



## MIRROR OF LIFE

Actor Payal Ghosh says she identifies herself with her character in the upcoming film 'New York to Haridwar'

LEISURE P2



## HOSTAGES FREED

Four hostages were safe and their captor was killed ending an hours-long standoff at a Texas synagogue

INTERNATIONAL P10



## AUSTRALIA WIN ASHES

Australia completed a dominant 4-0 Ashes series victory over England Sunday winning the fifth day-night Test by 146 runs

SPORTS P12

## CBI ARRESTS GAIL DIRECTOR

**NEW DELHI:** A day after conducting searches, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested Gas Authority of India Ltd (GAIL) Director (Marketing) ES Ranganathan in connection with an alleged corruption case, officials said. The CBI recovered ₹1.30 crore in cash Saturday after conducting searches on the premises of the GAIL director. Sources said valuables in the form of gold and silver have also been recovered from the premises of ES Ranganathan. The searches were conducted after the federal probe agency filed an FIR against ES Ranganathan and others on allegations of corruption. The CBI has arrested six persons so far in this case.



## AVIATION TURBINE FUEL PRICE HIKED

**NEW DELHI:** Jet fuel or ATF price Sunday was hiked by 4.2 per cent - the second increase in rates this month warranted by firming international oil prices, but petrol and diesel prices remained unchanged for the 72nd day in a row. Aviation turbine fuel (ATF) price was hiked by ₹3,232.87 per kilolitre, or 4.25 per cent, to ₹79,294.91 per kl in the national capital, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers. This is the second increase in rates this month. Rates were hiked by ₹2,039.63 per kl, or 2.75 per cent, to ₹76,062.04 per kl January 1. These increases in rates came on the back of two rounds of price cuts seen in December that reflected a drop in international oil prices.

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# 24K kids lost parents in state

Over 1.47 lakh children lost their parents due to COVID and other reasons since April 2020, and most of them are from Odisha: NCPCR to SC



uploaded up to January 11 showed the status of children in need of care and protection included orphans (10,094), lost either parent (1,36,910) and abandoned (488) taking the total to 1,47,492.

In the gender-wise break-up, the commission said, out of the 1,47,492 children, there are 76,508 boys, 70,990 girls and four transgender. It said that the maximum number of children are between the age group of eight to 13 years (59,010), followed by children in the age group of 14 to 15 years (22,763) and age group of 16 to 18 years (22,626) and four to seven years (26,080). The Commission also gave the current status of shelter of children and said that maximum of the children are with their single parent - 1,25,205, while 11,272 children are with family members, followed by 8,450 with guardians.

- The maximum number of children are between the age group of eight to 13 years (59,010), followed by children in the age group of 14 to 15 years (22,763) and age group of 16 to 18 years (22,626) and four to seven years (26,080)
- The maximum number of such children are from Odisha (24,405), followed by Maharashtra (19,623), Gujarat (14,770), Tamil Nadu (11,014), Uttar Pradesh (9,247), Andhra Pradesh (8,760), Madhya Pradesh (8,760), West Bengal (6,835) Delhi (6,629) and Rajasthan (6,827)

It said that 1,529 kids are in children's homes, 19 in open shelter homes, two in observation homes, 188 in orphanages, 66 in special

adoption agencies and 39 in hostels.

Giving the state-wise details of children who lost either their mother or father or both parents to COVID and other reasons since April 2020, the Commission said that the maximum number of such children are from Odisha (24,405), followed by Maharashtra (19,623), Gujarat (14,770), Tamil Nadu (11,014), Uttar Pradesh (9,247), Andhra Pradesh (8,760), Madhya Pradesh (8,760), West Bengal (6,835) Delhi (6,629) and Rajasthan (6,827).

The Commission said that it is taking steps to ensure that children should not be or are less adversely affected in the pandemic.

"In this context, NCPCR has been conducting virtual meetings with state commissions for protection of child rights of each States/UTs to know the updated status of preparedness in the event of a third wave of COVID pandemic, if at all such a wave comes", it said. The Commission informed the top court that it has been conducting zone-wise meetings with SCPCRs of each state/UT and a virtual meeting with North-East states is scheduled to be held on January 19.

"The discussions with the SCPCRs are being done to take an updated status of health care facilities, institutions for Children-schools/residential educational institutions, child care institutions, children in street situations and status of implementation of court's order", it said.

# Daily Covid cases cross 11K-mark; 3 more deaths

Odisha Sunday recorded 11,177 new COVID-19 cases for the first time since May 26 last year

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 16:** Odisha Sunday recorded 11,177 new COVID-19 cases, 321 more than the previous day, with the tally rising to 11,33,912, a Health department bulletin said.

The daily infections crossed the 11,000-mark for the first time since May 26 last year as 11,623 cases were registered on that day.

The death toll mounted to 8,481 as three more persons from Sundargarh, Ganjam and Nayagarh districts succumbed to the disease in the last 24 hours, the bulletin said.

Fifty-three other COVID patients have died due to comorbidities so far, it said.

At least 1,016 children were among the newly infected patients. The daily positivity ratio stood at 14.5 per cent as the fresh infections were detected from 77,120 sample tests, the health department said.

Khurda district, where Bhubaneswar is located, registered nearly one-third of the new cases with 3,424 infections, followed by 2,136 in Sundargarh, 829 in Cuttack and 379 in Sambalpur, it said.



## nCoV is here to stay: WHO

**MOSCOW:** The way the novel coronavirus pandemic is developing suggests that the virus will never go away completely, WHO Representative to Russia Melita Vujnovic said Sunday. The virus will circulate as an endemic disease, TASS news agency quoted Vujnovic as saying on the Soloviev Live YouTube channel. "Coronavirus is on its way to becoming an endemic disease. This means it won't go away. But we have to learn how to treat it and how to protect ourselves from it. Most importantly, we need to contain the outbreak of the infection now and reduce the number of those vulnerable to it. Otherwise, new variants will emerge in an unpredictable fashion", she said.

In Bhubaneswar, the number of containment zones rose from 186 to 194, Sunday.

**IRREGULAR by MANJUL**

I follow cricket very closely. It has improved my understanding of politics.

**WEATHER**

|          | BHUB   | CTK    |
|----------|--------|--------|
| TEMP MAX | 25.6°C | 26.2°C |
| TEMP MIN | 16.2°C | 15.0°C |
| Humidity | 78%    | 83%    |
| Rainfall | TRACE  | NIL    |

Forecast: Dry weather most likely

## BUDGET 2022

# TDS/TCS on crypto trading likely

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 16:** The government could consider in the upcoming Budget levying TDS/TCS on sale and purchase of cryptocurrencies above a certain threshold and such transactions should be brought within the ambit of specified transaction for the purpose of reporting to income tax authorities, Nangia Andersen LLP Tax Leader Aravind Srivatsan said. Also, a higher tax rate of 30 per cent should be levied on the income arising from the sale of cryptocurrency, similar to winnings from lottery, game shows, puzzle, etc, he said. Speaking to this news agency on what the Budget 2022-23, to be unveiled by the government February 1, could have in store for the crypto



industry in India, Srivatsan said currently, India has the highest number of crypto owners globally, at 10.07 crore and as per a report it is expected that the investment by Indians in cryptocurrency could touch \$241 million by 2030.

"A Bill was expected to be presented during Winter Session of Parliament to regulate cryptocurrencies. However, it was not introduced, and it is now expected that the government may take up this Bill in the Budget Session. If the gov-

ernment does not prohibit Indians from dealing in cryptocurrencies, we expect that the government could introduce a regressive tax regime for cryptocurrencies," he noted.

The 'Cryptocurrency and Regulation of Official Digital Currency Bill' is now expected to be introduced in the Budget session of Parliament beginning January 31.

Separately, the government is mulling changes in income tax laws to bring cryptocurrencies under the tax net, and some changes that could form part of the 2022-23 Budget. He said considering the size of the market, the amount involved, and the risk coupled with cryptocurrencies, certain changes may be brought in the taxation of cryptocurrencies like bringing them under the provisions of tax.



**COVID CURBS:** Less traffic movement on a road during full lockdown imposed by Tamil Nadu government to curb the spread of coronavirus near Central Railway Station in Chennai, Sunday

# HE'S OUT: DJOKOVIC LOSES VISA BATTLE

The unanimous ruling by a three-judge bench dealt a final blow to Djokovic's hopes of chasing a record 21st Grand Slam win at the Australian Open

REUTERS

**Melbourne, Jan 16:** Tennis superstar Novak Djokovic boarded a plane to leave Australia Sunday after the Federal Court upheld a government decision to cancel his visa on the grounds that his decision not to be vaccinated against COVID-19 posed a risk to the country. The unanimous ruling by a three-judge bench dealt a final blow to Djokovic's hopes of chasing a record

21st Grand Slam win at the Australian Open, after a roller-coaster ride.

The Djokovic boarded an Emirates flight bound from Melbourne to Dubai Sunday evening just hours after the ruling, a Reuters witness said. The flight was due to take off at 10:30 p.m. (11:30 GMT).

The flight capped a journey that began when Djokovic, the world's top men's player, was first detained by immigration authorities January 6, ordered released by a court January 10 and then detained Saturday again.

Djokovic said after the ruling he was extremely disappointed as it meant he could not take part in the tournament, which starts Monday. "I respect the Court's ruling and I will cooperate with the relevant authorities in relation to my



departure from the country," he said in a statement, and wished the tournament well.

Djokovic, 34, had appealed against Immigration Minister Alex Hawke's use of discretionary powers to can-

cel his visa. The minister had said Djokovic could be a threat to public order because his presence would encourage anti-vaccination sentiment amidst Australia's worst outbreak of the virus. Chief Justice James Allsop said the court ruling was based on the lawfulness and legality of the minister's decision in the context of the three grounds of appeal Djokovic's legal team lodged. "It is no part of the function of the court to decide upon the merits or wisdom of the decision," Allsop said, adding that the three judges were unanimous in their ruling. Full reasoning behind the ruling would be released in coming days, he said. But the player also had some support, especially in his native Serbia and from Serbians living in Australia. Serbian Prime Minister Ana Brnabic said Sunday, "I think that the court decision is scandalous. I am disappointed, I think it demonstrated how the rule of law is functioning or better to say not functioning in some other countries."

# CBSE TO CONDUCT BOARD EXAMS AMID COVID SURGE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Jan 16:** As exams across the country have been scrapped in view of the surging Covid-19 cases, the CBSE Board and the Union Ministry of Education are all set to conduct Term 2 of the Classes X and XII board examinations, the first phase of which were held in November-December, 2021 and the second phase is scheduled to be conducted in March-April.

The chances of the second term of the board examination getting cancelled this year are very slim, as health experts had earlier mentioned that the third wave is under control. However, students who decide to skip the exams will be graded on the basis of their first

term's test results. The duration of the second phase of exams will be of two hours and the questions will be subjective.

Dr Joseph Emmanuel, Academic Director of CBSE, said: "The sample question papers and the marking schemes for Term 2 examinations of Classes X and XII have been released on the website and the schools affiliated to CBSE Board have been alerted too."

Sanyam Bhardwaj, CBSE's controller of examinations, said: "If the situation gets worse, only then the second term of examinations will not be held. Marks obtained in the first phase will be considered final and based on them, the results will be prepared. But if such a situation does not arise and the second term is held successfully.

# leisure



## 'MY FAMILY TREATED ME WORSE THAN A DEATH ROW INMATE'

Britney Spears says her family treated her worse than a death row inmate during her conservatorship. The 40-year-old pop star has penned another open letter to her sister Jamie Lynn claiming the latter did nothing to help her in that period.

## TIM ALLEN BACK AS SCOTT CALVIN IN THE SANTA CLAUSE SERIES

The Santa Clause Christmas comedy franchise, which was a commercial and critical success when the first film was first released in 1994, is to be continued as a limited series on Disney Plus with Tim Allen returning to star as Scott Calvin, reports *Variety*.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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#### ARIES

Today will be a difficult day full of action. You may not agree with your friends about trifling matters, but you will love it. You will complete all work that has been pending, which will give you relief. Ganesha says it is an optimistic day.

#### TAURUS

You can expect a pleasant, comfortable day at the office, today, so says Ganesha. You will be carrying out your work cheerfully and effortlessly. You could, later in the evening, have a strong urge to go out for dinner with your family and friends. If that does happen, you're certain to go for an after dinner movie, or an ice cream treat.

#### GEMINI

You know where you are headed, and will redouble your efforts to reach your goals today. You are full of energy and enthusiasm, which helps you to achieve all your targets. You will receive unexpected gains owing to your hard work.

#### CANCER

Sentimentalism will be hinder your path of success. So, says Ganesha, give up too much sentimentalism. It can be quite a hazard in the future. You will win over people with the force of speech and polite approach.

#### LEO

You will be able to influence people with your co-operative and accommodating attitude today. You will have discussions on various topics with people who come into contact with you. You will also come into contact with people who share the same mental wavelength as you do, says Ganesha.

#### VIRGO

There will be dirt on your shoulder today, so dust it off, says Ganesha, because every time you fall you will get up stronger than before. Your logic and analytical skills will help you find the necessary precision to accomplish tasks at work.

#### LIBRA

Ganesha says that today you will get worried over petty matters and be tense. To get mental peace keep yourself occupied with religious or spiritual activity. Along with that if you go to some religious place you will gain mental peace, which will stay with you for a long time.

#### SCORPIO

You may be in a mood to build castles in the air today, says Ganesha. You may be caught up in a whirlpool of thoughts and nostalgia. However, you will soon realise that the time once gone, never comes back and so, you make up for the lost time by beginning the new chapter of your life from today itself.

#### SAGITTARIUS

You're caught in a whirlpool of emotions, predicts Ganesha. You may come across many ups and downs today. However, nothing seems to deter you from your determination and dedication towards work.

#### CAPRICORN

You are busy as a beaver. It is extremely difficult for you to think for yourself as you are all tied up by the demands of your work. You want to be creative, but again, the workload will not let you have that freedom, says Ganesha. You have learnt the art of time management. So, you have properly lined up your priorities and success is waiting for you.

#### AQUARIUS

You will hit the bull's eye, today. From the smallest to the biggest, all of your plans will turn into reality. Don't get disheartened if there are some obstacles on your path; you are fully armed to face the challenges and come out triumphant.

#### PISCES

For those looking for a promotion at the work-place, now is the time to ask for it. Freelancers could find interesting projects falling into their laps. Businesses are likely to see a surge in profits. No conflicts in personal life are indicated.

## New York to Haridwar turns a personal journey for Payal



**Mumbai:** Actress Payal Ghosh, who is set to play a girl suffering from depression in her upcoming film *New York to Haridwar*, has called the progression of her character in the film as a personal journey as she has been in a dark place mentally in her life at some point.

The film follows the story of a girl, who visits India from New York. How the events turn during her journey forms the crux of the story. Talking about her character, the actress says, "I

play a girl with mental blocks and depression in the upcoming movie *New York to Haridwar*. Depression is difficult and I have been through it myself. I understand the challenges completely and how difficult it gets to believe and start looking for what can go right rather than what can go wrong."

She adds, "We have started preparing for the film and it's a story unlike anything we have seen so far. I can't reveal much about it yet. My character travels from New York and her life changes as she comes to India in the film. It's like a personal journey."

### UTTAR PURUSH'S NATAKA PARIKRAMA-DAY 2

## Play Kabandha underlines the pain of vulnerable class

**Bhubaneswar:** City-based theatre troupe Uttar Purush Sunday presented the play *Kabandha* on the second evening of its annual drama festival *Nataka Parikrama-2022*.

Written by Dr Sarojkanta Mishra and directed by Chakradhar Patra, the symbolic drama was a reflection of the present state of affairs in the society. Director Patra conveyed a message that the society today boasts of a grand structure but it lacks a soul. The intrinsic pain and helplessness of the vulnerable class of the soci-



A scene from the play *Kabandha*

Jagannath, Devalendu Rakesh, Rupesh, Manoj, Ajit, Somnath, Tanmay, Sourav, Abhilipsa, Dipti, Alibha, Pratima and Chakradhar. Kailash Senapati scored the music while veteran artiste Banchhanidhi Patnaik took care of the makeup part.

The dignitaries who attended the evening included Dhirendranath Mallick, founder of Satabdira Kalakar, playwright Saroj Kanta Mishra, Uttar Purush vice-president Chittaranjan Swain. The programme was coordinated by Debadutta Pati.



## Ghai makes his heroines look gorgeous: Flora

look gorgeous, but also enacts scenes for his actors and this helps them hone their acting skills. "It makes our work very easy," she added.

Among the few projects that Flora has been a part of in the recent past, are Farhan Akhtar's *Inside Edge 2*, Nagesh Kukunoor's political drama web series *City of Dreams*, the festive movie *Maya* and a short film titled *Motherland*.

**Mumbai:** Flora Saini, who was last seen in movies such as *Stree*, *Dabangg 2* and *Begum Jaan*, is excited about being able to work with a master entertainer of the stature of Subhash Ghai for upcoming film *36 Farmhouse*.

Sharing her experience, Flora said: "It was like a wish coming true. Anyone who comes to Mumbai wants to work with legends and people whose films one has grown up watching. Subhash Ghai Sir is one of those names I have always wished I could work with."

Flora said Ghai, who is making his debut as a music composer in the film, not only makes his heroines

## Scream ends four-week reign of Spider-Man

The fifth instalment in the horror franchise, and the first in over a decade, grossed \$13.35 million Friday from 3,664 locations

With an opening weekend that should finally dethrone *Spider-Man: No Way Home* after the Marvel entry's four-week perch on top of the earnings totem pole, *Scream* is the new box-office No. 1. The fifth instalment in the horror franchise, and the first in over a decade, grossed \$13.35 million on Friday from 3,664 locations, reports



*Variety*. Paramount Pictures projects the horror film should rake in \$36 million over the four-day Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday weekend, more than enough to land at No. 1 for the

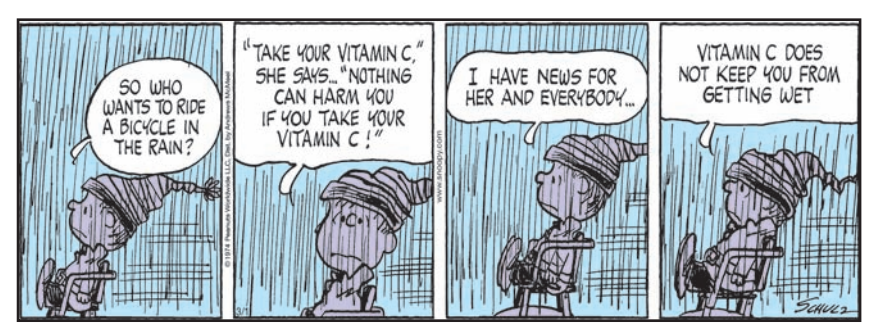
weekend. *Scream* is evidence that audiences will still roll out to theatres during the pandemic, especially films targeting a demographic of younger viewers.

Matt Bettinelli-Olpin and Tyler Gillett direct *Scream*, taking over the series from its founder Wes Craven, who helmed the four first entries before passing away in 2015, reports *Variety*. The film stars series regulars Neve Campbell, Courteney Cox and David Arquette as they are once again haunted by a serial killer in a Ghostface mask.

