expectations that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will tighten monetary policies earlier than thought, like some other central banks

strengthened last month, but concerns about supply-chain disruptions, rapid spread of the new Omicron variant and inflationary pressures dampened sentiment.

Employment slipped back into contractionary territory last month after growing in November for the first time since July; however, the pace of job shedding was mar-

ginal. Although input costs rose sharply at an above-trend pace, output price inflation eased to a 14-month low as firms did not pass on the burden fully to consumers.

There were tentative signs that inflationary pressures started to subside, but companies weren't particularly confident that such trend would continue, De Lima added.

Despite easing in December, input cost inflation was still running at one of its highest rates in around seven-and-a-half years. The vast majority of firms nevertheless decided to keep their selling prices unchanged, in order to boost sales, with overall charges up only marginally in December.

BATTERS FAIL TO IMPRESS

Disappointing run of Pujara, Rahane with bat continues as India manage to post 202 in the first innings of the second Test before South Africa reach 35/1 at stumps on Day 1

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Johannesburg, Jan 3: Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane's saga of failures compounded a shoddy batting performance by India even as stand-in skipper KL Rahul impressed with a defiant show amid the ruins on the opening day of the second Test against South Africa here Monday.

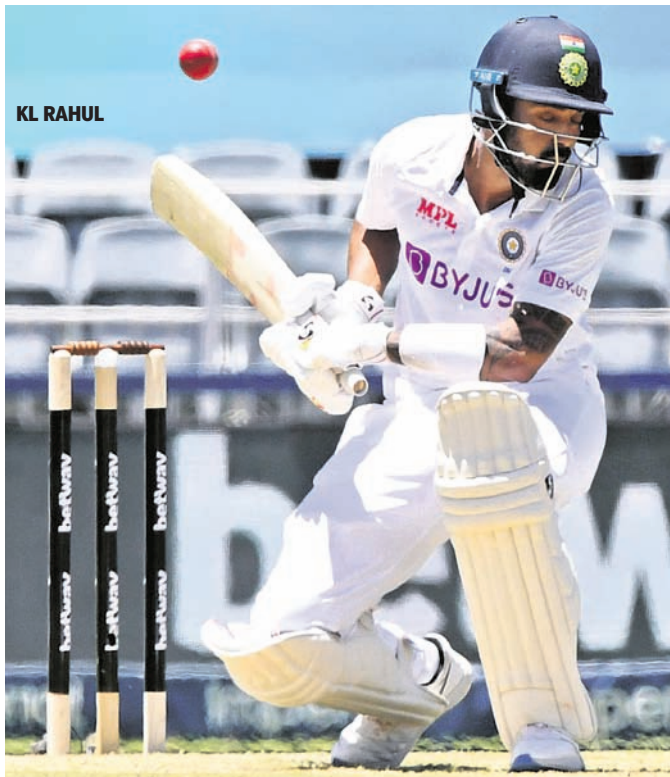
Rahul's patient 50-run knock on a day when India missed Virat Kohli due to back spasms and Ravichandran Ashwin's cavalier 46 at the rear end ensured that India scored 202 in their first innings on a bouncy Wanderers track.

At stumps, Mohammed Shami sent back Aiden Markram even as Dean Elgar (11 batting) and Keegan Peterson (14 batting) took South Africa to 35/1. It could have been two down had Rishabh Pant snapped Peterson off Jasprit Bumrah, which seemed a regulation catch.

Worse, Mohammed Siraj hobbled off with what looked like a hamstring strain and if it's bad news, then India would be left with four bowlers.

However, a lot of blame should go to India's batters as some like Pujara didn't show intent to score while others like Rahane seemed completely short of confidence. It prompted the legendary Sunil Gavaskar to say it is on air, "I think the next innings will be their last chance."

Having given up hopes to play for England, Duanne Olivier (3/67), playing his first game for South



KL RAHUL

Africa in three years, dismissed Pujara (3) and Rahane (0) off successive deliveries to make it difficult for the Indians.

Marco Jansen (4/31), with his giant frame, created awkward lengths for every Indian batter while Kagiso Rabada (3/64), despite not being at his best, got wickets when it mattered.

In his first game as captain, Rahul concentrated hard as he

played 133 deliveries. He was peppered with short balls. He would sway to some and duck the others while pulling the ones that he could.

