



### JOB SATISFACTION

Actor Vani Kapoor says in the profession of acting one can get to live so many lives


LEISURE | P2



### ‘IN THE NAME OF GOD, GO’

Boris Johnson defies calls to resign, but it may be too little to prevent his party lawmakers from trying to oust him

INTERNATIONAL | P10



### SINDHU ADVANCES

Shuttler PV Sindhu humbles Tanya Hemanth to sail into the second round of the Syed Modi International

SPORTS | P12



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## 30K OmiSure kits to be used in 4 towns

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 19:** The state government has received 30,000 OmiSure testing kits, which will be used on a trial run basis in four towns of the state to detect the Omicron variant of Covid-19, an official said Wednesday.

Odisha is the first state in India to place an order for the OmiSure kits. It had placed orders to procure 5 lakh kits, of which 30,000 kits

## 145 fresh Omicron cases in state

**Bhubaneswar:** The state Wednesday witnessed a sharp rise in its Omicron tally with 145 new cases of the highly contagious variant of Covid-19 being detected, Health and Family Welfare Department said.

The Indian Life Sciences conducted the genome sequencing of 249 samples from which traces of Omicron strain were found in 145 samples. P3

have arrived, the official said.

"The OmiSure kits have arrived. There are many variants of Covid-19. Omicron is one among them, which is highly transmissible. The OmiSure kits will be sent to places having a high caseload for an internal study," said State director of health services, Bijay Mohapatra.

The kits will be sent to Bhubaneswar, Berhampur, Cuttack and Rourkela where a high number of Covid cases are being detected in comparison to other places of the state, he informed.

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) had recently approved the OmiSure kits developed by the Tata Medical and Diagnostics Ltd. (Tata MD) for RT-PCR detection of the Omicron variant.

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX		VARIATION
SENSEX	60098.82	↓ 656.04
NIFTY	17938.40	↓ 174.60
DOLLAR	74.49	↓ ₹0.18
EURO	84.44	↑ ₹0.04
GOLD	₹48,104	↑ ₹178
SILVER	₹63,820	↑ ₹801

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP		
MAX	27.0°C	26.8°C
MIN	13.0°C	13.0°C
Humidity	84%	84%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Dry weather most likely	

## Relief to ArcelorMittal's Odisha plan

**New Delhi:** The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has approved ArcelorMittal India's takeover bid for Odisha Slurry Pipeline Infrastructure Ltd (OSPIL) after it dismissed a batch of appeals filed against the LN Mittal-owned unit's resolution plan for the loan defaulter firm. A two-member bench, comprising Jarat Kumar Jain (judicial member) and Kanthi Narahari, Tuesday approved the earlier order passed by the Cuttack bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), which had approved ArcelorMittal India's bid for the company. Confirming the development, Senior Advocate Ramji Srinivasan, who had represented OSIL's Resolution Professional, told PTI: "The NCLAT had dismissed all the appeals filed against the resolution plan."



P11

## No liquor sale for 48 hrs before polls

■ The SEC ban on liquor will come into force two days before polling during all five phases. It will also continue during the voting day



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 19:** With an aim to ensure free and fair panchayat election, the State Election Commission (SEC) has issued an order to impose a complete ban on sale and distribution of liquor for 48 hours including the voting day.

SEC Secretary RN Sahu Wednesday wrote a letter to the excise department secretary for this purpose. "The commission has directed that no spirituous, fermented or intoxicating liquor or other substances of like nature shall be sold, given or transported to or distributed at hotels, eating houses, taverns, shops or any other place, public or private, within respective wards during 48 hours preceding the poll up to the day following the poll day," Sahu said in his letter. The excise department was asked to issue necessary instructions to the field level officials. The election officers concerned have been advised to make a copy of the detailed area-wise poll programme available to the

excise commissioner and concerned district superintendents of excise.

The SEC has also directed the Home department to ensure that no arms and fatal weapons are allowed to the booths. People carrying licenced guns and other weapons are prohibited from moving around near the places from February 14 (5 pm) to March 1 (5 pm), the commission said.

However, the authorized personnel who are on polling duty like polling officers, police officers and any other persons appointed to maintain law and order can carry such weapons. The SEC asked the state government to grant paid holiday to all of its employees on the day of poll. Government employees who desire to vote at a place away from their headquarters will be allowed a special CL for a maximum period of three days.

Moreover, the SEC has written to the labour and ESI department to ensure that every person employed in business, trade, industrial undertaking and desiring to vote shall be granted paid holiday.

## Mulayam's daughter-in-law joins BJP

**New Delhi:** Samajwadi Party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav's daughter-in-law Aparna Yadav joined the BJP Wednesday, asserting that she has always been impressed with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. She joined the party in the presence of Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya and its state chief Swatantra Dev Singh. Expressing her admiration for Modi, she also said the nation's interest has always been a priority for her and praised several schemes of the BJP government for cleanliness, empowerment of women and employment.

Aparna Yadav is married to Prateek Yadav, son of Mulayam Singh Yadav's second wife while SP president Akhilesh Yadav is his son from the first marriage.



# B'lore-Bhub plane averts crash

■ Both aircraft after departure were on converging heading i.e. moving towards each other. Approach radar controller gave diverging heading and avoided mid-air collision

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Jan 19:** Two IndiGo planes averted mid-air collision over the Bangalore airport just after their take-off on the morning of January 9, senior officials of aviation regulator DGCA said Wednesday.

The incident was not logged in any logbook and it was not reported by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) either, they said. Meanwhile, DGCA chief Arun Kumar told PTI that the regulator is investigating the incident "and shall take strictest action against those found delinquent".

IndiGo and the AAI did not respond to PTI's request for a statement on this matter. Officials of Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said that the two IndiGo planes -- 6E455 (Bangalore to Kolkata) and 6E246 (Bangalore to Bhubaneswar) -- were involved in 'breach of separation' at Bangalore airport.