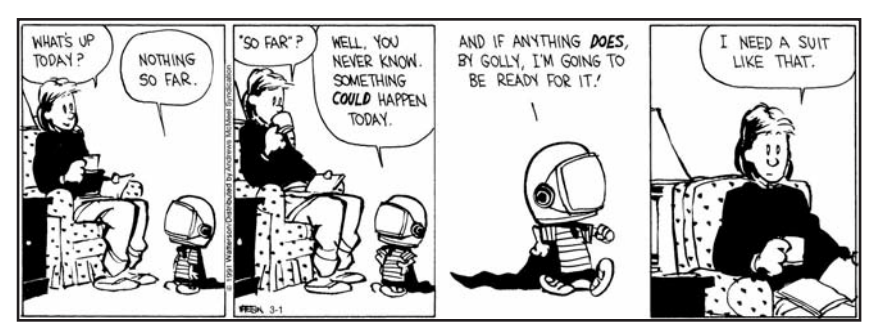
The killing spree extends to a group of high school students in the town of Woodsboro, California. Melissa Barrera, Jenna Ortega, Jack Quaid and Dylan Minnette also star in the slasher.



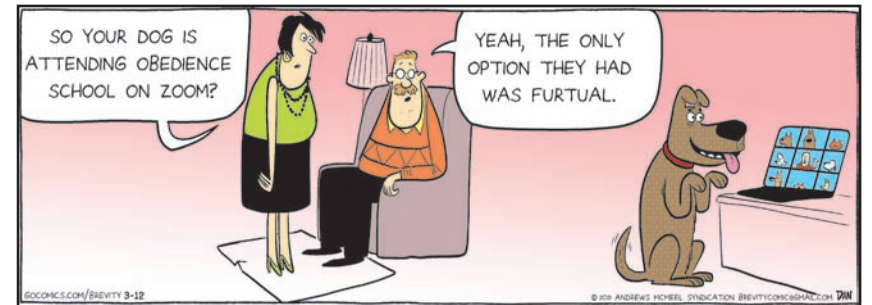
### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

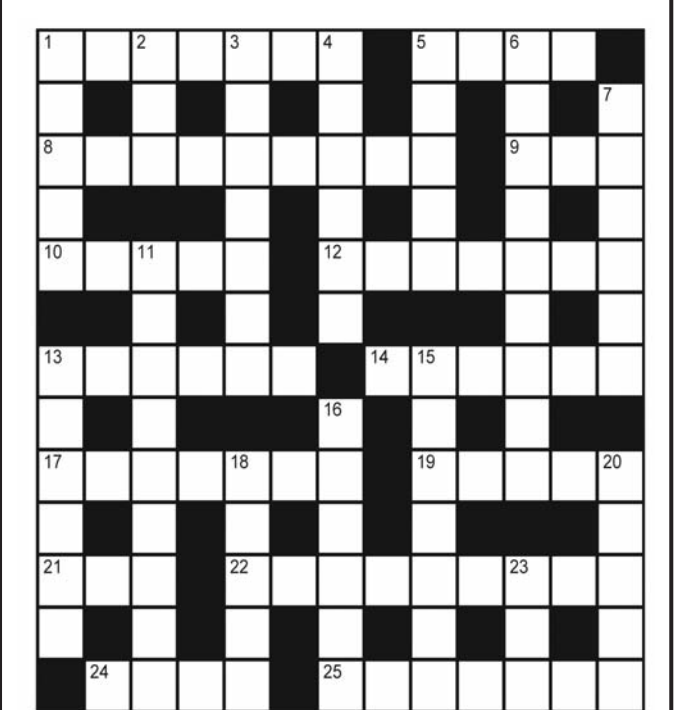


### BREVITY



### FUN post

### CROSSWORD



- Across
- 1 Picnic grill
  - 5 Crest
  - 8 Arranged, as figures
  - 9 Antelope ma'am
  - 10 Oversight
  - 12 Kind of desk (4-3)
  - 13 Eye membrane
  - 14 Gambol
  - 17 Venice transport
  - 19 Troubled
  - 21 Kimono sash
  - 22 Ursa Major
  - 24 Attention getter
  - 25 Fall back
  - 4 Buries
  - 5 Bicycle part
  - 6 Screen tests
  - 7 Dictator
  - 11 Become hoity-toity (3,2,4)
  - 13 Area
  - 15 Humorous
  - 16 Tease
  - 18 Celestial path
  - 20 Mountain lakes
  - 23 Bake shop buy
- Down
- 1 Suite spot?
  - 2 Baby protector
  - 3 Irish lass

### 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.

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
|   | 3 |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |
|   | 9 |   |   | 8 |   | 4 | 1 |  |
|   | 1 |   | 7 | 6 |   |   |   |  |
|   | 5 |   |   |   |   | 8 |   |  |
| 6 |   |   |   |   |   | 3 |   |  |
|   |   | 6 | 1 | 2 |   |   |   |  |
| 4 |   |   | 7 |   |   |   |   |  |
|   |   | 8 |   |   |   |   | 7 |  |
| 3 | 2 |   | 4 | 5 | 8 |   |   |  |

### SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B | R | A | M | B | L | E | T | H | R | O | W |
| U | S | L | D | O | U | I |   |   |   |   |   |
| M | U | S | T | A | N | G | T | A | N | K | S |
| P | E | C | I | D | E |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| S | I | T | K | A | N | G | A | R | O | O | S |
| B | G | Q | W | U |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| A | D | A | G | I | O | T | U | R | N | I | P |
| N | R | R | A | A |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| C | O | T | E | D | A | Z | U | R | P | U | P |
| I | I | A | T | U | A |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| E | A | S | E | L | L | O | U | V | R | E | S |
| N | T | I | E | M | S | S |   |   |   |   |   |
| T | A | S | K | S | A | U | S | T | E | R | E |

SUDOKU

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 7 | 5 |
| 7 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 6 |
| 5 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 8 | 1 | 2 |
| 1 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 9 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 3 |
| 3 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 8 | 9 |
| 9 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 8 | 7 | 1 | 6 | 4 |
| 6 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| 4 | 9 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 8 |
| 2 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 9 | 7 |

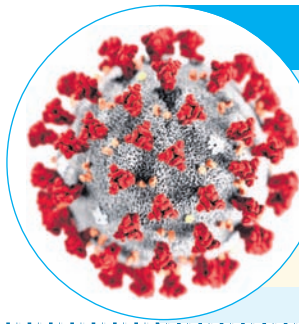
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



## FIREFIGHTING

Fire brigade personnel in action after an ambulance caught fire at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack, Sunday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

|        | INFECTED     | RECOVERED    | DEAD      |
|--------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| World  | 32,71,16,408 | 26,66,24,157 | 55,55,240 |
| India  | 3,71,22,164  | 3,50,85,721  | 4,86,066  |
| Odisha | 11,33,912    | 10,60,067    | 8,481     |

# 2 arrested over Press Chhak murder

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 16:** The twin city Commissionerate Police Sunday claimed to have arrested two persons and detained another in connection with the brutal murder of a youth following an altercation between two groups at Press Chhak under Saheed Nagar police limits here Saturday evening.

The arrested were identified as Satyaranjan Singh and Satya Parkash Panday, both of Bhadrak. "The accused will be produced before the court Monday. Multiple teams of the Commissionerate Police Sunday carried out raids at the possible hideouts of the accused, all of whom have already been identified and will be taken into custody soon," said a police official.

According to sources, a youth of Gadakana area was chitchatting with a girl in an SUV parked in front of a fast-food stall near a two-wheeler showroom at Press



A member of the forensic team at the spot

Chhak around 6pm when one of the accused peeped into the vehicle multiple times which did not go well with the youth.

"The youth confronted the accused. The youth called his friends—Niranjan Parida alias Chintu, Bishal Patra, Vivek Patra and Sritanu Mishra—of Gadakana for help. Soon a mountain was made out of a molehill with the accused stabbing Chintu and oth-

ers with a knife before fleeing the spot without any hindrance. Locals rushed a profusely bleeding Chintu and Bishal to a nearby private hospital where Chintu was declared dead on arrival," said an eye witness.

Police have been investigating the matter by registering a case (18/22) on the basis of a complaint lodged by the deceased's family.

The murder led to tremendous

public outrage with Gadakana locals staging a road blockade near Press Chhak demanding immediate arrest of the accused. The road blockade was, however, removed after police pacified the protestors by assuring them that the accused will be nabbed at the earliest.

Meanwhile, the aggrieved residents of Gadakana Sunday staged a protest before the vehicle showroom alleging the involvement of a lady employee and the owner of the showroom in the entire episode. Police personnel were deployed in the area to avoid any eventualities.

The forensic team of the state police also visited the crime spot for examination. Police have seized incriminating materials, including the blood-stained knives, from the spot.

Sources said Bishal, who remains to be critical, was undergoing treatment at the private hospital when the last report came in.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



# Former BJP legislator Laxman Soren joins BJD



AGENCIES

**Soren was inducted into CM Naveen Patnaik-led BJD in presence of party's Organisational Secretary Pranab Prakash Das.**

Laxman Soren was elected to the State Legislative Assembly on a BJP ticket from Bahalda Assembly Constituency in 2000. He joined the Congress and fought the Assembly election after being denied a ticket from the BJP in 2004. After losing the poll, he returned to the BJP in 2004.

However, the BJP did not give him chance to fight the elections further for which he left the party and joined the BJD, said an official.

# Infighting may hit BJD in Puri Sadar block

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Puri, Jan 16:** With the announcement of dates for the three-tier panchayat elections in the state, the major political parties—BJD, BJP and Congress—have started process for selection of their candidates for the Zilla Parishad zones and gram panchayats coming under Puri Sadar block here.

While election for the Zilla Parishad members would be fought with party symbols, the poll for the sarpanches, samiti members and ward members would be held without it. However, the political parties are all set to field their affiliated candidates for the posts of sarpanch, samiti member and ward member.

The ruling BJD had done extremely well in Puri Sadar block during the last panchayat elections. The party is also expecting

## THREE-TIER PANCHAYAT POLLS



ON THE OTHER HAND, A GROUP LED BY BIJU YUVA JANATA DAL VICE-PRESIDENT SHUBHASHIS KHUNTIA IS TOURING VARIOUS GRAM PANCHAYATS TO AUGMENT SUPPORT IN ITS FAVOUR

to repeat its performance in the block in the upcoming rural polls, sources said.

However, factionalism in the ruling party may affect its performance in the block in the panchayat elections, scheduled to be

held in five phases between February 16 and 24.

Former Puri Zilla Parishad chairman Dibakar Patra, a known loyalist of BJD district unit president Maheswar Mohanty, has started consultation with party workers

from various gram panchayats for selection of affiliated candidates for the posts of sarpanch, samiti member and ward member.

On the other hand, a group led by Biju Yuva Janata Dal vice-president Shubhashis Khuntia is touring various gram panchayats to select suitable candidates for the rural polls.

Both the groups are trying their best to influence BJD workers in their favour, sources said.

"The candidates for the upcoming rural polls will be selected under the guidance of BJD Puri district unit president Maheswar Mohanty. All our candidates will win the polls with people's blessings. Those who are creating factionalism in the party will get better reply," said Patra.

Khuntia, however, claimed that candidates having good public contact will come victorious in the elections.

However, the BJP is quite hopeful of taking advantage from the infighting in BJD. "We had lost at least two Zilla Parishad zones under Puri Sadar block with narrow margins in last panchayat elections. This time, we will take advantage from the factionalism in BJD," said BJP youth wing leader Jayanta Kumar Dash.

The Congress party, on the other hand, is facing a leadership crisis for the rural polls. The district unit president post of the party has been lying vacant since the death of incumbent Ajit Mangaraj.

The state leadership of the party is yet to hold any meeting with the district-level leaders for the panchayat elections, sources said. "The people of Puri Sadar block are quite dissatisfied with the BJD and BJP. But, the leadership crisis would affect our poll prospect," said Congress leader Rajesh Kumar Mishra.

## EXQUISITE CRAFTSMANSHIP



An artisan working on a huge headgear in Firingi Bazar area of Cuttack, Sunday. The headgear would be sent to the Achyutananda Peeth at Nemalo

# Sex racket busted in Cuttack; 3 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, Jan 16:** Markatnagar police Sunday claimed to have busted a sex racket running at a guest house here after arresting three men and rescuing three women in connection with the incident.

The identity of the arrested persons was yet to be revealed. The police also seized a car, a motorbike, a DVD player and other incriminating articles from the place.

The Markatnagar police were tipped of that a sex racket was running at a guest house right behind the Markatnagar police station.

Acting on the info, the police conducted a raid on three rooms of the guest house and made the arrests.

"We have arrested three men for their involvement in the sex racket. The guest house manager has also been detained for questioning. We have seized Rs 13,000 in cash, six mobile phones and other incriminating articles from the guest house," said a senior police official.

# BJP forms 7-member poll mgmt committee

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 16:** The state unit of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Sunday announced a seven-member election management committee for the upcoming three-tier panchayat polls in Odisha.

State BJP president Sameer Mohanty formed the committee to manage the party's discourse in the panchayat election in state.

The committee includes Jual Oram, Basanta Panda, Jay Narayan Mishra, Mohan Charan Majhi, Anita Subhadarshini, Golak Mohapatra and Shankar Parida.

According to sources, the saffron party had decided to reach out to the people with several issues over which it had launched state-wide agitation last year.

"Failure of the state government in providing 27 per cent reservation to OBCs, who constitute over 52 per cent of the state's population, will top the agenda. Increase in the upper age limit for entry into government jobs will have a bearing on a large number of unemployed youths in the state," said Mohanty.

The rural housing scam and large scale irregularities in paddy procurement after the introduction of the online token system are other issues that will be highlighted, he added.

"In every village, there are people in the permanent wait-



The committee includes Jual Oram, Basanta Panda, Jay Narayan Mishra, Mohan Charan Majhi, Anita Subhadarshini, Golak Mohapatra and Shankar Parida

list for getting housing assistance under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY). However, their wait continues for years as their share of benefits is going to the well-off people who are in connection with local BJD leaders," he alleged.

The party, meanwhile, lifted the suspension of all BJP workers and activists who faced disciplinary action during the 2017 panchayat elections and 2019 General Election. The suspension was lifted after the approval of party's state leadership.

# 5 of snatchers' gang nabbed

**Puri:** Kumbharpada police Sunday claimed to have arrested five members of a snatchers' gang in the city here and recovered 24 mobile phones from them. The accused have been identified as Rohan Kumar Dalei, Aryan Kumar Palei, Shubham Kumar Sahu, Damodar Tripathy and Mahaveer Behera. The accused have been produced in a local court, said City DSP Janardhan Padhi. According to police, some miscreants had snatched away a mobile phone from Sachikanta Mishra near Jhadeswari club a few days ago. Mishra had filed a complaint in this regard with police. The miscreants had also snatched away a phone from Ajay Ransingh near SCS College. The district police had constituted a special team to trace the miscreants. The police came to know about the snatchers' gang during investigation, Padhi said.

# Too much 'giloy' can do more harm than good: Study

When the first wave of Covid struck, know-it-all doctors and medical experts claimed that 'giloy' was an immunity booster that would help fight the virus.

Almost overnight, the sales of Giloy rocketed and people started taking it without any medical consultation.

Now two years later, a study recently published in Hepatology Communications, the official journal of the American Association for the Study of Liver Disease, has found that consumption of 'giloy' without prescription and monitoring can cause damage to organs such as the liver.

The study was conducted by Liver Research Club of India at 13 medical centres including King George's Medical University

(KGMU). Giloy, also known as 'Amrita' or 'Guduchi' in Hindi, is an herb that helps improve digestion and boost immunity. It has heart-shaped leaves that resemble betel leaves. All parts of the plant are used in Ayurvedic medicine. However, the stem is thought to have the most beneficial compounds.

The study was conducted on 43 patients—23 females and 20 males—who reported symptoms of jaundice. Clinical findings revealed that all patients were suffering from chronic

liver disease or liver failure.

Doctors also found that each of the patients had a history of taking a

concoction of giloy. Dr Ajay Kumar Patwa, associate professor of gas-

troenterology at KGMU, said, "We found that giloy was the main cause of liver issues in 67.4 per cent (29) patients as there was no other factor like excessive alcohol consumption, diabetes, thyroid, hypertension or any other etiological reason. The remaining patients consumed alcohol regularly and had comorbidities, hence they were not included among those in whom giloy was the main cause."

"Most of these patients had consumed the herbal drug without prescription or taken unapproved doses for an average 46 days. This generated common antinuclear antibodies which started attacking liver cells and induced acute hepatitis with autoimmune hepatitis-like features," said Prof Patwa.

■ Giloy, also known as 'Amrita' or 'Guduchi' in Hindi, is a herb that helps improve digestion and boost immunity

■ It has heart-shaped leaves that resemble betel leaves

■ All parts of the plant are used in Ayurvedic medicine

■ However, the stem is thought to have the most beneficial compounds

ARTISTS AT WORK



Students of Khallikote Art College draw murals near AG Square in Bhubaneswar as part of a beautification drive, Sunday

OP PHOTO

1ST SINCE OUTBREAK

# Capital closing in on 200 containment zone mark

The state Capital, in past 10 days, has witnessed a 261 per cent rise in daily Covid detections

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 16:** In a first, the state Capital's micro containment zones neared the 200-mark with the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) declaring about 194 locations as restricted zones, in a bid to control the spread of Covid-19.

The civic authority, Sunday, reported about 18 new micro containment zones in City. These included three in Satya Nagar, Palas Palli and Madhusudan Nagar from South-East Zone; seven in Nayapalli, Khandagiri, Pokhariput, Rajdhani Gas Lane, Kalinga Vihar, Ghatikia, Kalinga Studio Square from South-West Zone.

Similarly, eight containment zones were identified from the North Zone in Niladri Vihar, Mancheswar, Patia, Damana Square, Maitree Vihar and Jaydev Vihar. With this, the total containment zones in the state Capital shot to 194; out of which 70 remain in South-West, 72 in South-East and in 52 in North Zones.

With this development, Bhubaneswar became the first city in Odisha to have almost 200 containment zones within its purview since the outbreak of the virus.

Amidst this, the BMC has claimed to have achieved 100 per cent vaccination under its jurisdiction.



STATS SO FAR

BMC SUNDAY REPORTED 18 NEW MICRO CONTAINMENT ZONES IN CITY

THESE INCLUDE THREE FROM THE SOUTH-EAST ZONE, SEVEN FROM THE SOUTH-WEST ZONE, AND EIGHT FROM THE NORTH ZONE

OUT OF THE TOTAL 194 CONTAINMENT ZONES, 70 REMAIN IN SOUTH-WEST, 72 IN SOUTH-EAST AND IN 52 IN NORTH ZONES

It can be mentioned that the state Capital, in past 10 days, has witnessed 261 per cent rise in new Covid cases. As per the information provided by the BMC, the Temple City, which had only 341 cases until January 5, saw an alarming boom of Covid cases to 1,233 new cases Jan 15.

"Micro containment zones are helping us contain the spread of the virus without limiting the movement of those who are not affected by it. Even though Bhubaneswar has a floating population, the residents of the state Capital are largely the ones who are infected by it. We have also enhanced our testing for efficient detection and containment of the virus," a BMC official said.

Meanwhile, the civic body has also ramped up testing to keep track of the explosion in daily fresh cases. As per sources, while only 7,478 tests were conducted in Bhubaneswar January 6, the number had been raised to 10,533 January 15.

DHINKIA ROW

## NHRC moved over police excesses



The commission was also urged to direct the district administration to protect the livelihood of the villagers and put a stop to the use of excessive police force

deployed at the spot entered into the houses of the victims and thrashed them.

Several villagers, human rights defenders and persons leading the protest were arrested by the police personnels too.

