

ODM GLOBAL SCHOOL
Unlock your potential

ADMISSIONS OPEN
I - XI (Day Boarding)
VI - XI (Residential)

www.odmglobalschool.org
1800-120-2316

NEET-PG COUNSELLING TO BEGIN JANUARY 12

New Delhi: The NEET-PG counselling will commence from January 12, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said Sunday. The Supreme Court, in an interim order, January 7, allowed resumption of medical counselling for NEET-PG admissions for the year 2021-22. It also upheld the validity of 27 per cent OBC and 10 per cent EWS quotas. "As assured by the Ministry of Health to the resident doctors, following the order of the Honourable Supreme Court, the NEET-PG counselling is being started by the Medical Counselling Committee from January 12, 2022," Mandaviya tweeted.



400 PARLIAMENT STAFF TEST COVID POSITIVE

New Delhi: Over 400 Parliament staffers have tested positive for Covid-19 during random testing ahead of the Budget session. It has been found that among all those tested positive for Covid, 65 are from the Rajya Sabha, 200 from the Lok Sabha and 133 belong to the allied services. According to the sources, random testing was conducted January 6-7 in the wake of the sudden spike of new cases in the national capital. Most of the staffers who have contracted the virus did not show any symptoms, they said. Meanwhile, the Rajya Sabha Secretariat has decided to restrict staff attendance after Vice President and Rajya Sabha chairman M Venkaiah Naidu reviewed the situation and directed to take necessary measures to contain the spread of the virus among the secretariat officials and staff.



JSW Cement
The Leaders' Choice

1800 266 266 1 (toll free)

ODISHA SEES BIGGEST SINGLE-DAY SPIKE WITH 4,714 NEW COVID CASES

Booster dose begins today

■ The precautionary third dose of Covid-19 vaccine begins Monday as the state registered 28% spike in Covid cases Sunday

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 9: Amidst a massive spike in Covid cases in the state, the Health department will begin administering the precautionary third dose of Covid vaccine for senior citizens with co-morbidity, health workers and other frontline workers in the capital city and Cuttack from Monday. The booking for the booster dose was opened on CoWIN app Saturday night and individuals who want to take the third dose need to produce the certificate of second jab at the vaccination centre. Meanwhile, the state registered 4,714 new Covid cases Sunday, 28 per cent more than the previous day, and the biggest single-day spike in nearly six months, the Health department said. The daily posi-



tivity rate jumped to 6.72 per cent from 5.15 Saturday. As many as 416 children are among the newly-infected patients, a bulletin said.

The spike is more than 11-fold from 424 cases reported January 2. The state had logged 3,679 cases Saturday, while 4,852 infections were registered June 12 last year.

Khurda district, where Bhubaneswar is located, reported more than a quarter of the new

cases as 1,619 people tested positive. Sundargarh reported 662 new cases, while Sambalpur (437), Cuttack (360) and Puri (119) followed. The active cases rose to 16,117, including 5,671 in Khurda, which is in the red zone. Sundargarh, Sambalpur and Cuttack are in the yellow zone where the number of patients is between 1,001 and 2,500, the bulletin said.

Meanwhile, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation, Sunday, added 19 more zones in the capital.

Evicted City street vendor ends life

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 9: In a tragic fallout of trader-vendor tussle, a street vendor ended his life Sunday by hanging himself in his house at a slum in Tankapani area under Badagada police limits here. The deceased Ajit Sahni, is a resident of Vaishali district in Bihar.

Sahni had moved from Bihar to Odisha along with his family in search of livelihood around 35 years ago. He reportedly made a living as a roadside vendor selling a variety of textile items like bed sheets, pillow and sofa covers in the City. Later, Sahni shifted his business to the Market Building in Unit-II area.

He had also received the street vendors' card issued by the Bhubaneswar Municipality Corporation (BMC) authorities.

However, local traders put pressure on the BMC authorities to evict the vendors located in the Market Building following a tussle between a woman street

vendor and a shop owner in the building over encroachment of walkway in front of the latter's shop. Sahni was forced out of the premises by the traders. Owing to the eviction, street vendors who have been earning their bread and butter by vending products in the area for years lost their means of support all of a sudden.

According to sources, Sahni had recently purchased goods worth over ₹2 lakh by taking loan from a private money lender. As a result, he went into depression after the eviction from the area. Earlier, the BMC had provided him ₹10,000 as loan to compensate for the losses incurred due to the Covid-induced lockdown and shutdowns.

Reeling under huge debts, Sahni decided to take the extreme step Sunday morning and hanged himself from a ceiling fan when his wife and other street vendors were at the Market Building area to decide their future course of action.

Two youths die in road mishap in city

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 9: Two persons died in a road mishap near Satsang Vihar under Saheed Nagar police limits here Sunday evening. One of the deceased was identified as Arman Khan (alias Pappu) of Salia Sahi area under Nayapalli police station.

Police were trying to ascertain the identity of the other victim identity till reports last came in. Police said that they are trying to contact Pappu's family members.

Sources claimed that the victims were going towards Acharya Vihar on their motor cycle (OR14 G 1180) when a speeding truck hit their vehicle from the rear.

Both the victims, who sustained critical injuries, died on the spot. On being informed, Saheed Nagar police rushed to the spot and sent the bodies to Capital Hospital for post-mortem.

It is worth mentioning here that the place where the accident occurred Sunday has been marked as a black spot by the authorities. Several fatal mishaps have taken place there in the past.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Wonderful speech! But replace all abuses with hate speech. You see, model code of conduct is in force now.

WEATHER		BHUB	CTK
TEMP.	MAX	29.7°C	29.6°C
	MIN	13.2°C	14.2°C
Humidity		79%	86%
Rainfall		Nil	Nil
	Forecast	Light to moderate rain	

DSPL-386



ADVANCED TREATMENT FACILITIES FOR BSKY BENEFICIARIES AVAILABLE IN PREMIER HOSPITALS OUTSIDE ODISHA



LIST OF PREMIER HOSPITALS EMPANELLED UNDER BSKY

FROM 10TH JANUARY 2022

- ➊ Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai
- ➋ Tata Medical Center, Kolkata
- ➌ Christian Medical College, Vellore
- ➍ Sri Shankara Cancer Hospital & Research Centre, Bangalore
- ➎ Fortis Hospital, Mohali, Punjab
- ➏ Fortis Hospital, Anandpur, Kolkata
- ➐ Fortis Hospital and Kidney Institute, Kolkata
- ➑ BALCO Medical Centre, Raipur
- ➒ Shree Balaji Institute of Medical Science, Raipur
- ➓ CARE Hospital, Visakhapatnam
- ➔ Apollo Hospital, Visakhapatnam
- ➕ Mahatma Gandhi Cancer Hospital & Research Institute, Visakhapatnam
- ➖ Tirumala Multispeciality Hospital, Visakhapatnam
- ➗ Tristar Hospital, Surat
- ➘ Unity Trauma Centre & ICU, Surat

ANOTHER 40+ PREMIER HOSPITALS WILL JOIN BSKY IN FEBRUARY 2022



CALL 104 HEALTH HELPLINE

OIPR-10001/13/0115/2122

leisure



ENJOYED STRIPPING OFF IN NINE BULLETS: LENA HEADEY

Actress Lena Headey used a body double for her memorable 'walk of shame' nude scene in *Game of Thrones*. However, 48-year-old, while speaking on *The Happy Vagina* podcast, revealed that she relished the opportunity to strip off in her latest film *Nine Bullets*.

TIMBALAND COMPARES THE WEEKND TO MJ

Prolific music producer Timbaland, who worked on Michael Jackson's second posthumous album *Xscape* in 2014, has compared the new album of rapper The Weeknd (real name - Abel Tesfaye), to Jackson's *Thriller*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES
Today, you may wake up with your nose in the air. Though you may feel bossy and important, others may not feel that way about you. Avoid giving orders that sound like insults. Otherwise, the whole thing may fall flat on your face, says Ganesh.

TAURUS
Getting through today will be like a cruise, says Ganesh. Business deals will kneel to the charm of your honey tongue and you will taste success. As the day progresses, you may lose interest in things. Beware of being too sentimental in the evening, warns Ganesh.

GEMINI
There are indications that you will most certainly guard against going off on a tangent in important meetings today, foresees Ganesh. You are also likely to let your brains on an overdrive to get things done at the workplace.

CANCER
Chances are that your day will be filled with a lot of fun and celebration, says Ganesh. In the afternoon, you can expect a breakthrough in a very important business deal. At night, you will be busy partying.

LEO
Your wish to be in a cocoon, protected from the vagaries of the world, may come to fruition today. You remain sensitive and protected, says Ganesh. At work, you will be filled with a sense of purpose, and a feeling of solidity. But it is the evening that you should look forward to, as you are assured of a fantastic time with your family and loved ones.

VIRGO
It is quite probable that today will be an action-packed day for you, feels Ganesh. It is going to be a progressive day for your business. Later in the day, you may retreat into your shell, and refuse company.

LIBRA
It's now or never for you, as today, you may finally take out time to do some sound thinking for your future goals and success. Things seem to go your way, and all your plans are beautifully executed towards the afternoon. Also, find time in the evening to be with the ones dear to you. A movie and dinner sounds like a good idea to Ganesh. Enjoy life in all its goodness!

SCORPIO
Armed with a good sense of judgement, you will make a number of encouraging changes in your behaviour today, foretells Ganesh. Habits die hard, but all the effort that you put in to refine your routine will pay off brilliantly by the end of the day.

SAGITTARIUS
You may just strike the notes of your beloved's heart today. Your presence and presents will make them realise how much you do indeed love them. Expect a trip to posh showrooms and designer shops to buy them expensive gifts.

CAPRICORN
It's not every day that you wake up with a positive feeling, one that pushes you to make right everything that has been going wrong around and within you. Today, you may be in one of those high-spirited moods, says Ganesh. At home, you will strive to gain the confidence of your family members while at work, you will slog hard the entire day and get adequately rewarded for the same.

AQUARIUS
You are fully charged and raring to go! Your friends are supportive of your new schemes, and your bosses are pushing you to complete pending projects. This shouldn't be a problem, considering your current levels of energy and enthusiasm, says Ganesh.

PISCES
You will feel like King Midas himself today because everything you take up will fructify into something successful and rewarding, says Ganesh. You will be alight with incredible ideas and abuzz with stupendous energy. Feel free to skip the coffee!

Samantha recounts her mental health struggles

Hyderabad: Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu has spoken about the importance of mental health as she recounted her own struggle with mental health issues.

Samantha was invited as the chief guest for the launch of the 'Psychiatry at your doorstep' initiative of Roshini Trust and Datla Foundation.

Being in the spotlight for the issues in her private life right now, she has provided a window into how she has handled those issues.

The Family Man 2 actress, who spoke at the event opened up about her mental health struggles and how many people helped her overcome those problems.

She said, "There should be no inhibitions about seeking help when you are mentally disturbed. In my case, I was able to

overcome my mental health issues only with the help of my counsellors and friends."

The actress also stressed the point that seeking help from psychiatrists must be normalised. "Like how we go to a doctor for physical injuries, we also should consult doctors if our heart gets hurt," she said.

AGENCIES

Tara signs her first solo lead

Mumbai: Actress Tara Sutaria seems to be a hot favourite currently. After her last film *Tadap* alongside Ahan Shetty, she seems to be on a signing spree. The actress has reportedly signed her first solo lead film. The forthcoming film will be bankrolled by *Kabir Singh* producer Murad Khetani.

According to a tabloid, the film is the story of the survival of a young girl. Produced by Murad Khetani under his banner Cine1 Studios, the film will be helmed by Brij Mohan. It is said to be along the lines of *NH10* which starred Anushka Sharma.

Back in December 2021, Tara said that she had an announcement coming up regarding a project that will see her in a completely different light.

Tara Sutaria will be starring next in *Ek Villian Returns* alongside John Abraham, Arjun Kapoor, and Disha Patani. It is being helmed by Mohit Suri. She will also be starring in *Heropati 2* with Tiger Shroff. It marks their reunion after *Student of the Year 2*.

AGENCIES



REVERSE TREND

James Bond vrooms past Spidey in UK mkt

London: The Tom Holland-led *Spider-Man: No Way Home* may be leaping from one box-office record to the next in this time of the pandemic, but audiences in the UK and Ireland have shown their loyalty to their favourite spy, James Bond, by ensuring that



Wars: The Force Awakens (123.2 million pounds) and another James Bond movie, *Skyfall* (103.2 million pounds).

Spider-Man: No Way Home, which is still running in cinemas, is No.10 in the all-time chart with 74.8 million pounds and is most likely to overtake 2019's *The Lion King* (76 million pounds) and will then challenge *Titanic* (80.2 million pounds) for the eighth position, reports *Variety* quoting Comscore data.

data released by the media measurement and analytics company, Comscore, and reported by *Variety*, the year's UK and Ireland box-office was led by *No Time to Die*, which is the No. 3 film of all time with 96.5 million pounds, behind *Star*

British actor Daniel Craig's final outing as 007, *No Time to Die*, tops the 2021 charts. According to

Return of the character actor

Earlier, the writers didn't think of creating characters, besides the hero, heroine and villain. But, now, the popularity of some of the actors on OTT is compelling filmmakers to cast them.

The character artistes lent credibility to a film's story, they filled the screen and, what is more, helped break the monotony of the lead pair dominating the screen. All that because these characters were woven into the script. Whatever the draw, popularity or fan following of a star, he or she alone could not carry a film through.

There were some great character actors such as Balraj Sahni, Jayant, Iftekhar, Rehman, Sapru, Kanhaiyalal and Jeevan, whose

very names in the credit titles added to a film's value.

One cannot imagine Manoj Kumar's *Shaheed* or later, *Upkar* without Pran, or *Chupke Chupke* without Om Prakash.

Then followed an era when the character artistes were out of favour almost totally. There were no writers who could pen

actors have staged a comeback. Their films, as a rule, are low- or moderate-budget productions, such as *Fukrey*, *Vicky Donor*, *Piku*, *Kahaani*, *English Vinglish*, *Paan Singh Tomar*.

There are actors such as Pankaj Tripathi, Sanjay Mishra, Imraan, Rajesh Sharma, Deepak Dobriyal,

Arshad Warsi, Ronit Roy, Varun Sharma. The list can go on.

Sadly, most of these talents do not get their due in mainstream cinema. Our writers don't



think of creating characters, besides the hero and villain (the heroine being mandatory). But, now, the popularity of some of the actors on OTT is compelling filmmakers to cast them.

Take for example Pratik Gandhi. An unknown stage actor till the other day, he is now doing about half-a-dozen films. Imagine, Pankaj Tripathi is now seen in as many, if not more, television commercials as any top hero.



Pratik Gandhi

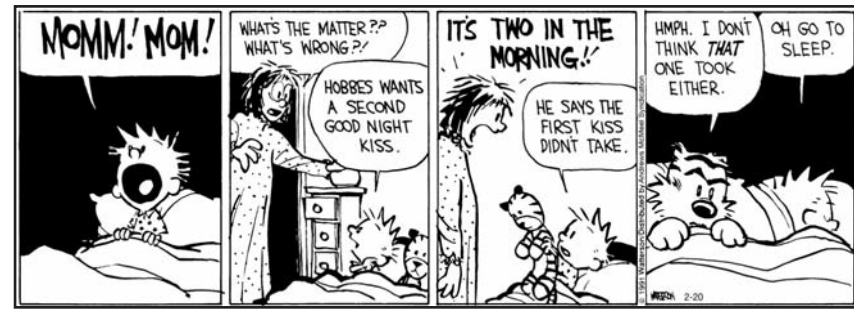


Pankaj Tripathi

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

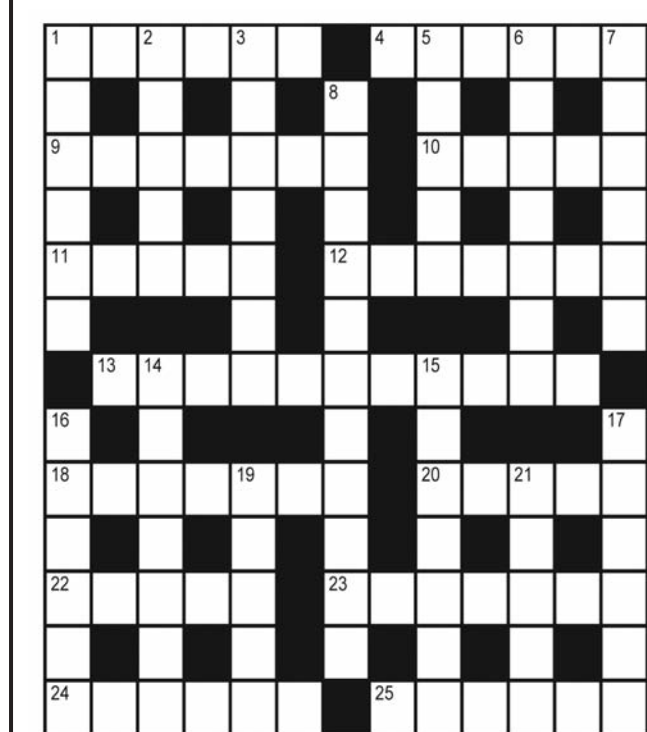


BREVITY



FUN post

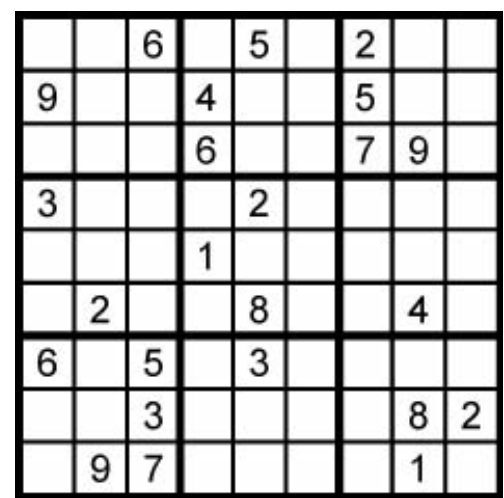
CROSSWORD



- Across**
1 Hot and muggy
4 Japanese island
9 Appearance
10 Macaroni shape
11 Girder material
12 Movie lead
13 Education
18 Japanese dish
20 Circus site
22 Welsh dog
- Down**
23 Decipherable
24 Tea type
25 Sea eagle
- Across**
7 Foolish
8 Enjoyable
14 Roman
15 Chemical weapon (4,3)
16 Building material
17 Kind of glass or belt
19 Merger
21 Hot coal

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.