Breach of separation happens when two aircraft cross the minimum mandatory vertical or horizontal distance in an airspace. Both these aircraft departed from the Bangalore airport within a span of approximately 5 minutes on the morning of January 9, the officials mentioned.

"Both aircraft after departure were on converging heading i.e. Moving towards each other. Approach radar controller gave diverging heading and avoided mid-air collision," one of the officials noted. The Bangalore-Kolkata flight carried 176 passengers and six crew, while the Bangalore-Bhubaneswar flight carried 238 passengers and six crew - a total of 426 passengers.



## INDIA EXTENDS BAN ON INT'L FLIGHTS TILL FEB 28

**New Delhi:** India's civil aviation regulator, the DGCA, Wednesday extended the ban on scheduled international commercial flights till February 28, 2022. At present, India suffers from a third Covid wave which is said to be driven by the Omicron variant. In a notification, the DGCA extended the ban on scheduled international commercial flights till February 28, 2022. "This restriction shall not apply to international all-cargo operations and flights specifically approved by the DGCA. However, flights under Air Bubble agreement will not be affected." Last month, the civil aviation regulator had extended the ban on scheduled international commercial flights till January 31, 2022.

## FLIGHTS TO US GROUNDED

### 5G SCORE

**New York:** Travel plans for thousands of passengers, including those travelling to India, were disrupted after airlines cancelled or curtailed some flights to and from the US over the issue of deployment of new 5G service, scheduled to begin from Wednesday.

Several international airlines, including Air India, have announced that they will cancel flights into the US, warning that the signals from new 5G phone service could interfere with aeroplane navigation systems. The US aviation regulator

Federal Aviation Administration January 14 said that "5G interference with the aircraft's radio altimeter could prevent engine and braking systems from transitioning to landing mode, which could prevent an aircraft from stopping on the runway".

The C-band service, which offers faster speeds and broader coverage, was due to be turned on from Wednesday. Air India said due to deployment of 5G communications in the US, "our operations to the USA from India stand curtailed/revised with change in aircraft type from January 19, 2022."

## GUARDING LoC



Army jawans patrol in a snow-covered area near the LoC in Poonch, Wednesday

PTI PHOTO

## Nachika Linga throws his hat into poll ring

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Koraput, Jan 19:** Tribal leader and Chasi Mulia Adivashi Sangha (CMAS) chief Nachika Linga Wednesday filed nomination papers for the lone Zilla Parishad zone of Narayanpatna block in Koraput district. He filed his nominations at the office of sub-collector Lalit Kumar Kanhar in Koraput this afternoon.

His son Rabi Nachika also filed the nomination for the same zone. Nachika's daughter-in-law has filed her nomination papers for the post of sarpanch of Podapadar panchayat in the district. Nachika had filed his nomination for the same seat in 2017 panchayat polls through his lawyer as he was lodged in Koraput Circle Jail then in connection with 45 cases registered against him.



The attack on Narayanpatana police station November 20, 2009 is one of the cases.

Nachika was arrested and remanded to judicial custody after he surrendered before police October, 2014. He was released on bail by the Orissa High Court (HC) November 2020 after spending six years in jail.

## Borrowers to gain as govt sanctions ₹974cr loan moratorium

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Jan 19:** In a major relief for borrowers, especially of home loans, hit by the outbreak of Covid and the lockdown, the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Wednesday approved the payment of ex-gratia amount of ₹973.74 crore to the SBI as reimbursement related to loan moratorium.

This is pertaining to remaining claims submitted by Lending Institutions (LIs) under the scheme for grant of ex-gratia payment of difference between compound interest and simple interest for six months to borrowers in specified loan accounts from March 1, 2020 to August 31, 2020, when India was hit hard by the pandemic, finance ministry said. About 1,612 LIs have 23,89,30,080 beneficiaries with a claim of ₹6,473.74 crore, out of which ₹5,500 crore have been disbursed earlier; and claims of ₹973.74 crore were pending.

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, a scheme for grant of ex-gratia payment of difference between compound interest and simple interest for six months to borrowers in specified loan accounts from March 1, 2020 to August 31, 2020 was approved by the Cabinet in October 2020, envisaging therein an outlay of ₹5,500 crore. Budget allocation of ₹5,500 crore was made for the scheme in FY 2020-2021. The amount of ₹5,500 crore has been disbursed to SBI, the nodal agency under the scheme, for consequent reimbursement to lending institutions. The SBI said it received consolidated claims of ₹6,473.74 crore approx from lending institutions. As ₹5,500 crore has already been disbursed, the Cabinet's nod was sought for a balance amount of ₹973.74 crore.



I've always said that I will play until I enjoy that grind... and I am not sure I'm enjoying it anymore

SANIA MIRZA

AGENCIES

**Melbourne, Jan 19:** Trailblazing India tennis star Sania Mirza Wednesday announced that she will hang up her racquet at the end of 2022 season as her body is "wearing down" and the motivation and energy for everyday grind is not the same anymore.

Winner of six Grand Slam titles, including three mixed doubles, Sania will retire as India's most accomplished woman tennis player. The 35-year-old made the retirement announcement after losing the Australian Open women's doubles first round with partner Nadia Kichenok. They lost to Slovenia's Tamara Zidansek and Kaja Juvan.

"There's a bunch of reasons for it. I do feel my recovery is taking longer and considering my son is three years old, I do feel I am putting him at risk by travelling so much with him. Unfortunately the pandemic is making us take certain decision for the well-being of ourselves and family," Mirza said at the post-match press conference.

"Also, my body is wearing down. My knee was really hurting today and I'm not saying that's the reason we lost but I do think that it is taking time to recover as I'm getting older," she said. Sania, who became world number one in doubles during her successful partnership with Swiss legend Martina Hingis, said there were certain issues that influenced her decision.