The complainant urged the commission to direct the DGP, Home secretary and Jagatsinghpur SP to stop the brutal behavior of the local police against the villagers.

The rights activist also demanded immediate withdrawal of the security personnel from the tents set up at the three entry points to the village.

The commission was also urged to direct the district administration to protect the livelihood of the villagers and put a stop to the use of excessive police force.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jagatsinghpur district.

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 16:** A rights activist Sunday lodged a petition before the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), seeking its intervention into the police excess on the agitating villagers of Dhinkia of

The villagers were protesting the alleged forceful demolition of betel vines by police Friday afternoon.

The activist, in his plea sent to the focal person for human rights defenders, alleged that around 1,000 police personnel

## MoU inked for Choice-KISS Residential School in Maha

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 16:** After Delhi and Kolkata, KISS Residential School will now be opened in Mumbai as per an MoU between KISS and Choice Welfare Foundation of Mumbai Sunday.

Sunil Patodia signed the agreement on behalf of the Choice Welfare Foundation, while Achyuta Samanta, Founder, KIIT & KISS signed on behalf of KISS. Choice - KISS Residential School will greatly benefit the vulnerable, marginalised, and tribal students of Maharashtra.

Patodia said he had been keen to set up a branch of KISS in Maharashtra for a long time. In the meantime, he has arranged 25 acre land for Choice-KISS on the outskirts of Mumbai. He has also arranged funds from various sources for the infrastructure of the proposed residential school.

Choice Welfare Foundation will bear all the costs for Choice-KISS Residential School, which will start

functioning from the coming year.

"I am a great admirer of Samanta and his work towards society. He is a role model for us. So many poor, underprivileged kids are not getting proper education in Maharashtra. They have inner qualities, but they need proper education. So I had a dream to set up a KISS school in Maharashtra for the last five years. Today my dream is fulfilled and this will be a big beginning. We will work together for society in the coming years," said Patodia after signing the MoU.

Expressing happiness that KISS has been recognised as a successful model, Samanta said, it is a pride for Odisha that KISS has been set up in three metropolitan cities of India.

KISS-Delhi is working since 2013, while infrastructure work of HUHT-KISS Residential School, Kolkata in collaboration of Help Us Help Them has been completed. Now KISS will be set up in Mumbai.

TEMPORARY ARRANGEMENT



Following the de-centralisation of markets by the BMC, vegetable and meat vendors were seen setting up their shops near the Red Cross Bhawan at Unit-IV area in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

OP PHOTO

## Puri para-athlete enters Guinness Book of Records

Earlier, Mario Trinidad from Portugal was holding the world record



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 16:** Kamalakanta Nayak, a para-athlete from Puri district brought fame for Odisha by entering the Guinness Book of World Records for 'the greatest distance covered by wheelchair in 24

hours' Sunday.

On a manual wheelchair, Nayak covered the record distance of 215 kilometre from Rajmahal square to Master Canteen square by driving to and fro.

The distance between Rajmahal square to Master Canteen square is 1.14 kms. The event concluded at 4:30 pm Sunday.

He covered 43 kms in 4 hours, 89 kms in 9 hours, 118 kms in 12 hours, 165 kms in 18 hours and 183 kms approximately in 20 hours.

Earlier, Mario Trinidad from Portugal was holding the world record for covering the maximum distance on a manual wheelchair at 182.4 kilometre.

The 24-hour event was inaugurated at 4:30 pm Saturday.

## New vaccine by Texas scientists cheaper, patent-free

A new Covid-19 vaccine is being developed by Texas scientists using a decade-old conventional method that will make the production and distribution cheaper and more accessible for countries most affected by the pandemic and where new variants are likely to originate due to low inoculation rates, The Guardian reported.

The team, led by Peter Hotez and Maria Bottazzi from the Texas Children's Hospital Centre for Vaccine Development at Baylor College of Medicine, has been developing vaccine prototypes for Sars and Mers since 2011, which they reconstructed to create the new Covid vaccine, dubbed Corbevax, or "the world's Covid-19 vaccine", the report said.

Although more than 60 other vaccines are in development using

COMBATING COVID



the same technology, Bottazzi said that their vaccine is unique because they do not intend to patent it, allowing anyone with the capacity to reproduce it, The Guardian reported.

"Pretty much anybody that can make Hepatitis B vaccines or

has the capacity to produce microbial-based protein like bacteria or yeast, can replicate what we do," Bottazzi said. Corbevax's clinical trial data is yet to be released "due to resource constraints, but the Texas Children's Hospital said that the vaccine

"Pretty much anybody that can make Hepatitis B vaccines or has the capacity to produce microbial-based protein like bacteria or yeast, can replicate what we do

MARIA BOTTAZZI | LEAD DEVELOPER, TEXAS CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL CENTRE FOR VACCINE DEVELOPMENT, BAYLOR COLLEGE OF MEDICINE, HUSTON, TEXAS

was over 90 per cent effective against the original Covid-19 strain and over 80 per cent effective against the Delta variant. The vaccine's efficacy against the Omicron variant is currently being tested, the report added.

The process to create the vaccine

involves the use of yeast -- the same method by which Hepatitis B vaccines are produced.

Biological E, an Indian pharmaceutical company accustomed to producing Hepatitis B vaccines with which Bottazzi's team has a longstanding relationship, has already produced 150m doses of the new Corbevax vaccine and will soon be able to produce 100m doses every month, it was reported.

While the highly infectious virus is mutating rapidly and recurring waves have left many developed and developing countries' health infrastructure with a bloody nose, such a patent-free universal anti-Covid vaccine development could prove instrumental in changing the course of pandemic resilience.

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SHORT TAKES

2 Bolangir villages for poll boycott

**Bolangir:** At a time when several parts of Bolangir district are abuzz with political activities following the announcement of panchayat poll schedule, voters of two villages under Deogaon and Loisingha blocks have warned of boycotting the rural polls alleging that development in their regions has taken a back seat. According to sources, people of Kuhimunda in Uparjhar panchayat under Deogaon block have been reeling under lack of motorable road infrastructure for the last 50 years. "Our plight has gone unheard for half a century. We had approached leaders of all political parties, MLAs and even minister for a motorable road, but to no avail. We have to commute on a farm land ridge. What is the use of voting for these people when our problems are left unresolved," the villagers rued. The residents have decided to deny entry of leaders to their village during the electioneering. Similarly, residents at Dandapani village of Banipalli panchayat under Loisingha block have the same problem. The villagers have to commute through a forested track while going to the panchayat headquarters to avail of PDS items or pension. The villagers also demanded that the administration brings back the village under Ratakhandi panchayat from Banapalli panchayat.

DGP reviews rural poll preparedness



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhawanipatna, Jan 16:** Director General of Police (DGP) Sunil Kumar Bansal Sunday visited Kalahandi and Nuapada districts and took stock of the preparedness for the upcoming panchayat elections. The top cop also reviewed the Maoist situation in these districts.

The top cop stressed upon peaceful conduct of the panchayat elections as Kalahandi and Nuapada are Maoist-hit districts

The top police official visited Kalahandi in a special helicopter after the completion of the meeting at Nuapada. Bansal was joined by senior officials from the state police headquarters including Intelligence Director Lalit Das, IG, Operations Amitabh Thakur, DIG Anirudha Singh, Kalahandi SP Sravan Vivek and Nuapada SP Pratyush Diwakar. This is Bansal's first visit to these Red-hit districts after taking over the charge as DGP.

Damodar Mela may turn into a 'super spreader'

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Baripada, Jan 16:** Congregation of thousands of people at Damodar Mela that kicked off in Mayurbhanj district Sunday has raised serious concerns as Covid-19 norms went for a toss at the traditional fair.

Damodar Mela, a three-day festival of tribals, particularly Santhals, in Mayurbhanj district began at Sunamuhin also known as Baruni ghat - the confluence of Budhabalanga, Jarali and Sarali rivers- Sunday. Thousands of tribals from various parts of the district, other districts, neighbouring states like Jharkhand and West Bengal thronged the holy ghat and immersed the ashes of their deceased family members. Covid-19 norms were apparently thrown to the winds as thousands of tribals congregated at the ghat on the same day. In view of the third wave of Covid-19 and spiralling Omicron cases, the district administration has imposed restrictions on festivals and gatherings.

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The Damodar Mela in Mayurbhanj saw huge congregation of people, Sunday

They believe that the souls of their dead kin can only rest in peace after their ashes are immersed in the confluence of the three rivers. This fair and tradition have been in vogue for centuries. Before offering 'pinda' to their forefathers, tribals immerse the ashes. The offerings comprising balls of mud, toothpicks, rice and sweets are put on three Sal leaves. Singing songs to the tunes of beating of drums in praise of ancestors is an integral part of this fair. After the offerings, the tribals usually get their heads tonsured and take holy dip in the river. Tribals also offer gifts like umbrellas, slippers, clothes, utensils, boxes and clocks to others. Presenting and receiving gifts are considered hallowed traditions. This mela is part of their annual ritual called 'Jiling Dahar'. Tribals chant certain lines to appease their presiding deity. Like the River Ganges, Santhals regard the confluence as 'Holy Damodar' and immerse articles belonging to their forefathers, the tradition being followed since time immemorial. It was said that this river assumed significance during the rule of Pratap Chandra Bhanj Deo, the king of Bhanja dynasty in the erstwhile princely state Mayurbhanj. Earlier, Santhals used to trek miles all the way to Thakurbadi, a place near Gopiballapur in West Bengal, to immerse the bones and ashes of their ancestors in Subarnarekha. The officials of the district administration, police and fire services personnel have made elaborate arrangements for smooth conduct of the three-day fair. Facilities like lighting, watch tower, first aid, rest sheds and drinking water have been put in place. In view of the third wave of Covid-19 and spiralling Omicron cases, the district administration has imposed restrictions on festivals and gatherings. Activists of various organisations have been sensitising the tribals about wearing masks, sanitising hands and maintaining social distance as precautionary measures.

190 Boudh villages child marriage free

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Boudh, Jan 16:** The district administration along with officials of various departments has been able to make 190 villages free of child marriages in Boudh district, taking the tally to 371, as per an announcement made by district Collector Lalatendu Mishra.

The Collector has attributed this achievement to the efforts made by the district administration officials, the district social welfare officer, district child protection officer, district advisor of ActionAid, child development programme officers of three blocks, Anganwadi supervisors and workers. According to reports, 10 villages in the district were made child marriage free with a host of awareness/sensitisation programmes in 2020. Besides, 171 villages were declared free of child marriages in 2021 and 190 village were declared in the early part of this year. In all, 371 villages are now free of child marriages.



REPRESENTATIVE PICTURE

The Collector exuded hopes that sustained efforts are on to emancipate all the villages in the district from social malady like child marriage. As part of its awareness campaign against child marriages, the state government had observed a programme 'Sishu Pain Dina Tie' December 24 across the state. Moreover, students and senior citizens have taken the pledge on occasions like district foundation day, museum foundation day and other occasions to eradicate child marriage.

Now, Navy to use Rourkela steel for making submarines



REPRESENTATIVE PICTURE

**Rourkela, Jan 16:** The Rourkela Steel Plant, a unit of Maharatna public sector undertaking SAIL, has received a certificate from the Indian Navy for producing high-strength steel for making submarines, a statement said Sunday. A high-level navy delegation led by Rear Admiral R Vishwanathan interacted with SR Suryavanshi, executive director (works) and other senior officers of the Odisha-based RSP here January 13 for commercial production of DMR grade speciality steel, it said. Senior officers of the Chief Minister's Office and SAIL headquarters also attended the meeting virtually. During the interaction, Vishwanathan said, "As a policy, the Indian Navy is using indigenous steel for its ship and submarine manufacturing. The RSP is fulfilling the needs of a tough and meticulous customer like the Indian Navy for the last 10 years...Commencement of commercial production of the submarine grade steel will further strengthen our association. He also hailed the RSP for its efforts in the field of environment and corporate social responsibility. The RSP has so far supplied more than 7,000 tonnes of steel, adhering to stringent quality specifications for use in various naval applications.

The special plate plant of RSP that is dedicated to making steel for defence sector has been relentlessly working towards developing new grades of customised products that can absorb high ballistic impact, the statement said. The high-quality steel is being developed with years of research and several rounds of testing, it added.

1 rescued from electric tower



**Nuapada:** High drama unfolded at Sahajat village under Komna block in the district Sunday when a youth climbed upon 132-kv electric tower and tried to commit suicide over unknown reasons. Informed, police and fire services personnel disconnected the power supply and rescued him from a height of 150-ft after struggling for over five hours. The rescued youth was identified as Santosh Ahir, 32, a resident of village. The incident occurred when Ahir climbed upon the tower in the afternoon and tried to end his life. However, some villagers spotted him and asked him to refrain from taking the extreme step. Family members also rushed to the spot and asked him to come down but he refused to listen to anybody's call. The villagers informed the electricity, police and fire personnel who rushed to the spot and rescued the youth in a joint operation. The reason behind his suicide attempt is yet to be ascertained.

Big cat census in Ganjam from Jan 20

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhanjanagar, Jan 16:** The annual tiger census in South Ghumusar forest division and North Ghumusar forest division in Ganjam district will commence January 20 with the help of an online ecological app, said sources. The tiger census will be conducted through online ecological app instead of the practice of collecting pugmarks, faeces, use of plaster of paris and trap camera methods. The development came to the fore during a training programme



of the forest officials of the South Ghumusar forest division office held in their office premises here, Sunday. According to sources, annual tiger census is conducted in every

Leopard strikes terror in Nuapada



REPRESENTATIVE PICTURE

**Nuapada:** A leopard is reportedly on the prowl in Dharambandha area of Nuapada district. The wild animal has struck terror among people in the region after it reportedly killed a cow at Kutarenga village Sunday. According to reports, Agin Majhi, a resident of Kutarenga, was tending his cows near Toragaon early in the morning when a leopard appeared. The animal grabbed the throat of a cow and dragged it away into the nearby forest, Majhi said. As he screamed for help, villagers rushed to his rescue and in no time the leopard disappeared into

four years and the census for this year will be held in four phases. The first phase will start January 20 and continue till January 25. When contacted, divisional forest officer (DFO) Dillip Kumar Rout said, "This year, online ecological app will be put into use for the census where the forest officials are required to take the photographs of tiger pugmarks and faeces in GPS-enabled cameras and upload it in the app." This will form the basis for tiger census. The forest officials are being imparted training for the tiger census and several teams have been formed to ensure smooth conduct of the census. Earlier, similar training programmes have been organised for the officials of North Ghumusar forest division. Bhakta Padarbinda Rath and Dr Nimain Charan Polei joined as resource persons and provided training to the participants.

Dhinkia villagers urged to hold talks with admin

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kujang, Jan 16:** Jagatsinghpur Superintendent of Police (SP) Akhilesh Singh Sunday visited Dhinkia village under Erasama tehsil in the district and called upon the residents to come forward for discussion with the administration. Singh's visit assumes significance amid the prevailing tension over Friday's police lathi-charge on the villagers opposing the establishment of JSW project in the area. He urged the residents to create a conducive atmosphere for restoration of peace in Dhinkia. However, police have been keeping a close watch on situation in the area. He arrived at Dhinkia panchayat office in the evening and reviewed the situation. He advised the residents to come forward for discussions with the administration without getting involved in nefarious activities. He assured the residents that those having police cases will not be arrested under any circumstances. Abhayachandpur police station IIC Jibananda Jena, Dhinkia sarpanch and village elders were present during the SP's visit. Hours before SP's visit, labour union leader Bapi Sarkhel had visited the area and met people. He said that there is a need for establishment of industries in the area.

Tribal boys steal show at 'India's Got Talent'

13 ORPHAN BOYS OF MALKANGIRI DISTRICT QUALIFIED FOR THE 2ND ROUND OF POPULAR REALITY SHOW ON SONY ENTERTAINMENT

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Malkangiri, Jan 16:** A troupe of 13 tribal orphan boys from this district have won hearts of millions on Sony Entertainment Television's reality show 'India's Got Talent' by showcasing their amazing skills and daredevilry in a fusion of martial arts and dance. The tribal boys mainly from Bonda, Koya and Didai tribes are orphaned and natives of 'Swabhimaan Anchal' of Malkangiri district, once a cut-off region notoriously famous for Left Wing Extremism (LWE) before the Gurupriya Setu came into existence. These boys have been groomed by Binash Kumar Mishra, founder of All Odisha Martial Arts Academy (AOMAA). These boys after losing their parents were struggling hard for survival when Mishra spotted them and brought them to his own academy. Mishra provided them shelter and made arrangements for their study and food and trained them in



the art of self-defence in martial arts like Judo, Karate, Kung-fu, Taekwondo and Yoga. He also taught them to use their acquired skills in recreating a dance fusion. These boys have qualified for the second round of 'India's Got Talent' show after displaying their daredevil skills in the first round. When contacted, Rama Madkani, one of the troupe member, said that they had never imagined that they would step into Mumbai and qualify in 'India's Got Talent'. They have passed the audition and first round of the show and are practicing for the next episode. They hope to perform well in the coming rounds, he said. Another member of the team, Arjun Khara, said that they had never ever thought in their wildest dreams that they will be performing in 'India's Got Talent'. The boys have sought the support of the people of Odisha to move into the next round of the show. "In this situation, there is a dire need for some government assistance," their teacher and motivator Binash Mishra stated.

**“** You should always do what you say, but it is not always wise to say all that you do.

THE MOTHER



## Alternative For Cricket

It is time things change and change, in reality, must be accepted as the only constant by those who oppose it. The recent incident involving Virat Kohli is an indication of change that cricketing universe in India has to, willingly or otherwise, swallow. The game has, within the past half century, metamorphosed into a monolith and that has helped make the Board of Cricket Control of India (BCCI) sit on a massive pile of money which enables it to bankroll even the International Cricket Council. Politicians and kin are known to control this rich sport Board simply because it makes excellent business sense.

Observing the present situation, it feels like it is time now that the possibilities intertwined with this sport, such as opening up employment opportunities for the youth, creation of more sports facilities and allied entrepreneurship while encouraging a whole new set of aspiring young players to have an alternative to BCCI. That is the least these new and undiscovered sports people deserve.

In other words, an almost similar entity should be built that could also, in the not too distant future, be of equal magnitude to the BCCI. It would not be difficult to achieve a similar status if it would involve mid-level corporates which can take up important responsibilities for promotion of the game. At present, if a Chinese Vivo is forced out, a Tata alone is capable enough to step in. This is simply because, for the BCCI, only a particular kind of replacement would be acceptable.

Apart from shaking up the BCCI power structure, formation of an alternative entity will also create wealth which would build competition with BCCI in investments that will encourage the game of Cricket even more. Unfortunately the BCCI, although such a super prosperous organization, is presently not known to invest in building any cricket infrastructure worth mentioning although it has mostly enjoyed powerful government access throughout its lifetime.

When talking of money power, coming to think of it, no one can stop a Mukesh Ambani from backing and helping install a similar Board, thus making the environment of cricket more democratic, equitable and relaxed.

The new entity could utilize a set of selectors which may also help discover new brilliance that may otherwise go to waste. Both these bodies could, as fallout of a healthy competition, offer benefits to sportsperson unheard of currently.

Democracy implies multiple choices. Why should this nationally important, (but personally extremely dull for me), game be allowed to degenerate into some few individuals' fiefdoms? The way Kohli was pushed out of his captaincy by circumstances created by the powerful authorities of BCCI smacks of dictatorial arrogance. It is an unprofessional approach to the spirit of sports.