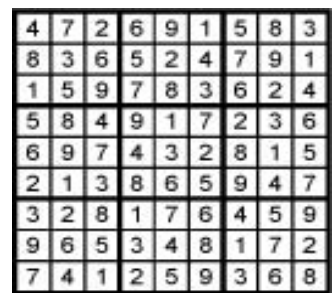


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

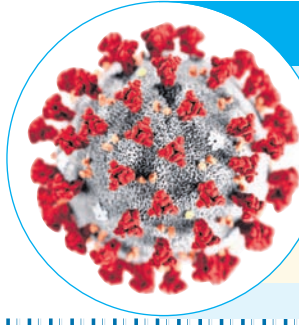


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



CIVIC ISSUE

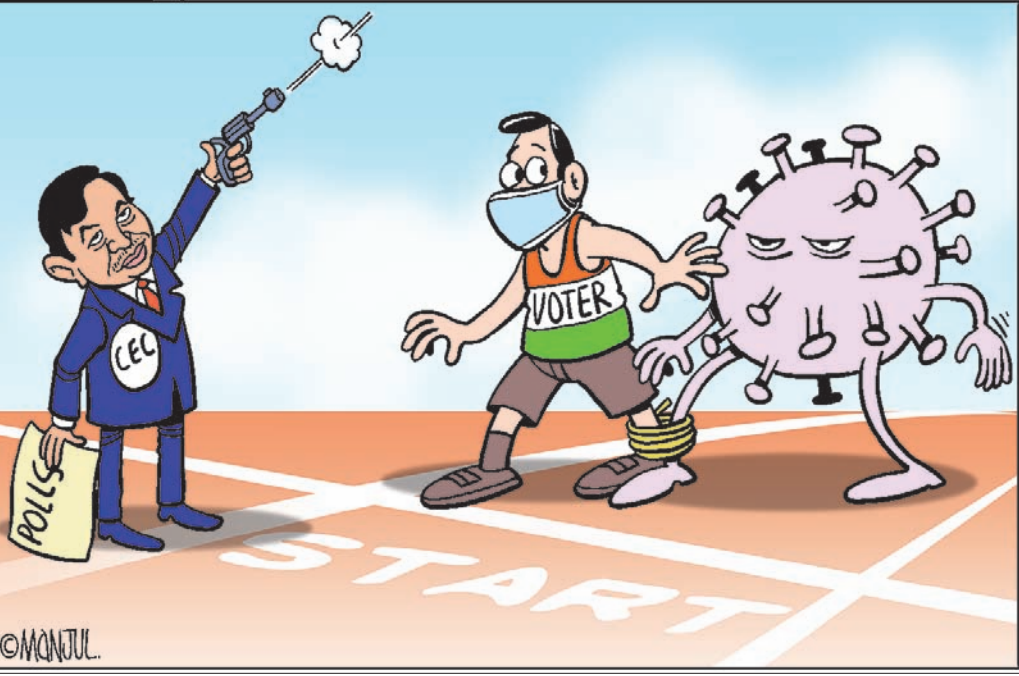
Stray cattle feast on garbage dumped near the Lingaraj temple in Bhubaneswar, Sunday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	30,63,04,874	25,91,11,400	55,04,015
India	3,55,28,004	3,44,53,603	4,83,790
Odisha	10,70,869	10,46,617	8,468

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Unseasonal rain likely to hit Odisha

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Jan 9: The MeT of office Sunday warned that heavy rain and thunderstorm, accompanied by hail, are likely to lash Odisha for three days from January 11, and asked farmers to shift their harvest to safer places.

Some impact on agriculture is expected during the period due to a western disturbance approaching towards eastern India and strong moisture incursion from the Bay Bengal, the weathermen said. "Light to moderate rainfall activity is very likely at many places over the districts of Odisha from January 11 to 14," the Bhubaneswar Meteorological Centre said in a bulletin.

According to the MeT department, thunderstorms and hail are likely to occur in seven districts - Bargarh, Bolangir, Sonepur,

MeT forecast



Light to moderate rainfall activity is very likely at many places over the districts of Odisha from January 11 to 14, said the MeT office

The MeT department advised farmers to shift the harvested paddy to safer places within Monday and postpone sowing of Rabi pulses and oilseeds for a few days

Sambalpur Jharsuguda, Sundargarh and Deogarh - Tuesday. Thunderstorms and heavy rain may occur in Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Boudh, Angul, Dhenkanal, Cuttack and Nayagarh districts Wednesday, said the weather report.

rain in some areas in Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Nayagarh and Kandhamal districts Thursday.

"The rainfall may commence from January 10 at some districts of Western Odisha," the bulletin said.

The MeT department advised farmers to shift the harvested paddy to safer places within Monday and postpone sowing of Rabi pulses and oilseeds for a few days.

Matured vegetables like cauliflower, cabbage, tomato, bean, green pea, carrot, and radish also may be harvested and shifted to safer places, according to the department.

Arrangements should be made to cover vegetables like onion, tomato, chilly and cauliflower, which are at a seedling stage, with hail nets, plastic cover or polythene sheet. Proper drainage channels should be ensured to drain out excess water in the nursery, as well as the main field, the bulletin said.

Irrigation activities should be stopped for groundnut and mustard crops as most of them are at a flowering stage and the rain will be helpful, the weather office added.

Chief Secy asks Collectors to visit Covid hospitals

The present trend shows that around 97 pc of the patients can be managed without hospitalisation



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 9: Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra Sunday reviewed the preparedness at the district level to treat people infected with the Omicron variant of Covid-19.

Participating in the review meeting virtually, the Collectors apprised the Chief Secretary regarding the steps taken by them to deal with the Omicron situation. The Chief Secretary directed the Collectors to insulate the doctors, nurses and health workers with booster dose of the Covid vaccine on priority basis.

He also directed the Collectors to set up help desks at Covid hospitals and Covid care centres for communication with family members of the patients.

"No patient should feel neglected in hospitals. All should be attended to with care and love. The family members should be communicated about condition of the patients regularly," said the Chief Secretary while emphasizing upon em-

pathetic treatment to the patients.

The Chief Secretary directed the Health and Family Welfare department to meet the requirements of the district administrations on priority basis. He also asked the collectors to visit the Covid hospitals personally and take stock of the availability of medicine, man power, instruments, pathological test facilities and oxygen.

Additional Chief Secretary, Health and Family Welfare department, Raj Kumar Sharma said all facilities and provisions put in place for combating the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic should be reactivated to meet the emergency situation.

He directed the collectors to recruit the retired doctors and nurses locally as per the requirements. The Chief District Medical Officers (CDMOs) and Public Health Officers were asked to go ahead with the booster dose vaccination by utilizing the vaccine stocks available at the district level.

Review meeting

- The Chief Secretary directed the Collectors to insulate the doctors, nurses and health workers with booster dose of the Covid vaccine on priority basis
- He also directed the Collectors to set up help desks at Covid hospitals and Covid care centres for communication with family members of the patients
- The meeting revealed that the state has 7,181 oxygen-supported beds, around 1,000 paediatric beds, 2,024 ICUs and HDUs
- As of now, the state has 16,117 active cases, out of which 15,640 patients are being treated in home isolation

Development Commissioner Pradeep Kumar Jena assured all sorts of cooperation among the state and Central PSUs and Covid hospitals. The Collectors were asked to go ahead with tripartite agreements similar to those inked during the first and second wave.

The meeting revealed that the state has 7,181 oxygen supported beds, around 1,000 paediatric beds, 2,024 ICUs and HDUs. As of now, the state has 16,117 active cases, out of which 15,640 patients are being treated in home isolation.

The patients under home isolation are being managed by the rapid response teams constituted in each district and ULB.

The present trend shows that around 97 per cent of the patients can be managed without hospitalisation. Only around 3 per cent of the available beds, 11 per cent of the ICUs and 3 per cent of the ventilators are being used across the state, revealed the meeting.

Interstate drug trafficker held from Bengal

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 9: The Special Task Force (STF) of the Crime Branch with the help of West Bengal police has arrested an interstate drug trafficker from Nadia district of the neighbouring state.

The accused was identified as Lal Mohammad Sk alias Lulu Sk, a native of Baranaldaha under Palashipara police limits in Nadia district, sources said.

The accused was produced before the court of the CJM of Tehatta that allowed the STF to bring him Odisha on a five-day transit remand.

The STF came to know about Lal Mohammad Sk from Safikul Sk, another drug trafficker from Murshidabad in West Bengal. Safikul had confessed to have procured the contraband from Mohammad Sk.

120 gm brown sugar seized; 2 nabbed



CUTTACK: The Cantonment police Sunday claimed to have arrested a father-son duo on charges of supplying brown sugar to the peddlers in the Silver City here.

The police have seized 120 grams of brown sugar from Niranjana Mohanty and

Safikul had been arrested by the STF during a raid in Tangi area of Khurda district October 20, last year.

As per the information collected from Safikul, the STF team carried out a raid

his son Pabitra Kumar Mohanty of Jagatsinghpur, sources said.

A special team arrested the father-son duo while they were about to sell the illegal drug to some peddlers in the evening, said Cantonment police inspector in-charge Dinakrushna Mishra.

The duo has admitted that they were supplying brown sugar to the peddlers in Cantonment area. They have been produced before a local court, Mishra added.

at Mohammad Sk's village in Nadia district and arrested him, sources said

"Mohammad Sk is an interstate drug trafficker. He was on the run for last many days," STF sources informed.

'Covid-vaccinated mothers pass on antibodies to babies via breast milk'

Women vaccinated against Covid-19 transfer SARS-CoV-2 antibodies to their breastfed infants, potentially giving their babies passive immunity against the coronavirus, according to a new research that encourages lactating women to continue breastfeeding after they receive the vaccine.

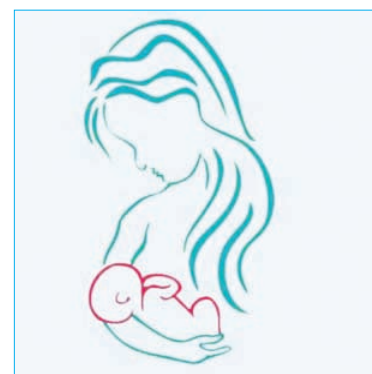
The study, published in the journal *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, measured the immune response to the Covid-19 mRNA vaccine in both breast milk and the stools of breastfed infants.

"This research is the first to detect SARS-CoV-2 antibodies in stool samples from infants of vaccinated mothers," said lead author Vignesh Narayanaswamy, research student at University of Massachusetts Amherst.

"This is really important because women want to know whether their babies have these antibodies, and our study shows that antibodies are being transferred via breast milk. Providing this compelling evidence is motivation for women to continue breastfeeding after they receive the vaccine," he added.

Further, the study showed that the antibodies were detected in infants regardless of age—from 1.5 months old to 23 months old.

Thirty lactating women from across the US—most of them healthcare workers—were enrolled in the study. They re-



ceived the Covid-19 mRNA vaccine between January and April 2021.

The women provided breast milk samples before they were vaccinated, across two to three weeks after their first vaccine dose and across three weeks after the second dose. They also gave samples of their blood, spotted on cards, 19 days after the first dose and 21 days after the second dose. Infant stool samples were collected 21 days after the mothers' second vaccination. Pre-pandemic samples of breast milk, dried blood spots and infant stools were used as controls for the study.

The samples were tested for receptor-binding domain (RBD)-specific immunoglobulin (IgA) and IgG antibodies. In the breast milk samples, anti-RBD IgG antibodies were found to neutralise

This (research) is really important because women want to know whether their babies have these antibodies, and our study shows that antibodies are being transferred via breast milk. Providing this compelling evidence is motivation for women to continue breastfeeding after they receive the vaccine

VIGNESH NARAYANASWAMY | LEAD AUTHOR & RESEARCH STUDENT AT UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

the protein spike of SARS-CoV-2, as well as four variants. A significant increase in cytokine levels also revealed the immune response in breast milk samples.

Anti-RBD IgG and anti-RBD IgA antibodies were detected in 33 per cent and 30 per cent of infant stool samples, respectively. The levels of antibodies correlated with the vaccine side effects the mother experienced.

"Women who did feel sick from the vaccine were associated with greater antibodies in the infant stool," said Kathleen Arcaro, Professor of environmental toxicology in the Department of Veterinary and Animal Sciences.

"So, you might have felt badly, but that was a benefit for your infant," Arcaro said. IANS

SWOSTI GROUP
 Since 1981
 WHERE PASSION LIVES

Sri Naveen Patnaik
 Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha
 will lay the Foundation Stone
 of
"SWOSTI PREMIUM BEACH RESORTS"
 on
10th January 2022
 at Plot No. 696/1555, New Marine Drive Road
 Sipasurubuli, Puri

Banker held for ₹16 lakh embezzlement

Cuttack, Jan 9: Bidanasi police Sunday claimed to have arrested a former assistant manager with SBI's Chandi Chhak branch here on charges of embezzling ₹16 lakh. Bidanasi inspector in-charge (IC) Pradipta Kumar Nayak said they have arrested Chandrabhanu Rout, 42, of Ramgarh area under Lalbagh police limits here on the basis of a case (258/20) registered following the complaint of State Bank of India (SBI) Chandi Chhak branch manager Sangita Clits regarding ₹16.15 lakh fraud by Rout. During the probe, it was found that Rout, during his stint at the Chandi Chhak branch as an assistant manager in 2020, had embezzled ₹16.15 lakh belonging to Geetanjali Das, a resident of



Rout, during his stint at the Chandi Chhak branch as an assistant manager in 2020, had embezzled ₹16.15 lakh belonging to Geetanjali Das, a resident of Mandapada area under Choudwar police limits

Mandapada area under Choudwar police limits in the Silver City who had been maintaining a savings account and two fixed deposits with the leading bank. "Geetanjali Das had been maintaining a savings account and two fixed deposits with the Chandi Chhak branch. Upon ma-

turity of Das' fixed deposits, Rout abused his official position and diverted around ₹16.15 lakh to a few of his relatives' account instead of disbursing it to Das," the Bidanasi IIC said. A four-wheeler and a scooter have been recovered from the accused, the IIC pointed out.



CULTURAL FETE

Artistes perform during an event organised by Binapani Natya Sanstha at Sanchana Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

OP PHOTO

Lockdown counterproductive, say experts

Bhubaneswar, Jan 9: The Odisha government has imposed additional restrictions in a bid to leash the alarming spread of the virus. Night curfew, in all urban areas of the state, has been extended by an hour. The trend of such countermeasures compels people to ask whether the state is heading towards another chain of lockdowns and shutdowns like the last two years, or the government has any other trick up its sleeves. Orissa POST spoke to experts from different quarters over a similar action's requirement, productivity and probable collateral damage. Ex-president of Utkal Chamber of Commerce and Industries Ramesh Mohapatra said that a complete lockdown is not good for the economy and for people too. However, curbs like night curfew, restriction on public gathering and weekend shutdowns



among others will not affect the economy that much. Health expert Amrit Pattojoshi said that lockdown will bring more distress among people and will also cripple the economy to a bigger extent. Instead, the state government should control social gathering in marriages and hostels etc. "Thanks to timely restrictions, we were able to control the cases' rise in some way. There is no doubt

that cases will rise in the state again and we have to be prepared for that. No one can say they are safe from the virus because it can affect all," he warned. Meanwhile, environmentalist Jaya Krushna Panigrahi batted for a complete lockdown, calling it the most effective solution to prevent the third wave of Covid and Omicron from going out of proportions. A 15 days' complete shut-

A complete lockdown is meaningless unless the daily caseload goes beyond 1 lakh-mark in state. Odisha's healthcare infrastructure is robust, so there is nothing to worry about

NIROJ KUMAR MISHRA | EXPERT ON COVID TREATMENT

down will drastically reduce Covid's spread. "Alternatively if we go for phase-wise regulations keeping in view the economy and livelihood issues, people's irresponsible behaviour will be the main hindrance. Public awareness is still not being reflected in their actions," said a disappointed Panigrahi. City urban planner and cyclist Piyush Ranjan Rout said, "Another complete lockdown is nothing but accepting failure of our public health policies. What we need is effective public policies dealing with lifestyle." Educationist Basudev Bhatt said

that the virus is very likely here to stay. The government must find ways to continue children's physical education, instead of keeping them away from it. Educational institutions can run with stricter Covid protocols like odd-even system in place. He asked, "If the government can allow elections and celebrations, why not education?" Niroj Kumar Mishra, a Bhubaneswar based expert on Covid treatment, said, "The third wave could be seen from miles away. There is no surprise in the cases' rapid increase. However, a complete lockdown is meaningless unless the daily caseload goes beyond 1 lakh-mark in state. The state's healthcare infrastructure is robust, so there is nothing to worry about." He also said that the cases will peak by January 25. People should be careful and follow safety protocols to keep Covid at bay.

WEBINAR ON BIOFUELS

Bioenergy Centre need of the hour for Odisha: OES

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 9: The Orissa Environmental Society (OES) Sunday organized a webinar on 'Biofuels as alternative sources of energy' here. The webinar saw experts expressing their views emphasising on establishment of a bioenergy centre and popularising 'energy crops' in Odisha. Experts were of the idea that biofuels, derived from biomass such as plants, algae, agriculture residue and animal wastes, are considered superior alternatives to fossil fuels as they are carbon-neutral, nontoxic, biodegradable and cleanerburning green substitutes. The need of the hour is to work, both at the levels of government as well as communities, for further improvement and popularisation of biofuels like biodiesel and ethanol that have gained worldwide acceptance, the suggested.



Cultivation of biofuel crops such as sugarcane, wheat, corn, edible oilseeds, and technological upgradation need to be patronised by the government

SANJUKTA SUBUDHI | SENIOR FELLOW AND AREA CONVENER, MICROBIAL BIOFUELS AND BIOCHEMICALS GROUP, TERI, NEW DELHI

Subsequent to industrialisation till today, fossil fuels such as coal, petroleum, and natural gas, have been the major sources of energy that meet the ever escalating global demands of energy by various sectors. They are playing a vital role in empowering the economies of nations for over last 150 years, and providing about 80 per cent of the world's energy need currently. However, in the scenario of enhanced emission of greenhouse gases from fossil fuels, which has culminated in serious environmental challenges like global warming and climate change, emphasis is now on the use of alternative, renewable sources of energy. These include solar energy, wind energy, biofuels, nuclear and geothermal energy which are naturally replenishing and virtually inexhaustible. Of course, hydropower and wood were the most used renewable energy resources until 1990s. Sanjukta Subudhi, Senior Fellow

and Area Convener, Microbial Biofuels and Biochemicals Group, TERI, New Delhi graced the webinar as the chief speaker and emphasised on the increased production of 'biofuels in order to reduce the pressure on fossil fuels, especially crude oil, and in agreement with the resolutions adopted in the recently held Glasgow Climate Conference. "Cultivation of biofuel crops such as sugarcane, wheat, corn, edible oilseeds, and technological upgradation need to be patronised by the government," she said. On the occasion, OES President Sundara Narayan Patro underlined the importance of carrying out of training programmes for farmers to undertake cultivation of biofuel crops, and creating marketing facilities in this regard. OES secretary Jaya Krushna Panigrahi opined that large scale dissemination of the research outcomes in the field of biofuels need to reach the user groups for wider adoption.

ICG repatriates 20 bangla fishermen

Paradip: Indian Coast Guard personnel aboard ship Sarojini Naidu undertook successful repatriation of 20 Bangladeshi fishermen at Indo-Bangladesh IMBL Sunday. The Bangladesh Fishing Boat 'AllaharDaan' was adrift on the sea due to engine breakdown. The boat was sighted by Indian fishermen. The Indian fishermen provided necessary assistance to the boat and towed the distressed boat to Paradip December 26. The coast guard personnel in coordination with Marine Police Station personnel at Paradip provided shelter to its crew on humanitarian grounds. The crew were reported to be safe and healthy. The boat along with 20 fishermen was formally handed over to Bangladesh Coast Guard Ship Shadhin Bangla at IMBL 9 January 2022. The Indian Coast Guard not only provides solace to fishermen and mariners in distress, but also provides humanitarian assistance.