"Also for me to find that motivation everyday to come out, the energy is not the same anymore. Right this minute, it's there but there are days where I don't feel like doing that. I've always said that I will play until I enjoy that grind, the process and not just winning but you have to enjoy the

process and I am not sure I'm enjoying it anymore. "I am enjoying it enough to play this season. I've worked very hard to come back, get fit, lose the weight and try to set a good example for mothers, new mothers to follow their dreams as much as they can. Beyond this season, I don't feel my body doing it. It's beat," said the world number 68.

She reached top-30 in singles with 27 being her career best rank. Sania quit singles after a wrist injury to focus on doubles and enjoyed exceptional results. Sania said she feels that she was playing at a decent level but she always knew that 2022 will be her last season and Wednesday's defeat was no trigger for it.



# leisure

## FORTUNE FORECAST

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### ARIES

Joining a yoga class will be a good decision. You should try ayurvedic foodstuffs too. You may expect a lot of new things to happen today. Ganesha advises you not to worry as there is a good amount of money coming up for you.

### TAURUS

Your thoughts are not likely to remain focused in your business or profession. Ganesha sees them drifting from such issues and moving towards your home and family members. You will be keenly aware of the fact that you have been neglecting your family interests and affairs on account of your professional involvement.

### GEMINI

You will be unable to cope with the flurry of demands made upon your time and person by those around you. You will try to break free of the rut and look for some new things to do in the evening. Some creative and constructive work will provide you with much needed respite from the demands of the day, says Ganesha.

### CANCER

Your natural talents will be rewarded at work, predicts Ganesha. Later in the day, your peers will fully co-operate to help you achieve your goals. Your popularity will grow by leaps and bounds. But you should not let success get to your head.

### LEO

With your penchant for being almost surgical in your tasks, it seems there isn't a single blunder that escapes your trained eye. This fact comes to the fore today and helps you step into the lime-light, especially at work, where your efforts get noticed and appreciated. Wisdom always was the prerogative of the observant mind, and so was a bit of indulgence.

### VIRGO

The day will bring in innovation and ingenuity on your part today. Expect a probable visit to a museum or a historical place, says Ganesha. Being frisky will help shape that body up a bit. Entertainment will work as a wonderful remedy to cure the wounds of an estranged relationship, says Ganesha.

### LIBRA

Money matters may cause you some concern, at least till the latter half of the day, foresees Ganesha. After that, those financial troubles will make way for lucrative opportunities. Expect to make money from all quarters later in the afternoon. You shall be your own boss when it comes to making career decisions.

### SCORPIO

Athletes will achieve prime fitness and form today, says Ganesha. Engineers will design plans that will concentrate their resources on laying the foundation to new business ventures. Your social reputation will get a major boost later in the day.

### SAGITTARIUS

Today will be a day when you are inclined not only to being upbeat but also firm, says Ganesha. In your line of work, you may get passionate about your views. But compromise is on the cards and that too without any harm to your dignity.

### CAPRICORN

Dreading the consequences of errors induced in the past, you will be extra cautious while working on important assignments and will try to save your skin, says Ganesha. This apart, you will spend a major part of the day worrying over career prospects and mulling a change of job.

### AQUARIUS

You will plan your day well. Good, says Ganesha, as it does away with the clutter in your schedule. That way, you will also get more time to do stuff you never came around doing it.

### PISCES

A good day for investments and speculations, especially in the real estate markets. Your gains will outweigh the risks associated with your transactions. However, maintain some monetary reserves to invest in other opportunities, as even better times are round the corner.



## SEX AND THE CITY CAN BE A TEACHING TOOL: KRISTIN DAVIS

Actress Kristin Davis, who played the part of Charlotte Goldenblatt in the iconic TV series *Sex and the City*, thinks it could provide some valuable life lessons for her own children.

## WHEN BAREILLES FEELS PROFOUND, HOLY RELIEF

American singer-songwriter Sara Bareilles has admitted she feels profound, holy relief after starting to take medication for the first time to help battle her depression and anxiety.



# Vaani wants a diverse filmography

**Mumbai:** Actress Vaani Kapoor, who recently essayed a trans woman in *Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui*, is consciously working on shaping up her filmography by choosing scripts and characters that are different from the league.

She hopes that her work in *Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui* and her upcoming release *Shamshera* where she will be seen opposite Ranbir Kapoor, will incite the confidence in film-makers about her craft.

Talking about the same, she says, "I would like my filmography to be as diverse as possible and after showing my range as an actor in *Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui* and *Shamshera*, I can only hope that filmmakers would feel extremely confident to approach me with any challenging role."

She adds, "I will give it my best to pull off any character that I'm approached with to play on screen." Stating her opinion on the best thing about the profession of acting, the actress says, "The best thing about our profession is that one can get to become so many characters and live so many lives." IANS

## FIRST TIME IN HISTORY

## Grammy Awards evening to be in Vegas



*Jon Batiste is leading the 2022 Grammy nominee list with 11 nods, followed by Justin Bieber, Doja Cat and H.E.R. with eight nominations each*

**Los Angeles:** The 64th Grammy Awards, which were earlier scheduled to be held here January 31, have been moved to a later date owing to the surge in the Omicron variant in downtown Los Angeles.

The ceremony will now be held April 3 at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas, for which Trevor Noah, long-running host of *The Daily Show* and of the 2021 Grammys, will return as master of ceremonies, re-

ports Variety.

Additional details about the dates and locations of other official Grammy Week events, including the Premiere Ceremony the MusiCares Person of the Year benefit concert (which will honour Joni Mitchell), and the Clive Davis Pre-Grammy Gala (honouring Sony Music chief Rob Stringer) are still awaited, according to Variety.

This is the first time in the history of the prestigious award ceremony that it will be held in Las Vegas. The move has bumped the CMT Awards, which were originally scheduled to air live April 3 night on CBS.