Consider the plight of aspiring players. If, by terrible luck, a talented player falls foul of any senior at BCCI, his future is blocked. As is usual in most fields in India, there exists no redressal system in the world of Indian cricket. Not only for new aspiring players, but even for cricket superstars like Virat Kohli, the recent events demonstrated, there is no scope for appeal.

**Piate**  
Tathagata Satpathy



Sagarika Mishra

**WITH THE INCREASING GLOBAL BURDEN OF DISEASES AND INCREASING PLASTIC CONSUMPTION, THEIR STRONG CORRELATION MAY NOT BE COMPLETELY RULED OUT**

The short-run economic benefits of plastic use are visibly great! This versatile, lightweight, cost-effective, and incredibly convenient material has substantially improved human living conditions and facilitated economic growth. Plastic has no close substitutes that have identical utility along with environment-friendly properties. Subsequently, its overproduction and unsustainable consumption have pushed environmental pollution exponentially. Its ubiquitous presence has led to the man-made calamity of mounting marine litter, ocean garbage patches and massive landfills. Due to the existing throwaway culture, animals in water and on land are now commonly found with plastics chocked in their stomach and drains are seen clogged in cities and municipalities. Given its non-biodegradable nature, plastic footprint will stay with us perpetually. Unless acted upon, it can only be accumulated, creating numerous issues in the long run.

So far, the world has produced 8.3 billion tonnes of plastics, and now it produces 300 million tonnes of plastic waste every year. Out of total plastic waste generated so far, only 10% and 14% are recycled and incinerated respectively. Eventually, the remaining is either dumped in the ocean or landfills or littered in the natural environment. According to a Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) report, India produces 3.5 million tonnes of annual plastic waste. Compared to China (61 million tonnes) and the US (34.5 million tonnes), though plastic waste generation in India is much less, it still needs urgent attention because India appears to be poor at managing plastic waste. India's waste has doubled in the last five years and will continue to grow extensively with increasing plastic demand due to rising population, income, and economic activities. Unless managed well, oceans would receive 23-37 million tonnes of plastic waste a year by 2040, where India's contribution could be significant.



**Given its non-biodegradable nature, plastic footprint will stay with us perpetually. Unless acted upon, it can only be accumulated, creating numerous issues in the long run**

India's population is expected to reach 1.5 billion by 2030 and 1.64 billion by 2050. India's food grain production is expected to jump up to 345 MT by 2030 (from 303 MT now) and by 2050, food sufficiency would mean doubling our food productivity. But climate change, if not controlled, may reduce agricultural productivity of India by 25% by the end of this century and water stress may exaggerate it further. To monitor and regulate all such factors that could lead to low farm output, plasticulture under precision farming is contemplated by experts as the best practice to follow. It means more use of plastic in farm activities like making greenhouses, mulching to cover crop roots, providing shades and also for micro-irrigation. Though plasticulture guarantees increased output, reduces pesticide use, retains soil moisture, and saves water it is quite harmful for soil health. Again, it may further degrade environment if plastic waste is not managed well. Thus, farmers need to be well trained and sensitised enough regarding the potential environmental loss before adopting this practice.

More than 30 different primary plastics with various ad-

ditives are used worldwide. When disposed of, these plastics leach thousands of toxic chemicals into soil and water. Now microplastics entering our food chain and is invariably reaching all of us through the water we drink or food we eat. The finding of an average person ingesting up to 5 grams of plastic could be a conservative estimation. The worst part is we have not been able to concretise the ill-effects of microplastic and plastic contaminated consumption on human health. But the harmful effects on the marine ecosystem are evident from the higher mortality of sea animals ingesting plastics. Similarly, materials commonly used in plastic containers are found associated with cell malfunctions, heart diseases and cancer. With the increasing global burden of diseases and increasing plastic consumption, their strong correlation may not be completely ruled out. Considering such loss to the environment and human health, plastic costs us infinitely in real and nominal terms.

So, we must make a circular economy possible for all plastics that we produce from the cradle to the grave. India recycles 60% of its plastic production, but the

rest's mismanagement has enormous ramifications for this densely populated country.

Increasingly the world is focusing on banning single-use plastic (SUP). India has hosted 2018 World Environment Day with the theme 'Beat Plastic Pollution' and is now heading towards an ambitious target of banning SUP by 2022. Banning SUP means India must halve its plastic production as SUP consists of almost 50% of the country's total plastic production. However, it is surprising that this agenda is neither understood nor accepted at the grassroots, mainly because people don't have substitutes. Alongside, plastic items are not labelled to reflect their limited or permitted usability and this effectively discourages people to respond to this policy initiative. Making rules and adhering to them with stricter enforcement may help reduce avoidable plastic waste in everyday use.

Relying on technological innovations to solve this problem of burgeoning plastic waste and leading economic growth beyond the planetary boundaries may not be sustained for long. Developing awareness about responsible consumption and production activities and sensitising one to adapt to lifestyles in harmony with nature may help us have a sustainable economy in future. Recent research says extending education may help to reduce the annual amount of inadequately managed plastic waste by 34%. Stricter regulations enforcing environmental norms would supplement further.

Since India's poor plastic waste management is a global problem, better waste management is urgently solicited. It needs effective waste targeting and well-coordinated actions from consumers, producers, and policymakers in India and worldwide.

*The writer is an assistant professor in the School of Rural Management at XIM University, Bhubaneswar.*

### WISDOM CORNER

It is utterly false and cruelly arbitrary to put all the play and learning into childhood, all the work into middle age, and all the regrets into old age. **MARGARET MEAD**

Love recognises no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope. **MAYA ANGELOU**

Real integrity is doing the right thing, knowing that nobody's going to know whether you did it or not. **OPRAH WINFREY**

### WORDSWORTH

#### Retronym

It's a hard concept to define succinctly. The Oxford English Dictionary says that it is "A neologism created for an existing object or concept because the exact meaning of the original term used for it has become ambiguous (usually as a result of a new development, technological advance)" and comments that a retronym typically consists of the original term combined with a modifying word. This writer must hope that some examples will make the idea plainer. At one time we just had guitars, then somebody invented the electric guitar; this made the word guitar ambiguous, so the retronym acoustic guitar was invented to describe the older form. Another example is analogue watch, to describe the sort that has hands, to distinguish it from the digital variety; yet another is snail mail, which came in as a joke reference to the old-fashioned stuff written on paper, but which looks as though it is becoming a true retronym to distinguish it from e-mail. Other examples are birth mother, natural turf, regular coffee, classic Coke and real cream. Sometimes the original concept of the retronymic object is expressed by doubling up on the name: book-book to mean a printed book, not an e-book; volunteer-volunteer has been heard in the White House to distinguish true volunteers from those who actually get some payment; wood-wood in golf for a club actually made of wood; cheese-cheese, for the real stuff, and so on. These mostly turn up in speech, with heavy stress on the first member of the pair. These repeated terms are sometimes called doubles or clones, or, if you want to be academic about it, reduplicatives. The invention of retronym was attributed by William Safire in an On Language column in the New York Times in 1980 to Frank Mankiewicz, a well-known US broadcaster and journalist who was at one time Robert Kennedy's press secretary. It certainly seems to have first appeared at about that date and is now well established in the vocabulary of those who keep a watch on our changing language.

#### Rhino

Rhino is one of the more ancient, curious and perplexing slang terms for money in the English language. It originated in Britain and was taken to other English-speaking countries by emigrants. It has had a long life — though it begins to appear in the written record in the 1620s, it continued to pop up well into the twentieth century. The obvious assumption is that it's the same word as the abbreviated form of rhinoceros, whose name is from Greek words that literally mean nose-horn (Greek rhinos, nose). Much speculation has been built upon this supposed connection, some of it attempting to link rhino with paying through the nose, another seventeenth-century idiom that has acquired fanciful etymologies of its own. It has been argued that monetary rhino came about as a reference to the high value of rhinoceros horn, a supposed aphrodisiac.

#### LOL

#### Loud, mad, or sad

The psychology instructor had just finished a lecture on mental health and was giving an oral test. Speaking specifically about manic depression, she asked, "How would you diagnose a patient who walks



back and forth screaming at the top of his lungs one minute, then sits in a chair weeping uncontrollably the next?"  
A young man in the rear raised his hand and answered, "A basketball coach?"

### SPECTRUM INEQUALITY

## An alert that India must pay heed to



Shivaji Sarkar

**LATEST INDIAN NUMBERS ARE A CAUSE FOR CONCERN AS RISING PRICES WILL PUT A GREATER SQUEEZE ON DISPOSABLE INCOMES FURTHER AFFECTING WEAKENING AGGREGATE DEMAND**

India has to grapple with difficult world economic prospects, not so bright domestic growth and inflationary situation as it prepares to present its new Budget. The World Bank foresees more inequality leading to socio-political unrest. India needs to feel concerned and rethink about ending the global woes.

The domestic industrial (Index of Industrial Production) growth has slowed down in November to 1.4 per cent from 3.2 per cent in October 2021. It is a matter of concern but it is almost in sync with the WB global economic growth forecast. The WB projecting a prickly slowdown says that growth in 2022 will sharply dip to 4.1 per cent and in 2023 to 3.2 per cent indicating that the pandemic lockdown is creating an unequal world.

The WB projection for India is 8.3 per cent in 2021-22, less than what RBI estimated. It is less enthusiastic about the future as it finds the Indian growth to be at 6.8 per cent in 2023-24. The present projections are over a minus 23.9 per cent contraction in 2020-21.

The National Statistic Office (NSO) finds retail inflation grow-

ing at 5.6 per cent in December but wholesale price inflation is over 14.6 per cent. It means overall costs would be impinging government efforts at pacing up the economy with high deficit and borrowings.

The situation calls for reviewing the economy with consideration of delinking with globalisation. India needs to insulate itself against global woes for ensuring societal vibrancy. The WB is concerned about growing inequality threatening to reverse historic development gains exposing millions of people worse off than they were three years ago.

The latest Indian numbers are a cause for concern as rising prices will put a greater squeeze on disposable incomes further affecting weakening aggregate demand. The third wave may add to the problems. The economy is in the midst of anaemic investment and consumer demand, observes principal economist, Sunil Sinha of India Ratings.

By 2023, all advanced economies are expected to achieve a full output recovery, but output in emerging economies to remain below the pre-pandemic levels. It is to

accentuate with rising inflation, which hits low-income workers particularly hard—constraining monetary policy. The poor are the worst-hit by food inflation. Globally and in advanced economies, inflation is running at the highest rates since 2008. In emerging markets and developing economies, it has reached its highest. Many emerging and developing economies are withdrawing policy support to contain inflation, well before the full recovery, says the WB.

As per World Inequality Report, the richest 10 per cent of the global population takes 52 per cent of the global income and 76 per cent of the global wealth, while the poorest 50 per cent earns 8.5 per cent of the income and owns 2 per cent of the wealth.

Indian numbers are more intriguing. The top one per cent earns 21.7 per cent of the income, while the bottom 50 per cent of the population earns a mere 13.1 per cent of the income. Gender inequality adds to the divide.

The corporates constitute the largest segment of the richest. In other words, the world being dom-

inated by the corporates is heaping tremendous woes on the people. Unfortunately enough the corporates have grown in power more than the sovereign states. They are dominating the global policy formulations. This is what affects the global situation. A strong message from India can change the global scenario.

India is on the verge of witnessing social turbulence that is likely to decide the political outcome in the present Assembly elections to five states. The WB concern of turbulence in a more unequal world is an alert that India must listen to and take fast corrective steps to reduce inequality through better working conditions, wages and stability to the poor. The growing unrest in the world has to be stemmed through drastic policy changes and thrust on welfareism, which is the message given by all religions. Let the world change as per the innate concept of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. A change in India can alter the global course. India has to take the lead to show the path to a fair, just and dignified world.

INFA

#### Long wait for results

**Sir,** Though the poll bugle has been sounded in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Punjab and Manipur by the Election Commission (EC), political parties had begun their preparation well ahead of the announcement. Three states will go for a single phase poll, one will have a two-phase poll and the largest of them all, Uttar Pradesh will, as expected, have a seven-phase elections. The election results will be announced March 10. That implies people of those states whose elections are over in one, or two, phase will have to wait for nearly one month to know who will govern them. And it's not easy because everyone, including the candidates, are prone to be stressed out when the wait to know their fate is long. Clever political parties may encash the long drawn out poll process in their favour by manipulation and deceit. On another note, the never ending pandemic that has knocked the stuffing out of the common man may not be kind to those involved in the election process including party workers and government officers. In as much as the EC is trying its best to limit the election campaign to keep the virus at bay, a prolonged election phase may defeat its purpose. There is also the model code of conduct that has come into place with the election announcement. In a huge state like Uttar Pradesh, the model code will be in place till March 7 — two months from the date of announcement of elections. Such a long period of model code of conduct is bound to hit smooth administration in the state that badly needs to be on its toes all the time. If one counts the enormous expenditure that goes into conducting an election, then multiphase elections are not exactly good for the democratic exercise.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

#### Failed talks

**Sir,** The 14th of Sino-Indian talks along LAC situation remained inconclusive and virtually ended in a stalemate. China has been coming to the negotiating table with little seriousness. It is no secret that China's expansionist ambition is the bone of contention not only with India but many other countries like Japan, the Philippines and Vietnam. Hong Kong was under British rule for 150 years but was ceded to China in 1997 by the UK. China has grabbed 38,000 square kilometers of Indian territory, but is still not satisfied with it. Pakistan has given 'in charity' some portion of Kashmir to China as quid pro quo for China helping Pakistan against India.

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](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

**OrissaPOST**  
B-15, Russagarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010



**Many leaders are quitting the BJP and joining other parties ahead of elections as they are fed up with dictatorship**  
**SUSHIL KUMAR SHINDE | CONGRESS LEADER**

## SUKWA DUKWAN DAM GETS HERITAGE STATUS

The over 100-year-old Sukwa Dukwan dam in Uttar Pradesh's Jhansi, has been recognised as a World Heritage Irrigation Structure by the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage



## of the day quote

As of now no new restrictions will be brought in but a decision will be taken next week depending upon the scenario



**AJIT PAWAR | MAHARASHTRA DEPUTY CM**

Voters in Goa are looking for a change. There are issues like unemployment which needs to be addressed



**ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CM**

The overuse of chemical fertilisers is turning the farmland infertile and therefore, adoption of natural farming methods is vital to restore the land quality, increase agricultural production and make farmers prosperous



**AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER**

# TABLEAU POLITICS HEATS UP

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Jan 16:** Ahead of the Republic day parade, politics of tableau has heated up after Centre rejected the proposals of Kerala and West Bengal governments with Mamata Banerjee shooting off a letter to the Prime Minister and Congress alleging partisan and vindictiveness in the selection of the states for the tableau.

Congress leader B.K. Hariprasad has alleged that the BJP is vindictive towards non-NDA ruled states. "BJP is having vindictive attitude towards certain states. The Centre has rejected Kerala government's tableau which was based on Narayana Guru, a philosopher & social reformer." "He fought against caste-ridden society & rejecting his tableau is an insult to the spiritual guru. This smells of #BJP conspiracy," he added.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Sunday too shot off a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and requested him to reconsider the decision of excluding West Bengal's tableau.



Earlier, floor leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury had written to Defence Minister Rajnath Singh over the issue and had said that he is disappointed and shocked

The tableau was to commemorate Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and his Indian National Army (INA) on his 125th birth anniversary.

"All the people of West Bengal are deeply pained by this attitude of the central government. Bengal was at the forefront of the Indian freedom struggle and has paid the heaviest price for the country's independence through the partition," Mamata in her letter said. Earlier, floor leader of the

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Sunday too shot off a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and requested him to reconsider the decision of excluding West Bengal's tableau

Congress in the Lok Sabha, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury had written to Defence Minister Rajnath Singh over the issue and had said that he is disappointed and shocked. "It is an insult to the people of Bengal that the Central Government has rejected the proposal of West Bengal's tableau showcasing its cultural heritage and Netaji's life and contributions in our Freedom Struggle, on Republic Day", he said.

## MP'S FAMOUS 'COLLARWALI' TIGRESS DIES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Seoni (MP), Jan 16:** "Collarwali", the famous tigress of Madhya Pradesh's Pench Tiger Reserve (PTR), who had earned the tag of "supermom" for giving birth to 29 cubs, has died, officials said.

The 17-year-old tigress, also known as T15, died on Saturday evening, they said. She had given birth to 29 cubs in eight litters during the span of 11 years - between 2008 and 2018 - the officials said.

An official from the office of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) confirmed about the death of the tigress without disclosing any other information. The tigress, who looked very weak due to old age, was last seen on January 14 by the PTR visitors.

According to experts, the average age of a tiger is about 12 years. This female cub was radio-collared in March 2008.

After that radio collar stopped functioning, she was again radio-collared in January 2010. The tigress later became famous as "Collarwali" or T15 tigress, the officials said.

Collarwali had first given birth to three cubs in May 2008, but they could not survive.

For the last time, the tigress delivered four cubs in December 2018, which took the number of her cubs to 29. Officials feel that this number could be a record, they said.

Of the total number of 29 cubs, 25 survived, the officials added. In a rare occurrence, Collarwali, born as one of the four cubs to famous tigress T-7 in September, 2005, had given birth to a litter of five cubs (four females and one male) on October 23, 2010, the officials said.

Madhya Pradesh, with 526 big cats, had emerged as the "tiger state" of the country in 2018.

## Only one person from a family to get ticket: BJP



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Jan 16:** The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has made it clear that it will give ticket to only one person from the family of any party leader. Sources in the BJP said that not more than one person from the same family shall be named as a candidate in the upcoming Assembly elections.

According to party sources, the BJP will not field any of its sitting MPs in the assembly elections. However, it could field its former MPs. In its first list released for the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections on Saturday, the BJP had named several former MPs as candidates.

Sources said that many BJP MPs want assembly tickets for their children, but a decision in this regard will be taken on a case-to-case basis depending on the winning ability of the individual concerned, and the electoral equation of the particular seat. Meanwhile, a senior party leader said that Aparna Yadav, the daughter-in-law of Mulayam Singh Yadav, may soon join the BJP.

Responding to the question of inclusion of other parties in the

## Will fight alone: JD(U)

**New Delhi:** The JD(U) will fight the Uttar Pradesh assembly polls on its own after the BJP, its ally in Bihar, did not reciprocate its offer of a tie-up, party spokesperson K C Tyagi said Sunday, asserting it will contest on the plank of "Bihar model" of empowerment of the deprived sections of society. Tyagi said JD(U) leader and Union minister R C P Singh, who was deputed by the party to hold alliance talks with the BJP, reached out to senior BJP leaders Amit Shah and Dharmendra Pradhan besides its president J P Nadda but in vain. The JD(U) will hold a meeting in Lucknow on January 18 to decide on the number of seats it will contest, Tyagi said.

NDA alliance in Uttar Pradesh, the senior BJP leader said that currently, the alliance of BJP in the state is with Apna Dal (S) and Nishad Party. Apart from Swami Prasad Maurya and Dara Singh Chauhan, many leaders of the OBC community have left the BJP and joined the Samajwadi Party.

## SHORT TAKES

### Baghel booked for flouting Covid norms

**Noida:** The Uttar Pradesh police lodged an FIR against Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel Sunday for allegedly flouting Covid norms while campaigning for a Congress candidate in Noida for the assembly polls, officials said. Baghel, was in Noida for a door-to-door campaign in support of Congress' Pankhuri Pathak when the alleged violations took place. The case, lodged under the Epidemic Diseases Act, names 'others' also as accused besides the senior Congress leader from Chhattisgarh, even as Pathak said the development was indicative of "fear" due to the "growing support base" of her party.