TRADE UNIONS' MEET

Representatives of various trade unions hold a meeting ahead of their nationwide agitation February 23 and 24, in Bhubaneswar Sunday

OP PHOTO

Chennai-bound flight makes emergency landing at BPIA

Bhubaneswar: A Chennai-bound flight made a medical emergency landing at the Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) here Sunday. The flight - Air Asia 15-1531 A320 took off from Ranchi towards Chennai airport. When a passenger complained of uneasiness, the flight was diverted to BPIA. The flight landed safely here at 7:26 PM, official sources said. The patient - Basant Kumar Paswan, 40, has been admitted to the Capital Hospital here and is reported to be in critical condition.

Mosambi peels can help prevent cancer: BHU study

WHO reports that over 2.6 billion people lack access to clean water, which is responsible for about 2.2 million deaths annually, of which 1.4 million are children

The modest 'mosambi' or sweet lime can now be used to prevent cancer. Researchers at IIT (BHU) claim that 'mosambi' (Citrus Limetta) peels can be used to remove heavy metals from water and prevent cancer and other life-threatening ailments. The researchers at the School of Biochemical Engineering, IIT (BHU) have synthesised an eco-friendly and cost-effective adsorbent, which can remove toxic heavy metal ions such as hexavalent chromium from contaminated water and wastewater. Vishal Mishra, Associate Professor, School of Biochemical Engineering and his student researcher Veer Singh's study has already been published in the international journal 'Separation Science and Technology'. Mishra said that the hexavalent chromium is responsible for several types of health problems in hu-

mans like cancers, liver and kidney diseases and liver malfunctioning, and skin problems. "This is a new eco-friendly product, synthesised from the Citrus Limetta (mosambi) peels biomass. This adsorbent is very effective for removal of hexavalent chromium from waste water compared to other conventional methods and takes less time to separate hexavalent chromium from aqueous solution," he said. According to Veer Singh, this adsorbent can be easily separated from the aqueous medium after the metal removal process. The researchers have tested the hexavalent chromium removal capacity of this adsorbent in synthetic simulated waste water and have got satisfactory results. The heavy metal removal efficiency of this adsorbent was also tested for other heavy metal ions, such as lead, copper and cadmium, and found emerging

This is a new eco-friendly product, synthesised from the Citrus Limetta (mosambi) peels biomass. This adsorbent is very effective for removal of hexavalent chromium from waste water compared to other conventional methods and takes less time to separate hexavalent chromium from aqueous solution

VISHAL MISHRA | ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, SCHOOL OF BIOCHEMICAL ENGINEERING, IIT (BHU)



We collect the mosambi peels, dry those, grind them into granules and then modify it with chitosan, a biopolymer. After this, the peels are put in water and they begin to separate the heavy metals

VEER SINGH | CO-RESEARCHER, SCHOOL OF BIOCHEMICAL ENGINEERING, IIT (BHU)

heavy metal removal efficiency of this adsorbent. The heavy metals have carcinogenic properties which cause cancer of all types. Explaining the procedure, he said, "We collect the mosambi peels, dry those, grind them into granules and then modify it with chitosan,

a biopolymer. After this, the peels are put in water and they begin to separate the heavy metals." He said that in developing countries, water-borne diseases are a major problem. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 3.4 million people, mostly children, die from water-related

diseases each year. According to a United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) assessment, 4,000 children die each day due to the intake of bacterial contaminated water. WHO reports that over 2.6 billion people lack access to clean water, which is responsible for about 2.2 million

deaths annually, of which 1.4 million are children. Improving water quality can reduce the global water-borne diseases. Cancer due to hexavalent chromium and other heavy metal ions is a severe problem worldwide. A report from the water resources ministry says that a large number of the Indian population drinks water with lethal levels of toxic heavy metals. About the socio-economic aspect of this research, Mishra said that mosambi peels are readily available as fruit waste. Adsorbent synthesis from this and chitosan is a cost effective and eco-friendly method. Replying to a question, Mishra said that the research had shown successful results and they now plan to take it to a larger scale and make it cost-effective. He said that clinical trials would begin soon at the lab level and then scale up. IANS

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

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

SHORT TAKES

Minor swept away in power channel

Sambalpur: An eight-year-old boy was swept away in the power channel in front of his mother while he was taking a bath at Burla in this district, Sunday. The missing boy was identified as Ronak Panchbihar, son of Chumki and Rajesh Panchbihar of Siba Mandir Pada in the town. The boy's mother also jumped into the channel to save her son but failed to save him. People present at the bathing ghat could not even come to his rescue. The locals saw the woman screaming for help and immediately informed the police and fire department. Fire personnel from Burla and Sambalpur launched a search operation, but failed to trace the boy by the last report came in. The family members had gone to the power channel to take bath when the mishap occurred. The fire personnel will again launch a search operation Monday.

Close shave: Jumbo rams bus from rear

Baripada: Passengers of a packed bus had a close shave as a tusker rammed it from behind with force on Tikapada road in Rasgobindapur range of Mayurbhanj district. The visuals of the incident went viral on social media. It was seen that a part of the bus was damaged while passengers inside were screaming out of fear. It was said that the incident took place Sunday. A bus was coming from Olmara to Balasore when a tusker attacked the bus at Tikapada. The enraged pachyderm vigorously tried to push the bus from behind. Every year, elephants from Jharkhand unleash a reign of terror on Rasgobindapur area.

Hockey training centre in limbo as sports dept awaits land handover

CM Naveen Patnaik had announced November 2, 2020 that a synthetic turf hockey training centre would be launched in Chhatrapur

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur, Jan 9: The synthetic turf hockey training centre proposed at Chhatrapur, the district headquarters of Ganjam, has failed to take off as yet due to delay in land handover, a report said.

Notably, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had announced November 2, 2020 that a synthetic turf hockey training centre would be launched in Chhatrapur in Ganjam in recognition of the rich hockey culture in the region.

According to the report, there is delay on part of the administration to hand over the earmarked land to the sports and youth affairs department. IDCO has been tasked to look after the construction of the synthetic turf hockey training centre. Meanwhile, the IDCO has completed its tender.

"As land is not being provided, land demarcation has got delayed. Hence, the contractor is unable to start construction of the astro turf

hockey centre," said Ashok Kumar Mishra, the divisional head of IDCO. He has intimated the issue to the IDCO CMD in Bhubaneswar and the Ganjam Collector.

It was learnt that a patch of 3.1 acre of land identified for the hockey centre is under the Home department. The land has an old building which needs to be dismantled.

On March 2, 2021, the Ganjam Collector had written to the additional chief secretary of the Home department to hand over land to the revenue and disaster management department. And later, he sought to transfer the land to the sports and youth affairs department.

After handover of the land, area will be demarcated by Chhatrapur tehsildar while trees on the land will be enumerated.

The IDCO has asked the district administration to hasten the land handover process so that construction work can be taken up soon.



REPRESENTATIONAL PICTURE

A WORD OF CAUTION



A forest official standing atop a vehicle cautioning people against elephants causing mayhem in Binika forest range of Subarnapur district, Sunday OP PHOTO

Govt to tap eco-tourism potential of Gaikhai dam

POST NEWS NETWORK

Loisingha, Jan 9: The state government has initiated process to boost eco-tourism potential of Gaikhai irrigation project in Agalpur block of Bolangir district. Bolangir DFO Nitish Kumar and Bhawanipatna RCCF Abhiram Kar visited the project area Saturday.

It was stated that the visit of the two senior forest officials to the spot is part of the ongoing initiative of the state government to explore and tap the eco-tourism potential of the scenic place.

The Gaikhai irrigation project is spread over 120 acres, close to



REPRESENTATIONAL PICTURE

Bolangir-Bargarh National Highway-26. The dam is surrounded by Chheliapat reserve forest in

vast areas. A large number of people are drawn towards the picture postcard spot.

However, it was alleged that the place has been neglected due to administrative apathy.

Last year, MLA Mukesh Mahaling visited the place and had proposed the state government to develop the site as an eco-tourism spot.

In 2021, the irrigation project has been renovated at a cost of ₹4.36 crore. However, locals were unhappy over the renovation work of the project.

Recently, Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari visited Agalpur block when locals had pressed for allocation of ₹20 crore for the development of the dam.

Locals oppose eviction drive from airstrip land



POST NEWS NETWORK

Padmapur, Jan 9: The administration's move to conduct an eviction drive on the land acquired for a proposed airstrip project at Balimunda panchayat under Basudevpur block in Bhadrak district was frustrated after the displaced locals staged a protest Sunday.

The displaced residents of Nandapatna, Champudia and Badahavelisahi staged a demonstration stating that they will not allow commencement of the airstrip work until their demands are fulfilled. The incident occurred when Basudevpur tehsildar Anita Nayak accompanied by her Chandbali counterpart Susant Sutar, sub-collector Manoj Kumar

Patra, SDPO Prabhas Chandra Pal, Basudevpur IIC Susant Kumar Mishra and police officials reached the spot to carry out an eviction drive from the land.

The agitating residents demanded that the district administration should provide 25 decimal of land to each household, ₹3 lakh for house construction and employment to one member of each family. They warned that they will oppose the construction of airstrip if their demands are not addressed at the earliest. The officials first tried to placate them but relented and assured to look into their demands after they refused to budge.

The displaced locals will meet the Collector in his office Monday and will apprise him of their demands.

Malkangiri tribals up in arms opposing limestone mining

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, Jan 9: Over 2,000 people of five panchayats in Malkangiri district staged protests Sunday at Katamateru against mining of limestone at Matapaka and Niliguda panchayats.

Shouting slogans against the administration over mining, the agitating people said that they would not spare their land, forest and water for exploitation.

They stated that through the Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC), the state government had auctioned 200 acres of land for limestone mining at Matapaka and Niliguda panchayats in 2015-16 without the consent of the local people.

"Well before auction of the limestone mines, neither the state government, nor the OMC, nor the administration took locals into confidence. No palli sabha was held over the stone mining," they added.

Over years, tribals have been living and depending on forests, they said, adding that the administration has not paid attention to the development of the villages in the region. People have been suffering for lack of proper communication, they added.

The SC/ST welfare department



has set up a high school at Katamateru. Over 500 children study in the school, but they have to suffer in the absence of a pucca road from Matapaka to Katamateru.

"Over years, we are in misery as communication is still a problem in Katamateru, Niliguda, Koyagiri, Puruna Niliguda, Uskalbag. Telephony has been inaccessible. Every village here has many widows, who are still deprived of pension. Many government schemes do not reach people. Farmers have to face distress sale of their crops every year. On the other hand, the government has been trying to displace them through mining," the agitating people observed, adding that they would not let the conspiracy of the government take shape.

People from Kalimela, Katamateru, Nandibada, Uskalbag, Niliguda, Kayagiri and Iralgundi also stated that huge quantities of minor forest produce, groundnuts and sesame seeds are transported to other states, but the state government has never thought of setting up agro-based industries to process the local produce and market them.

They also pointed out that people in nine panchayats had been displaced due to the Chitrakonda reservoir; but many of them have not yet been rehabilitated.

"So, we have been opposing the mining of limestone in the area," said the sarpanchs of Niliguda, Matapaka, Gorakhunta, Materu and Tandapalli.

NH-49 EXPANSION

Work on Dwarasuni ghat road to begin in 5 months

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bangiriposi, Jan 9: The Union Minister of State (MoS) for Tribal Affairs and Mayurbhanj MP, Bishweswar Tudu has taken stock of the Dwarasuni ghat road on NH-49 which passes through Bangiriposi area in Mayurbhanj district. The road has got the reputation of being a death trap with a number of people dying on it due to frequent mishaps.

Tudu assured that expansion work of the narrow and congested ghat road will start within the next five months to facilitate better road communication, curb traffic snarls and avert accidents.

During his official tour, Tudu inspected the infrastructure on the national highway for its expansion. Later, he also held a meeting with the District Collector Vineet Bhardwaj and several other officials.

Mayurbhanj SP Rishikesh Dnyandeo Khilari, regional officer of the NHA Ramachandra Panda, project director of Balasore division JP Verma, Similipal DFO (North) and tiger reserve (STR) deputy director Sai Kiran, Rairangpur ranger Nalinikanta Behera, BDO Ramdas Tudu and tehsildar Satyaban Nayak took part in the high-level meeting held



at Khairi Resorts in Bangiriposi.

It is worth mentioning that an eight-kilometre-long stretch of the NH-49 from Bangiriposi passes through Similipal tiger reserve. Hundreds of heavy as well as light vehicles ply through the road every day. Frequent accidents at the Dwarasuni ghat road have led to loss of lives on the stretch at regular intervals. A total of 52 persons have died and 150 others have suffered injuries in the last seven years owing to road mishaps on this black spot.

Despite repeated written appeals by local residents to widen the road, the Mayurbhanj forest department and the NHA authorities are yet to take any concrete step.

Widening of the ghat road was delayed as Forest department failed to hand over the required land to NHA authorities.

A letter (No-5766, dated-15.12.2020) was previously written for the purpose to the former department, an NHA official said.

SAFETY AWARENESS



Policemen creating awareness about adhering to Covid safety guidelines at Lathore in Bolangir amid a spurt in infection rate OP PHOTO

Woman daily wager duped of ₹37,500

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kuanrunda, Jan 9: Cyber fraudsters defrauded a woman daily wager here in Sundargarh district of ₹37,500 after informing her on phone to have won a lottery of ₹25 lakh in the Indian television game show 'Kaun Banega Crorepati,' police said.

The defrauded woman was identified as Sania Singh, 27, daughter of Surendra Singh of Sialgor village under this block in Sundargarh district, a daily wager by profession. The matter came to the fore after she lodged a complaint at the Cyber police station in Rourkela.

The incident occurred when she received a voice message on her phone in the name of the television show 'Kaun Banega Crorepati' informing her to have won lottery worth ₹25 lakh in the game show.



The voice message was accompanied by a photograph of actor Amitabh Bachhan, the host of the game show.

In the message, the fraudsters asked her to register for the lottery and later, withdrew ₹37,500 in two phases from bank account. The fraudsters withdrew ₹12,500 in the first phase and ₹25,000 in the second phase from her account. Later, she realised to have been duped after she failed to contact the sender on her phone. Left with no option she lodged a complaint at the Cyber police station in Rourkela.

Chilika dolphin census begins

EIGHTEEN TEAMS HAVE BEEN ENGAGED TO CARRY OUT THE DOLPHIN HEADCOUNT UNDER SATAPADA AND BALUGAON WILDLIFE DIVISIONS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balugaon/Brahmagiri, Jan 9: The annual census of dolphins living in the brackish water bodies of Chilika lake started Sunday morning at around 6.00am and continued till 12.00 noon.

A source informed that the entire Chilika lake region has been divided into four sectors such as outer, inner, northern and southern. Separate teams of experts will conduct a comprehensive counting of dolphins including the Irrawaddy species of the aquatic mammals.

Eighteen teams comprising senior forest officials, wildlife experts and scientists from the Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) in Bhubaneswar have been engaged to carry out the dolphin headcount



Chilika is home to the endangered Irrawaddy species of dolphins. It is the single largest habitat of the slow-swimming dolphins in the world

drive at Chilika and its nearby areas under Satapada and Balugaon wildlife divisions.

As many as eight teams are from Satapada division and 10 teams

are from Balugaon division, the source added.

Each team consists of five members and has been equipped with advanced GPS, binoculars, cameras and handycams, which will follow parallel line traffic survey method including the traditional counting procedures.

Notably, the annual dolphin census was previously being conducted under the active supervision of the Chilika Development Authority (CDA). For the last two years, the exercise is being carried out jointly by CDA and Forest Department officials.

Chilika is home to the endangered Irrawaddy species of dolphins. It is the single largest habitat of the slow-swimming dolphins in the world. The aquatic mammal was named after Irrawaddy river in Myanmar, where they were first sighted.

FOCUS ECONOMY

CAPITAL IS NOT A STRATEGY



The managerial sagas of Uber, WeWork, and Theranos represent the downstream consequences of the flood unleashed by central banks

VCs directly engaged in firm governance can survive the current bubble's inevitable collapse by remembering that, sooner or later, corporate happiness is positive cash flow. The ability to pay your bills because you receive more cash from customers than it costs to develop and deliver what you are selling is categorically different from relying on the continued kindness of non-traditional financial strangers. This type of success requires continuous and rigorously defining a path to positive cash flow from operations, within a timeframe constrained by the amount of cash currently on the balance sheet.

If no such path can be found, consider the following simple advice from Bernard Baruch, a legendary figure in finance from the first half of the twentieth century who advised US presidents and identified his profession to a congressional committee as 'speculator'. When asked how he made his money, Baruch replied: "By selling too soon." Baruch speculated in the public stock market, where he could sell whenever he chose. But the 'nontraditional investors' fueling the current VC bubble are locked in, along with the limited partners of the VC funds that sponsored the ventures. Both have been enjoying spectacular reported returns on the order of 50%.

But the vast majority of these returns represent illiquid investments, with 'mark to market' based on recent valuations recorded in late-stage financings or on the value of public companies deemed to be 'comparable'. So, cash will prove to be the test. Not only is capital not a strategy, but too much capital can eliminate the need for entrepreneurs and investors alike to have any strategy at all. For VCs and investors, that will work right up to the point when, suddenly, there are no cookies left.

The writer is an affiliated lecturer in economics at the University of Cambridge.
©PROJECT SYNDICATE

'strategy' has taken hold. In the low-friction world of internet-delivered or mediated services, start-ups are eager to spend ever-greater amounts of other people's money to acquire customers, the goal being to emerge victorious in a winner-takes-all race.

The problem, of course, is that capital is not a strategy; rather, it is a resource whose supply and cost are highly variable historically. At least since the Dutch tulip mania of the 1630s and London's South Sea Bubble of 1720, financial history has been replete with episodes of speculative excess. Occasionally, these explosions of investor exuberance have funded the deployment of innovative technologies at sufficient scale to transform the market economy, as was the case with railroads, electrification, and the internet. Whether a bubble is productive depends on what it leaves behind. But all bubbles burst, so even investors in the vehicles of a productive episode inevitably will fall into one of two categories: the quick or the dead.

Opportunism is a virtue in the VC world. Taking virtually free capital from investors who have no interest in (or capacity for) firm governance is irresistible. As the old saying goes, "When they are passing around the cookies,

take all that you can." If non-traditional sources of capital are prepared to liquify original investors' holdings at a multiple of cost that is usually only available through an initial public offering or a trade sale, a partial seller would have to be extraordinarily greedy to refuse the offer.

And yet the extraordinary increase in the supply of capital has eliminated any perceived need for critically assessing business models and business plans, undermining the Golden Rule of venture capital: that those who have the gold set the rules. Instead, there has been a shift in the balance of power between entrepreneurs and VCs. This is evident in the increased number of start-ups whose founders are entrenched in control no matter how much capital is raised.

The managerial sagas of Uber, WeWork, and Theranos represent the downstream consequences of the flood unleashed by central banks. Theranos founder Elizabeth Holmes may be the only one so far to have been caught crossing the line into criminal liability as she pumped and puffed up her company. But the absence of other prosecutions is no excuse for investors and board members to abandon their fiduciary responsibilities. Entrepreneurs and founding



William H. Janeway

IN THE LOW-FRICTION WORLD OF INTERNET-DELIVERED OR MEDIATED SERVICES, START-UPS ARE EAGER TO SPEND EVER-GREATER AMOUNTS OF OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY TO ACQUIRE CUSTOMERS, THE GOAL BEING TO EMERGE VICTORIOUS IN A WINNER-TAKES-ALL RACE

Along with the rest of the world, entrepreneurs have spent the past dozen years living in an unprecedented financial environment. Responding first to the stubbornly slow recovery from the 2008 financial crisis, and then to the recession caused by COVID-19, major central banks have sustained an array of unconventional initiatives and asset-purchase programmes collectively known as 'quantitative easing' (QE).