Jon Batiste is leading the 2022 Grammy nominee list with 11 nods, followed by Justin Bieber, Doja Cat and H.E.R. with eight noms each. Billie

# 'Have stopped reading new scripts'

**Mumbai:** Blame it on the backlog of films created by the second wave of the pandemic and newer offers coming his way, but Manoj Bajpayee is starting at a hectic 2022. The actor

Eilish and Olivia Rodrigo have seven nominations apiece. Jesse Collins, Raj Kapoor and Ben Winston will serve as executive producers, with Kapoor, an Indian American entertainment executive, taking over the reins from Winston as the showrunner. IANS

wrapped up the shoot of Raam Reddy's yet-untitled project and Kanu Behl's investigative thriller *Despatch* in 2021. Before he could take a breather, he dived into his next with Abhishek Chaubey. The yet-untitled project, which reunites him with the filmmaker after their gritty *Sonchiriya* (2019), will see him sharing screen space with Konkona Sen Sharma.

Bajpayee admits that the frenetic pace can be overwhelming at times. "With the commitments I have, it will be hectic till the end of 2023. I have to finish all the films I have committed to. Only

for this reason, I have stopped reading new scripts and taking narrations. At this point of time, I don't have dates," says the actor.

AGENCIES



**Mumbai:** Actors Pratik Gandhi, Wamiqa Gabbi, and Fatima Sana Shaikh will be part of the Indian adaptation of popular American romantic comedy anthology *Modern Love*.

According to sources close to the development, "Each of the actors is helming different directors' stories in the anthology. And it's an ex-

citing lineup of directors and actors who have come together. The series was shot late in 2021 and is believed to be releasing soon on an OTT platform."

The anthology will be directed by some renowned filmmakers like Hansal Mehta, Vishal Bhardwaj, Anjali Menon, Alankrita Shrivastava, Dhruv Sehgal and Shonali Bose.

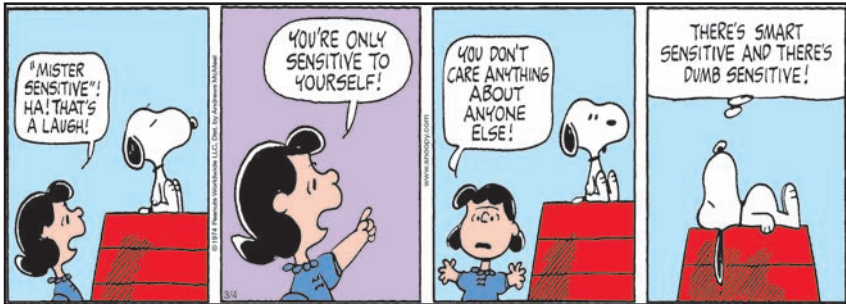
The anthology series explores love in all of its complicated and beau-

tiful forms, as well as its effects on the human connection. Each episode brings to life a different story that has been inspired by a newspaper column.

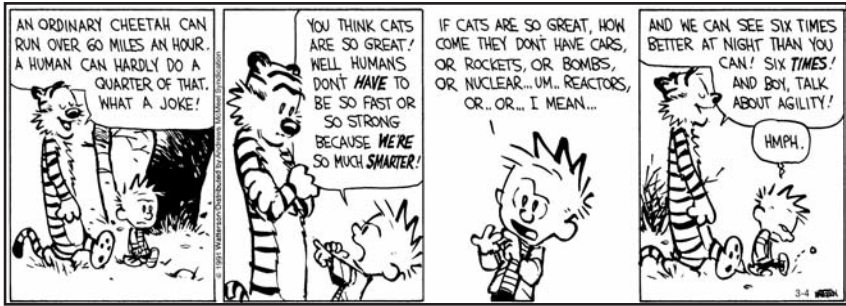
The Indian adaptation will have a similar yet fresh concept around the various stories being presented as episodes. IANS



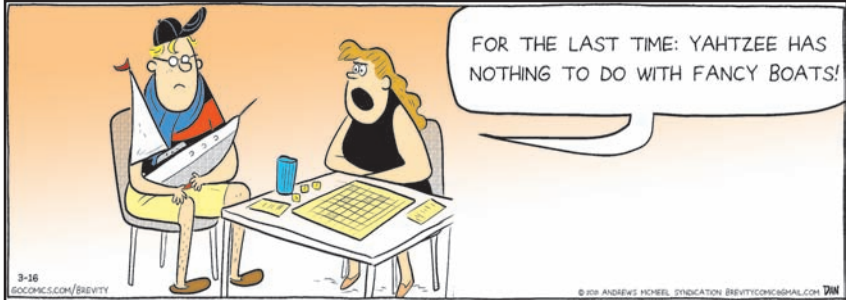
## PEANUTS



## CALVIN AND HOBBS

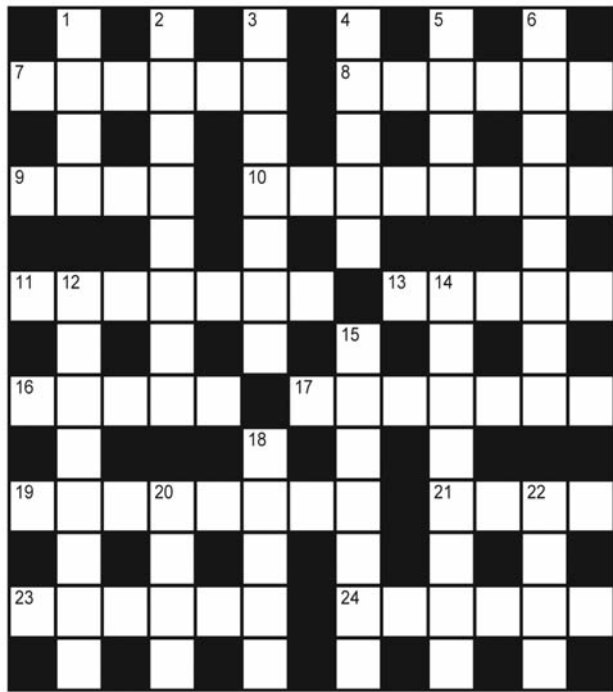


## BREVITY



## FUN post

## CROSSWORD



### Across

- 7 Salad ingredient
- 8 Talk like a horse
- 9 Java neighbor
- 10 Cops around the world?
- 11 Bloodbath
- 13 Thread holder
- 16 Nonsensical
- 17 Finds