### Two boys drown

**Datia (MP):** Two boys drowned after they fell into a well while riding a bicycle in Datia district of Madhya Pradesh Sunday morning, police said. The incident occurred at Jigna, located approximately 25 km from the district headquarters, around 9 am, they said. "Two boys, identified as Prince Ahirwar, 7, and Lokesh Ahirwar, 12, drowned after falling into a well while they were cycling near their house," Jigna police station in-charge Ashutosh Sharma said.

### Three arrested

**Banda (UP):** Three people were Sunday arrested with 28 kg of explosive material from Chilla area here, police said. According to SHO of Chilla Police Station Narendra Pratap Singh, the explosive material was to be used during the assembly polls. Zakir Hussain, Hamid, and Shahid were arrested during routine vehicle checking and the explosive material along with 196 fuses was seized from them.

### Two dead

**Budaun (UP):** Two people were killed and three others injured here Sunday after a wall of a house collapsed on them when they were sitting near a bonfire, police said. The incident took place in Ibrahimpur Gadhi village in Sahsawan area when people had gathered at the residence of one Nareesh Pal (55) to mourn the death of his granddaughter, they said.

### Four injured

**Jammu:** At least four labourers suffered minor injuries in a landslide that struck an under-construction railway tunnel in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said Sunday. The landslide, triggered by heavy rains, hit the front side of the tunnel at Sakalkote in Arnas tehsil late Saturday, the officials said.

## Massive fire destroys Secunderabad Club

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad, Jan 16:** Secunderabad, the twin city of Hyderabad, lost a key heritage building as the iconic Secunderabad Club was gutted in the early hours of Sunday.

One of the oldest clubs in India, Secunderabad Club has been in existence since 1878 when it was founded for the British Army officers in Secunderabad, then a British Cantonment. There was no loss of life in the mishap. According to fire services department, the fire in ground plus two storey building broke out around 3 a.m. The fire call was received 15 minutes later.

Seven fire tenders rushed from various parts of twin cities battled for three hours to extinguish the fire and thus prevented it from spreading to other buildings in the premises, an official said. However, the 144-year-old main colonnade patterned building of the iconic club including main reception, portico, bar, restaurant and vintage wood furniture were completely gutted.

According to fire services department, the fire spread rapidly as the building was built mostly with wood. The department had pressed into services multipurpose fire tenders, water browsers and water cum foam tenders to extinguish the flames.

The internal staircase of the building which was made of wood was completely destroyed in fire and fire-fighting operations were carried out from the external staircase but it didn't have access to first and second floors of the building.

K. Madhusudhana Rao, district fire officer, Secunderabad supervised fire-fighting operations. "The cause of the fire is under investigation and the loss of property is under assessment," it said. Meanwhile, Arvind Kumar, special chief secretary, urban development, government of Telangana, termed the incident as unfortunate.

## Nishad party to contest 15 seats in UP election

*Nishad said he will meet senior BJP leaders, including Amit Shah, in Delhi Monday to finalise the constituencies where the party will field its candidates*



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow, Jan 16:** Nishad party president Sanjay Nishad Sunday said they will contest in 15 assembly constituencies in Uttar Pradesh as part of an alliance with the BJP, but the seats are yet to be finalised.

Nishad said he will meet senior BJP leaders, including Amit Shah, in Delhi Monday to finalise the constituencies where the party will field its candidates. "We have got 15 seats (out of 403 seats) to contest in alliance with the BJP. The seats are almost final. Most of the seats are in 'Purvanchal' (East UP) and some are in 'Paschimanchal' (West)."

"There are some seats which we want to change due to changing equations. We are focusing not only on seat but 'jeet' (victory)," Nishad said when asked about his proposed meeting with Union Home Minister Shah.

The Nirbal Indian Shoshit Hamara Aaam Dal, or Nishad party, was formed in 2016 and its leaders claim to enjoy support of the Nishad

community, which is one of the Other Backward Classes (OBC). Nishad said his party has built cadre base all over the state and has substantial influence in Gorakhpur, Ballia, Sant Kabir Nagar, Ambedkar Nagar, Jaunpur, Bhadohi, Sultanpur, Faizabad, Chitrakoot, Jhansi, Banda, Hamipur and Etawah districts, among others.

The party fielded 100 candidates in the last assembly election in 2017 in alliance with the Peace Party of India, Apna Dal and the Jan Adhikar Party, but could win just one seat -- Gyanpur in Bhadohi district.

Nishad, now a member of the Legislative Council, had contested the last assembly election from Gorakhpur Rural and came third. In the 2018 Lok Sabha by-election, Sanjay Nishad's son Praveen Kumar Nishad was a Samajwadi Party candidate and wrested the Gorakhpur constituency from the BJP which had been winning the seat since 1989.

Praveen Kumar Nishad is now a BJP MP from Sant Kabir Nagar.

## STAYING FIT



Medics conduct a yoga class of Covid-19 infected patients inside a Covid Care Centre of the Commonwealth Games village in New Delhi

# 'School closures due to Covid not justified'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 16:** There is no justification now for keeping schools closed in view of the pandemic and even if there are new waves, closing schools should be the last resort, according to the World Bank's Global Education Director Jaime Saavedra.

Saavedra, whose team has been tracking the impact of COVID-19 on the education sector, says there is no evidence that reopening schools has caused a surge in coronavirus cases and that schools are not a "safe place".

He also asserted that it does not make sense from public-policy perspective to wait till children are vaccinated as there is "no science" behind it. "There is no relation between opening schools and spread of coronavirus. There is no evidence linking the two and there is no justification now to keep the schools closed. Even if there are new

waves of COVID-19, closing schools should be the last resort," Saavedra said in an interview from Washington. "It does not make sense to keep restaurants, bars and shopping malls open and keep schools closed. There is no excuse," he added. According to various simulations by the World Bank, health risks for children if schools are opened are low and the cost of the closure is extremely high.

"During 2020, we were navigating in a sea of ignorance. We just didn't know what is the best way of combating the pandemic and the immediate reaction of most countries in the world was let's close schools. Time has passed since then and with evidence coming in from late 2020 and 2021, we have had several waves and there are several countries which have opened schools," he said.

"We have been able to see if schools opening have had an impact in the transmission of virus and



new data shows it doesn't. Many countries have also had waves when schools were closed so obviously there has been no role of schools in some of the spikes.

"Even if the kids can get infected and with the Omicron it is happening even more but fatalities and serious illness among children is extremely rare. The risks for children are low and costs are extremely high," he added.

"impact is more severe than previously thought" and the learning poverty is likely to increase much more than anticipated.

Learning poverty means being unable to read and understand a simple text by the age of 10.

"The learning poverty in India is expected to increase from 55 per cent to 70 per cent due to leaning loss and more out-of-school children. Learning adjusted years of schooling is estimated to fall almost one full year of schooling while the average annual earnings might shrink in a pessimistic scenario by nine per cent per student in future.

"In countries like India where the

inequalities in education were already prevalent before the pandemic and the learning poverty levels were already gigantic, there is a lot at stake. Nearly two years later, schools remain closed for millions of children, and others may never return to school." The loss of learning that many children are experiencing is morally unacceptable. And the potential increase of learning poverty might have a devastating impact on future productivity, earnings, and well-being for this generation of children and youth, their families, and the world's economies," he said.

Rationalising the curriculum, reorganising the academic calendar, preparing the teachers for the huge task ahead are among the suggestions that the World Bank has to reduce long-term learning losses caused by closure of schools during the pandemic.

**There is no evidence that reopening schools has caused a surge in coronavirus cases and that schools are not a "safe place"**

**JAIME SAAVEDRA | WORLD BANK GLOBAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR**

## ISI activates terror wings to derail Punjab polls: Intel

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Jan 16:** With an aim to derail the electioneering process in the state and to increase the Khalistani footprints in Punjab, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) has activated its terror outfits to execute more terror activities in the state and also in some parts of Uttar Pradesh, the Intelligence agencies have warned.

The sources in the security set up, quoting the intelligence inputs, said that the ISI sponsored Sikh terror outfits may target the election rallies and may attempt to hit some important leaders or VVIP during the electioneering process in Punjab, parts of UP and Uttarakhand. Considering Punjab election as an apt opportunity to reactivate the Khalistani movement in the state and also in other poll bound states wherein the Sikh voters are in large numbers, the ISI has activated all small or big terror groups which have been tasked to derail the poll process in the state, the sources further said.

The inputs have been shared by the Punjab, UP and Uttarakhand administrations which disclosed that these outfits may try to make inroad among Sikh population in other states too to gain their supports for their cause. The ISI has also conveyed these proscribed Sikh Militant organizations that this is a time of 'Now or Never' for Khalistan.



### CROSS-BORDER TERROR

The use of drones for transporting weapons and explosives across the border has become a major challenge for the security forces in recent times along the Punjab border

According to the officials, over 60 incidents of drones have been spotted on the Indo-Pakistan border in Punjab sector. Many of them have been shot down by the Border security Force

The investigations into the recent Ludhiana blast have also revealed that how these Sikh Militant groups are trying to execute their terror attacks in the state with their overground workers

Accordingly, the UP and Uttarakhand governments have been asked to keep a vigil on these activities and to keep in touch with the Sikh religious leaders and prominent persons in these states.

The ISI has instructed the Sikh militant groups which are active abroad to channelise the supply of weapons and explosives in Punjab and the organisations like International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF), Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) to arrange the supply of weapons through Pakistani handlers.

The sources, quoting the intelligence input, also said that Sikh militant Wadhava Singh Babbar of BKI, Parmjit Singh Panjwar of Khalistan Commando Force and Ranjeet Singh Neeta of Khalistan Zindabad Force are in constant touch with ISI and executing the instructions while Gurbatwant Singh Pannu of Sikh for Justice who have already been declared terrorist by Indian authorities, is also active in the UK, the US and Germany to support his men in Punjab by all means.

## KASHMIR PRESS CLUB LOCKED DOWN

# Editors Guild condemns 'coup'

THE EGI TERMED THE INCIDENT A CONTINUING TREND TO SMOTHER PRESS FREEDOM IN THE UNION TERRITORY WITH THE HELP OF POLICE WHO HAVE BEEN 'BRAZENLY COMPLICIT' IN IT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, Jan 16:** A day after it witnessed a virtual coup, the Kashmir Press Club was locked down Sunday by its new management citing COVID-19 infection of a member, even though the Editors Guild of India and other journalists' organisations condemned the forceful takeover and said it was part of a continuing trend to smother press freedom in Jammu and Kashmir.

A notice put up at the club gate stated that it has been shut after the detection of a COVID-19 positive case and an email was sent to its members asking them not to visit the club located near the posh Polo Ground area of the city for one week.

"I was informed by the gatekeeper that two persons from the interim body told him to shut the gates of the club and not let any-

one inside as a member had tested positive," the manager of the club, Sajad Ahmad, said.

The email from the interim body, which has come under severe criticism, claimed that its email account was 'hacked by miscreants' and that a formal complaint "was being filed against the incident of the account hacking and subsequent mischief."

In New Delhi, the Editors Guild of India issued a strongly worded statement condemning the 'coup' at KPC by the Jammu and Kashmir administration and termed it a continuing trend to smother press freedom in the union territory with the help of police who have been 'brazenly complicit' in it.

The Guild said it was aghast at the manner in which the office and management of KPC, the largest journalists' association in the Valley, was forcibly taken over by a group of journalists with the help of armed policemen Saturday.

The Guild said even more alarming is that the Jammu and Kashmir Police entered the premises without any due warrant or paperwork and had "therefore been brazenly complicit in this coup, in which a group of people have become self-declared management of the club."

The Guild is equally alarmed by an arbitrary order of putting the registration of the Kashmir Press Club 'in abeyance' by the Registrar of Societies, a day before its takeover and said "the armed takeover has effectively scuttled this rule-based functioning of the club."

Demanding immediate restora-



tion of the status quo before this hostile takeover, the Guild called for holding of elections to appoint a new management body and executive council, and strict prohibitions on any armed forces from interfering with the functioning of the club, without due legal sanction.

"The Guild further demands an independent inquiry as to how armed forces entered the club premises," the statement added.

The statement of the Guild comes a day after the KPC witnessed unfamiliar activities when a few journalists accompanied by policemen reached there and claimed to be its 'new management'.

The developments at KPC had also drawn strong reactions from politicians with former chief minister and National Conference vice

president Omar Abdullah terming it a 'state-sponsored coup' and hitting out at one of the journalists of the interim body, saying "there is no government this 'journalist' hasn't sucked up to and no government he hasn't lied on behalf of. I should know, I've seen both sides very closely. Now he's benefited from a state sponsored coup."

Former chief minister and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti tweeted that the government does not want a 'debate on the oppression unleashed' in JK.

Both the former chief ministers shared a purported picture from inside the KPC office showing two policemen holding their assault rifles, with Mehbooba saying it conveyed the most obvious yet disturbing reality gripping Kashmir.

## Pak mercenaries using J&K youth as 'terror mules'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, Jan 16:** Pakistani mercenaries operating in Jammu and Kashmir are tricking the youth into terrorism and using them as 'terror mules' who can even be eliminated if they plan to shun the path of violence, senior security officials said Sunday.

Referring to an encounter in Budgam earlier this month and the call details of 24-year-old Wasim Qadir Mir, a resident of Shahzadpora, the officials said he was the latest victim of the despot behaviour of the Pakistani terrorists who eliminated him during a gunfight with security forces in village Zouli in the central Kashmir district January 6.

Mir along with his two Pakistani accomplices were trapped in a cordon-and-search operation, leading to a fierce gunfight, they said, adding by dawn, it was common news that the security forces had eliminated yet another group of terrorists in an encounter but what was uncommon was the series of events unfolded during the encounter the preceding night.

"During the encounter Mir wanted to put down his arms probably with an aim to come out and



surrender to the security forces but was forced by the two Pakistani terrorists to keep firing back."

"Details that emerged later including the post-mortem report further confirmed that Mir was actually killed by members of his own group, as a result of their failed attempts to resist him from surrendering," a senior official involved in the gunfight said.

Mir was a school dropout who initially worked as an over ground worker and subsequently was recruited into the terror folds in December 2020 by JeM commander Saifulla alias 'Lamb Bhai', a Pakistani terrorist.

Even though Mir's stint as an active terrorist was short, he had a long list of acts of terror attributed to him, including the Zewan attack in which three police personnel were killed and 11 others

were injured December 13 last year, the officials said.

They said it was probably his involvement in a long list of terror-related incidents that prevented him from re-joining the mainstream and eventually when he was given an opportunity by the security forces to save his own life, he did not stand a chance at the hands of the very companions for whom he was working as the 'terror mule'.

## Denied ticket, Punjab CM's brother goes independent

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chandigarh, Jan 16:** Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi's brother Manohar Singh, who was eyeing a Congress ticket from Bassi Pathana assembly seat, Sunday said he will contest as an independent from the constituency after the ruling party fielded its sitting legislator.

In its first list of 86 candidates, the Congress Saturday gave the ticket to party MLA Gurpreet Singh GP from Bassi Pathana (SC) seat.

Manohar Singh dubbed the decision of the Congress giving ticket to Gurpreet Singh GP as 'injustice' with the people of the constituency and alleged that the sitting legislator was "incapable and ineffective."

"Several prominent people of Bassi Pathana area have asked me to fight as an independent and I will go by what they have said. There is no chance of going back and I will surely fight the polls," Manohar Singh told PTT over the phone.

Singh had in August last year



resigned as a senior medical officer from Kharar civil hospital. Singh has done his MBBS and MD. He also holds a postgraduate degree in journalism and has also studied law.

He said he took the decision of contesting as an independent after meeting several councillors, village sarpanch and panch who asked him to fight the polls.

"People told me it was wrong to give the ticket to him (Gurpreet Singh GP). He had earlier not done

anything and now he has again been foisted upon," said Singh.

Singh said he will talk to his brother Channi and convince him about his decision.

On the 'one family-one ticket' formula of the Congress for the upcoming assembly polls, Channi said the party fielded Vikramjit Singh Chaudhary, who is the son of Jalandhar MP Santokh Singh Chaudhary, from Phillaur seat.

## AFTER CHANNI, BJP & ITS ALLIES WANT PUNJAB POLLS POSTPONED

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chandigarh, Jan 16:** The BJP and its allies Punjab Lok Congress (PLC) and SAD (Sanyukt) have appealed to the Election Commission to postpone the February 14 assembly election in Punjab in view of Guru Ravidas Jayanti, after the BSP and Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi made similar requests to the poll panel.

The birth anniversary of Guru Ravidas falls February 16. In a letter to the Chief Election Commissioner Sunday seeking postponement of the election, Punjab BJP general secretary Subhash Sharma said, "The state has substantial population of followers of Guru Ravidas ji, including the Scheduled Caste (SC) community which is about 32 per cent of the population of Punjab."

"On this pious occasion, millions of the devotees would visit Banaras in Uttar Pradesh to celebrate the gurparb. So it would not be possible for them to participate in the voting process. It is therefore requested to your goodself that the date of voting may be postponed so that these voters of Punjab could participate in the election process," he wrote.



Former chief minister Amarinder Singh-led Punjab Lok Congress also supported the demand for postponing the election by a week.

"Tens of thousands of people from Punjab visit Banaras every year around Guru Ravidas Jayanti," said PLC general secretary Kamal Saini in a letter to the poll panel.

"Since elections are scheduled two days before Guru Ravidas Jayanti, many voters may be denied the chance to exercise the franchise as they will be away to Banaras for the annual pilgrimage," Saini wrote.

The PLC leader said it should not

Tens of thousands of people from Punjab visit Banaras every year around Guru Ravidas Jayanti

KAMAL SAINI | PLC GENERAL SECRETARY

be difficult for the poll panel to reschedule the date for Punjab, as everything else will remain the same.

Shiromani Akali Dal (Sanyukt) chief Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa, in a letter to the poll panel, also sought that the date of voting be postponed.

## J&K admin announces rules for land conversion

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Jammu, Jan 16:** The Jammu and Kashmir government Saturday announced rules for converting agricultural land into non-agricultural land beyond the already stipulated 400 square metres which was allowed for only residential purposes.

The facility of land conversion is believed to become pivotal for the union territory's industrial growth that had largely been impeded by non-availability of land for the industrial purposes.

An official statement said: "The Revenue Department framed Jammu and Kashmir Agricultural Land (Conversion for Non-Agricultural Purposes) Regulations which empowered land owners to convert agricultural land for non-agricultural beyond 400 square metres for residential purposes.

The concerned district development commissioner will head the committee which will examine the plea for conversion of agricultural land into non-agricultural and grant permission after recommendations from the Committee. The Committee will have the Assistant Commissioner (Revenue) as the Member Secretary and will include senior most officers in the districts of Public Works (R&B), Irrigation & Flood Control, Power Development, Pollution Control



Committee (if required), Agriculture, Industries and Commerce, Development Authority of the district, Forests and any other member(s) co-opted by the Chairman.

The district level Committee will meet every week on a fixed day to consider cases for change of land use. The District Collectors will, however, be empowered to call additional meetings to dispose of the cases.

The Government has listed certain conditions on which the permission for conversion of land use will be granted. The grant of permission shall be subject to the pro-

visions of the Jammu and Kashmir Land Revenue Act and Rules framed. The land shall not be used for a purpose other than that for which permission is granted.