The direct result has been a massive accumulation of financial reserves in central banks and throughout the financial system, and a reduction of nominal interest rates on risk-free financial assets to levels below the rate of inflation. Interest rates are thus negative in real terms. Years of unconventional monetary policies have also had a secondary effect on investment behaviour. Under the conditions that central banks have created, investors (both institutional and retail) have become increasingly aggressive in their pursuit of positive real returns. Not only have they accepted increased levels of fundamental risk; they also have become increasingly willing to accept illiquidity, buying securities that they cannot freely resell.

One dramatic example of this phenomenon is the flood of 'non-traditional capital' - the National Venture Capital Association's term for mutual funds, hedge funds, sovereign wealth funds, and so forth - into venture-backed private companies at historically high valuations. Others are the bubbles in crypto assets and the explosion of 'meme' stocks, driven by Reddit communities and retail investors on apps like Robinhood.

Finally, the apparently limitless supply of low-cost capital available to entrepreneurs and early-stage venture-capital firms has had a third-level effect as well: the proliferation of business models with little or no potential to generate sustainable, self-financed growth. The idea of 'capital as a

SPECTRUM AGRICULTURE

The need for crop diversification in Odisha



Mosharaf Hossain

PULSES, OILSEEDS, AND POTATOES ARE SUCH CROPS THAT THE PADDY-BASED CROPPING SYSTEM NEEDS TO BE DIVERSIFIED INTO

Having made several significant strides in the last five decades, agriculture in Odisha is at a crossroads. What and how much to grow and more importantly what needs to be less produced are now key policy considerations. Such vital decisions are often guided by food and nutrition security status, farm profitability, threat of climate change, and impending burden on the exchequer to procure the produce at MSP.

Odisha agriculture is primarily paddy-centric in terms of its volume, acreage, and contribution to GDP. Despite lower productivity, Odisha has come a long way to become a rice surplus state. Paddy by nature is a water-guzzling crop and preferably grown in stagnant water. Thus, it demands an assured irrigation especially in dry season. Besides, water stagnant rice field is a major source of greenhouse gas emission. The imprudent usage of fertilizer in paddy is also a challenge in maintaining balanced soil health for subsequent crops. This essentially gives a clarion call to rationalise paddy production and shift focus on non-paddy crops having substantial shortages in the state. Pulses, oilseeds, and potatoes are such crops that the paddy-based cropping system needs to be diversified into.

In rural Odisha, 41% of people consume less than the recommended level of protein. Much of this issue can conveniently be alleviated

through an augmented production and availability of pulses—the chief protein source. Odisha annually requires around 12 million tonnes of pulses against the current production of 10.5 million tonnes from two million hectares. The state's pulses productivity is also stagnant at 540 kg/ha against the national average of 806kg/ha. The supply shortage and spiralling pulses prices restrict the common man from accessing this essential. Paddy is the major crop of Odisha grown in the kharif season and again taken in rabi season depending upon irrigation availability. However, it is scientifically evident that pulse cultivation following the kharif paddy requires less water and fertilizer compared to paddy, helps in better soil health management, and thereby contributes to sustainable agriculture practices. Yet, farmers in Odisha are not very keen on growing pulses; majorly due to dearth of quality seeds of newer high-yielding varieties, recurring pest attacks, lack of irrigation facilities, poor marketability, and the menace of cattle grazing that damages the standing crop. Given the irrigation availability, farmers will typically prefer growing paddy to pulse in rabi season and where water scarcity is apparent, the fields remain fallow. Currently, there are 1.2 million hectares of such rice fallow areas span over all districts where pulse crops can be a fitting option. Weaning farmers from water-

intensive rabi paddy and encouraging them to take up pulse as a second crop, however, warrant a slew of integrated and coherent measures including introducing improved varieties and provisioning of quality seeds. The majorly grown pulses in the state are green gram, black gram, horse gram, and pigeon pea but the varieties used are older, having diseases and pest susceptibility. The state government has recently embarked upon a noble mission to renovate minor irrigation structures in 15 districts that are supposedly going to be an enabler for pulse area expansion.

Potato is another crop that needs a production boost to meet domestic consumption. With an annual production of just 2.61 lakh tonnes, Odisha can meet merely 21% of its total potato requirement (12.42 lakh tonnes) and remains dependent on West Bengal, UP, and Chhattisgarh. The interrupted supply, at times, from supplying states and unreasonable price surge is quite a recurrent phenomenon in recent times demanding the state's self-sufficiency in potato. To this end, an overarching potato seed market and area expansion can be planned in suitable districts like Cuttack, Kandhamal, Keonjhar, Koraput, Balasore, Sambalpur in unison with strengthening appropriate cold storage structures.

The oilseed crops which are mainly sown in the winter cover

barely 6.02 lakh ha. Groundnut, sesame, and mustard are the major oilseed crops in the state. Against the total requirement of 23.12 lakh tonnes, the state can produce only 5.23 lakh tonnes. It is a humongous challenge to meet the government-estimated daily requirement of 45 gm per capita oilseeds a day. Farmers aided with better production technologies and remunerative marketing avenues can reverse the scenario.

About 90% of farmers in the state are either marginal or small cultivators who mostly practice subsistence farming and rice is the staple food for them. Thus, successful mobilisation of farmers to replace paddy with other crops is a mammoth task with an intricate interplay of farm economics, environmental concern, and production behaviour change.

The state government has attached utmost importance to crop diversification and taken several measures including irrigation and seed system improvement initiatives in the run-up to being self-sufficient in critical non-paddy crops for consolidating food security and better response to climate issues. Nevertheless, turning a strategy into action to reach desired outcomes is not a cakewalk but needs sustained effort and commitment.

The writer is a Bhubaneswar-based agricultural economist.

WISDOM CORNER

- “A hero is someone who understands the responsibility that comes with his freedom.” BOB DYLAN
- “It is the set of the sails, not the direction of the wind that determines which way we will go.” JIM ROHN
- “We keep moving forward, opening new doors, and doing new things, because we're curious and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths.” WALT DISNEY

WORDSWORTH

Refocillate

The initial syllable of this verb tells us that whatever action is being described is happening again. The word's core derives from the Latin focus, a domestic hearth (the direct source of our word for a centre of interest or activity). The re-warming implied here is not literal but figurative, a revival or refreshment of the spirit or the senses. The number of writers who have used it may be counted, if not on the fingers of one hand, then certainly on two. The first known was Thomas Coryate of Odcombe in Somerset, an inveterate traveller who died in India aged 40. A decade earlier he traversed much of Europe, frequently on foot, and published an early travel book in 1611. Coryates Crudities, which he announced was "Hastily gobbled up in five Moneths travells in France, Savoy, Italy, Rhetia commonly called the Orisons country, Helvetia alias Switzerland, some parts of high Germany and the Netherlands." He visited Venice in 1608: It is wholly plaine, and beautified with such abundance of goodly rivers, pleasant meadows, fruitful vineyardes, fat pastures, delectable gardens, orchards, woodes, and what not, that the first view thereof did even refocillate my spirits, and tickle my senses with inward joy. The initial syllable of this verb tells us that whatever action is being described is happening again. The word's core derives from the Latin focus, a domestic hearth (the direct source of our word for a centre of interest or activity). The re-warming implied here is not literal but figurative, a revival or refreshment of the spirit or the senses. The number of writers who have used it may be counted, if not on the fingers of one hand, then certainly on two. The first known was Thomas Coryate of Odcombe in Somerset, an inveterate traveller who died in India aged 40. A decade earlier he traversed much of Europe, frequently on foot, and published an early travel book in 1611. Coryates Crudities, which he announced was "Hastily gobbled up in five Moneths travells in France, Savoy, Italy, Rhetia commonly called the Orisons country, Helvetia alias Switzerland, some parts of high Germany and the Netherlands." He visited Venice in 1608: It is wholly plaine, and beautified with such abundance of goodly rivers, pleasant meadows, fruitful vineyardes, fat pastures, delectable gardens, orchards, woodes, and what not, that the first view thereof did even refocillate my spirits, and tickle my senses with inward joy. Here's a rare modern user: He thought for a moment of the things that magic had accomplished in this very town. ... the innumerable wives who had refocillated a dying passion in their husbands; husbands who had regained the love of their wives ... (Time for a Tiger, by Anthony Burgess, 1956).

LOL

The hungry lion

A hungry lion was roaming through the jungle looking for something to eat. He came across two men. One was sitting under a tree reading a book; the other was typing away on his typewriter. The lion quickly



pounced on the man reading the book and devoured him. Even the king of the jungle knows that readers digest and writers cramp.

Communal narrative

Sir, As the dates of elections to Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand Assemblies draw near, the RSS-BJP Sangh Parivar is desperate to bring the communal Hindutva narrative to the forefront. This is because the ruling dispensation is aware that not a single people's issue can be raised by them to seek vote as their performance on each front has been so dismal that aggrieved citizens in poll-bound states are seething in anger. Harrowing price rise, mounting unemployment, one after another closure of industries, growing poverty, increasing hunger and malnutrition, acute scarcity of potable water, virtual collapse of law and order, shameless politicisation of police administration, spiraling corruption, nepotism, rising number of custodial and encounter deaths, lynching by so called cow-vigilantes, unabated peasants' suicide, diminishing access to education, perilous health-care system, criminal callousness in handling the coronavirus pandemic, soaring atrocities against women, engineered fratricidal bloodbaths, domination of mafia money power, absence of justice, vulgar inequality -- these are only some of what constitute the spectacle of capitalist India, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand included. The ruling BJP, a devoted servitor of the ruling monopolists, has no answer to all these problems as the very capitalist system is breeding all these evils, maladies and aberrations. Only way left to retain power is communal Hindutva narrative. Dharma Sansad in Haridwar, planned violence against the Christian community and fanning up Hindutva fanaticism are all part of this Hindutva narrative.
Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

Welcome ruling

Sir, The Madras High Court has rightly set aside the order of lower court in Kumbakonam to the authorities of a temple in Tiruppur district to produce the 'Moolavar' (presiding deity) idol belonging to the Paramasivan Swamy temple which had been stolen, traced and installed at the shrine after following the rituals and 'Agama' rules, for verification. The High Court observed that the judge of the lower court could have deputed an advocate-commissioner to inspect/verify the veracity of the idol and recorded his findings/report. Justice R Suresh Kumar of the Madras High Court has wondered if the God can be summoned to the court. The High Court has rightly sensed that the order of the lower court hurts the religious sentiments of the people. The Madras High Court has acted with magnanimity to show that courts are not above God.
KV Seetharamaiah, BANGALORE

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST
B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

national



The setting up of 100 new Sainik schools will provide an opportunity to girls to join the Armed Forces and contribute to national security

RAJNATH SINGH | DEFENCE MINISTER

TEMPERATURE TO DIP

The cold weather is likely to intensify in northwest India, including Delhi, during the next three days while isolated areas of some states may witness foggy mornings and evenings



of the day quote

We will abide by the law. The pandemic situation is a worrying situation. But we will observe the rules and conduct our election campaign in accordance with the rules. We appeal to the people to follow Covid restrictions

P. CHIDAMBARAM | CONGRESS LEADER

A wide ranging conversation with my Iranian colleague, FM @Amirabdollahian. Discussed the difficulties of Covid, challenges in Afghanistan, prospects of Chabahar and complexities of the Iranian nuclear issue

S. JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

It will be a "80 per cent versus 20 per cent" election in Uttar Pradesh and the BJP will retain power in the state

YOGI ADITYANATH | UP CM

Massive spike in daily Covid cases

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 9: India logged 552 new cases of Omicron, taking the total tally of such infections to 3,623 across 27 states and UTs so far, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated Sunday.

Out of the total Omicron cases, 1,409 people have migrated or recovered. Maharashtra recorded the maximum number of 1,009 cases followed by Delhi at 513, Karnataka 441, Rajasthan 373, Kerala 333 and Gujarat 204.

A total of 1,59,632 new coronavirus infections were reported in a day, the highest in 224 days, while the active cases increased to 5,90,611, the highest in around 197 days, according to the data updated at 8 am. May 29 last year, India had logged 1,65,553 infections in a day.

The death toll climbed to 4,83,790 with 327 fresh fatalities, the data stated. The active cases comprise 1.66 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate decreased to 96.98 per cent, the ministry said.

An increase of 1,18,442 cases has been recorded in the active COVID-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours. The daily positivity rate was



City streets wear a deserted look during full lockdown imposed by Tamil Nadu government to curb the spread of Covid, near Greater Chennai Corporation (Ribbon Building) in Chennai

PTI PHOTO

recorded at 10.21 per cent while the weekly positivity rate was recorded at 6.77 per cent, according to the ministry.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 3,44,53,603 while the case fatality rate was recorded at 1.36 per cent. The cumulative doses administered in the country so far under the nationwide COVID-19 vaccination drive has exceeded 151.58 crore. India's COVID-

19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 2020, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19. India crossed the grim milestone of two crore on May 4 and three crore on June 23.

The 327 new fatalities include 242 from Kerala and 19 from West Bengal. A total of 4,83,790 deaths have been reported so far in the country including 1,41,627 from Maharashtra, 49,547 from Kerala, 38,366 from Karnataka, 36,843 from Tamil Nadu, 25,143 from Delhi, 22,924 from Uttar Pradesh and 19,883 from West Bengal. The ministry stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities. "Our figures are being reconciled with the Indian Council of Medical Research," the ministry said on its website, adding that state-wise distribution of figures is subject to further verification and reconciliation.

PM REVIEWS COVID SITUATION

New Delhi: Reviewing the Covid situation amid a surge in cases fuelled by the Omicron variant of the virus, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday called for ensuring adequate health infrastructure at district level and accelerating the vaccination drive for adolescents in mission mode. Noting that the coronavirus has been evolving continuously, Modi underlined the need for continuous scientific research in testing and vaccines besides pharmacological interventions, including genome sequencing, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said in a statement. Highlighting the need to ensure effective usage of masks and physical distancing measures as a new normal to control the spread of Covid, Modi called for effective implementation of home isolation for mild and asymptomatic cases and to disseminate the factual information to the community at large. He said a meeting with chief ministers be convened to discuss state-specific scenarios, best-practices and public health response, the PMO added.

SHORT TAKES

Three airlifted

Srinagar: The Border Security Force (BSF) has airlifted three patients for medical attention from the snow-bound Tangdhar sector in Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara district, officials said Sunday. They have been identified as Nasreen Fatima, 50, Sobiya Begun, 30, and Rizwan Ahmad, 10. "On request of district administration Kupwara, BSF evacuated (Airlifted) three civilian patients from the snow-bound Tangdhar sector to district headquarters for medical attention amid the closure of the only road, which passes through Sadhna Top," BSF said.

Heavy snowfall

Shimla: Himachal Pradesh on Sunday continued to experience moderate to heavy snowfall, temporarily closing over 400 roads, officials said here. Roads in Kinnaur district and towns in Shimla district such as Narkanda, Jubbal, Kharapathar, Rohru and Chopal have been cut off with heavy snow cover piled on roads, a government official said. While picturesque tourist resort Kufri recorded the highest snowfall in the state at 55 cm, it was 30 cm in Dalhousie, 21.6 cm in Kalpa, 15 cm in Shimla and 2 cm in Manali.

Tiger kills girl

Bahraich (UP): A 12-year-old girl was killed in a tiger attack in Abdullah Ganj forest area on the Nepal border. According to a senior forest department official, Seema Yadav, daughter of Parshuram Yadav, a resident of Chenaini village, had taken out their goats for grazing in the dense Charda forest on Saturday when the tiger dragged her away.

4 dead, 14 hurt

Beed: Four persons were killed and 14 injured after a Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation bus and a truck collided on Ambajogai-Latur Road in Beed district Sunday, police said. The accident took place near Nandgaon village when the ST bus, which was going from Latur to Aurangabad, and the truck carrying machinery to Hyderabad in neighbouring Telangana collided when the former tried to overtake another vehicle, an official said.

Drug peddler held

Jammu: An alleged drug peddler was arrested along with charas and Rs 14.35 lakh in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir Sunday, police said. Bashir Ahmed, a resident of Chak Bhagta village of Katra, was riding a two-wheeler when he was stopped for checking by a police party at Sool-Kakriyal.

Name changing spree in MP to woo the electorate

The name changing spree started November 15, the birth anniversary of tribal leader Birsa Munda



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhopal, Jan 9: It is said what's in a name, but in Madhya Pradesh the name says it all. The entire politics in the state is revolving around rechristening government buildings, railway stations, bus stands and universities with the intent to woo the electorate.

The name changing spree started November 15, the birth anniversary of tribal leader Birsa Munda. It was announced that November 15 will be observed as Tribal Pride Day. On the same day, Habibganj railway station was renamed Gond Rani Kamalapati station. The Indore Patalpani railway station has been renamed after tribal icon Tantya Bheel. The Minto hall, the old vahan sabha (legislative assembly),

has been renamed after the Bharatiya Janata Party's founder member Kushabhau Thakre and will be known as Kushabhau Thakre hall.

Minto Hall was constructed by Nawab Sultan Jahan Begum, the fourth and the last begum of Bhopal. She named the Hall as Minto Hall to felicitate Lord Minto, the then viceroy of India. In 2018, Minto Hall was reconstructed and is currently being used as a convention centre.

The previous Kamal Nath government had started Chhindwara university in Chhindwara which has been renamed as Raja Shankar Shah University Chhindwara. As per the latest decision, the Spiritual department will be renamed as 'Dharmik Nyas and Dharmik

Vibhaag' (Department of Religious Trust and Religious Affairs). The state has also formed a Happiness Department.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has announced the renaming of Hoshangabad district as Narmadapuram. Former Congress Minister Sajjan Verma has advocated renaming Indore along with Gwalior.

Many leaders have demanded renaming Indore as Ahilya Bai Nagar. The Municipal Corporation has passed a proposal and sent it to the state government to rename Bhopal as Bhojpal. Similarly, there was a demand to change the name of Idgah Hills to Guru Nanak Hills. It is said that Guru Nanak Dev ji, the first guru of the Sikhs, stayed here and the place houses his footprints.

Former chief minister Uma Bharti has already demanded the renaming of Halali dam.

Bhopal MP Pragma Singh Thakur has demanded changing the names of Islam Nagar, Lalghati, Halali Dam and Halapura bus stand in Bhopal. Some Congress leaders have also demanded renaming a few other places. Some prominent opposition leaders have been questioning the name changes, but the BJP is moving ahead with changing the names of places that are reminiscent of slavery.

IN SYNC



Troops of the Indian Army perform Khukuri dance in the snow-clad ranges of the Tangdhar sector in the Kupwara district of north Kashmir

PTI PHOTO

Vax certificates in poll-bound states won't have PM's photo

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 9: Covid vaccination certificates issued in the five poll-bound states will not have Prime Minister Narendra Modi's photo since the model code of conduct has come into force there, official sources said Sunday.

The Union Health Ministry has applied necessary filters on the Co-WIN platform to exclude Modi's photo from the vaccine certificate, a source said.