Such is beauty of sport that Rahul, who till five months ago wasn't supposed to start as an opener in England, is now being groomed as an all-format India captain. If the first day composure is any indication, he won't do a bad job. He had a nice little partnership



R ASHWIN

of 42 runs with Hanuma Vihari (20) before an inspirational close-in catch from Rassie Van der Dussen at short leg sent the latter back.

Pant (17) and an attacking Ashwin added 40 in quick time but what India needed was a partnership of at least 75 if not 100.

At the start, Mayank Agarwal (26) looked fluent in the first hour with five boundaries before Jansen pitched one in the spot from where

it wasn't on drivable length as it climbed on. The opener went for a drive only to edge that to wicket-keeper Kyle Verreynne.

BRIEF SCORES

India 202 (KL Rahul 50, Ravichandran Ashwin 46; Marco Jansen 4/31, Kagiso Rabada 3/64, Duanne Olivier 3/64); South Africa 35/1 (Keegan Petersen 14 batting, Dean Elgar 11 batting; Mohamed Shami 1/15). Match to continue.

Back spasm keeps Virat out of 2nd tie



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Johannesburg, Jan 3: India captain Virat Kohli was Monday ruled out of the second Test against South Africa here just before start of the game because of an upper back spasm. The opener went for a drive only to edge that to wicket-keeper Kyle Verreynne.

Rahul said at the toss that Kohli is expected to be available for the third and final Test from January 11. "Unfortunately, Virat is having an upper back spasm. The physios are working on him and hopefully he will recover in time for the next Test," Rahul said at the toss when asked about Kohli's absence from the match.

All-rounder Hanuma Vihari has come in the playing XI to replace Kohli, who has been battling a prolonged lean patch with the willow,

will thus not be able to complete his landmark 100th Test in the series-finale at Cape Town.

The 33-year-old will be playing in the ODI series against the Proteas starting January 19. Rahul will captain India in that rubber as regular white-ball skipper Rohit Sharma is out injured.

The BCCI also issued a statement later in which it informed that Jasprit Bumrah would be Rahul's deputy during the match here. Bumrah is also due to play the same role during the ODI series.

As per the Indian team's fixtures, Kohli, if all goes well, will now get to play his 100th Test against Sri Lanka at Bangalore in February.

It is worth noting that head coach Rahul Dravid, while addressing the pre-match press conference Sunday, gave no indication of any possible injury concerns over Kohli, who is locked in a war of words with the BCCI over the way his white-ball captaincy tenure ended.

IYER RULED OUT DUE TO STOMACH BUG

Johannesburg: Middle-order batter Shreyas Iyer was ruled out of the second Test, which started here Monday, against South Africa due to a stomach bug, the BCCI said in a statement. "Team India batsman Shreyas Iyer was ruled out of selection for the 2nd Test owing to a stomach bug," a BCCI statement stated. Iyer made a magnificent start to his Test career, scoring a hundred and a half century on debut in the home series against New Zealand towards the end of last year.

Spain, Poland win at ATP Cup



ROBERTO BAUTISTA AGUT

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sydney, Jan 3: Spain and Poland remained perfect at the ATP Cup with 3-0 wins in their matches Monday, their second consecutive victories in the team event.

Roberto Bautista Agut clinched the match for Spain by beating Casper Ruud of Norway 6-4, 7-6(7-4) after Pablo Carreno Busta defeated Viktor Durasovic 6-3, 6-3. Bautista Agut improved to 9-2 in singles at the team event.

"Casper is playing unbelievable tennis, (he did) an unbelievable performance last year, and today I played very good," Bautista Agut said in his on-court interview. "I returned very well, I made very few unforced errors and I played ag-

gressively." Kamil Majchrzak gave Poland the early lead over Georgia with a 6-1, 6-1 win over Aleksandre Bakshi before Hubert Hurkacz clinched it with a 6-7(5-7), 6-3, 6-1 win over Aleksandre Metreveli.

"He (Metreveli) played well in the first set and things were not going my way. But I got better with each set and am happy to get the win," Hurkacz said.

Spain and Poland later both won their doubles matches to make it 3-0 scorelines. Poland can book a place in the semifinals if it defeats Argentina Wednesday in its next group game.

Majchrzak needed only 53 minutes to beat Bakshi. "I was trying to move (Bakshi) around and I think that was the key to the match,"

said Majchrzak, who is coached by former world seventh-ranked Joakim Nystrom.