If the applicant does not commence non-agricultural use applied for within one year from order of the date and up to the maximum period of two years from first date of permission, the permission granted shall be deemed to have lapsed. The Assistant Commissioner Revenue/ Sub Divisional Magistrate concerned can take action for any violation under provisions of the Act.

For conversion of agricultural

land, the owner will be charged fee equivalent to Rs 5 percentum of market value of the land as notified for the purpose under the Stamps Act. If subsequently land use is changed for a purpose other than that for which permission has been given, then the fee, if applicable on differential market value shall be charge after permission for the purpose is accorded by the concerned District Collector.

The statement went on to say that the Revenue Department has fixed 30 days time limit for grant of permission.

If no decision/comment is conveyed within a period of 30 days after receipt of application complete in all respects, the District Collector shall, deeming due consideration, grant permission exercising the powers vested on him and report details with explanatory notes to the Revenue Department. The timeline of 30 days shall be counted from the date of addressing all deficiencies as may be communicated by the District Collectors.

"It shall be the duty of every Agriculture Extension Officer to report violations of these regulations in their respective areas of jurisdiction to the Assistant Commissioner Revenue, SDM or the Tehsildar. In case he fails to do so, it shall be treated as dereliction of duty on his part and he shall be liable to disciplinary action," it added.



of the day quote

Various people-friendly initiatives have been launched in the last three years and this government is sensitive towards citizens' concerns

ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CM

I express thanks to the prime minister, national president and BJP

Parliamentary Board who decided to field me from Gorakhpur Urban seat in the current assembly elections

YOGI ADITYANATH | UP CM

The SP's past record shows it always took an anti-Dalit approach

MAYAWATI | BSP SUPREMO

SHORT TAKES

Trafficker arrested

Malda: The NIA has arrested an absconding person who was allegedly involved in a case of smuggling fake Indian currency notes from Bangladesh, an official said Sunday.

Four held

Yavatmal: Four persons were arrested for allegedly shooting dead a doctor near a government-run hospital in Yavatmal in Maharashtra, police said Sunday.

Five killed

Palanpur: Five persons, including a minor brother-sister duo, were killed, while two others suffered grievous injuries after a car rammed into a moving tractor in Banaskantha district of Gujarat, police said Sunday.

Woman ends life

Jaipur: A 31-year old woman allegedly hanged herself to death over torture by her husband and in-laws in Ajmer, police said Sunday.

Rajasthan reels under cold wave

Jaipur: Rajasthan continued to reel under cold wave conditions with dense fog engulfing many areas in the state Sunday morning.



Scientific knowledge related to environmental protection is ingrained in the every day practices of tribal societies and efforts should be made to use this knowledge in modern contexts

KALRAJ MISHRA | RAJASTHAN GOVERNOR

PASSING EXERCISE

The navies of India and Russia conducted a passing exercise in the Arabian Sea, the Indian Navy said Sunday



A year on, Covid vax drive surpasses 150 crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 16: The countrywide vaccination drive against COVID-19 on Sunday completed one year, during which over 156.76 crore vaccine doses were administered.

According to health ministry officials, over 93 per cent of the adult population have received at least one dose while over 69.8 per cent have been fully vaccinated.

A commemorative postage stamp on indigenously developed vaccine Covaxin was released to mark one year of the inoculation drive.



A healthworker collects swab sample of a woman for Covid test during Covid-induced restrictions in Jammu

A commemorative postage stamp on indigenously developed vaccine Covaxin was released to mark one year of the inoculation drive

January 16 last year with healthcare workers getting inoculated in the first phase. Vaccination of frontline workers started from February 2.

ambit of the inoculation drive by allowing everyone above 18 to be vaccinated from May 1. The next phase of COVID-19 vaccination commenced from January 3 this year for adolescents in the age group of 15-18 years.

Vaccination of all people aged over 45 from April 1. The government then decided to expand the

precaution dose of Covid vaccine to healthcare and frontline workers, which include polling personnel deployed in the five poll-bound

Bihar hooch toll climbs to 11

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bihar Sharif, Jan 16: Seven more people have died here after consuming spurious liquor, raising the toll to 11 in the headquarters of Nalanda district - to which Bihar's Chief Minister Nitish Kumar belongs.

According to Superintendent of Police, Nalanda, Ashok Mishra, the station house officer (SHO) of the police station concerned has been suspended and bodies of eight of the deceased have been handed over to family members after post mortem.

"Four people died in the early hours of Saturday while four others breathed their last in the evening. Three more died this morning," he said.

"All deaths have taken place in Chhoti Pahari and Pahari Talli localities of the town. The SHO of Soharsai has been suspended for being lax in keeping an eye on the activities in an area under his jurisdiction," added the SP.

Bodies of the three persons who died Sunday morning have been sent for post mortem. All bereaved family members have said that the deceased consumed liquor on Friday night. Sale and consumption of liquor is completely banned in Bihar since April, 2016.

The hooch tragedy comes barely two months after more than 40 people died after consuming spurious liquor in four north Bihar districts. Meanwhile, state BJP president Sanjay Jaiswal, whose party shares power in the state, launched a fresh attack on the chief minister's party.

"JD(U) leaders would do well to acknowledge that the hydra-headed monster that is illicit liquor trade cannot be slain until the nexus of high officials, police personnel and liquor mafia is broken," said Jaiswal in a statement.

The BJP leader, who represents Pashchim Champaran in Lok Sabha, has been sore ever since a JD(U) spokesman took potshots at him for the hooch deaths in his constituency in November last year.

ANXIOUS WAIT



A vendor waits for customers at a vegetable market on a cold morning in New Delhi

AAI YET TO PROCURE A SINGLE BODY SCANNER FOR OVER 100 AIRPORTS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 16: The Centre-run Airports Authority of India (AAI) is yet to procure and install a single body scanner for its 100-plus airports across the country, government officials said.

Aviation security regulator BCAS had in April 2019 directed 84 hypersensitive and sensitive airports across the country to install body scanners by March 2020, replacing existing door frame metal detectors, hand-held scanners and pat-down searches of passengers to detect metallic objects.

"Walk-through metal detectors and hand-held metal detectors cannot detect non-metallic weapons and explosives. Body scanners detect both metallic and non-metallic items concealed on the body," the circular of Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) had said.

Following the BCAS circular, the AAI had in 2020 issued a tender to procure 198 body scanners for 63 airports, officials said. Three com-

panies had put in their bids but the tender was later cancelled, they stated. When asked for the reason for cancellation, the AAI spokesperson said it was done due to "administrative reasons".

The spokesperson stated that a fresh tender to procure body scanners is in "planning stage" right now. Airports where these body scanners will be installed will be decided "after completion of the (new) tender process", the spokesperson mentioned.

According to its website, the AAI manages a total of 137 airports which include 24 international airports (3 civil enclaves), 10 custom airports (4 civil enclaves) and 103 domestic airports (23 civil enclaves).

The BCAS circular had in April 2019 classified 28 airports -- including the ones in conflict areas such as Jammu and Kashmir and in the north-east -- as hypersensitive and 56 airports as sensitive.

First phase in UP is challenge for BJP, hope for SP

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Jan 16: There is a battle for the BJP in western Uttar Pradesh, hope for the Samajwadi Party and revival for the Rashtriya Lok Dal in the region that goes to polls in the first phase on February 10.

The region, considered one of the most politically sensitive, surcharged and highly polarised areas, especially after the farmers' agitation, will set the tone for elections in the remaining six phases in Uttar Pradesh.

Elections will be held in the 94 Assembly segments in 11 districts of west Uttar Pradesh namely, Shamli, Meerut, Hapur, Muzaffarnagar, Baghpat, Ghaziabad, Bulandshahr, Aligarh, Agra, Gautam Buddha Nagar and Mathura, on February 10.

In the 2017 Assembly elections, BJP had received a decisive mandate in the region and carried that momentum further to other parts of the state. The BJP in 2017, had won 66 of the 76 seats in this region. The Samajwadi Party (SP) won four; the

Former UP minister Dara Singh joins SP

Friday, former ministers Swami Prasad Maurya and Dharam Singh Saini, five BJP MLAs and one from the Apna Dal (Sonela) had crossed over to the Samajwadi Party



Former UP minister Dara Singh Chauhan (L) joins the Samajwadi Party in presence of Akhilesh Yadav at party office in Lucknow

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Jan 16: Former Uttar Pradesh minister and OBC leader Dara Singh Chauhan joined the Samajwadi Party Sunday, days after he resigned from the Yogi Adityanath cabinet ahead of the assembly polls.

Besides Chauhan, Apna Dal (Sonela) MLA from Vishvanathganj Assembly constituency in Pratapgarh district R K Verma too joined the Akhilesh Yadav-led party which has emerged as the main challenger to the BJP in the state. Apna Dal (Sonela) is an ally of the BJP.

Friday, former ministers Swami Prasad Maurya and Dharam Singh Saini, five BJP MLAs and one from the Apna Dal (Sonela) had crossed over to the Samajwadi Party.

While joining the Samajwadi Party on Sunday, Chauhan trained his guns at the BJP, saying, "When the BJP formed government in Uttar Pradesh in 2017, it gave the slogan 'sabka saath, sabka vikaas'... But, 'vikaas' (development) of a handful of people was done and the rest were left to their fate."

Terming the Samajwadi Party as his "old home", he said, "We will change the politics of Uttar Pradesh, and make Akhilesh Yadav the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh once

again." "People belonging to the OBC and Dalit communities will come together. Our rivals may try their level best but will not be able to stop this storm. A change is inevitable," Chauhan said.

In a jolt to the ruling BJP, Chauhan, who represents the Madhuban Assembly constituency in Mau district, had resigned from the Yogi Adityanath cabinet on Wednesday while alleging that the Dalits, the OBCs and the unemployed did not get justice from the BJP government.

"It was the poor who had made the government but others took all the advantage in the past five years," he alleged after resigning as the minister for forests and environment.

He represented the Ghosi seat in the 15th Lok Sabha after winning the 2009 general elections on Bahujan Samaj Party ticket. In the 2014 general elections, he was defeated by the BJP's Harinarayan Rajbhar by over 1.4 lakh votes.

The next year, he joined the BJP and was appointed the party's OBC Morcha president and fielded from the Madhuban assembly constituency. Swami Prasad Maurya was the first to desert the BJP and the move was followed by a similar announcement by others.



In the 2017 Assembly elections, BJP had received a decisive mandate in the region and carried that momentum further to other parts of the state

lines have blurred and farmer unity is now a bigger factor in the region. Religious polarization is unlikely in the region in the present scenario.

The BJP has been trying to placate the farmers by repealing farm laws but its own leaders are queering the pitch by announcing that farm laws will be brought back after the elections.

It has been a tough going so far for the BJP whose leaders have been facing hostile voters in the rural interiors of the region.

The failure of the government to announce MSP guarantee, payment of cane dues, shortage of fertilizer and the menace of stray cattle are factors that remain major irritants for the ruling BJP.



Covid shadow on PMO

The government was virtually in a tizzy last week when a top official of the Prime Minister's Office was

found Covid positive. All hell broke when the news surfaced as the top official went into home quarantine.

Many of those who came into his contact had to compulsorily self-quarantine themselves. Fortunately, the Prime Minister had been taking extreme precaution himself and has been keeping even his officials at bay and operating largely on intercom or at a safe distance. Therefore, there was no worry. The PMO has been following a rather strict Covid protocol and officers avoid mingling in groups or with the crowd. Therefore, it is baffling as to how the top official got infected with Covid. A separate scrutiny is being held. But most of

the PMO staff had to undergo Covid test as the PMO cannot afford to allow the spread of virus.

When will Omicron peak out?

After the two recent studies by top IIT professors, Omicron will fade away as early as January-end in Mumbai and Delhi to begin with while another professor claims it will end by February. However, the government is not reacting to such studies and waiting for more signals. Reason; none of those making such predictions have sent their reports to the government

and secondly; it is still in the process of obtaining data from global agencies to study the pattern.

Omicron hit all: Experts

With India's vaccination touching nearly 160 crore doses, many experts have claimed that Omicron will affect almost everybody, sooner or later. These experts have also said that the Omicron variant of Covid-19 is far milder than Delta and "almost unstoppable". The virus will "most likely get infected with it. A top Epidemiologist

associated with the ICMR, said that Covid is not a frightening disease anymore as the new strain is not deadly and leading to much less hospitalization and the country can deal with it.

Virtual campaign a blessing

Civil aviation minister Jyotiraditya Scindia is the latest to get infected with Covid among the ministers of the Modi government. With this, more than half of the Central Ministers and their private secretaries and ministerial staff have been

infected with Covid. Scindia joins the queue of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari, BJP president J P Nadda, Minister of State for Railways Raosaheb Danve and several others. However, all of them are in home quarantine and in self isolation. Even Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and a large army of MPs and MLAs are infected with Covid. It is said that the decision of the Election Commission to permit only virtual rallies and digital campaigning in the state assembly polls has come as a blessing to the political class.

# international

## of the day quote

Economic hardship and harsh winter weather in Afghanistan necessitated humanitarian assistance and support from the international community to the people of Afghanistan

NARAYAN KHADKA | FOREIGN MINISTER OF NEPAL

What we have stated as our official position is that relations between the two countries would return to normal whenever the Saudi side wishes. Iran is ready and welcomes the reopening of the embassies and consulates

HOSSEIN AMIR ABDOLLAHIAN | IRANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

Today we stand together on behalf of Virginians who've never lost faith, even when they suffered loss

GLENN YOUNGKIN | VIRGINIA'S NEW GOVERNOR

## SHORT TAKES

### Mali's ousted Prez Keita dies

**Bamako (Mali):** Former Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, who took office in a landmark election held after a destabilising coup only to be ousted in another military takeover nearly seven years later, has died. He was 76. Keita, known to Malians by his initials IBK, had been in declining health since his forced resignation in August 2020, and had sought medical treatment in Dubai shortly after his release from junta custody.

### Child killed, 4 injured in Kabul bomb blast

**Kabul:** At least a child was killed and four security personnel were wounded after a roadside bomb blast hit a security forces pick-up truck in Bagrami district, east of the capital Kabul Sunday, the capital police said. The incident occurred when an improvised bomb planted at a road divider was detonated when the vehicle was passing by an area in Bagrami district at around mid-day.

### Iran N-talks in a progressing way

**Riyadh:** Chief negotiators of Iran and three European countries have temporarily returned to their home countries for consultations as expert talks continue, providing the latest evidence that international talks to salvage the 2015 nuclear deal in Vienna have been moving forward. The return of chief negotiators to their countries does not mean the eighth round of talks has stopped, according to the website of Iran's Foreign Ministry.

### Govt spokesman injured in bombing

**Mogadishu (Somalia):** Somalia's government spokesman was wounded Sunday in a suicide bombing that the al-Shabab extremist group has claimed responsibility for. Mohamed Ibrahim Moalimu appeared to be the sole target in the attack near his residence by a busy intersection in the capital, Mogadishu.

### Quake rattles parts of Greece

**Athens:** A magnitude 5.4 earthquake rattled northern Greece and was felt in the capital Sunday. There were no immediate reports of damage. The tremor occurred at 1:48 pm (11:48 GMT; 6:48 am EST) in the Aegean Sea near the Mount Athos peninsula at a depth of 19.3 km (12 miles).

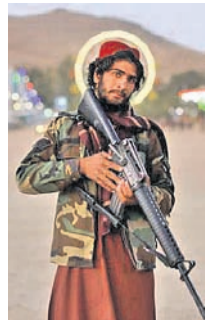


I have planned to return to Ukraine Monday despite the threat of arrest

PETRO POROSHENKO | FORMER UKRAINIAN PRESIDENT

## CRUEL TALIBAN

Taliban forces Sunday fired pepper spray at a group of women protesters in Afghanistan's capital demanding rights to work and education, three demonstrators told AFP. Since seizing control of the country by force in August, the Taliban authorities have imposed creeping restrictions on Afghans, especially on women



# Hostages freed after standoff at Texas synagogue; captor dead

OFFICIALS SAY HOSTAGE-TAKER DEMANDED THE RELEASE OF A PAKISTANI NEUROSCIENTIST WHO IS SERVING A PRISON TERM IN THE US

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Colleyville (US), Jan 16:** Authorities Sunday identified a 44-year-old British national as the man who took four people hostage at a Texas synagogue for 10 hours before an FBI SWAT team stormed the building, ending a tense standoff that President Joe Biden called "an act of terror."

Malik Faisal Akram was shot and killed after the last of the hostages got out at around 9 pm. Saturday at Congregation Beth Israel near Fort Worth. In a statement, the FBI said there was no indication that anyone else was involved, but it didn't provide a possible motive.

Akram could be heard ranting on a Facebook livestream of the services and demanding the release of a Pakistani neuroscientist who was convicted of trying to kill US Army officers in Afghanistan. The FBI and police spokeswoman declined to answer questions Saturday night about who shot Akram when the standoff ended.

Video from Dallas TV station WFAA showed people running out a door of the synagogue, and then a man holding a gun opening the same door just seconds later before he turned around and closed it. Moments later, several rounds of gunfire could be heard, followed by the sound of an explosion. "Rest assured, we are focused," Biden said during a visit



SWAT team members deploy near the Congregation Beth Israel synagogue

to a food pantry in Philadelphia Sunday morning.

FBI Special Agent in Charge Matt DeSarno said the hostage-taker was specifically focused on an issue not directly connected to the Jewish community, and there was no immediate indication that the man was part of any broader plan. But DeSarno said the agency's investigation "will have global reach."

It wasn't clear why Akram chose the synagogue. Law enforcement officials who were not authorised to discuss the ongoing investigation and who spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity earlier said the hostage-taker demanded the release of Aafia Siddiqui, a Pakistani neuroscientist suspected of having ties to al-Qaida who is in a federal prison in Texas. He also said he wanted to be able to speak with her, according to the officials, one of whom confirmed that the hostage-taker was a

British national.

A rabbi in New York City received a call from the rabbi believed to be held hostage in the synagogue to demand Siddiqui's release, a law enforcement official said. The New York rabbi then called 9/11. Police were first called to the synagogue around 11 am and people were evacuated from the surrounding neighborhood soon after that, FBI Dallas spokeswoman Katie Chaumont said. Saturday's services were being livestreamed on the synagogue's Facebook page for a time. The standoff prompted increased security in other places, including New York City, where police said that they increased their presence "at key Jewish institutions" out of an abundance of caution. In the years since, Pakistani officials have expressed interest publicly in any sort of deal or swap that could result in her release from US custody, and her case has continued to draw attention from supporters.

## Nepal urges India to stop construction activities in region

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kathmandu, Jan 16:** The Nepal government Sunday reiterated that Limpiyadhura, Lipulek and Kalapani are the country's "integral part" and urged India to stop all construction activities but asserted that it is committed to resolve the border issues through diplomatic channels.

The remarks comes a day after the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu issued a statement here, saying India's position on its boundary with Nepal is "well known, consistent and unambiguous. It has been communicated to the Government of Nepal."

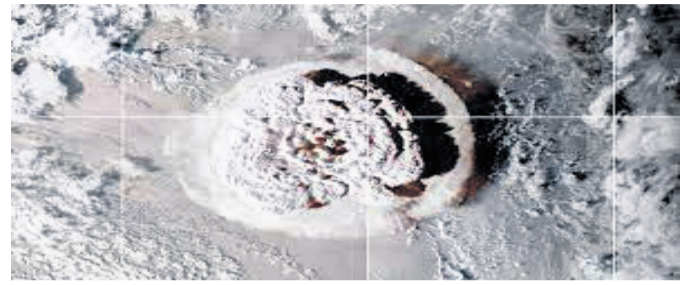
"It is our view that the established inter-governmental mechanisms and channels are most appropriate for communication and dialogue.