According to sources, the filters

were applied on Saturday night soon after the poll schedule was announced. Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Manipur and Goa will be held between February 10 and March 7 in seven phases with the counting of votes on March 10, the Election Commission announced Saturday.

With the announcement of the schedule, the Model Code of Conduct for governments, candidates and political parties has come into force. "The Health Ministry has applied necessary filters on

the CoWIN platform to exclude the picture of the prime minister from the COVID-19 certificates being given to people in these five poll-bound states because of the model code of conduct coming into force," an official source said.

In March 2021, Health Ministry had taken a similar initiative during the polls held in Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Puducherry as suggested by the Election Commission following complaints raised by some political parties.

Migrants once again leave for home fearing lockdown

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 9: Migrant labourers, who during the previous coronavirus-induced lockdown, ran out of food, struggled to access healthcare and faced acute livelihood problems, are once again returning to their home states fearing that the weekly curfew may be converted into a lockdown as Covid surge continues.

Fearing lockdown in the national capital, migrant labourer Hemant Maurya has already left for his home state. "Last time, I got stuck in the national capital with my family. Duration of lockdown was extended gradually and I faced a lot of hardship. That's why when this time I heard of curfew, I left the national capital," Maurya said.

He further said: "If the curfew is not extended, we will come back. Fearing lockdown, I left for home on January 6. Will face problem due to unemployment, but if life will be saved, will find some work. This time I was accompanied by four fellow labourers."

Hemant is not the only one, 33-year-old Raju, resident of Gonda district, also returned home. Raju said: "In the previous lockdown, my kids were staying with me. We did not have money and had to survive without food for one day. After borrowing money from my friend, I returned home. This time, I did not wait for anything. If curfew will not be extended, we will return."

"One of my villagers Vinod has also returned along with me. Covid cases are increasing. We will think about going back when



the situation becomes normal," Raju further said. Delhi's daily Covid tally has crossed over 20,000 cases in a day. Due to surge in infection, lockdown is likely to be imposed, which is a cause of concern for the migrant labourers.

Although the government has imposed night and weekend curfew to contain Covid, but given the current situation, migrant labourers are taking no chances this time and are either preparing or opting to leave for home.

Toufiq Ahmed, a contractor in a society in Delhi's Prem Nagar, is a resident of Ambedkar Nagar. Many people from his village work under him. Even before the imposition of curfew in the national capital, eight of the migrant labourers left for their home.

Ahmed said that eight labourers have already returned home and others are likely to follow. "Despite our assurance to the migrant labourers that there will be no shortage of food, they are scared," Ahmed added.

"The workers who faced hardships during previous lockdowns are frightened and are rushing for their homes. At the same time, bus fare has also increased. Earlier, a private bus from Prem Nagar to Ambedkar Nagar used to charge Rs 1,000 which has now been in-

creased to Rs 1,200," he pointed out.

Ahmed said: "Labourers of Bihar, Gonda and Moradabad have left for their homes. Three labourers left two days ago and earlier, three workers left. We want that they should return early, failing which work would be affected. All the labourers who have left for their homes have not informed when they will come back."

However, many private operators, who sit outside Anand Vihar Bus Stand and look after buses operating for Bihar, said the situation is grim, so they are charging the high fare. Most of the people who work in Delhi come from other states. If Covid situation does not improve, the national capital could re-witness the problems faced during the previous lockdowns.

TRIANGULAR CONTEST ON CARDS IN U'KHAND

The change of two CMs within just a few months has led the incumbent BJP to face the charge of frittering the mandate it got in 2017 and causing political instability in the state



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Assembly polls, making the most of the Narendra Modi factor while the Congress won 11 and independents two. The presence of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in the fray as the other challenger also makes the poll scene different this time for both the Congress and the BJP. Though most seats are likely to see straight contests between the BJP and the Congress, AAP may also make the contest triangular on a few. However, unlike its formidable opponents, the party does not have much of an organisational base in the state, which may work to its disadvantage. The Uttarakhand Kranti Dal (UKD) which had spearheaded the movement for a separate state is also trying to regain lost ground this time. Led by Kashi Singh Airi, the UKD had given its support to the BJP to form a government under the leadership of Bhuvan Chandra

Khanduri in 2007 but drew a blank in the 2012 and 2017 Assembly polls. The BJP is seeking another term in the name of development projects like the reconstruction of Kedarnath, Char Dham all-weather road and Rishikesh-Karnaprayag rail line. Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his poll rallies has described the decade as that of Uttarakhand, saying infrastructure projects underway in the state will boost tourism in a big way and generate large-scale employment opportunities. Congress sees a chance for itself as it feels the jinx of the power ball swinging from one end to the other in the bipolar politics of Uttarakhand can work in its favour. AAP on the other hand is asking voters to give it a chance as they had tried both the BJP and the Congress for 20 years.

Dehradun, Jan 9: With power shuttling between the BJP and the Congress every five years in Uttarakhand, the ruling BJP faces the challenge of repeating its government for a second consecutive term when the state goes to polls February 14. The challenge is only stiffened by an anti-incumbency worsened by the fact that the party in power gave three chief ministers to the state in less than five years, changing two of them in quick succession despite storming to power with a huge mandate in 2017. The change of two chief ministers within just a few months has led the incumbent BJP to face the charge of frittering the mandate it got in 2017 and causing political instability in the state. It had won 57 of 70 seats in the 2017

BJP has its task cut out in UP

The SP has emerged as the major contender, and the Congress is under pressure to come up with better numbers, now that the campaign is under the direct charge of general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Jan 9: The BJP has its task cut out in Uttar Pradesh — to break a jinx under which no party has won two consecutive assembly elections in the state after 1985. Spread over seven phases, moving sequentially from the west to the east of the vast state, the 403-seat polls will have a major bearing on the 2024 parliamentary elections, when the party hopes to return to power in Delhi under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Union Minister Amit Shah, who has been spearheading the ruling party's campaigns in UP in the past elections, indicated that much a few weeks back at a rally that scotched speculation that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is now out of favour with the BJP's central leadership. "The foundation of the 2024 Lok Sabha election, which has to be won under the leadership of Modi ji, will be laid in the 2022 assembly elections here," he said. The BJP had registered a landslide victory in 2017 assembly polls winning 312 seats on its own, and 325 if the those won by the allies are also counted. Akhilesh Yadav's Samajwadi Party was a distant second then at 49. Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party won 19 seats. Apna Dal



(Sonelal) got nine, two more than the Congress tally. The SP has emerged as the major contender to power, and the Congress is under pressure to come up with better numbers, now that the campaign is under the direct charge of general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. With PM Modi inaugurating or laying the foundation stones for a series of projects — including expressways and irrigation schemes — in recent weeks, development still remains a big poll plank for the ruling BJP. But the party appears to be banking heavily on the "Hindutva" card. The Ram temple being built in Ayodhya has been a constant refrain at political rallies and the first phase of the redevelopment around

the Kashi Vishwanath temple was showcased by Modi himself. He took a dip in the Ganga and addressed a rally which focused on the country's resilience against the likes of Aurangzeb. And CM Adityanath has often directed barbs at Akhilesh Yadav that suggest that the SP is counting on the Muslim community. A remark by the SP leader, seemingly equating Pakistan founder Muhammad Ali Jinnah with the likes of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, has also been repeatedly invoked at BJP rallies. The SP, in turn, has harped on "rising" crime — the BJP disputes this and recalls the "mafia rule" when the SP was in power — and claimed that many of the projects being inaugurated now were begun

by its own government. It has also accused the BJP of misusing the central agencies like the Enforcement Directorate to intimidate opponents. But more than anything, the SP hopes that its alliances with the smaller parties will make the crucial difference. Apart from the RLD, Akhilesh Yadav's main allies are Om Prakash Rajbhar's Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP) and the Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) - PSP(L) led by his once-estranged uncle Shivpal Yadav. Also on his team are the Apna Dal (Krishna Patel faction), Sanjay Chauhan's Janwadi Party (Socialist) and Keshav Dev Maurya's Mahan Dal. The BJP has tied up with the Apna Dal (Sonelal), and the Nishad Party which represents the group traditionally associated with boatmen and the fisher community. The BSP and the Congress have decided to go solo in these polls. Adityanath, now the face of the BJP in these polls, has claimed that the party will be back in power in UP with an "overwhelming majority". UP Congress spokesperson Ashok Singh claims that his own party — being seen by most as an underdog — will spring a surprise. And Akhilesh Yadav's tagline is "March das BJP saaf" (on March 10, BJP will be finished).

SP seeks removal of 4 top officers in UP



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Jan 9: It was the Bahujan Samaj Party that brought them together and it is, again, the BSP that is slowly driving them away. The party itself is imploding. After nearly two decades, Uttar Pradesh is likely to witness a fragmentation of Dalit votes that is bound to weaken the political base of the BSP. With the announcement of election dates, Mayawati becomes the only leader who will guide her voters into election without addressing them even once. The rallies addressed by BSP MP Satish Chandra Mishra have been aimed at bringing Brahmins into the BSP, rather than keeping the Dalits together. Dalits in Uttar Pradesh are an influential caste group. Their population is around 21.6 per cent, which includes 66 Dalit sub castes. Seventeen of the 80 Lok Sabha seats in UP are reserved for Scheduled Castes. Of these, the BJP won 14 in the 2019 general election, including the Hathras seat. The BSP won two and the Apna Dal one seat. This proves that on its own, the BSP cannot get elected unless it has the support of other caste groups. Since 1993, when late Kanshi Ram formed an alliance with Mulayam Singh Yadav's Samajwadi Party and formed the first BSP government in a coalition, Dalits

Dalits set to go different ways as BSP implodes

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

have been voting en bloc for BSP. It was Mayawati who led the BSP to its first government with a majority in 2007 and in 2022, it is Mayawati's unexplained inertia that had led to the dismantling of her own party and also her vote base. "It is only the Jatav community that remains loyal to the BSP while other sub-castes are searching for greener pastures. Dalits, in general, are disillusioned with Mayawati's leadership since the BJP came to power in UP. Her statements are erratic and leave her voters confused about her relationship with the BJP. This political inconsistency that made Muslims think twice about supporting BSP. Dalit Muslims and



Dalit, to a considerable extent, are shifting to the Samajwadi Party who seems better positioned to defeat the ruling BJP," said Israr Ahmad, a former BSP leader. Mayawati has sacked leaders with a vengeance and the exodus of veterans like Sukhdev Rajbhar, Lalji Varma and Ram Achal Rajbhar has ensured that these leaders have taken Dalits away from the BSP in their respective areas of influence. The BSP now lacks the presence of a senior Dalit leader and the party which had won 19 seats in 2017, is now left with just three MLAs. Satish Chandra Mishra, the second tallest leader of the party, is the new face of the BSP, along with

We need a leader who responds and is accessible. Mayawati remains locked in her ivory tower and even during the Hathras incident, she did not step out. Chandra Shekhar is becoming increasingly acceptable because the BSP is losing its core ideology

RAJ NARAIN GAUTAM | BHIM ARMY ACTIVIST

his wife and son, who have been addressing Brahmins. The BSP leaders in Rajya Sabha, Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha now belong to upper castes. Dalits, naturally, are wondering if this is the same party that swore its allegiance to Dalits. A major factor, meanwhile, that is all set to divide Dalit votes, especially in west UP, is the emergence of the Bhim Army chief Chandra Shekhar Chandra Shekhar became a known face in the state after the Dalit-Thakur clash in Saharanpur in May 2017. He has been relentlessly working at the grassroots level among Dalits — holding classes to educate Dalit children and protecting the welfare of his community members. He has been visiting various areas where atrocities on Dalits have been reported and now enjoys a sizeable following among Dalit youth.

35-km stretch of NH claims 900 lives, earns ₹272cr revenue in 3 yrs



Picture used for representation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Noida, Jan 9: A 35-km stretch of national highway between Hapur and Moradabad, generating a revenue of Rs 272 crore between 2017 and 2021 has claimed nearly 900 lives during the same period, official data reveal. The toll road under the Brijghat toll plaza falls on the national highway 24 between its 58-km to 93-km milestones and is a key connecting route for the people travelling between Delhi and interiors of UP or towards Nainital in Uttarakhand. The data has been shared by the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) in reply to a query filed under the Right to Information (RTI) Act by Noida-based social activist Amit Gupta. The total project cost is Rs 195.51 crore while a sum of over Rs 272 crore was collected in toll from 2017-18 till November 2021, the NHAI said. It also mentioned that the recovery of the user fees on the Brijghat Toll Plaza is scheduled to continue till May 27, 2041, said the RTI reply accessed by PTI. On deaths that took place on

roads under the Brijghat Toll Plaza area, the NHAI said 136 people had died in 2018-19, 184 in 2019-20, 326 in 2020-21 and 238 between April and November 2021 in the ongoing financial year. Gupta had sought the death data for the last 10 years but the NHAI said it had no record for the years 2017-18 and prior to it. The NHAI also said it has no record of the number of complaints related to damages or bad roads on the 35-km stretch. "No separate budget is allocated for the repair for the stretch under the Brijghat toll plaza. However, a sum of Rs 5,39,72,337 has been spent on the maintenance and repair from Garhmukteshwar to Moradabad," Rakesh Kumar Sood, the general manager-cum-project director for NHAI's project implementation unit in Moradabad stated in the reply. According to information available on the NHAI website, the Brijghat toll plaza has a design capacity for handling 60,000 vehicles a day and had daily traffic of 46,360 vehicles in March 2017.

After 29 yrs in obscurity, Beatles Ashram now in vogue

IN 1968, WORLD-FAMOUS MUSIC BAND THE BEATLES VISITED THIS PLACE TO ATTEND AN ADVANCED 'TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION' TRAINING COURSE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Rishikesh, Jan 9: Rishikesh is known as 'Yoga Nagari' across the world but you will be surprised to know that 'Chaurasi Kuti', the place that got Rishikesh recognition as Yoga City, itself remained in obscurity for 29-long years. We are talking about Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the pioneer of transcendental meditation who founded Chaurasi Kuti, 84 igloo-shaped huts at Rishikesh in 1963. After Rajaji Tiger Reserve was established, entry of common man was prohibited in Shankaracharya Nagar (Chaurasi Kuti). Over the time forest grew there and the heritage structure lay in the state of



Tourists in the ashram

ruins. But, after 29 years, when it was reopened for tourists, it gradually became their favourite destination. In 1961, Mahesh Yogi had taken 15 acres of land near Swarg Ashram Rishikesh on lease from the forest department. Here, he built 84 small huts and more than 100 caves with wonderful architecture and developed this place as yoga centre for meditation. These huts are wonderful specimens of architecture and are earthquake resistant too. Besides Mahesh Yogi, Dr Swami Ram and Swami Shivanand were also known

for imparting yoga education here. However, Chaurasi Kuti developed into a unique centre for meditation. In 1968, world-famous music band Beatles group visited this place to attend an advanced 'Transcendental Meditation' training course. Four members of the Beatles group — George Harrison, Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr and John Lennon stayed here for a long time and composed many tunes and songs. After this, Rishikesh became a centre of attraction for foreign tourists and got recognition

on the world stage as the international capital of Yoga. After Rajaji National Park came up and its boundaries were expanded in 1986, Chaurasi Kuti was just at the fringe of the park area. Due to strict rules for traffic movement, and inability to get resources, Mahesh Yogi went to the Netherlands and handed over the Kuti to the Forest department. At the same time, entry of common man to the Kuti was prohibited. Due to lack of maintenance, the huts and caves were gradually reclaimed by nature after being abandoned and the entire campus lay in the state of ruins. Fro almost 29 years, this heritage structure remained in darkness. Many tourists used to come here to see this heritage associated with the Beatles group but they returned disappointed as they were not allowed to enter. On December 8, 2015, the Forest department cleaned and repaired this complex and reopened it for tourists. Since then, domestic and foreign tourist, students and elders are visiting the place after paying fee. After reopening of Chaurasi Kuti, the influx of tourists increased manifold. Recently, when record of last

five years was presented by the Rajaji Tiger Reserve, it was found that this heritage campus is no less than a treasure. In the past six years, 1,39,176 foreign and Indian tourists visited Chaurasi Kuti and the Rajaji park administration has earned Rs 2,33,29,685 from tourists. The coronavirus pandemic has also cast its shadow on the Kuti. When Chaurasi Kuti was opened for the first time in 2015, a total of 4,975 tourists arrived there by March 2016. In the financial year 2016-2017, a total 9,675 tourist footfalls were recorded, in 2017-18, a total 18,313 tourist footfalls while in 2018-19, a total 30,047 tourist footfalls were recorded. In 2019-20, highest number, 42,233 tourists visited the Kuti but in March 2020, it was closed due to coronavirus scare. October 16, 2020, when the campus was reopened, the number of tourists visiting here declined. After reopening the Kuti, tourists facilities were expanded. Range officer Dheer Singh informed that Herbal Garden and Navagrah Vatika were recently established in the Chaurasi Kuti. Besides this, arrangements have been made for drinking water, nature path, bio toilet, bamboo hut, solar street light and music system.

95 of 403 Assembly segments in UP are sensitive, says DGP

AGENCIES

Lucknow, Jan 9: As many as 95 out of 403 assembly constituencies in Uttar Pradesh have been marked as "sensitive", state's Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar said Sunday. Speaking to reporters here, Kumar said in the seven-phase assembly elections in the state, as many as 92,821 polling centres comprising 1,74,351 polling booths have been set up. Compared to the 2017 UP assembly polls, the number of polling centres has increased by over 2 per cent and that of polling booths by 18.45 per cent. He said all polling centres have

been physically verified by police. Asked what makes an assembly segment "sensitive", Kumar said there are many parameters on the basis of which an assembly segment is declared sensitive. Kumar, however, did not elaborate on the parameters. Another official said the parameters for declaring an assembly constituency "sensitive" in general include factors like "highly-pronounced rivalry between political parties or pronounced presence of criminals, communal and caste tension or Left-wing extremism, among others". Kumar said a separate register has been opened up in all police stations of the state to register all poll-related information.

national

of the day quote

The TMC has roped in "unreliable leaders" from other parties, including the Congress, and such an attitude does not suit West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who is herself fighting the BJP

SANJAY RAUT | SHIV SENA MP

The party will fight strongly and will again win in Punjab and oust the BJP from power in the remaining four states

RANDEEP SURJEWALA | CONGRESS LEADER

39 coal mines that fall in the limits of the proposed Lemru Elephant Reserve in the northern part of the state will not be allocated for mining

BHUPESH BAGHEL | CHHATTISGARH CM

SHORT TAKES

Two die

Chennai: Two of a family, including a woman and her 3-year-old nephew, died while two others are recuperating after the four members of a family in Tamil Nadu's Madurai attempted suicide Sunday morning. Madurai police identified the deceased woman as Jothika (23) and her nephew, Rithesh (3) of Kalmedu in Madurai district. Jothika's mother Lakshmi (46) and her brother Sibiraj (13) are undergoing treatment at the Government Rajaji Memorial Medical College Hospital, Madurai. Police said that Lakshmi's husband and her elder daughter Anitha, who was mother of Rithesh, died last year due to some disease. Neighbours said that Jothika had tested Covid-19 positive and the family was dependent on her for their living.

Body found

Kolkata: The blood-soaked body of an autorickshaw driver was found in Nonadanga area of the city on Sunday, triggering protest by locals who vandalised a hooch den in the vicinity. A police officer said Biswajit Jana, aged around 30 years, was found lying dead with his head smashed at a deserted plot in Anandapur police station area on Sunday morning. The body also bore several deep cuts. One person has been detained in connection with the incident, the officer said.