- 19 Gambling mecca (3,5)
- 21 Work station
- 23 Time of the year
- 24 Like many tunes

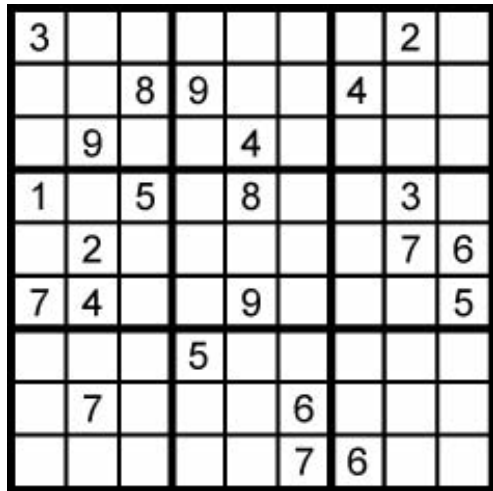
### Down

- 1 Itty bit
- 2 Sane
- 3 Leaves
- 4 Belts

- 5 Make-up artist?
- 6 Tête-à-tête (3-2-3)
- 12 In a lather
- 14 Enthusiastic approval
- 15 Island in the Mediterranean
- 18 Torment
- 20 Widespread
- 22 London district

## SUDOKU

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



## SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



# downtown

## Odisha gets 6 new courts

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, Jan 19:** Orissa High Court Chief Justice S Muralidhar Wednesday inaugurated six new courts, one each at Malkangiri, Kalahandi, Kendrapara, Jajpur, Bolangir and Keonjhar districts, through videoconference, an official said.

The new courts are: Court of civil judge-cum-JMFC at Kudumulguma in Malkangiri district, court of senior civil judge-cum-assistant sessions judge (women's court) at Bhawanipatna in Kalahandi district, court of senior civil judge (LR & LTV) at Kendrapara, court of senior civil judge (LR & LTV) at Jajpur, court of senior civil judge (LR & LTV) at Bolangir and court of senior civil judge-cum-assistant sessions judge (women's court) at Keonjhar, it was learnt.

Justices S Pujahari, Biswanath Rath, SK Sahoo, BP Routray and SK Panigrahi were present.

The Orissa HC Chief Justice said the collective efforts of judges, judicial officers, members of the Bar, local administration and police play a key role in the success of justice delivery system.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 19:** The state Wednesday recorded 11,607 new Covid-19 cases, 521 more than the previous day, and 145 more Omicron cases taking the tally of the new variant to 347, a Health department bulletin said.

The caseload is now 11,67,094, it said. The new Omicron cases were confirmed after genome sequencing by the Institute of Life Science (ILS), Bhubaneswar out of a total 249 samples collected between January 9 to January 16, 2022, a health department official said.

Odisha government Wednesday started trial run of OmiSure test kits for early detection of Omicron virus within four hours. The tests in the first phase will be conducted in places reporting high test positive rates (TPR), the official said.

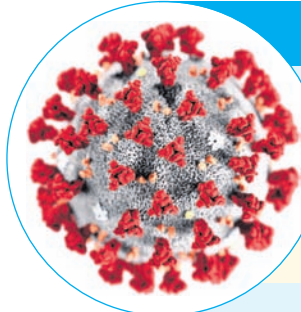
Meanwhile, the Covid-19 toll in Odisha mounted to 8,494 with six fresh fatalities, the highest single-day count in more than three months, he said.

Fifty three other coronavirus-positive patients have died due to comorbidities so far, the bulletin said. At least 991 children were among the new patients and the TPR stood at 16.7 per cent, it said.



### BIRTH ANNIV PREP

A bust of Subhash Chandra Bose on the premises of Netaji Birthplace Museum at Odia Bazar in Cuttack being refurbished Wednesday ahead of the freedom fighter's birth anniversary



### COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	33,58,40,617	27,14,83,390	55,75,724
India	3,79,01,241	3,55,83,039	4,87,202
Odisha	11,67,094	10,80,562	8,494

# State logs 6 more nCoV fatalities

### VITAL DATA



The death toll mounted to 8,494 with six fresh Covid fatalities, the highest single-day count in more than three months

Odisha Wednesday recorded 11,607 new Covid cases, 521 more than the previous day

At least 991 children were among the new patients and the positivity ratio stood at 16.7 per cent

Khurda district registered more than one-third of the fresh cases with 4,347 infections, followed by 1,219 in Sundargarh and 898 in Cuttack

The number of new infections is the highest since May 26 last year when 11,623 coronavirus cases were reported on that day. The increase is more than 32 per cent from 8,778 a week ago.

Khurda district, which comprises the state capital Bhubaneswar, registered more than one-third of the fresh cases

with 4,347 infections, followed by 1,219 in Sundargarh and 898 in Cuttack, the bulletin said.

Khurda has a TPR of 31.3 per cent, while it is 29.4 in Sundargarh, 20.2 in Jagatsinghpur and 18.4 in Cuttack. Nineteen more districts are in the red category with a positivity of more than 7.5.

Altogether 10,73,777 people, in-

## Don't panic, follow Covid norms: CS

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 19:** Amid rising Covid-19 cases in the state, Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra Wednesday advised people to remain cautious and follow all Covid-related norms in order to curb the spread of the infection.

Mahapatra said the infection rate is rising rapidly and daily cases are hovering around 10,000 to 11,000 for one week now. "We can't let our guard down," said Mahapatra.