"Mutually agreed boundary issues that are outstanding can always be addressed in the spirit of our close and friendly bilateral relations," the statement said.

On Sunday, Communications and Information Technology Minister Gyanendra Bahadur Karki, who is also the Nepal government's spokesperson, said that the government is "firm and clear about the fact that Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura and Kalapani region east of the Mahakali river is an integral part of Nepal."

# Significant tsunami damage feared in Tonga, communications still cut



The eruption of an underwater volcano off Tonga, which triggered a tsunami warning for several South Pacific island nations, is seen in an image

REUTERS

**Wellington, Jan 16:** Tsunami-hit Tonga remained largely uncontactable Sunday with telephone and internet links severed, leaving relatives in faraway New Zealand praying for their families on the Pacific islands as casualty reports had yet to come through.

An underwater volcano off Tonga erupted Saturday, triggering warnings of 1.2-metre tsunami waves and evacuation orders on the shores of Tonga as well as several South Pacific islands, where footage on social media showed waves crashing into coastal homes.

Internet and phone lines went down at about 6.40 p.m. local time on Saturday, leaving the 105,000 residents on the islands virtually uncontactable.

There are no official reports of injuries or deaths in Tonga as yet although communications are limited and contact has not been established with outlying coastal areas beyond the capital Nukualofa and closer to the volcano, Jacinda Ardern the Prime Minister of New

Zealand told a news conference Sunday. Tonga, an island nation with around 105,000 residents, lies 2,383 kilometres (1,481 miles) north-east of New Zealand. "Nukualofa is covered in thick plumes of volcanic dust but otherwise conditions are calm and stable," Ardern said. "There are parts of Tonga where we just don't know yet... we just haven't established communication," she said.

Satellite images captured the volcanic eruption on Saturday as the explosion sent plumes of smoke into the air and about 12 miles above the sea level. The sky over Tonga was darkened by the ash.

Concerns were growing among the Tongan community in New Zealand, desperate to make contact with their families back home. Some churches organised community prayers in Auckland and other cities.

"We pray God will help our country at this sad moment. We hope everybody is safe," Maikeliti Atiolo, the Secretary of the Wesleyan Church of Tonga in Auckland said, Radio New Zealand reported.

# Ukraine claims Russia behind cyberattack



The ministry urged Ukrainians not to panic, saying their personal information was protected

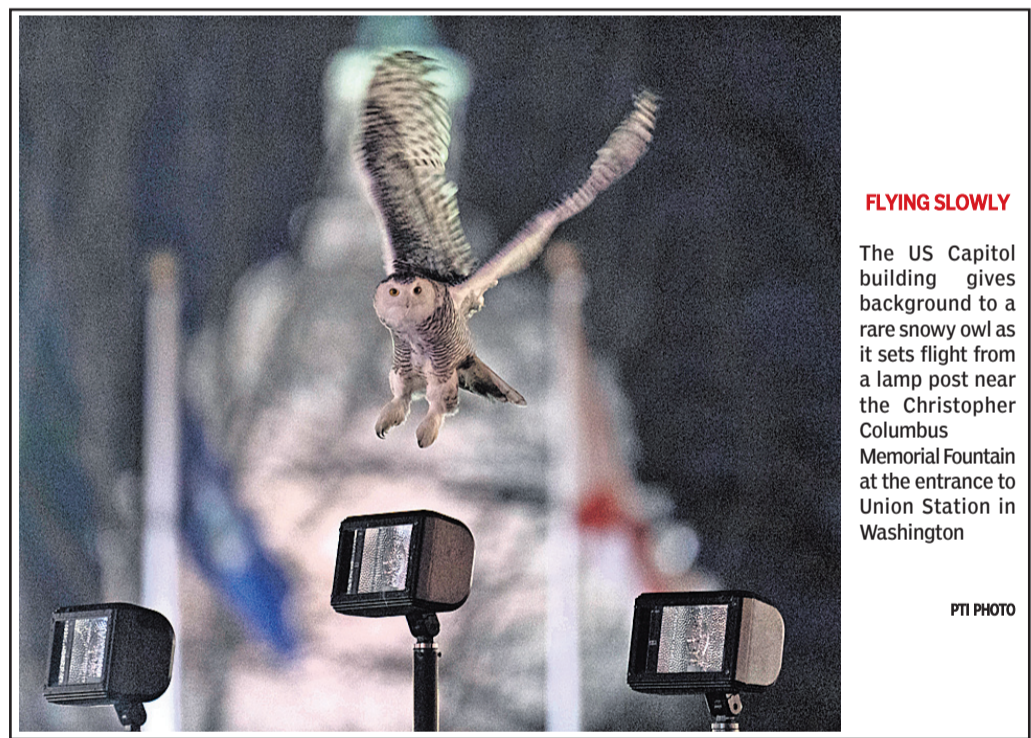
ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Kyiv, Jan 16:** Ukraine's Ministry of Digital Development said Sunday that Russia was behind a cyberattack that defaced government websites and it alleged that Russia is engaged in a "hybrid war" against its neighbour.

The statement came a day after Microsoft said dozens of computer systems at an unspecified number of Ukrainian government agencies had been infected with destructive malware disguised as ransomware. That disclosure suggested the attention-grabbing defacement attack on official websites last week was a diversion.

"All evidence indicates that Russia is behind the cyberattack. Moscow continues to wage a hybrid war and is actively building up its forces in the information and cyberspaces," the ministry statement

said. The attack comes as the threat of a Russian invasion of Ukraine looms and diplomatic talks to resolve the tense standoff appear stalled. Microsoft said in a short blog post Saturday that it first detected the malware on Thursday. That would coincide with the attack that simultaneously took some 70 Ukrainian government websites temporarily offline. Microsoft said in a different, technical post that the affected systems "span multiple government, non-profit, and information technology organizations." A top private sector cybersecurity executive in Kyiv, Oleh Derevianko, told The Associated Press that the intruders penetrated the government networks through a shared software supplier in a supply-chain attack like the 2020 SolarWinds Russian cyberespionage campaign that targeted the US Government.



FLYING SLOWLY

The US Capitol gives background to a rare snowy owl as it sets flight from a lamp post near the Christopher Columbus Memorial Fountain at the entrance to Union Station in Washington

PTI PHOTO

## Displaced Afghans selling kidneys, kids to survive

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kabul/New Delhi, Jan 16:** Displaced families living in a camp in the capital city of Balkh province of Afghanistan have sold their children and their kidneys for funds to survive, Tolo News reported.

The displaced families escaped heavy conflict between the Islamic Emirate and former government forces before the fall of the

publican government in the northern provinces of Balkh, Sar-e-Pul, Faryab and Jawzjan.

A charity committee is helping displaced families with food and cash aid in order to dissuade them from selling their children and kidneys. The price of a child is between 100,000 to 150,000 Afs and the price of one kidney is 150,000 to 220,000 Afs, the report said. The families are living in a camp in Mazar-e-Sharif, the cap-

ital of Balkh province. The families said that they were forced to make such decisions due to poverty, the economic problems in the country as well Covid-19's outbreak. These families were helped by a charity committee to stop them from selling the kids and kidneys.

The charity committee provided cash aid and food for thousands displaced and vulnerable people in Mazar-e-Sharif.

# Prince Harry takes legal action over family protection in UK

The 37-yr-old Duke of Sussex, wants to fund the security for his family himself during a future visit to his home country.

He reportedly does not want to ask British taxpayers to foot the bill, having stepped back as a senior member of the royal family

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, Jan 16:** Britain's Prince Harry, now based in the US with wife Meghan Markle and children Archie and Lilibet, is taking

legal action over a Home Office decision to prevent him from paying for police protection for himself and his family during visits to the UK.

The 37-year-old Duke of Sussex, who stepped back from frontline royal duties in 2020, wants to fund the security for his family himself during a future visit to his home country.

He reportedly does not want to ask British taxpayers to foot the bill, having stepped back as a senior member of the royal family. "The UK will always be Prince Harry's home and a country he wants his wife and children to be safe in," Harry's legal representative said in a statement.

"With the lack of police protection comes too great a personal risk. The Duke and Duchess of Sussex personally fund a private security team for their family, yet that security cannot replicate the necessary police protection needed whilst in the UK. In the absence of such protection, Prince Harry and his family are unable to return to his home," it noted.

Queen Elizabeth II's grandson and sixth in line to the British throne is believed to be arguing that his private protection team in the US does not have access to UK intelligence information, which is needed to keep his wife and children safe when they visit Britain.

Now based in California, Harry hopes to visit the UK with wife Meghan and seven-month-old daughter and two-year-old son. He has only travelled solo last year, to attend his grandfather Prince Philip's funeral in April and then



to unveil a statue in memory of his late mother Diana, Princess of Wales, in July.

The application for a judicial review – a legal challenge in the High Court in England against the decision of a public body or

government department – follows a security incident in London in July 2021 when Harry's car was chased by photographers as he left a charity event.

His legal representative's statement added: "Prince Harry in-

herited a security risk at birth, for life. He remains sixth in line to the throne, served two tours of combat duty in Afghanistan, and in recent years his family has been subjected to well-documented neo-Nazi and extremist threats. Prince Harry has spoken in the past about his security concerns ever since his mother, Princess Diana, died in a Paris car crash as her vehicle was chased by paparazzi photographers in August 1997.

A UK government spokesperson told the BBC that the country's "protective security system is rigorous and proportionate".

The spokesperson said: "It is our long-standing policy not to provide detailed information on those arrangements. To do so could compromise their integrity and affect individuals' security."

## of the day quote

Swadeshi Jagran Manch is deeply concerned to note that a huge number of unicorns, which have grown in the last one decade, have either flipped abroad or have been incorporated overseas

**ASHWANI MAHAJAN**  
NATIONAL CO-CONVENER, SJM

We have taken a step by step approach in developing electric vehicle strategy in India. Now we are in 50 cities with the EQC and the next step is to expand the portfolio with a car, which we believe has a stronger volume appeal and producing it locally

**MARTIN SCHWENK**  
MD & CEO, MERCEDES-BENZ

The hike in interchange fees by RBI coupled with various structural growth drivers, including expected increase in cash withdrawal transactions, will accelerate White Label ATMs deployments in the country

**K SRINIVAS** | MD AND CEO, INDIA1 PAYMENTS

## SHORT TAKES

### FPIs invest net ₹3,117cr so far

**New Delhi:** Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) reversed the three-month selling streak in January by investing net ₹3,117 crore in Indian markets, so far this month. Depositories data showed that they pumped ₹1,857 crore into equities and ₹1,743 crore into hybrid instruments during January 1-14. At the same time, they pulled out ₹482 crore from the debt segment, taking the total net inflow to ₹3,117 crore. Prior to this, overseas investors were net sellers in the Indian markets for three consecutive months since October 2021. "IT stocks have boomed in Jan after the good results of IT majors. This is likely to be repeated in the case of financials too," noted VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services.

### Power use grows 1.5% to 49.34BU

**New Delhi:** India's power consumption grew marginally at 1.5 per cent in the first fortnight of January to 49.34 billion units (BU) compared to the same period a year ago, showing the impact of local restrictions imposed by states amid the third wave of Covid-19. During January 1 to 14 in 2021, electricity consumption stood at 48.59 BU, as per power ministry data. Power consumption in the entire January last year was 109.76 BU, which was 4.4 per cent higher than 105.15 BU in January 2020. According to the data, peak power demand met or highest supply in a day rose to 179.59 GW during January 1 to 14 this year, compared to 178.88 GW in the same period of the previous year.

### PMC, USFB merger awaits govt nod

**New Delhi:** The proposed merger of debt-ridden Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative Bank with Unity Small Finance Bank (USFB) is being examined and the process of amalgamation will start after the government approval, sources said. Various aspects of the scheme of amalgamation have been examined and the government would soon send its suggestions, if any, to the RBI, sources said. The RBI in December extended the restrictions on Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank for another three months till the end of March, 2022 as all necessary process on the draft scheme for the takeover was not complete.



India's overall macroeconomic situation is in recovery mode... The worry stems from the fact that this growth is concentrated at the top end

**KAUSHIK BASU**  
CHIEF ECONOMIST, WORLD BANK

## FM HOLDS PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATIONS

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Sunday held pre-budget consultations with BJP leaders in which representatives from 25 states participated virtually and gave their suggestions on the budget. The meeting was conducted from the BJP's national headquarters by Vice President Bajajayant Panda, General Secretary Arun Singh and Spokesperson Gopal Krishna Agarwal



# PV exports up 46% in April-Dec

Our ambition was also inspired by a two-pronged strategy of the Commerce & Industry Ministry to deepen localisation and multiply exports as part of the overall Make in India vision, noted Maruti's Executive Director

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 16:** Passenger vehicle exports from India increased 46 per cent in the first nine months of the current fiscal year, with Maruti Suzuki India leading the segment with dispatches of around 1.68 lakh units, as per the latest data by SIAM.

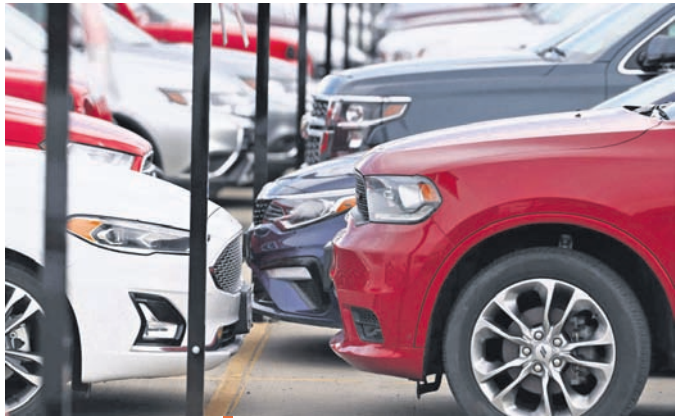
The total passenger vehicle (PV) exports stood at 4,24,037 units in April-December 2021-22 as compared with 2,91,170 units in the same period a year ago.

Passenger car shipments saw 45 per cent growth at 2,75,728 units while utility vehicle exports rose 47 per cent at 1,46,688 units during the period under review, the data by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers showed.

Export of vans nearly doubled to 1,621 units in April-December 2021-22 as compared with 877 units in the same period last fiscal year.

Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) led the segment during the period, followed by Hyundai Motor India and Kia India at the second and third positions, respectively.

MSI, the country's largest car-maker exported 1,67,964 PVs in the period under review, almost triple



Total PV exports stood at 4,24,037 units in April-Dec 2021-22 as compared with 2,91,170 units in the same period 2020-21

MSI led the segment during the period, followed by Hyundai Motor India and Kia India at the second and third positions, respectively

However, in December, total overseas PV shipments declined to 54,846 units as against 57,050 units in December 2020

as compared with 59,821 units in the same period of the previous fiscal year. Besides, the company shipped out 1,958 Super Carry (LCV) units during the nine-month period.

MSI's top PV export markets include Latin America, ASEAN, Africa, the Middle East and neighbouring regions while its top five export models comprise Baleno, Dzire, Swift, S-Presso and Brezza.

When contacted, MSI Executive Director (Corporate Affairs) Rahul Bharti told PTI that about two years ago, the company decided

to mount a strong effort towards a quantum increase in exports.

"With the strong support of our parent, Suzuki Motor Corporation, we worked on all fronts - expanding the export product portfolio, reaching out to more geographies/markets and expanding distributor network," he noted.

With this, during April-December 2021-22, the automaker was able to export 1,69,922 vehicles (PV plus LCV), the highest ever in a nine-month period, Bharti stated.

"Not only this, in the calendar year 2021, Maruti Suzuki exported 2,05,450 vehicles, the highest ever in a calendar year. These numbers show the confidence of customers around the world in the quality, technology, reliability, performance and cost-effectiveness of our cars," he noted.

Hyundai Motor India's foreign dispatches stood at 1,00,059 units during April-December 2021-22, up 35 per cent from the year-ago period.

Similarly, Kia India exported 34,341 units across global markets in the period under review as compared with 28,538 units in the last fiscal year. Volkswagen India exported 29,796 units in the April-December period.

## 33% DEMAND POTENTIAL SECURED

# IOC to invest ₹7K cr in city gas projects

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 16:** Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), the nation's largest oil firm, Sunday said it will invest over ₹7,000 crore in setting up city gas distribution (CGD) networks in the cities for which it has secured a licence in the latest bidding round.

IOC secured 33 per cent of the demand potential that was up for grabs in the recently concluded 11th round of CGD bidding, cornering cities from Jammu to Madurai to Haldia, the firm said.

Of the 61 geographical areas or GAs that received bids in the 11th round city gas distribution (CGD) bidding, IOC got 9 licenses to retail CNG to automobiles and piped cooking gas to households. Though the GAs it won were less than Megha Engineering and Infrastructures Ltd's 15 licences and Adani Total Gas Ltd's 14, in the terms of demand potential it got the maximum.

"The nearest competing bidder was left with less than 20 per cent of the demand potential in the bidding round in which IOC bagged 9 out of the 15 high potential GAs," the firm said in a statement.

"With this substantial win in the 11th bidding round, IOC and its associates would service almost 28 per cent of the combined CGD potential in the 3 rounds of bidding till now, which is far ahead of the next major player."

The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) last week opened the bids and decided on preliminary winners.

IOC's acquired GAs include major districts like Jammu, Pathankot, Sikar, Jalgaon, Guntur (Amravati), Tuticorin, Tirunelveli, Kanyakumari, Madurai, Dharmapuri and Haldia (East Midnapore). These districts contain high demand customers across the industry-commercial-domestic spectrum for PNG and CNG.

"Indian Oil plans to invest over ₹7,000 Crore in these new CGD Projects, over and above the ₹20,000 crore already planned for its CGD Vertical," the statement said.

Speaking on the occasion, IOC Chairman Shrikant Madhav Vaidya said the company has a proud



IOC along with its two joint venture companies is now present in 49 GAs and 105 districts spread across 21 states and UTs, making it one of the most significant CGD players in the country

legacy of always aligning its growth agenda with national priorities.

"And our concerted efforts to expand the gas business across the length and breadth of the country reflects our commitment to realise the Government's vision of raising the share of natural gas to 15 per cent," he said.

"Gas will play a significant role in India's march towards a low carbon future as part of its Panchamrit pledge during COP-26 summit to reduce total carbon emissions by one billion tonne from now till 2030."

Reflecting on the latest developments, Vaidya said IOC's "intelligently aggressive" approach in the latest CGD bidding process has been able to secure nine high market potential GAs that cover 26 districts spread across the country.

On a standalone basis, IOC will now have a presence in 26 GAs and 68 Districts spread across 11 states and UT covering nearly 20 per cent of the total CGD market potential in GAs announced recently in 3 bidding rounds.

## RED CARPET TO TESLA

January 13, Musk had informed that the EV maker is facing a "lot of challenges" for its car launch in India. "Still working through a lot of challenges with the government," Musk tweeted. In response to Musk, the Industry and Commerce Minister of Telangana, Rama Rao, said Telangana is a champion in sustainability initiatives and his government would be happy to partner with Tesla in working through the challenges



### Sidhu seeks Tesla's unit in Ludhiana

**Chandigarh:** In the run-up to the state assembly polls, Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee chief Navjot Singh Sidhu Sunday invited industry tycoon Elon Musk to set up Tesla's unit in state's industrial hub Ludhiana. "I invite @elonmusk, Punjab Model will create Ludhiana as a hub for Electric Vehicles & Battery industry with time-bound single-window clearance for investment that brings new technology to Punjab, create green jobs, walking path of environment preservation & sustainable development," Sidhu tweeted.