Man arrested for hoax call

Jabalpur: Madhya Pradesh Police have arrested a man for allegedly making a call to the Mumbai Police control room about a terror attack, which later turned out to be a hoax, an official said Sunday. Jitesh Thakur (35) was arrested here on Saturday on the basis of a mobile number shared by the Maharashtra Police, Jabalpur's Additional Superintendent of Police Gopal Khandel said. The accused, who is unemployed and a habitual drinker, had made the call to the Mumbai Police on January 6, he said.

Tiger cub found dead

Umaria: A tiger cub was found dead in the buffer zone of Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh's Umaria district, with officials suspecting that it died following a territorial fight. A forest patrolling team Saturday spotted the carcass of the feline, nearly 11 months' old, in Majhauli beat of Manpur buffer area. Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve's deputy director Lavit Bharati said in a statement Sunday.

ASSEMBLY POLLS

Congress to go without CM face

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 9: In the upcoming five state elections, the Congress has decided to go without declaring the chief ministerial face despite having incumbent face in Punjab as a chief minister.

Sources in the Congress say that it will only be decided after the results and Congress legislative party will decide the new leader with the consent of the high command, except at few occasions the party does not project a chief minister's face.

The Congress leaders in Punjab and Uttarakhand want that Chief Ministers should be projected. Supporters of Harish Rawat, former CM and Navjot Singh Sidhu, Punjab Congress chief want to be projected as Chief Minister's face. But party says it will not take risk to alienate other factions ahead of polls.

The Congress faces major challenge of retaining power in Punjab, and to come up with a credible show against the BJP in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur and Aam Aadmi Party.

Cop in soup for hair, moustache

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, Jan 9: The Madhya Pradesh Police have suspended a constable for indiscipline as he grew his hair and moustache despite being told to trim it, an official said on Sunday.

The suspension order issued on Friday to constable Rakesh Rana, posted as a driver in the police's motor transport wing, surfaced on various social media platforms Sunday.

Assistant Inspector General, Cooperatives Fraud and Public Service Guarantee, Prashant Sharma, who issued the order, said that Rana was suspended as he did not follow his senior's order about correcting his appearance.

The constable was posted as the driver of Special Director General, Cooperatives Fraud and Public Service Guarantee section of the MP Police

"When his appearance was checked, the constable was found with hair grown and a moustache till the neck. He was directed to trim the hair as his turnout was awkward, but he did not follow the directives," the official said.

Sharma also claimed the constable was adamant on keeping long hair and moustache, which was not in accordance with norms for the uniformed personnel. Hence, he was suspended as part of disciplinary action, the official said.

The constable was posted as the driver of Special Director General, Cooperatives Fraud and Public Service Guarantee section of the Madhya Pradesh Police.

He told a TV channel that he will continue to keep a moustache as it is a matter of "self-respect" for him. Claiming that he always wore a proper uniform, Rana said he will not compromise on this issue despite the suspension as he had been keeping the moustache since a long time.



The Congress faces major challenge of retaining power in Punjab, and to come up with a credible show against the BJP in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur

The Congress is faced with a crisis in Goa, where almost all the MLAs have deserted the party

Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, who is top choice of the party in UP, but it's unlikely that anyone could be projected as CM though party has very less chance in the state compared to other election going states.

MATTER OF FAITH



A pilgrim seeks blessings from a naga sadhu at a transit camp for Gangasagar Mela pilgrims in Kolkata

Iran offers to assist India in transportation of aid to Afghan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 9: Iran has offered to assist India in the transportation of wheat, medicines and coronavirus vaccines to Afghanistan which has been reeling under a serious humanitarian crisis.

The offer was made by Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian during a telephonic conversation with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday, according to the Iranian foreign ministry.

In the conversation, Amir-Abdollahian also called for the formation of an inclusive government in Kabul, the Iranian foreign ministry said. "Regarding Afghanistan, Amir-Abdollahian stressed the need to form an inclusive government in the country. He also referred to India's humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, announcing measures and cooperation by the Islamic Republic of Iran to transfer this aid in the form of wheat, medicine and

COVID-19 vaccine to the country," it said in a statement.

Iran and Afghanistan share a nearly 920 km-long border. India has already sent three separate consignments of life-saving medicines and COVID-19 vaccines to Afghanistan.

While the first consignment was sent on a special charter flight that brought 104 people to New Delhi from Kabul, the subsequent aid was sent to Kabul via a flight of Iran's Mahan Air.

However, India is yet to deliver 50,000 tonnes of wheat it had pledged to supply to Afghanistan as modalities for transporting the aid to the war-torn country through Pakistan are yet to be thrashed out with Islamabad.

There is an option for India of sending aid to Afghanistan via the Chabahar port in Iran.

Located in the Sistan-Balochistan province on the energy-rich Iran's southern coast, the Chabahar port is being developed by India and Iran to boost trade ties.

4 SC judges test positive for Covid

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 9: Four Supreme Court judges and almost five per cent of its staff have tested positive for COVID-19, official sources said on Sunday, as the national capital witnesses a sharp spike in coronavirus cases.

An apex court official said that out of the 32 judges in the apex court, at least four judges, and 150 out of the nearly 3,000 staff members, are currently infected with the virus.

Delhi Saturday, recorded seven fatalities due to Covid and 20,181 cases as the positivity rate rose to 19.60 per cent, while the country, according to Union health ministry data updated on Sunday, reported a single day rise of 1,59,632 cases and 327 fatalities.

A Covid-19 testing facility has been set up on the top court's premises and it is open from Monday to Saturday. "In view to contain the spread of the highly contagious coronavirus infection and sudden upsurge in the cases of Omicron variant of the coronavirus, it is reiterated that the entrants to the Supreme Court premises, i.e. the registry staff, staff of the coordinate agencies, advocates and their staff etc., particularly those who may be showing any symptom(s) similar to those notified for COVID-19 infection(s), may kindly get themselves tested at such facility..." a circular read.

No plan to impose lockdown: Kejriwal



A healthworker interacts with Covid-19 infected children inside the Covid Care Centre of the Commonwealth Games village in New Delhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 9: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal Sunday said there is no plan to impose a lockdown as of now in the city, and that there will be no need for it if people wear masks.

He said that on Sunday, the city is likely to report 22,000 COVID-19 cases in 24 hours. He appealed to the public to wear masks and not panic. "Rising COVID-19 cases are a matter of concern but there is no need to panic. Very few people are getting hospitalised. Wearing mask is very important. There will be no lockdown if you continue to wear mask. There is no plan to impose lockdown as of now," Kejriwal said in a virtual press conference.

The CM said that he along with Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal and the Centre are keeping a close eye on the Covid situation. "Our attempt is to impose minimum restrictions so livelihoods are not affected," Kejriwal said.

Comparing the current third wave with the second Covid wave in April-May last year, the CM said that on May 7, 2021 there were 20,000 cases reported with 341 deaths but Saturday Delhi witnessed same number of cases with only seven deaths.

He, however, said that there should not be even a single death. "On May 7 last year nearly 20,000 Covid beds were occupied while till yesterday there were only 1500 hospital beds occupied de-

The CM said that a meeting of the DDMA will be convened Monday to further review the situation

spite having reported same number of cases. "I am telling you this data to show that very less people are requiring to go to hospital in this infection and you do not need to panic. We just have to behave responsibly," Kejriwal said.

The CM said that a meeting of the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) will be convened Monday to further review the situation and discuss efforts to be taken. "We have overcome the dangerous second wave last year and we will sail through this one too," Kejriwal said.

He also appealed to the public not to go out unnecessarily and follow social distancing norms. He also urged people to take vaccine and get themselves protected against the virus. The national capital has been seeing an uptick of daily cases in the last few days, mainly triggered by the Omicron variant of the infection. According to data by health department, Delhi recorded 20,181 new COVID-19 cases and logged seven deaths on Saturday. The positivity rate rose to 19.60 per cent. To curb the spread of the virus, the DDMA has already imposed a weekend curfew in the city.

AAP likely to face fund crunch

Two days ago, the Election Commission increased the expenditure limit from ₹28 lakh to ₹40 lakh for candidates in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand and from ₹20 lakh to ₹28 lakh in Goa

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 9: After limiting fund collection from abroad, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) may face a financial crunch for campaigning in four of the five poll-bound states it is contesting in the February-March elections.

Two days ago, the Election Commission increased the expenditure limit from Rs 28 lakh to Rs 40 lakh in candidates in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, and from Rs 20 lakh to Rs 28 lakh in Goa.

Earlier, the NRI wing of the



NRI Wing Hoshiarpur, Varinder Singh Parihar had accused party leaders of transferring Rs 200 crore to Rs 500 crore, collected from NRIs living in the US, from Punjab to Delhi.

party, which was considered very strong in Punjab, used to donate crores of rupees to the party's coffers. During the 2017 Punjab elections, NRI Joban Randhawa was the Youth Deputy Convener of the NRI cell of the AAP. As many as 30,000 NRI supporters had registered themselves with the party for campaigning and around 2,000 NRI supporters reached Punjab that year.

However, the support for the party in Canada, California, New York, New Jersey is not very aggressive this year, giving rise to a financial crunch. Former co-ordinator of AAP's Fund Raising and

NRI Wing Hoshiarpur, Varinder Singh Parihar had accused party leaders of transferring Rs 200 crore to Rs 500 crore, collected from NRIs living in the US, from Punjab to Delhi. He alleged that party MP Bhagwant Mann had gone to Vancouver, while Sukhpal Singh Khaira went to the US and held meetings with NRIs in Seattle, California, New York, New Jersey and other places.

"Therefore, the party has millions of dollars donated by the NRIs stored and does not need to focus on overseas fund this year," Parihar said. Even after investigations into its foreign fund-collection were conducted by the Home Ministry under both the UP and the BJP government, the AAP has received a clean chit on both occasions.

According to the party, despite having complete control over the Central Bureau of Investigation, Income Tax Department, Enforcement Directorate, Intelligence Bureau, and Delhi Police, the BJP government did not find anything wrong in the AAP funding process.

Kuru Kolumn

Rajnath next Vice President!

The BJP watchers say that the party is undergoing a generational change. If the first Modi term in 2014 saw the easing out of all 75-plus-year-old politicians

in the government, including LK Advani, MM Joshi, Yashwant Sinha and others, the 2021 cabinet reshuffle witnessed another change when as many as 12 ministers were shown the door. A close look at the current list of 32 Cabinet Ministers and two MoS with Independent charge will show that except for a few prominent leaders like Rajnath Singh, Nitin Gadkari and Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, none belong to the Atal-Advani era. If Rajnath Singh has shown immense resilience, Gadkari's candid comments in public raised many eyebrows many times. The last word on Gadkari is yet to be written about a complaint filed by his own BJP state party president relating to his cooperative companies in Maharashtra. The

state BJP chief Chandrakant Patil sent a letter to the Home Minister seeking inquiry into 73 cooperative companies, including two belonging to Gadkari late last year. Many say that Gadkari wants to be out 'hit wicket' by his free-wheeling talks. But Modi is ignoring him the way he has been ignoring the remarks of Meghalaya Governor Satya Pal Malik. It is in this context that many in the BJP believe that Rajnath Singh can be kicked up the ladder as next Vice President in July 2022.

Suspense continues in Uttar Pradesh
The state BJP leaders have been shouting from the rooftops

that Yogi Adityanath will be the UP Chief Minister after the 2022 polls but no one is sure. The BJP high command has been maintaining a studied silence. Of course, the polls are being fought under the leadership of Yogi Adityanath. UP BJP president Swatantra Dev Singh was the first to declare Yogi Adityanath will be the party's face for the top post during the 2022 UP Assembly elections. Earlier, UP Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma said the issue of the state's next CM is already 'settled'. "This is a settled issue as the BJP's Central leadership has already made it clear that the party will contest the UP Assembly elections under Yogi

Adityanath ji to return to power," Sharma, who himself was a strong contender for the CM's post in 2017, had said in a recent interview. But neither BJP chief JP Nadda nor Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made such a strong public declaration.

BJP's Punjab dilemma

BJP is facing a Waterloo in Punjab as leaders in the state want to go alone while top leaders feel that Captain Amarinder Singh and Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa will be useful for alliance in the polls. The BJP sees the current situation in

Punjab as an opportunity to come out of the shadow of Akali Dal after almost 40 years and try its own luck. It is largely because of this reason that the Prime Minister has been campaigning heavily in the border state and making security a big issue. The recent case of a huge lapse in the security of the Prime Minister gave a handle to browbeat the Congress government. The BJP doesn't want to let slip this opportunity from its hands and make its presence felt in the Assembly polls. But none can predict what the BJP will finally do in Punjab as it is desperate to stop the AAP's bandwagon at any cost in the state.

international

of the day quote

I reiterate the support of the United Nations for all efforts made at various levels to unify the military institution

STEPHANIE WILLIAMS | AMERICAN DIPLOMAT

Shocked (and) upset at tragic deaths of tourists on road to Murree. Unprecedented snowfall (and) rush of (people) proceeding without checking weather conditions caught district admin unprepared

IMRAN KHAN | PAK PRIME MINISTER

Washington was seeking answers from Kazakhstan officials on why they needed to call in Russian-led security forces to resolve domestic unrest

ANTONY BLINKEN | US SECRETARY OF STATE

SHORT TAKES

6 IS terrorists gunned down

Islamabad: Six Islamic State (IS) terrorists were gunned down in Pakistan's Balochistan, including most-wanted militant Asghar Samalani who carried a reward of 2 million PKR, The News International said in a report. He was reported to be planning a major attack against a sensitive installation in Quetta, the report said. A long sought-after militant by the law enforcement agencies, Samalani was previously an active member of Lashkar-e-Jhangvi that carried out serious sectarian attacks in Balochistan as well as across the country.

Iran blacklists 51 Americans

Tehran: Iran's Foreign Ministry has blacklisted 51 more US individuals for their "roles" in the assassination of former military commander Qasem Soleimani. In a statement Saturday, the Ministry said the new list of sanctioned American individuals, including Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Mark Milley and former National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien, was in line with implementing Iran's law on "combating human rights violations and the adventurous and terrorist acts of the US in the region", reports said.

NYC: New law allows non-citizens to vote

New York: More than 800,000 noncitizens and "Dreamers" in New York City will have access to the ballot box — and could vote in municipal elections as early as next year — after Mayor Eric Adams allowed legislation to automatically become law Sunday. Opponents have vowed to challenge the new law, which the City Council approved a month ago. Unless a judge halts its implementation, New York City is the first major US City to grant widespread municipal voting rights to noncitizens.

164 killed, over 5K held during riots

AGENCIES

Moscow, Jan 9: More than 160 people were killed and over 5,000 arrested in Kazakhstan after the riots that shook Central Asia's largest country over the past week.

The interior ministry, quoted Sunday by local media, said initial estimates put property damage at about 175 million euros (\$198m) after the deadly violence.

More than 100 businesses and banks were attacked and looted and about 400 vehicles destroyed, the ministry said.

A total of 164 people, including two children, were killed in violent, Russia's Sputnik news agency cited the health ministry as saying Sunday. It said 103 people had died in Kazakhstan's main city of Almaty, where the worst of the violence took place.

"Today the situation is stabilised in all regions of the country," Interior Minister Erlan Turgumbayev said, adding nonetheless "the counterterror operation is continuing in a bid to re-establish order in the country". President

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's office said Sunday that order has stabilised in the country and that authorities have regained control of administrative buildings that were occupied by protesters, some of which were set on fire.

Protests over a sharp rise in prices of LPG fuel began in the country's west January 2 and spread throughout the country, apparently reflecting discontent extending beyond the fuel prices.

The same party has ruled Kazakhstan since independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Any figures aspiring to oppose the government have either been repressed, sidelined, or co-opted and financial hardship is widespread despite Kazakhstan's enormous reserves of oil, natural gas, uranium and minerals.

Tokayev contends the demonstrators were ignited by "terrorists" with foreign backing, although the protests have shown no obvious leaders or organization. The statement from his office Sunday said the detentions included "a sizable number of foreign nationals," but gave no details.

KAZAKHSTAN UNREST



It was unclear how many of those detained remained in custody Sunday. The former head of Kazakhstan's counterintelligence and anti-terror agency has been arrested on charges of attempted government overthrow. The arrest of Karim Masimov, which was announced Saturday, came just days after he was removed as head of the National Security Committee by Tokayev. No details were given about what Masimov was alleged to have done that would constitute an attempted government overthrow. The National Security

Committee, a successor to the Soviet-era KGB, is responsible for counterintelligence, the border guards service and anti-terror activities. Authorities say security forces killed 26 demonstrators in this week's unrest and that 16 law-enforcement officers died.

At Tokayev's request, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, a Russia-led military alliance of six former Soviet states, authorized sending about 2,500 mostly Russian troops to Kazakhstan as peacekeepers. In a sign that the demonstrations

Dozens of people have been killed, thousands detained and public buildings torched over the past week, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to issue shoot-to-kill orders to end unrest he has blamed on bandits and terrorists

were more deeply rooted than just the fuel price rise, many demonstrators shouted "Old man out," a reference to Nursultan Nazarbayev, who was president from Kazakhstan's independence until he resigned in 2019 and anointed Tokayev as his successor. Nazarbayev retained substantial power as head of the National Security Council. But Tokayev replaced him as council head amid this week's unrest. Possibly aiming at a concession to mollify protesters.

However, Nazarbayev's adviser Aido Ukibay said Sunday that it was done at Nazarbayev's initiative, according to the Kazakh news agency KazTag.

At least 200 dead in bandit attacks in northwest Nigeria

REUTERS

Maiduguri, Nigeria, Jan 9: An estimated 200 people or more have been killed in villages in the north-western Nigerian state of Zamfara during deadly reprisal attacks by armed bandits following military air strikes on their hideouts this week, residents said Saturday.

Residents gained access to the villages on Saturday after the military captured the communities to organise mass burials, they told Reuters. The state government said 58 people had been killed during the attacks. Ummaru Makeri, a resident who lost his wife and three children during the attack, said around 154 people had been buried including several vigilantes who were killed. Residents said the total death toll was at least 200.



Reuters reported on Friday that at least 30 people had been killed in the Anka local government area in Zamfara, when more than 300 armed bandits on motorbikes stormed eight villages and started shooting sporadically Tuesday.

The military said it had conducted air strikes in the early hours of Monday on targets in the Gusami forest and west Tsamre village in Zamfara state, killing more than 100 bandits including two of their leaders, following intelligence reports.

One resident who declined to be identified told Reuters the attacks on the villages could be linked to the military strikes.

In a separate incident, 30 students abducted from their college in the northwestern Nigerian state of Kebbi were freed Saturday, a spokesman for the Kebbi governor said, without providing details.

Russia takes hard line before talks with US

REUTERS

Moscow, Jan 9: Russia said Sunday it would not make any concessions under US pressure at talks this week on the Ukraine crisis and its demands for Western security guarantees, and that there was a risk they might end quickly.

The hard line from Moscow underscored the fragile prospects for negotiations that Washington hopes will avert the danger of a new Russian invasion of Ukraine, at the tensest point in US-Russia relations since the Cold War ended three decades ago.