Stating that the next few days are very crucial, he urged the people not to panic and religiously follow Covid-19 guidelines.

Due to the cooperation of all, the state has so far been able to tackle the third wave from exploding out of control. Stringent restrictions like lockdown and shut-down have not been enforced in the state in order to protect the livelihoods of people, he pointed out.

The hospitalisation and ICU requirement is currently low as compared to previous waves. Only 2 per cent of active cases have so far been hospitalised against the 10 per cent during the second wave and only 10 per cent of hospital beds in the



state have been occupied, he said.

The Chief Secretary appealed to people to use masks when stepping outside the house and while talking to others. Mahapatra also urged the people to take care of the vulnerable group, including the elderly, pregnant women and children, who have not been vaccinated.

He further advised to immediately undergo a Covid test in case of any symptoms. "Take medicines only as per the advice of doctors. In Odisha, the government is providing medicines and hospital treatment to the people for free," he added.

# Fani work: Colleges asked to submit UCs for CMRF money

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 19:** The Higher Education department has directed 134 non-government aided colleges in the state to submit the utilisation certificates with regard to the money provided from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) for repair and renovation of infrastructure damaged due to cyclone Fani in 2019.

The colleges were directed to submit the UCs by February 15, sources said.

In a letter to all principals of non-government aided colleges, Higher Education department senior administrative officer Srinibas

At least 134 colleges of five districts were given grants of around ₹27.5 crore for the repair and renovation of infrastructure damaged due to cyclone Fani

Mishra said the funds were provided to the colleges for repair and renovation of infrastructure during 2020-21 fiscal.

"No further infrastructure grants shall be released unless the UCs are received from the defaulting col-

leges. If the funds are not utilised by the colleges, the unspent amounts must be deposited immediately at the CMRF account," Mishra said.

As per report, at least 134 colleges of Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Khurda and Puri districts were given grants of around ₹27.5 crore for the repair and renovation of infrastructure damaged due to cyclonic storm Fani.

The CMRF was created in 1954 to provide immediate relief to the people in distress. It depends upon budgetary allocation from the state government and voluntary donations from the people and various organisations.

### BID TO DECONGEST MARKET



Unit-I vegetable market in Bhubaneswar relocated to a nearby ground, Wednesday, to ensure social distancing among customers

OP PHOTO

# 2021 one of the seven warmest years on record, says WMO

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Geneva, Jan 19:** Although average global temperatures were temporarily cooled by the 2020-2022 La Nina events, 2021 was still one of the seven warmest years on record, according to six leading international datasets consolidated by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO).

The average global temperature in 2021 was about 1.11 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial (1850-1900) levels. 2021 is the 7th consecutive year (2015-2021) where global temperature has been over 1 degrees C above pre-industrial levels, according to all datasets compiled by WMO.

Since the 1980s, each decade has been warmer than the previous one. This is expected to continue. The warmest seven years have all been since 2015, with 2016, 2019 and 2020 constituting the top three. An exceptionally strong El Nino event occurred in 2016, which contributed to record global average warming.

Global warming and other long-term climate change trends are expected to continue as a result of record levels of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, the WMO said in a global release.

WMO uses six international datasets to ensure the most comprehensive, authoritative temperature assessment. The same data are used in its annual State of the Climate reports, which inform the international community on global climate indicators.

The rankings of individual years should be considered in



the long-term context, especially since the differences between individual years are sometimes marginal.

"Back-to-back La Nina events mean that 2021 warming was relatively less pronounced compared to recent years. Even so, 2021 was still warmer than previous years influenced by La Nina. The overall long-term warming as a result of greenhouse gas increase is now far larger than the year-to-year variability in global average temperatures caused by naturally occurring climate drivers," said WMO Secretary General Petteri Taalas.

"The year 2021 will be remembered for a record-shattering temperature of nearly 50 degrees Celsius in Canada, comparable to the values reported in the hot Saharan Desert of Algeria; exceptional rainfall, and deadly flooding in Asia and Europe as well as drought in parts of Africa and South America. Climate change impacts and weather-related hazards had life-changing and devastating impacts on

communities on every single continent," Taalas said.

La Nina refers to the large-scale cooling of the ocean surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean, coupled with changes in the tropical atmospheric circulation. It usually has the opposite impacts on weather and climate as El Nino. La Nina has a temporary global cooling effect, which is typically strongest in the second year of the event.

### International datasets

WMO uses datasets developed and maintained by the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies (NASA GISS), the United Kingdom's Met Office Hadley Centre and the University of East Anglia's Climatic Research Unit (HadCRUT), and the Berkeley Earth group.

WMO also uses reanalysis datasets from the European Centre for Medium Range

Weather Forecasts and its Copernicus Climate Change Service, and the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA).

The Copernicus Climate Change Service estimated that 2021 was the 5th warmest year on record, but only marginally warmer than 2015 and 2018. NOAA and Berkeley Earth found that 2021 was nominally the sixth warmest year: NASA GISTEMP and HadCRUT have 2021 effectively tied for sixth warmest. Data from the Japanese Meteorological Agency (JMA) Reanalysis rank 2021 as nominally the seventh warmest year. The small differences among these datasets indicate the margin of error for calculating the average global temperature. Even the India Meteorological Department (IMD) had last week announced that the year 2021 was the fifth warmest year for India since nationwide records commenced in 1901.

The Paris Agreement seeks to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels while pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. At 1.11 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial (1850-1900) levels, the global average temperature in 2021 is already approaching the lower limit of temperature increase the Paris Agreement seeks to avert.

Temperature is just one of the indicators of climate change. Others include greenhouse gas concentrations, ocean heat content, ocean pH, global mean sea level, glacial mass and sea ice extent.