"He brings me a lot of confidence and a lot of calm in my tennis so I can feel that I am improving," Majchrzak said of Nystrom on the ATP Tour's website.

"We are working on (developing an all-court game) but in a way that doesn't interrupt my baseline game. We will take it from the practice to the matches but it takes time."

Greece plays Argentina and Serbia takes on Chile in night matches Monday. The four group winners in the 16-team tournament advance to the semifinals Friday and Saturday, with the winners meeting in the final Sunday.

TER STEGEN HELPS BARCA BAG 3 POINTS

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Barcelona, Jan 3: Barcelona's German goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen made a stupendous stoppage-time reflex save to help his struggling coronavirus-hit side earn a 1-0 win at Mallorca.

The absence of 10 first-team players gave the rarely used Luuk de Jong the chance to finally show his worth as a striker since he joined Barcelona on loan at the end of the summer transfer market as a bargain replacement for Antoine Griezmann.

Barcelona travelled to Mallorca with 10 players from their 'B' team after a spate of COVID-19 cases. Coach Xavi Hernandez had to align a front line with De Jong flanked by youth players Ferran Jutglà and Ilias Aghomach.

De Jong, who had failed to earn consistent playing time, succeeded in providing a potent attacking threat for the visitors.

The Dutch striker tapped the ball onto the post moments before he produced a superb bicycle kick that rattled the crossbar. He then headed in his goal when he reached a cross by Oscar Mingueza at the far post just before halftime.

Barcelona still needed a stoppage-time save by Marc-Andre ter Stegen to rise to fifth place, one point from the Champions League spots.

Angel Correa scored twice as Atlético Madrid beat Rayo Vallecano 2-0 and ended their worst losing run since Diego Simeone took over the club a decade ago.

Blues-Reds draw benefits City

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, Jan 3: The only winner was Manchester City. And Romelu Lukaku certainly lost out. What a pulsating, entertaining encounter for Lukaku to miss — not out of his own choosing — as Chelsea recovered to draw 2-2 with Liverpool Sunday without the temporarily exiled striker.

It left City 10 points clear from the Blues at the top of the Premier League with Liverpool a further point back. The sky blue ribbons look like remaining on the trophy for another year thanks to the fading challenge from the chasing pack.

That's even before the Reds are the hardest hit by players heading to the African Cup of Nations. Before leaving for what could be more than a month away, Sadio Mane and Mohamed Salah did contribute Liverpool's goals.

Liverpool seemed to be coasting but was stung twice at the end of the first half with Mateo Kovacic's volley and Christian Pulisic's strike pulling Chelsea level.

Only 15 seconds into the game, it looked like Mane might also have had no further role in the game. Elbowing César Azpilicueta in the face while trying to beat the Chelsea captain, Mane immediately faced action from the referee. But he escaped with only a booking — the earliest recorded in a Premier League match.

It meant Mane was still on the pitch to score the opener in the ninth minute. Trevoh Chalobah's weak headed clearance created the opening for Mane to round Mendy



Christian Pulisic (2nd from L) celebrates with teammates after scoring Chelsea's equaliser against Liverpool, Sunday

and place the ball in the net past the helpless Azpilicueta.

Chelsea had wilted and looked rattled, especially when Salah's brilliance extended Liverpool's advantage in the 26th minute. The top scorer was involved in the buildup before receiving the ball back from Trent Alexander-Arnold's pass and controlling it past the befuddled Marcos Alonso and squeezing a shot past Mendy at his near post.

Liverpool were cruising. Soon it was cursing. The game swung around inside three minutes at the end of the first half.

A free-kick from the right was punched clear by Kelleher but only

to the edge of the penalty area. Unbalanced but still able to make a clean first-time connection, Kovacic volleyed impressively into the top corner off the inside of the post.

Chelsea's anxiety that the goal could be ruled out for an offside soon subsided for fresh celebrations. And Chelsea was celebrating again quickly again in stoppage time when Pulisic leveled after being released by N'Golo Kante and lifting the shot over Kelleher.

The third goal from Pulisic in 11 league appearances this season rescued a point for Chelsea that had seemed to be out of reach.