Talks are due in Geneva, Brussels and Vienna but the state-owned RIA news agency quoted Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov as saying it was entirely possible that diplomacy could end abruptly after a single meeting.

"I can't rule out anything, this is an entirely possible scenario and the Americans... should have no illusions about this," he was quoted as saying.

"Naturally, we will not make any concessions under pressure and in the course of threats that are constantly being formed by the Western participants of the upcoming talks."

Interfax news agency quoted Ryabkov, who will lead the Russian delegation in Geneva, as saying Moscow was not optimistic going into the negotiations.

The comments from Ryabkov,

who has compared the situation to the 1962 Cuban missile crisis when the world stood on the brink of nuclear war, were consistent with the uncompromising line that Russia has been signalling for weeks.

Tens of thousands of Russian troops are gathered within reach of the border with Ukraine in preparation for what Washington and Kyiv say could be an invasion, eight years after Russia seized the Crimea peninsula from Ukraine.

Russia denies invasion plans and says it is responding to what it calls aggressive and provocative behaviour from the NATO military alliance and Ukraine, its former Soviet neighbour which has tilted towards the West and aspires to join NATO.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has accused Russia of pushing a false narrative. "That's like the fox saying it had to attack the hen house because its occupants somehow pose a threat. We've seen this gaslighting before," he said last week.

RED LINES

Last month Russia presented a sweeping set of demands including for a bar on further NATO expansion and an end to the alliance's activity in central and eastern European countries that joined it after 1997. The United States and NATO have said large parts of the Russian proposals are a non-starter.

Wang meets top Lankan leaders

WANG'S VISIT IS TAKING PLACE AT A TIME WHEN SRI LANKA IS FACING ITS ALL-TIME WORST FOREIGN EXCHANGE CRISIS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, Jan 9: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi Sunday met Sri Lanka's top leadership and discussed a host of issues, including the debt crisis faced by the island nation, investments, promoting tourism and the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic as the two countries marked the 65th anniversary of diplomatic ties.

Wang, who arrived here Saturday from the Maldives on a two-day visit, first met the senior of the Rajapaksa brothers - Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa - who took to



Twitter to announce that he had a "very pleasant meeting" with the Chinese State Councilor. "Had a very pleasant meeting with the Foreign Min of #China. Discussions

centered around the logistics of facilitating the return of the many #lka med students to China. Also discussed were a host of issues inc Tourism, investments, #COVID19SL relief & post Covid preparedness," Mahinda Rajapaksa said on Twitter.

After his meeting with Mahinda Rajapaksa, Wang declared open the Port City Marina Promenade to the public - built with China's assistance on reclaimed sea - which is a major infrastructure Chinese project here. It is estimated that Sri Lanka owes debt payments to China in the region of \$ 1.5 to 2 billion this year.



Professor held for criticising Taliban rule

FILE: AFP PHOTO



Faizullah Jalal with his wife Massouda Jalal

The arrest of Faizullah Jalal is stoking fears that the Taliban will reimpose harsh rules on freedom of speech

Kabul, Jan 9: The Taliban have arrested a popular university professor and outspoken critic of successive Afghan governments, including the new rulers in Kabul, the group's spokesman said Sunday.

Zabihullah Mujahid said in a tweet that professor Faizullah Jalal was being held by the Taliban's intelligence arm.

The group accused the professor of "nonsensical remarks on social media, which were provoking people against the government and playing with people's dignity."

In the capital of Kabul a small group of women protested Jalal's detention.

They chanted: "Talking is not a crime, professor Jalal is not a criminal, we want professor Jalal's release, professor Jalal's voice is the people's voice, Talking is not a crime." Afghanistan faces a humanitarian crisis of epic proportions, with the United Nations warning that 90% of the country's 38 million people are in dire need. The arrest of a prominent political activist was certain to complicate humanitarian aid efforts. It also reinforced fears that the Taliban are

Seven dead after rock face collapse at Brazilian waterfall

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Brasilia, Jan 9: At least seven people died and nine were seriously injured when a wall of rock collapsed on top of motorboats below a waterfall in southeastern Brazil Saturday, the fire department said.

A tower of rocks suddenly broke away from the canyon wall and came crashing down on several leisure boats, sending out a huge wave over the lake at Capitolio, in Minas Gerais state.

Videos posted on social media showed tourists shouting as the column of rock crashed into the

water, smashing two boats.

Authorities said three people were still missing after others feared lost were located by telephone. Divers searched the lake.

The people hurt in the accident had broken bones and one was in serious condition in hospital with head and facial injuries.

Some 23 others were treated for light injuries, he said.

The region has been under heavy rainfall for two weeks, which could have loosened the rock face. On Saturday, a dike overflowed at an iron ore mine 300 kilometers to the east, cutting off a major federal highway.



THE DESERT CRATER HAS BURNED FOR DECADES AND IS A POPULAR SIGHT FOR TOURISTS

Turkmenistan plans to close its 'Gateway to Hell'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, Jan 9: Turkmenistan's strongman leader has ordered experts to find a way to finally extinguish a massive five-decade old fire in a giant natural gas crater in the Central Asian country, dubbed the Gateway to Hell.

Citing environmental and economic concerns, President Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov appeared on state television Saturday telling officials to put out the flames at the Darvaza gas crater in the middle of the vast Karakum desert. In 2010, Berdimukhamedov also ordered ex-



The resulting crater - 70 metres (229 feet) wide and 20 metres (65 feet) deep - is a popular tourist attraction in the ex-Soviet country. In 2018, the president officially renamed it to the "Shining of Karakum"

perts to find a way to put out the flames that have been burning ever since a Soviet drilling operation went awry in 1971.

President Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov said that the man-made crater negatively affects both the environment and the health of the people living nearby.

We are losing valuable natural resources for which we could get significant profits and use them for improving the wellbeing of our people, he said in televised remarks. Berdimukhamedov instructed officials to find a solution to extinguish the fire.

The crater was created in 1971

during a Soviet drilling accident that hit a gas cavern, causing the drilling rig to fall in and the earth to collapse underneath it.

To prevent the dangerous fumes from spreading, the Soviets decided to burn off the gas by setting it on fire.

The pit has been ablaze ever since and previous attempts to put it out have been unsuccessful.

The resulting crater - 70 metres (229 feet) wide and 20 metres (65 feet) deep - is a popular tourist attraction in the ex-Soviet country. In 2018, the president officially renamed it to the Shining of Karakum.



We urge the Finance Ministry to increase the interest deduction for homebuyers for tax rebate under section 24(B) to boost the overall home buying sentiment especially in these difficult times with the onset of the third wave

HARSHVARDHAN PATODIA | PRESIDENT, CREDAI

IBM LIKELY TO SELL WATSON HEALTH

Tech giant IBM could reportedly be looking to sell the Watson Health division for more than \$1 billion, media reports say. According to Axios, IBM spent more than \$4 billion to build Watson Health via a series of acquisitions. The business now includes health care data and analytics business Truven Health Analytics, population health company Phytel and medical imaging business Merge Healthcare.



of the day quote

I'm pretty confident that we should be having a good double-digit growth provided that things are not spoiled because of the corona once again

BALBIR SINGH DHILLON | HEAD, AUDI INDIA

We have been doubling our growth year on year. The ₹10,000 crore GTV mark is a significant milestone in the company's journey

ANIL KUMAR SG | FOUNDER AND CEO, SAMUNNATI

With an unprecedented surge in the cost of commodities, global freight and raw materials, we have taken steps to increase prices of our products by 3 to 5 per cent in the refrigerator, washing machines, and air conditioner categories

SATISH NS | PRESIDENT, HAIER APPLIANCES INDIA

SHORT TAKES

Foreign investors infuse ₹3,202 cr

New Delhi: After three months of selling spree, foreign investors have turned net buyers in the first week of January by infusing ₹3,202 crore in Indian equities, as correction in markets provided them good buying opportunity. Going forward, FPIs flows will remain volatile on the expectation of the US Fed rate hike, rising concerns over the Omicron variant and elevated inflation levels, experts said. The latest inflow came after witnessing a net outflow of ₹38,521 crore during October-December 2021. Before that, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) had made a net investment of ₹13,154 crore in September last year. According to data available with the depositories, FPIs have infused a net sum of ₹3,202 crore in the Indian equities during January 3-7.

Discoms' dues to gencos rise 4.4%

New Delhi: Total outstanding dues owed by electricity distribution companies (discoms) to power producers rose 4.4 per cent year-on-year to ₹1,21,030 crore in January 2022. Discoms owed a total of ₹1,15,904 crore to power generation firms in January 2021, according to portal PRAAPTI. On a sequential basis also, total dues in January increased from ₹1,15,462 crore in December 2021. In January 2022, the total overdue amount, which was not cleared even after 45 days of grace period offered by generators, stood at ₹1,01,357 crore as against ₹99,650 crore in the same month a year ago. The overdue amount stood at ₹99,981 crore. The proportion of central PSU gencos in the overdue was 22.43 per cent.

BSE SME m-cap breaches ₹50K cr

Mumbai: The market capitalisation of companies listed on the Bombay Stock Exchange's small and medium enterprise (SME) platform touched the ₹50,000 crore mark for the first time. At present, over 350 companies are listed on the BSE SME platform. Friday's closing, the total market valuation of these firms stood at ₹50,538 crore. "It is truly a memorable moment in our history and one we are very proud of. Small and medium enterprises are the backbone of the Indian economy and the rapid growth in scale we are observing currently is a bright indication of progress of our great nation," said Ajay Thakur, Head - BSE SME and Startups. The BSE has interacted with over 36,000 SME promoters to make them understand the benefits of listing and the results of all these efforts are evident in terms of the market cap milestone.

ONGOING DISPUTE

Amazon challenges CCI's suspension of Future Group deal

The filings at NCLAT are the latest in the bitter legal dispute which has embroiled Amazon, Future and Reliance over what is seen as a battle for retail supremacy in India's booming consumer market



AMAZON HAS LONG ARGUED THAT FUTURE VIOLATED THE TERMS OF ITS 2019 DEAL IN DECIDING TO SELL RETAIL ASSETS TO RELIANCE

THE US COMPANY'S POSITION HAS SO FAR BEEN BACKED BY THE SINGAPORE ARBITRATOR AND INDIAN COURTS. FUTURE DENIES ANY WRONGDOING

CCI SUSPENDED THAT DEAL'S APPROVAL, SAYING AMAZON SUPPRESSED INFORMATION WHILE SEEKING CLEARANCES FOR THE DEAL

REUTERS

New Delhi, Jan 9: Amazon.com Inc has filed fresh legal challenges in its long-running dispute with Indian retailer Future Group after the national antitrust agency suspended a 2019 deal between the two sides, leading to a halt in their arbitration, four sources told Reuters Sunday.

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) last month suspended its approval of Amazon's 2019 deal with Future, denting the US e-commerce giant's attempts to block the sale of Future's retail assets to Indian market leader Reliance Industries. The suspension jolted Amazon as subsequently a New Delhi court halted the arbitration proceedings between the two sides.

Late Saturday night, Amazon filed an appeal against the CCI suspension decision at India's National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT), two of the sources said.

Separately, two other sources said, Amazon also filed a challenge in the Supreme Court against the Delhi court decision in which judges last week said Future-Amazon arbitration proceedings must remain on hold until Feb. 1 in light of the antitrust suspension of the deal.

Reliance, run by one of India's richest men Mukesh Ambani, wants

to expand its footprint by acquiring debt-laden Future, but Amazon has told India's antitrust body it believes Reliance's consolidated position will further restrict competition in the Indian retail market.

Amazon has long argued that Future violated the terms of its 2019 deal in deciding to sell retail assets to Reliance. The US company's position has so far been backed by the Singapore arbitrator and Indian courts. Future denies any wrongdoing.

But after the CCI suspended that deal's approval, saying Amazon suppressed information while seeking clearances for the deal, Future has argued Amazon no longer has any legal basis to pursue the dispute. Both of Amazon's appeals, to the Indian tribunal and Supreme Court, are likely to be heard in coming days, two of the sources said.

RIL buys NY's Mandarin Oriental

THIS IS THE SECOND ACQUISITION OF AN ICONIC HOTEL BY RELIANCE IN LESS THAN A YEAR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 9: Indian conglomerate Reliance Industries Ltd is paying nearly \$100 million for a controlling stake in Mandarin Oriental New York, a five-star hotel in midtown Manhattan, through the purchase of its Cayman Islands-based parent.

Reliance said in a stock exchange filing Saturday its industrial investments subsidiary will acquire Cayman Islands-based Columbus Centre Corp for an equity value of approximately \$98.15 million.

The company said the acquisition of Columbus Centre Corp (Cayman), an indirect owner of a 73.37 per cent stake in Mandarin Oriental New York, by Reliance Industrial Investments and Holdings Ltd would add to its consumer and hospitality activities.

The filing added that in the event other owners of the hotel elect to



participate in the transaction, its subsidiary would acquire the remaining 26.63 per cent stake, based on the same valuation used for the acquisition of the indirect 73.37 per cent stake. The latest marquee acquisition for the oil-to-telecom and retail conglomerate marks its pivot

toward consumer offerings. Flush with ₹2.6 lakh crore in cash, Ambani is helming a transformation as he seeks to build the digital and retail business into equal-sized pillars for Reliance, paring dependence on profits from its traditional oil refining business.

Over the past five years, Reliance has announced \$5.7 billion in acquisitions with 45 per cent in TMT and 23.6 per cent in new energy.

Mandarin Oriental New York has global recognition and has won several influential awards, including AAA Five Diamond Hotel, Forbes Five Star Hotel, and Forbes Five Star Spa, among others. It had revenues of \$115 million in 2018, \$113 million in 2019 and \$15 million in 2020, according to the Reliance filing.

The closing of the transaction is anticipated to occur by the end of March 2022 and is subject to certain customary regulatory and other approvals and the satisfaction of certain other conditions.

Although the Mandarin Oriental reopened April 1 last year, it's been staggered like other leading hotels by the lack of high-spending visitors and business travellers from abroad.

OMICRON EFFECT

IndiGo to cancel around 20% flights

New Delhi: IndiGo Sunday said it will cancel around 20 per cent of its flights because of the surge in Covid cases driven by the Omicron variant and waive change fees till March 31 in response to customer needs. Change fee is paid by a passenger to switch to a different flight date. In a press release, the airline stated that owing to the increasing number of infections, a large number of IndiGo customers are changing their travel plans. In response to customer needs, IndiGo is waiving change fees and is offering free changes for all new and existing bookings made up to January 31, for flights up to March 31, 2022, it mentioned. The budget carrier said with reduced demand it will also selectively withdraw some flights from service. We anticipate that around 20 per cent of our current scheduled operations will be withdrawn from service. Where possible, cancellation of flights will be done at least 72 hours in advance and customers will be moved to the next available flight and will also be able to change their travel through the use of Plan B (section) on our website, it noted.



FMCG firms see customers pantry loading

New Delhi: FMCG companies witnessed an increase in demand in the past two weeks as consumers stocked up in the wake of rise in Covid-19 cases across the country, and have ramped up supplies to their stockists to avoid supply shortage. Companies such as Parle Products, Dabur India and ITC, which are already facing inflationary pressures on inputs, are keeping extra stock of raw materials to avoid any disruptions in the supply chain due to the fresh wave of the pandemic, putting in use their learnings from the past two waves. In the last two weeks, "we have seen a 10-15 per cent increase in demand in the market. We understand there is a bit of pantry loading as customers do not want to venture out," Parle Products Senior Category Head Mayank Shah told PTI. Expressing similar views, Dabur India CEO Mohit Malhotra said the company has also ramped up supplies and increased pipeline inventory in anticipation of any disruptions due to the rapid spread of the Omicron variant. An ITC spokesperson said the company has been continuously taking stock of operations and monitoring market developments.



ANIL: Adani's vehicle for new energy biz

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 9: Billionaire Gautam Adani's logistics-to-energy conglomerate has set up a new subsidiary, Adani New Industries Ltd (ANIL) to undertake green hydrogen projects, generation of low carbon electricity and manufacture of wind turbines, solar modules and batteries as it looks to become the world's largest renewable energy company and produce the cheapest hydrogen.

Adani had in November last year stated that his group will invest \$70 billion in the new energy space of the next decade. And now the company has incorporated a wholly-owned subsidiary, ANIL, its flagship Adani Enterprises Ltd said in a regulatory filing.

ANIL will undertake business of developing and operating projects for the synthesis of low carbon fuels and chemicals, generation of low carbon electricity and the manufacture of key components material for projects including generation of green hydrogen, related downstream products, electricity

GREEN ENERGY PUSH

Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL), the world's largest solar power developer, is targeting 45 gigawatts of renewable energy capacity by 2030

Adani Transmission Ltd (ATL), India's largest private sector power transmission and retail distribution company, is looking to increase the share of renewable power procurement from the current 3% to 30% by FY23

generation, manufacture of wind turbines, it said.

ANIL will also manufacture solar modules, batteries, electrolyzers, associated upstream manufacturing as well as ancillary industries and undertake all such activities associated therewith in this regard, it added.

Adani Enterprises in the regulatory filing said, ANIL will commence its business operations in due course. At COP 26 in Glasgow, Prime Minister

Narendra Modi announced 2070 as India's target year to reach net-zero carbon emissions.

India also announced a slew of other, more ambitious, climate targets for 2030 increasing the share of renewables in the country's energy mix to 50 per cent; expanding installed capacity of non-fossil energy from 450 to 500 GW; and reducing the carbon intensity of the economy by 45 per cent, as opposed to the previous goal of 33-35 per cent.

STPI FY22 exports seen at over ₹5L cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 9: The surge in Covid cases driven by the fast-spreading Omicron variant is not expected to disrupt the performance of units registered under the STPI scheme with proven remote working protocols already in place, according to a top official.

"The value of software exports from the Software Technology Parks of India units is expected to be at over ₹5 lakh crore during FY22, almost similar levels or a tad higher than the previous year," Arvind Kumar, Director General of STPI said.

The safety protocols activated during the previous waves of Covid have resulted in the adoption of an effective remote working model, and the digital nature of work has enabled STPI units to maintain continuity of services without

We will not fall short of the levels achieved in FY21, given that remote working model has matured and is proven. All the enabling provisions for work from home are already in place, and online approval procedure is ongoing

ARVIND KUMAR | DIRECTOR GENERAL, STPI

disruption. The value of software exports from units registered under the STPI scheme is expected to be a little over ₹5 lakh crore during FY22, against nearly ₹4.96 lakh crore in FY21, Kumar said.

Hence, the rising cases of Omicron in the country are not expected to disrupt the performance or business of these software units, he added. As many as 4,689 units are registered under the STPI scheme.



As per the data, 29.54 crore Jan Dhan accounts were held in rural and semi-urban bank branches. Nearly 24.61 crore account holders were women as of December 29, 2021. As per the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) guideline, there is no requirement of maintaining minimum balance in Basic Savings Bank Deposit (BSBD) accounts, including Jan Dhan accounts.

Depending upon transactions carried out by a Jan Dhan account holder, the balance in any Jan Dhan accounts can vary on a day-to-day basis, and may even become zero on a particular day.

As of December 8, 2021, the total number of zero balance accounts was 3.65 crore, which constituted about 8.3 per cent of the total Jan Dhan accounts, the government had informed Parliament last month.

Objectives of the government's flagship scheme include ensuring access to financial products and services at an affordable cost.