# Remove ads with CM's photo: BJP

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 19:** A day after BJD leaders pleaded for the removal of the BJP-led central government's hoardings, banners and posters for the upcoming panchayat elections in state, a delegation of the Bharatiya Janata Party Wednesday sought the removal of all state government advertisements with the photos of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

A delegation of Odisha BJP met State Election Commissioner (SEC) Aditya Prasad Padhi and submitted a memorandum in this regard.

The BJP leaders alleged that several government offices,



The BJP delegation submitting a memorandum to the SEC

Collector offices, hospitals and schools in Odisha are still carrying Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's photos in different schemes including Jaga Mission, Jal Shakti Mission and Mission Shakti despite the

imposition of the model code of conduct for the panchayat elections.

"The rules should be applicable to all equally," said BJP general secretary Lekhashree Samantasinghar.

Earlier, the state unit of BJP levelled serious allegations against the SEC by saying that they have doubts regarding the impartiality of the SEC in conducting the panchayat election. The party also alleged that the SEC has been reduced to 'a toothless body'.

On the other hand, the BJD had alleged that the hoardings, banners and posters at petrol pumps, highways, railway stations, airports and other central government installations and offices are promoting the BJP-led Union government's programmes and schemes in violation of the model code of conduct for the three-tier panchayat elections.

 <b>इंडियन बैंक</b> ALLAHABAD	<b>ZONAL OFFICE: SAMBALPUR</b> At: Shyam Arcade, Khetrajpur, Sambalpur - 768003		<b>APPENDIX - IV [Rule-8(1)]</b> <b>POSSESSION NOTICE</b> (for Immovable property)	
<p>Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of <b>Indian Bank</b> under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued Demand Notices calling upon the Borrowers/Guarantors/Mortgagors to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within <b>60 days</b> from the date of receipt of the said notice.</p> <p>The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the following Borrowers/Guarantors/Mortgagors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken <b>Physical/Symbolic Possession</b> of the properties described here-in-below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 &amp; 9 of the said Rules. The Borrowers/Guarantors/Mortgagors in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of the <b>Indian Bank</b> for an amount mentioned herein below with interest &amp; other expenses thereon.</p>				
<b>BRANCH / Name &amp; Address of Borrowers/ Guarantor/Mortgagors</b>		<b>Amount Payable as on specified date</b>	<b>Date of Demand / Possession Notice</b>	<b>Description of the Immovable Properties</b>
<b>BHADRAK - 1 BRANCH/ Borrowers: 1) M/s. Maa Tarini Distributors, Prop.: Sri Shyam Narayan Panda, At: Nayabazar, PO.: Bhadrak, Dist.: Bhadrak, PIN - 756100, 2) Sri Shyam Narayan Panda (Mortgagor), S/o.: Late Bhagaban Panda, At: Manisahi (Bagurai), PO.: Madhab Nagar, PS.: Bhadrak Town, Dist.: Bhadrak, PIN - 756181</b>		<b>₹ 9,44,000/- as on 31.03.2021 + interest &amp; cost thereon</b>	<b>30.09.2021 / 14.01.2022</b>	All that piece and parcel of Land and Building recorded in the name of <b>Sri Shyam Narayan Panda, S/o.: Late Bhagaban Panda</b> bearing Khata No.: 1070/732, Plot No.: 3546, KISSAM: Gharabari, Area: Ac.0.380 Dec., Mouza: Garadpur, Tahasil: Bhadrak, PS. No.: 98, PS.: Bhadrak, Dist.: Bhadrak, Bounded by North: Plot of Bhagaban Rout, South: Plot of Fakir Mohanty (Canal Road), East: Plot of Dhaneswar Parida, West: Plot of Narendra Prasad Nayak
<b>BHADRAK COLLEGE BRANCH/ Borrowers: 1) Sri Pitambar Mallick (Mortgagor), S/o.: Late Sambhunath Mallick, 2) Smt. Kanchanmani Mallick, W/o.: Sri Pitambar Mallick, Both are At: Erein, PO.: Charampa, PS./Dist.: Bhadrak, PIN - 756101/ Guarantor: Sri Nandan Kumar Baidya, S/o.: Moti Lal Baidya, At: Erein, PO.: Charampa, PS./Dist.: Bhadrak, PIN - 756101</b>		<b>₹ 15,65,000/- as on 28.01.2021 + interest &amp; cost thereon</b>	<b>12.11.2021 / 15.01.2022</b>	All that piece and parcel of Land and Building recorded in the name of <b>Sri Pitambar Mallick, S/o.: Late Sambhunath Mallick</b> bearing Khata No.: 1345/1290, having 3 plots are Plot No.: 2340 (Area: Ac.0.010 Dec.), Plot No.: 2339 (Area: Ac.0.010 Dec.) & Plot No.: 2338/4959 (Area: Ac.0.020 Dec.), KISSAM: Gharabari, <b>Total Area: Ac.0.040 Dec.</b> , Mouza: Erein, Tahasil/ SRO/Dist.: Bhadrak, Plot No.: 2339, 2340 & 2338/4959 are Bounded by North: Plot No.: 2341, 2339 & 2338, South: Plot No.: 2340, 2348 (Kaccha Road), East: Plot No.: 2341 & 2339, West: Plot No.: 2338/4959 & 2340
<b>Place: Sambalpur Date: 19.01.2022</b>		<b>Sd/- Authorised Officer Indian Bank</b>		



## Trains cancelled for modernisation work



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 19:** In view of safety related modernisation work for commissioning of third line work at Jaithari in Niguara-Jaithari - Chhulha Railway Section of Bilaspur Division under South East Central Railway and modernisation work in Bangalore Division under South Western Railway, ECoR trains mentioned below will be affected temporarily.

The trains that are cancelled due to modernisation work are 22909 Valsad-Puri Express from Valsad January 20 and 27, 22910 Puri-Valsad Express from Puri January 23 and 30, 20471 Bikaner-Puri Express from Bikaner January 23 and 30, 20472 Puri-Bikaner Express from Puri January 26 and February 2, 2022.