SHORT TAKES

Joshna ranked 10th

NEW DELHI: India's leading squash player Joshna Chinappa has returned to the top 10 of PSA world rankings. The 35-year-old had reached a career-high 10th place for the first time in 2016. She has returned to the elite club of players in 10th position. Saurav Ghosal has dropped a spot to be 16th in the men's rankings. It is an important year for Indian squash with Asian Games and Commonwealth Games scheduled.

Events postponed

NEW DELHI: All India Chess Federation (AICF) Monday announced the postponement of several national level championships scheduled for this month in view of the rising number of COVID-19 cases in the country and the restrictions imposed by various states. Among the tournaments put off are the national junior, sub-junior and national school championships. The new dates for the events would be announced later, AICF said in a press release.

Jerry show helps Odisha stun MCFC

POST NEWS NETWORK, ISL

Goa, Jan 3: Odisha FC completed a scintillating second-half comeback, courtesy a brace by Jerry Mawihmingthanga, recording an impressive 4-2 win over Mumbai City FC at the Tilak Maidan Stadium in their Indian Super League match.

The result leaves Des Buckingham's men winless in three games. Victory for Kiko Ramirez's men means that only three points separate them from the league leaders despite being in seventh place on the table.

Odisha's Aridai Cabrera (fourth minute) scored an early goal against the run of play but Ahmed Jahouh (11th) quickly brought the game on level terms with a superb finish.

Igor Angulo (38th) then headed his team into the lead before Jerry (70th & 77th) scored a memorable brace to hand the lead back to the Kalinga Warriors. Jonathas (89th) put the cherry on the cake for the Bhubaneswar-based side.



STAR OF THE NIGHT: Jerry Mawihmingthanga points skyward after scoring against Mumbai City FC as his teammates rush to join him for celebration

The match began at a rapid pace as Odisha FC scored an early goal. Mumbai City FC's Mourtada Fall gave the ball away with an unforced error in his own half which led to Cabrera cutting inside from the left flank and unleashing a

curling shot towards the far post. A few minutes later, Jahouh found the back of the net with a sensational curling shot from almost 25-yards out. The midfielder was fed by Cassio Gabriel with a perfectly weighted pass for the equaliser.

After a few failed attempts, Angulo finally gave the Islanders the lead with a precise header from a Jahouh free-kick.

The second half also started on a fiery note as OFC began on the front foot. Moments after the hour mark, Sahil Tanwar missed an easy header to score the equaliser from 12-yards away after finding himself unmarked inside the box. Ygor Catatau looked to have scored another goal from the bench but he was adjudged to be in an offside position.

Within seconds on the other end, Jerry scored his first goal of the season and equalised with a diving header at the far post. The winger then proceeded to score OFC's third and stunned the league leaders with a powerful drive that went straight into the top corner from the right flank.

To inflict more misery, Jerry turned provider by delivering a pinpoint cross for Jonathas who calmly placed his shot in the back of the net to score the fourth.

Nehra to be head coach of Ahmedabad IPL team

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 3: Former India fast bowler Ashish Nehra will be Ahmedabad IPL franchise's head coach during the 2022 Indian Premier League season while England opener of yesteryears Vikram Solanki is in line to become 'Director of Cricket'.

World Cup-winning former India coach Gary Kirsten will be the 'Mentor' of the franchise which is expecting to get its formal 'Letter of Intent' (LOI) during the month.

"As far as I have heard, they have signed Ashish as their head coach and someone who would be in overall charge of the franchise. Solanki will be the 'Director of Cricket' and also expected to double up as batting coach and Kirsten will be in a mentorship role," a senior IPL source told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

"The Ahmedabad franchise can't announce it formally as it is a BCCI diktat and they can only make a for-

mal announcement after they get the LOI. The head honchos of Ahmedabad franchise has already interviewed the trio and short-listed them for the season," the source said.

Nehra has earlier been a coach with Royal Challengers Bangalore where Kirsten was also involved for a couple of seasons. Both of them have had a long and fruitful working relationship since the time when Nehra was a player and Kirsten his national coach.

Nehra shares a great rapport even with Solanki, who has worked previously as a coach in IPL. Once it gets the green light from BCCI, the franchise will go ahead and select a few assistant coaches.

Nehra had been away from coaching for two seasons as he had decided that he would be taking up such an assignment only if he has the profile of a head coach where he can make a difference both in terms of team composition and strategy.