Everything to know about NCB under Motor Insurance

THE NCB DISCOUNT IS GRANTED AS PER SLABS; IT STARTS FROM 20% FOR THE FIRST CLAIM-FREE YEAR AND GRADUALLY GOES TO 25%, 35%, 45%, AND 50% FOR SECOND, THIRD, FOURTH, AND FIFTH CONSECUTIVE CLAIM-FREE YEARS, RESPECTIVELY. THE DISCOUNT IS CAPPED AT 50%

A comprehensive motor insurance is an excellent tool to ensure the safety of your vehicle and it also provides us coverage against third party liability which may arise due to our vehicle. No claim bonus (NCB) is an important element in motor insurance that can help reduce your motor insurance premium at the time of renewal. Your insurer grants NCB to you for each claim-free year. Let's understand more about NCB and its important features.

Applicable only to Own Damage (OD) premium
NCB is applied only on OD pre-

mium and not on the third-party (TP) premium. To give you an example, suppose the entire premium is ₹3,000 and say 20% of this is TP premium which is ₹600. The NCB discount will apply to the OD premium of ₹2,400.

NCB is granted to the driver
NCB is a reward for your good driving behavior. This means you can easily transfer your NCB when you change your vehicle or move to a new insurer. Also, you can keep your NCB intact for a longer period by avoiding raising a claim for some minor damage. It is smart to do a cost vs benefit analysis be-

fore filing a claim.

NCB transfer procedure
For offline NCB transfer procedure, you can reach out to your insurer, request them for the transfer, and submit required documents, the insurer will release your NCB certificate. You have to submit the certificate to the new insurer and they will transfer the NCB. If you are purchasing the cover online, in that case you just have to inform the new insurer about the correct NCB, previous policy number, and name of the previous insurer. The new insurer will transfer the NCB.

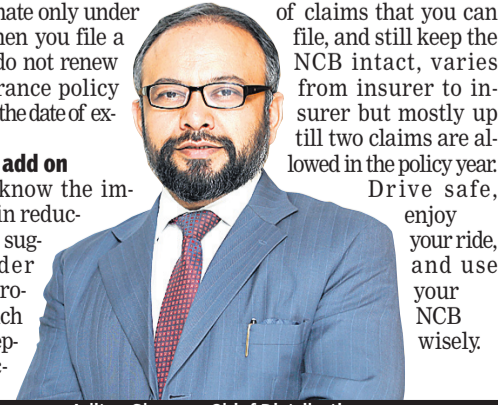
Another interesting point is that the NCB certificate is valid for 3 years.

How to transfer NCB to a new car?
The important thing to note while transferring NCB to a new car is that you cannot avail the discount till the time you are the owner of the older car. You can sell your old car, retain the NCB and transfer it to your new car. An alternative scenario is that you might not want to part away with your old car, in that case, you can transfer the ownership of the older vehicle to your family member.

NCB termination
NCB will terminate only under two scenarios: When you file a claim and if you do not renew your motor insurance policy within 90 days from the date of expiry.

NCB protection add on
Now that you know the importance of NCB in reducing the premium, I suggest you consider buying an NCB protection add on which will help you in keeping your NCB active even if

you file a claim. The number of claims that you can file, and still keep the NCB intact, varies from insurer to insurer but mostly up to two claims are allowed in the policy year. Drive safe, enjoy your ride, and use your NCB wisely.



Aditya Sharma, Chief Distribution Officer - Retail Sales, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance

INDIANS WIN DOUBLES TITLE AT ADELAIDE EVENT PARTNERING FOR THE 1ST TIME

Ram, Rohan strike magic



Rohan Bopanna (left) and Ramkumar Ramanathan pose with the trophy after their win Sunday at Adelaide

PHOTO: @BOPANNA TWITTER

AGENCIES

Adelaide, Jan 9: Teaming up for the first time on the ATP Tour, India's Rohan Bopanna and Ramkumar Ramanathan won the doubles title at the Adelaide International tennis tournament with a hard-fought 7-6 (8-6), 6-1 win over top seeds Ivan Dodig and Marcelo Melo here Sunday. Bopanna's excellent service returns at crucial times and Ramkumar's all-round game tilted the match in their favour.

In the 81-minute contest, the Indians saved all the four breakpoints they faced and broke their rivals twice.

It was Bopanna's 20th ATP dou-

bles title and first for Ramkumar, who was playing only in his second summit clash at this level, having ended a runner-up at the Hall of Fame Tennis Championships in 2018.

"When Ramkumar is serving by your side, you can finish the point early, so that was an advantage," said Bopanna.

Bopanna was asked how different it was playing with Ramkumar than the left-handed Divij Sharan. "With Divij, we had to create a point, ensure that first volley opportunity is taken while with Ram, the point can be finished early," Bopanna said. Bopanna and Ramkumar will split USD 18,700 as prize money and earned 250 ranking points each.

BARTY TRIUMPHS

Melbourne: Top ranked Ash Barty has won her second Adelaide International title in three years with a 6-3, 6-2 victory over Elena Rybakina here Sunday. The win improved Barty's record against top-20 rivals to 17-1 since the beginning of 2021. Barty also beat Coco Gauff, 2020 Australian Open champion Sofien Kenin and 2020 French Open winner Iga Swiatek en route to her 14th WTA tournament win. Barty will now play the Sydney Tennis Classic next week before the Australian Open begins January 17.

After saving an early breakpoint, Bopanna and Ramkumar upped their game. Bopanna then saved

another breakpoint and converted the deciding deuce point to make it 4-4. It went with serves till 6-6. However, a crucial return on Melo's serve by Bopanna helped them to win the set.

It was one-way traffic in the second set with the Indians dominating all through.

"It's amazing feeling to win my first ATP Title with Bopsy (Bopanna). A great week ended on a high note, always lived for these moments. Thankful to almighty God for all his blessings," Ramkumar said after the match. "It was a great tournament and we didn't lose even one service game all week. That I feel is a commendable achievement," he added.

DJOKOVIC GETS READY FOR GAME ON DIFFERENT COURT

Player's lawyers argue that he meets all the criteria set by the Australian government

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Melbourne, Jan 9: World No.1 Novak Djokovic readied his legal guns Sunday for a battle to stay here and defend his Australian Open title. He argued he has the all-clear because of a positive coronavirus test in December. Djokovic's fight to overturn the shock cancellation of his visa and his ensuing detention in a notorious Melbourne immigration facility will culminate in a highly publicised online hearing in federal court Monday.

The vaccine-sceptic Serbian star awaited the showdown holed up in the former Park Hotel, a five-storey facility that holds about 32 migrants trapped in Australia's hardline immigration system -- some for years. Nobody is allowed in or out except staff.

More than 100 protesters, many of them migrant rights activists, gathered in a park opposite the hotel. "Free, free, the refugees," the crowd chanted as dozens of police stood by.

Large banners were sprawled on the ground, reading: 'Justice for refugees', and 'We send love to

Rafa warms up

MELBOURNE: Spanish superstar Rafael Nadal's Australian Open preparations remain on track after he beat American Maxime Cressy 7-6 (8-6), 6-3 in the final of the Melbourne Summer Set tennis tournament here Sunday. He was not fluent and was pushed hard by the American qualifier, but Nadal had too much experience for the 24-year-old serve-volleyer. It was Nadal's 89th title on the ATP tour. Nadal will be aiming to break the record for most Grand Slam singles titles at this month's Australian Open. He is currently tied on 20 titles with Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic.

you every day'. Some men held inside the hotel could be seen watching through the detention centre windows.

With eight days to go before the January 17 start of the Australian Open, any delay could dash the 34-year-old Djokovic's hopes of winning his 10th crown here, and a record 21st Grand Slam title.

In an order released to the pub-

lic Sunday, Judge Anthony Kelly said the case will go ahead as scheduled at 10.00am Monday, refusing a government request to adjourn until Wednesday.

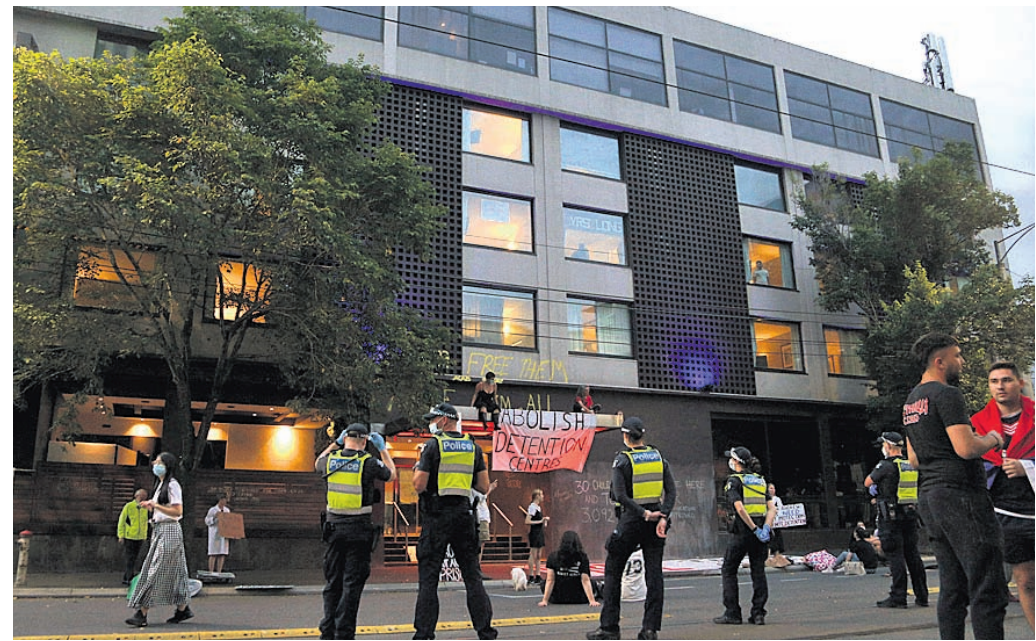
Djokovic's lawyers submitted a 35-page document Saturday arguing his visa was wrongly cancelled and should be reinstated, allowing him to compete.

The team argued that Djokovic's positive PCR test December 16, 2021 means he meets the criteria for a vaccine exemption under the guidance of Australia's own immunisation advisory body.

Tennis Australia cleared him for an exemption to play in the tournament, after his application was approved by two independent medical panels, his lawyers said.

Australia's government, however, insists a recent coronavirus infection only counts as an exemption for residents, not for foreign nationals trying to enter the country.

Despite Djokovic's claim of a positive test December 16, pictures show he attended a gathering on the same day, when the Serbian national postal service launched a series of stamps in his honour.



Police guard the house in Melbourne where Novak Djokovic is under detention

NEWS IN BRIEF

Latham ton puts Kiwis in command

Christchurch: New Zealand have promised to bounce back quickly from their first Test loss to Bangladesh. Captain Tom Latham (186 batting, 278b, 28x4) redeemed the pledge with a commanding unbeaten century Sunday, the first day of the second Test being played here. Giving him company was Devon Conway (99 batting, 148b, 10x4, 1x6) as the hosts cruised to 349 for one at stumps. After being put in by the visitors, New Zealand were off to a good start as Latham and Will Young (54, 114b, 5x4) put on 148 runs for the opening stand. Then Latham and Conway consolidated the position with their unbroken partnership of 201 runs so far.

BCCI may shift IPL overseas again

New Delhi: Following a sudden spurt in Covid-19 cases in India yet again, sources indicated Sunday that IPL 2022, scheduled to take place in April, might move out of India once again. A BCCI official said Sunday that the board is prioritising holding the tournament in India but the decision will be dependent on what the state governments decide. He informed that BCCI is monitoring the Covid-19 situation closely and no decision has been taken as of now with regards to venues for the tournament. "BCCI is exploring all options which include overseas IPL as well. But the focus is to host the IPL in India for sure. As of now the priority is the auction, and the board will soon take a call," the official said.

Praneeth pulls out

New Delhi: Top Indian shuttler and 2019 World Championships bronze medallist, B Sai Praneeth pulled out of the Indian Open badminton tournament after testing positive for Covid-19. "Yes, I have tested positive for Covid-19 and am isolating at home," Praneeth said. "I will test again after seven days and then take a call on my training. This is an important year and I want to get fit and back on court as quickly as possible," Praneeth added. Earlier the entire England contingent pulled out as two of their shuttlers tested positive. AGENCIES

TAILENDERS SAVE ENGLAND

Thrilling draw enables visitors salvage some lost pride in Test series

AGENCIES

Sydney, Jan 9: England's tailenders resisted Australia's bowlers in fading light Sunday to clinch a draw on a dramatic final day of the fourth Test at the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) here. Jack Leach, Stuart Broad and Jimmy Anderson batted out the final 10 overs under immense pressure, after Pat Cummins and Scott Boland took three quick wickets in the last session.

Leach was dismissed by Steve Smith but Anderson (0 n o, 6b) and Broad (8 n o, 35b) hung in with grit and determination. At stumps, England finished 270 for nine, their best result of the series so far. Australia lead the five-match series 3-0.

"It was indeed a delightful to see the way our batters fought hard. It certainly restores a lot of pride in your abilities," said England skipper Joe Root after the game.

With the final hour approaching, Cummins (2/80) removed Jos Buttler (11) and Mark Wood (0) in the space of three balls to turn the Test on its head after it was looking increasingly likely that England would earn a draw.

Boland (3/30) then continued his incredible start to Test cricket



Job done: James Anderson (left) Stuart Broad's faces have a look of relief as they walk back to the pavilion

by having first innings centurion Jonny Bairstow (41, 105b, 3x4) caught at bat-pad by Marnus Labuschagne.

Earlier in the session, Stokes

(60, 123b, 10x4, 1x6) held the England middle-order together. He had a side sprain, but fought hard. But Lyon eventually made the vital breakthrough as he had Stokes in

Injured Buttler to return home

Sydney: England's Jos Buttler has a broken finger and will be returning home to end a difficult Ashes tour for the 57-Test capped wicketkeeper-batsman. The England team management said "Buttler has a fractured left index finger" and he will return home Monday for further assessment and treatment. "It's quite a serious injury and for him to be able to front up and put in as he did from the moment he took that knock shows how much he cares," said skipper Joe Root after game.

two minds as to whether play at the ball or leave it. In the end Stokes did neither and guided a simple chance to Smith at slip. It was the ninth time that Lyon has taken Stokes' wicket, including twice in this match.

Needing to bat out the day to draw the Test after being set an improbable 388 to win, the tourists lost a very defensive-minded Hameed (9) and Malan (4) in the morning session, but Zak Crawley (77, 100b, 13x4) stood tall.

BRIEF SCORES: Australia 416 for 8 decl and 265 for 6 decl; England 294 and 270 for 9 (Zak Crawley 77, Ben Stokes 60, Scott Boland 3/30, Nathan Lyon 2/28). Match drawn.

Kohli hits nets as India eye series win

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cape Town, Jan 9: India Test captain Virat Kohli hit the nets Sunday and if his cover and off drives were any indication, he could return for the decisive third match against South Africa after missing the second game due to a back spasm. The Indian team began training for the third and final Test here hoping to recover from the defeat in Johannesburg and claim their maiden series win in the Rainbow Nation.

"We are here at the picturesque Cape Town. #TeamIndia begin preparations for the 3rd Test," the BCCI tweeted along with a picture of the Indian camp after the visiting players hit the ground running at the magnificent Newlands Stadium. The third Test is scheduled to be played here from January 11-15.

If Kohli is declared match fit, Hanuma Vihari will make way for the Indian talisman. "It's GO time here in Cape Town. #TeamIndia all set and prepping for the series decider," the BCCI wrote in another tweet alongside a host of pictures including Kohli batting at the nets.

India started the series on a rousing note, winning the opener at Centurion by 113 runs before succumbing to a seven-wicket defeat in



Indian Test skipper Virat Kohli at the nets Sunday. Photo courtesy: BCCI

the second Test at Johannesburg.

Meanwhile fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah is glad to be back at Newlands as one of India's premier fast bowlers, four years after making his Test debut at the same venue. Bumrah will have to play a pivotal role with the ball if India are to win their first series in South Africa.

"Cape Town, January 2018 - is where it all began for me in Test cricket. Four years on, I've grown as a player and a person and to return to this ground brings back special memories," Bumrah tweeted after the team's first training session at the venue.

Hard-fought victory

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Vasco, Jan 9: Alvaro Vazquez's first half strike proved to be decisive as Kerala Blasters FC (KBFC) ended Hyderabad FC's (HFC) unbeaten run with a 1-0 win here Sunday. The victory helped KBFC jump to the top of the points table in ISL.

The Blasters stretched their unbeaten streak to nine games and moved to the top owing to a better goal difference than Mumbai City FC. Both teams are on 17 points from 10 games. HFC are third with 16 points from 10 matches.

Hyderabad had a chance to take the lead early on when Edu Garcia's free-kick was deflected onto the crossbar by Prabhukhan Gill after the ball was curled expertly over the wall. Kattimani pulled off a

brilliant save in the 24th minute to deny Jorge Diaz as Kerala kept knocking on the door.

As the match progressed, both teams tried to carve open a clear-cut chance before Vazquez helped the yellow shirts nose ahead. A long throw-in was met by Sahal Abdul Samad who flicked it behind in the danger area where Vazquez struck a sweet volley to beat the HFC keeper all ends up. HFC came close through Bartholomew Ogbeche on the cusp of half time but the Nigerian shot wide.

In the second period, Hyderabad tried to up the ante but failed to muster any real opportunity in front of goal barring one where Kerala skipper Jessel Carneiro kept his side in the lead with a goalline clearance.

SHUTTLE CONFIDENT OF GOOD SHOW AT INDIAN OPEN

Sen targets maiden title

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 9: World Championships bronze medallist Lakshya Sen has said he will look to build on his rich vein of form and return with a maiden title when he begins the new season with a debut appearance at the India Open Super 500 here Tuesday.

The 20-year-old from Almora had a good outing in the last season as he reached the final of Dutch Open, made it to the semifinals at Hylo, and then entered the knockout stage of the World Tour Finals on debut. However, the icing on the cake was his bronze at the World Championships, which helped him to emulate his mentor



This year there are a number of important events. My aim is to remain fit and peak at the right time
LAKSHYA SEN

Prakash Padukone and compatriot B Sai Praneeth.

"This is the first time I will be playing the India Open as the last two editions were cancelled due to the pandemic. So I am looking forward to making the most of this opportunity and win the title," Sen said Sunday. "I had a 10-day break

after the World Championships and started training from January 1. I had some niggles but now I am back to full fitness," Sen added.

Sen will open his campaign against Egypt's Adham Hatem Elgamal and a win will pit him against Sweden's Felix Burestedt in the next round. "I have a good draw. I had trained with Felix in Dubai. I will take one match at a time and the way I am playing, I am confident of winning the tournament," Sen asserted.

Sohini, Kabir reign supreme

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 9: Kabir Hans bagged the double crown while Sohini Mohanty emerged champion in the under-14 girls' and women's category of the Utkal Open tennis tournament which ended Sunday here. In the men's singles final Kabir defeated Kumar Anurag Saran 6-0, 6-3. Then in the doubles final, Kabir and Aditya Satpathy trounced Saran and Avilash Mishra 6-2, 6-0.

In the under-14 girls' singles summit clash, Sohini defeated Aahan 6-2, 6-3. A couple of hours later, Sohini, in the women's singles final, trounced M Diksha Rout 6-4, 6-2 to make a nice start to the 2022 season.