### Maharashtra minister invites Elon Musk

**New Delhi:** Maharashtra Water Resources Minister Jayant Patil Sunday offered Tesla CEO Elon Musk to set up manufacturing in the state for electric cars. This comes after Telangana Industry and Commerce Minister KT Rama Rao invited Musk to set up shop in his state. In his tweet to Musk, Patil said: "Maharashtra is one of the most progressive states in India. We will provide you all the necessary help from Maharashtra for you to get established in India. We invite you to establish your manufacturing plant in Maharashtra." "Our state is a champion in sustainability initiatives and a top notch business destination in India," he added.



# GOLD IMPORTS JUMP OVER TWO-FOLD TO \$38 BILLION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 16:** India's gold imports, which has a bearing on the country's current account deficit more than doubled to \$38 billion during April-December this fiscal on account of higher demand, according to data of the commerce ministry.



The imports stood at \$16.78 billion in April-December 2020. In December 2021, imports of the precious metal rose to \$4.8 billion from

\$4.5 billion in the year-ago period. The surge in gold imports during the nine months contributed to the widening of the trade deficit to \$142.44 billion against \$61.38 billion in April-December 2020.

Similarly, silver imports also increased to \$2 billion during April-December 2021 from \$762 million in the same period of the previous fiscal. India is the world's second-biggest gold consumer after China. The imports mainly take care of the demand by the jewellery industry. The gems and jewellery exports during the nine-month of the current fiscal grew by 71 per cent to about \$29 million. India's current account slipped into a deficit of \$9.6 billion or 1.3 per cent of GDP in the September quarter, according to the Reserve Bank.

# OIL exits US shale venture

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 16:** State-owned Oil India Ltd (OIL) has exited from a US shale oil venture, selling its 20 per cent stake to its venture partner for \$25 million - the second exit of an Indian firm from the US shale business in two months.

"Oil India (USA) Inc (wholly owned subsidiary of OIL), divested its entire stake in Niobrara shale asset, USA," a regulatory filing by the company said, adding the consideration received was \$25 million.

OIL and Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) had together in October 2012 bought a 30 per cent stake in Houston-based Carrizo Oil & Gas's Niobrara shale asset in Colorado for \$82.5 million. While OIL had acquired 20 per cent, IOC bought 10 per cent in Carrizo's Niobrara basin acreage assets through their

## 20% STAKE SOLD



respective subsidiaries.

The total investment of \$82.5 million included an upfront cash payment of \$41.25 million and a carry amount of \$41.25 million, linked to Carrizo's future drilling and development cost. The stake

was sold to Verdad Resources LLC, which is the operator of the asset.

Originally, OIL acquired the 20 per cent interest in the liquid rich shale asset in the Denver-Julesburg Basin from Carrizo Oil & Gas, Inc Carrizo sold its entire stake in the Niobrara asset to Verdad Resources LLC in January 2018. As a result, Verdad became the new operator of the asset. Haimo Oil & Gas holds the remaining 10 per cent stake in the project. The move by OIL follows Reliance Industries Ltd's exit from US shale, which has not been attractive in generating returns.

In November last year, Reliance said its wholly-owned subsidiary Reliance Eagleford Upstream Holding, LP has signed an agreement with Ensign Operating III, LLC to divest its interest in upstream assets in the Eagleford shale play of Texas.

# FACTORS IMPACTING TWO-WHEELER INSURANCE

Our two-wheelers hold a special place in our life; it is convenient to use, affordable and easy to maintain. For many of us, our two-wheeler is the easiest way to commute on regular basis. It is only natural that we want to ensure the safety of our vehicle, given its importance. One of the best ways to safeguard our two-wheeler is with help of insurance.

If you own a two-wheeler and have motor insurance, at some point you might have wondered about the factors that impact the cost of insurance premium. So let's see what are the main factors that affect our two-wheeler insurance cost.

### The Type of two-wheeler

The price of a two-wheeler varies as per the features, specifications, make, and model. Since insurance covers the cost of the two-wheeler, the insurance premium is directly

proportional to the cost of the vehicle. So, the premium of a two-wheeler that costs ₹75,000 will be less than the premium of a vehicle that costs ₹1,00,000.

Another important element that impacts the cost of insurance premium is the cubic capacity (CC) of the vehicle, the cc of a two-wheeler reflects the power output of its engine. A 75cc bike will attract a lower premium than a 350cc bike. The insurance regulator has defined slab rates basis on the cubic capacity of the vehicle to compute the third party premium that is a mandatory insurance requirement. Third party premium of electric 2W is now defined based on KW parameter of the vehicle (instead of CC)

### Age of the two-wheeler and IDV

You would have noticed that your insurer asks the age of the vehicle when you fill the proposal from or

fill in the details in the online portal of the insurer. This is because the older the vehicle, the lesser is its value thus lower the premium. Like every other asset, the value of your two-wheeler also starts depreciating with time; the older the vehicle, the higher is the rate of depreciation. The rate of depreciation for two-wheelers beings at 5% for a vehicle that is below 6 months old, and goes up to 50% for a vehicle that is older than 5 years.

Insured declared value (IDV) is the maximum value your insurer will pay for the complete damage or theft of your vehicle. The IDV is calculated each year during the renewal, the value arrived after computing depreciation. As your vehicle depreciates over the years, the IDV also comes down. Since IDV signifies the value of the vehicle, it plays a decisive role in premium computation.

### Type of coverage

Broadly speaking, there are two types of cover available, a Third Party (TP) cover and a Comprehensive cover. As per the law, it is mandatory to have a TP cover to run the vehicle on the road, the TP cover protects you against the third party liability which may arise if a third party suffers a financial loss attributable to your vehicle. However, the TP cover does not extend protection to your vehicle, for that you require a comprehensive policy.

A comprehensive policy shields your vehicle from natural calamities like hailstorms, earthquakes, floods, inundation, hurricanes, landslides, and rockslides. It also covers man-made disasters like riots, accidents, and thefts. The cost of a

comprehensive policy is higher than a TP-only cover because the former provide wider protection.

### No Claims Bonus (NCB)

Your insurer grants you NCB for each claim-free year. NCB is the reward you get for your good driving behavior. The discount is granted as per pre-defined slabs, it starts from 20% for the first claim-free year and goes up to a maximum of 50% for five consecutive claim-free years. NCB helps significantly to bring down your motor insurance premium.

### Add-on Covers

Add-on helps you strengthen the protection of your vehicle, and allows you to customise your cover. Each add-on has some

unique feature and serves a specific purpose. The insurance market offers various add-on like roadside assistance, zero depreciation, medical cover, engine protection, to name a few. These add-on covers come with a cost, thus increasing your motor premium. It is advisable that you pick the add-ons which suit your requirements and accordingly customise to expand your cover.



BY GURDEEP SINGH BATRA, HEAD - RETAIL UNDERWRITING, BAJAJ ALLIANZ GENERAL INSURANCE

# Oz seal 4-0 Ashes triumph

Australia won the first three Test matches before England escaped with a draw at Sydney, where the last pair of batters survived the final two overs under intense pressure in a result that eventually meant the tourists avoided a 5-0 sweep

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Hobart, Jan 16:** Australia completed a dominant 4-0 Ashes series victory over England Sunday by winning the fifth day-night Test by 146 runs with two days to spare. England, set a target of 271 for victory, crashed to 124 all out in the last session on the third day at Hobart, losing 10 wickets for 56 after Zak Crawley (36) and Rory Burns (26) combined in the best opening stand of the series by putting on 68 runs.

Fast bowlers Scott Boland (3-18) and Cameron Green (3-21) made an impact in their first Ashes series by sharing six wickets on a lively greenish wicket as England crumbled against pace for the second time in the match after being dismissed for 188 in the first innings in reply to Australia's score of 303.

Australia skipper Pat Cummins also had an impact in his second spell to finish with 3-42 on an eventful day that saw 17 wickets tumble for the second successive day in the game. Cummins, who grabbed the last two wickets off three balls, led from the front in his first series as Australia captain and grabbed 21 wickets.

"Really feels like we are building



The Australian team posing with the trophy after a spectacular performance throughout the series

to something big. To have someone like Cameron Green in his second year to grow as a batter and bowler as well as some of the younger players ... can't wait to show our wares overseas, we really judge ourselves in all conditions," said Cummins

Earlier, Australia was bowled out for 155 just after the dinner break for an overall lead of 270 runs after it resumed from an overnight 37-3.

England pacesman Mark Wood snared 6-37, utilizing short-ball tactics against the Australians to perfection. Alex Carey top-scored

for Australia with 49 after getting two reprieves.

"We've been outplayed in all areas and credit to Australia," said England captain Joe Root, who remained the tourists' lone fighter with 322 runs, behind only Travis Head (357) and Marnus Labuschagne (335) who led the home side.

Australia missed an early opportunity when Burns could have been out lbw in Mitchell Starc's second over, but Cummins chose not to go for a television referral as the replays suggested the ball crashing onto the top of the stumps.

Burns and Crawley showed the

first real intent from any English batsmen in the series by driving off their pads against Cummins and Starc as they scored at a healthy run-rate of more than four runs an over.

But once Green was introduced at the stroke of the tea break, the tall fast bowler had Burns deflect a short delivery onto his stump as the left-hander was unsure whether to play the ball or leave it.

Boland then limited the runs through his impeccable fast bowling before claiming the wicket of skipper Root for the fourth time in the series as the ball stayed below the knee roll and crashed onto the off stump.

Boland then struck in successive overs when Sam Billings, playing in his debut Test, lobbed a gentle catch to mid-on and Carey played another blinder to dismiss Chris Woakes.

Cummins finished off the game by clean bowling Wood and Ollie Robinson as Australia recorded victory in a Test match in which off-spinner Nathan Lyon didn't bowl a single over.

## ISL COVID WOES

# Significant absentees make clubs call emergency meet

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Jan 16:** The Indian Super League (ISL) clubs are facing problems on multiple fronts due to the rising number of Covid-19 cases and have called an urgent meeting Sunday to discuss their concerns, sources in the know of things told media.

After a spurt in Covid-19 cases in different clubs, several players have locked themselves up in their rooms and are not even coming out for training.

As many as four ATK Mohun Bagan players in the bio-secure bubble had been reported to be positive and the Juan Ferrando-coached side had been locked in their rooms for one week without a single training session

Players of other teams including FC Goa, Bengaluru FC and Odisha FC also contracted the coronavirus, while SC East Bengal too isolated themselves after their hotel staff inside the bio bubble found positive

"Every club is worried about their players and support staff. The way Covid-19 is spreading and affecting the players' mental and physical health, it would be very difficult for any club to field 11 players. One has to be realistic about the situation," said a source.

ISL had already postponed some games including ATK Mohun Bagan's match against Bengaluru FC Saturday, hours before the start. This was ATK Mohun Bagan's second successive match to be postponed.

Earlier, their match against Odisha FC was postponed after an unnamed player reported positive for the virus.

Despite reporting three positive cases in their bio-secure bubble on the day of the match, Odisha FC played their match against Kerala Blasters January 12.

Meanwhile, Kerala Blaster coach Ivan Vukomanovic said that every-



## Kerala Blasters VS Mumbai City FC postponed

**Panaji:** The Indian Super League (ISL) match between Kerala Blasters FC and Mumbai City FC in Vasco was postponed Sunday, hours before their kick-off as the southern outfit did not have the requisite number of players available for the match.

The match was scheduled to be played at the Tilak Maidan in Vasco. The tournament organisers did not specify the reason for the postponement but sources

close to the league attributed it to the pandemic. The decision has been taken in consultation with the League's medical team after it was assessed that the Blasters do not have requisite number of players available for the match.

The League will work closely with the medical experts to monitor and ensure the safety of all the players and support staff in the squad and others involved, ISL added in the statement.

body is now talking about rising cases, and no one is interested in the game.

"Well, it's obviously not easy, seeing the circumstances not just for our club but so far I think nine clubs are in lockdown. Nobody is talking about football anymore because everyone is concerned. We have families here. I just hope everybody stays safe. I have confidence in the ISL people. They have things under control. But of course, it's not easy," the coach said in the pre-match press conference Saturday.

The players are now worried about the league and some of them

made critical remarks about ISL on social media.

"Yesterday, we played the game with nine casualties due to Covid cases. Today, for the second consecutive match another team suspends its game for the same reason. Can someone explain that to me? Adulterated competition," Goa captain Edu Bedia wrote on his Instagram story Saturday.

Meanwhile, ISL said in a statement that the health and safety of all personnel in various bubbles remain our priority, and the League and clubs will continue to monitor the situation and act accordingly.

## CAPTAINS' TAKE



It's pretty crazy, even as a professional cricketer these are the series you have in your diary a couple of years out

PAT CUMMINS | AUSTRALIA SKIPPER

We've been outplayed in all areas and credit to Australia. We've played good cricket in parts, just not been able to structure a whole game together

JOE ROOT | ENGLAND SKIPPER



# VIDIT'S VICTORIOUS START

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Wijk Aan Zee, Jan 16:** Indian Grandmaster Vidit Santosh Gujrathi began his campaign at the Tata Steel Masters Chess tournament with a win over American Sam Shankland here.

After the rating favourites Magnus Carlsen, Fabiano Caruana (USA) and Anish Giri (the Netherlands) drew their games, Jan-Krzysztof Duda, Gujrathi and Jorden van Foreest grabbed the lead with victories in round one late Saturday. Gujrathi, the India No 2 behind Viswanathan Anand, took advantage of a mistake by Shankland, playing black on the 33rd move to grind out a win in 73 moves.

Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa, the other Indian player in the fray in the Masters section of the Tata Steel chess tournament, opened

## TATA STEEL CHESS



with a draw against Anish Giri (the Netherlands) in 44 moves.

The 16-year old Indian faced Giri in a rare line of the English Opening with Black. The Dutchman made a pawn sacrifice to grab the initiative, but the Indian youngster neutralised white's threats and safely played out a draw.

World No 1 Carlsen of Norway was held to a draw by Russia's

Andrey Esipenko in 21 moves as chose to play it safe against the highly-rated opponent.

Caruana had the upper hand against Sergey Karjakin (Russia) but missed a couple of good attacking opportunities and allowed his opponent to escape with a draw.

In the second round later Sunday night, Gujrathi faces Caruana while Praggnanandhaa takes on Jan-Krzysztof Duda (Poland).

A total of 14 players are taking part in the round-robin tournament featuring 13 rounds with Carlsen headlining a strong field.

Meanwhile in the Challengers event, being held simultaneously, experienced Indian GM Surya Sekhar Ganguly began with a victory over Marc Andria Maurizzi of France. Arjun Erigaisi, the top-seed, was held to a draw by Lucas van Foreest (the Netherlands).

## YONEX-SUNRISE INDIA OPEN

# Lakshya Sen stuns world champion Yew

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 16:** India's Lakshya Sen secured his maiden Super 500 title by winning the Yonex-Sunrise India Open with a stunning straight-game victory over reigning world champion Loh Kean Yew of Singapore in the men's singles final in Delhi Sunday.

The 20-year-old Sen, who had claimed his maiden world championships medal with a bronze in Spain last month, produced a fine performance to outshine the fifth seeded shuttler 24-22 21-17 in the summit clash that lasted 54 minutes.

In a repeat of last year's Dutch Open final, the Indian ensured that he had the last laugh this time around. Going into this match,



the two had a 2-2 head-to-head record with Sen losing two of the last three meetings, but the Indian was the better man on show Sunday as he showed great ath-

leticism, used his attacking shots to good effect and came up with his punched winners from the back at the right moments.

Last year, the youngster made

it to the semifinals at Hylo, reached the knockout stage at World Tour Finals on debut before sizzling at the World Championships with a bronze.

## Satwik-Chirag pair claims maiden title

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty Sunday became the first team from country to win the Yonex-Sunrise India Open after topping three-time world champions Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Setiawan, here. The world number 10 Indian pair, which had won its first Super 500 tournament in Thailand in 2019, upset the top seeded Indonesian pair 21-16 26-24 in 43 minutes to make a rampaging start to the new season. Coming into the match with a 1-3 head-to-head record, Satwik and Chirag dished out a brave effort as they staged off a fightback to reign supreme in the final. From almost missing the tournament following a false COVID positive result to winning the title, it turned out to be an incredible start to 2022 for the Indian pair.



# Kohli one of the finest captains: BCCI

Under Kohli, India won 40 out of 68 Tests, a record which made him one of the successful Test captains in world cricket

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 16:** Virat Kohli is "one of the finest captains" and "once in a generation" cricketer, BCCI aid in its rich tribute after the star batter quit as Test captain and asserted that it was a personal decision which the cricket body respects.

Kohli Saturday ended his seven-year reign as India's most successful Test captain, a day after an unexpected 1-2 series loss against South Africa.

"Kohli will continue to be a very important member of this team and take this team to newer heights with his contributions with the bat under a new captain. Every good thing comes to an end and this has been a very good one," BCCI president Sourav Ganguly added.

Kohli's strained relations with the BCCI recently made headlines when the star batter quit T20 captaincy and was later sacked as ODI captain. Ganguly had said they had requested Kohli to stay back till the T20 World Cup, a claim which Kohli contradicted.

Kohli has been the most successful Test captain India has ever produced. After taking over the reins from Mahendra Singh Dhoni, he led India in 68 Test matches and secured 40 wins at a win percentage of 58.82. As Test captain, he registered his first series win against Sri Lanka in 2015, a vic-

tory that India registered in the Emerald Island after 22 years.

"Virat Kohli has been one of the finest captains to have ever led the Indian cricket team. His record and contribution towards the team as a leader has been second to none. To lead India in 40 Test wins is proof that he led the side with aplomb," BCCI secretary Jay Shah said.

Under Kohli's leadership, India also registered their first Test series win in Australia in 2018, clinched series in the West Indies, attained the No 1 spot in Test rankings and later in the subsequent years marched into the maiden ICC World

Test Championship Final in 2021. Kohli also holds the impeccable record of winning 24 out of the 31 Tests played at home as captain, having lost only two Tests.

While Kohli is India's most successful Test skipper, MS Dhoni is second in the list with 27 victories in 60 games and Ganguly comes third with 21 wins.

Kohli also ranks fourth in the list of most victories as Test captain behind South Africa's Graeme Smith (53) and Australian duo of Ricky Ponting (48) and Steve Waugh (41).

It is expected that Rohit Sharma will now lead India in Tests apart from captaining the side the white-ball games.



Shocked!! But congratulations on a successful stint as Indian captain. All the best wishes for the future

ROHIT SHARMA | ODI CAPTAIN OF INDIA

Under his leadership, the Indian cricket team has made rapid strides in all formats of the game. His decision is a personal one and the BCCI respects it immensely

SOURAV GANGULY | BCCI PRESIDENT

I think, in some way, he wants to make himself unsackable as captain. When he gets that vibe that his captaincy is under threat, he tends to quit

SANJAY MANUREKAR | EX INDIAN CRICKETER

Cricket captains will always be spoken about with respect to their records and the kind of triumphs they managed, but your legacy as a captain will stand for the kind of benchmarks you have set

RAVICHANDRAN ASHWIN | INDIAN CRICKETER

As a captain, I have experienced that series defeats overseas are not taken too kindly by the board and the cricket-loving public or board officials. The captain is in danger of being sacked

SUNIL GAVASKAR | EX INDIAN CAPTAIN