Similarly, the 12835 Hatia-Yesvantpur Express from Hatia 18.01.2022 & 25.01.2022 will run via Krishnarajapuram-Channasandra-Yelahanka-Yesvantpur.

## CUO offices to reopen today



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 19:** The Central University of Odisha, Koraput will reopen its offices Thursday after being closed for last 7 days as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak in the University campus. The administrative office, University library and the laboratories will function in a full-fledged manner with strict adherence to the Covid-19 norms. However, online classes will be continued till further order.

To take appropriate precautionary measures for functioning of the University, an emergency meeting was held Wednesday under the chairmanship of Vice-Chancellor in-charge, Prof SK Palita.

In the best interest of the University and its functioning, he urged all non-teaching members of the staff to resume work in physical mode. He said, "All employees and faculty members need not panic and should strictly follow the Covid-19 appropriate behavior. Any employee even with slight symptoms of Covid-19, should immediately inform the University Doctor and Nodal Officer, Covid-19 and to test them at the nearest hospital".

## CLASSIFIED

### AFFIDAVIT

I Hrusikesh Parida, S/o Late Hatakishore Parida, Village- Mathasahi, P.O.- Sri Ramchandrapur, P.S.- Satyabadi, Dist.- Puri declare for general public that on Dt.5.1.22 the Regd. Sale Deed Vide No.-307 Dt.15.3.1988 executed in favour of my mother namely Sanjukta Parida has been misplaced along with my bag while I was going to Satyabadi Tahasil Office from my home. In spite of my best efforts I could not trace out the same. For that I have lodged a F.I.R. at Satyabadi Police Station. If anybody found the same kindly inform to Satyabadi Police Station.

# NGT notice to Jaipur DC over sand mining

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, Jan 19:** The National Green Tribunal has issued a notice to Jaipur Collector in an application pertaining to the alleged illegal sand mining from Brahmani river.

A bench of judicial member B Amit Sthalekar and expert member Saibal Dasgupta directed the Collector to examine the site and file an affidavit with regard to the allegations made in the application, it was learnt.

"The district Collector shall also determine whether the sand mining is being carried under a valid mining lease and environmental clearance and if not, he

shall take action against the persons involved in accordance with law," the tribunal said.

It has been alleged in the application that sand mining is going on in Brahmani river even after the expiry of environmental clearance.

It has also been alleged that excavators are being used for mining while the permission is only for manual mining of sand.

The applicant alleged that the miners are undertaking mining activities beyond the permissible limit.

It has been further alleged that there has been no effective monitoring of mining and GPS tracking of vehicles engaged in the transportation of sand.

# BSF to launch boat ambulance service in Malkangiri Jan 26

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 19:** The Border Security Force (BSF) will launch boat ambulance service in Swabhiman Anchal of Malkangiri district January 26.

The service will be launched for shifting of patients to nearby hospitals, BSF sources said.

"The boat ambulance service will benefit around 20,000 people of 35 villages in the cut-off areas," said BSF Inspector General (IG) Satish Chandra Budakoti.

Highlighting the achievements of the BSF in the Naxal-affected areas, Budakoti claimed that they have succeeded in winning the confidence and support of the locals.

"The Swabhiman Anchal used to be a liberated zone by the Maoists. However, the area has almost been sanitised. The BSF has provided much needed conducive atmosphere to the civil administration to



**The boat ambulance service will benefit around 20,000 people of 35 villages in the cut-off areas, said the BSF IG**

carry out various developmental activities in Koraput and Malkangiri districts. Business and agricultural activities have returned to normalcy and violence activities by the Maoists have been contained to

large extend," claimed Budakoti.

The senior IPS officer also claimed that significant improvements have also been made in healthcare facilities in the area with a 50-bed hospital recently being opened at Badapada.

Apart from this a new district hospital has come up in Malkangiri in 2018.

The BSF also organised health camps in the remote areas to provide service to the locals.

He further said that around 250 youths have been imparted with skills, knowledge and experience in 2020 under the tribal youth exchange programme.

Around 120 youths were facilitated to Ranchi and Hyderabad in two phases, he said.

"The BSF has paid a heavy price to bring normalcy to the Maoist-hit districts of Odisha. Several troops have been injured and 14 BSF personnel have sacrificed their lives in the line of duty," he added.

## COMPROMISING SAFETY



People dangerously cross the barricades on a median near Rajmahal Square in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

## Manpower crunch hits Kujang tehsil office

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kujang, Jan 19:** Kujang tehsil office is one of the important offices of the revenue department functioning in Jagatsinghpur district. But vacancies in important posts and staff crunch have hit discharge of services here, reports said.

The office consists of 123 villages under six revenue circles headed by revenue inspectors (RI) in Kujang Block and industrially rich Paradip NAC.

Kujang tehsil carries the unique distinction of highest revenue earning tehsil in the district. The tehsil contributes over Rs 8 to Rs 10 to the state exchequer.

However, lack of adequate number of officials has hit discharge of services in the office. This has sparked resentment among the lawyers and residents visiting the office for their various works.

The tehsil office needs to be run by a tehsildar and three additional tehsildars. However, it has been

over a year that the office functioning with a tehsildar and a lone additional tehsildar.

The additional tehsildar Puja Lenka was also discharging some additional duty. She was discharging her own duty along with that of a sub-registrar as the government has not appointed a sub-registrar in the area. However, with Lenka going on maternity leave, tehsildar Preetiparna Mishra is now discharging the duty of sub-registrar along with her own responsibility of a tehsildar. All the functions in the tehsil office come to a grinding halt if the tehsildar leaves office and goes outside on law and order duty.

Many a times, the tehsildar has to visit Dhinkia, the site of the proposed JSW steel project on law and order duty and other works. As a result, students and their guardians visiting the office for income, residential, legal heir and caste certificates have to return in vain.

## Court acquits 8 accused in Guna Singhari murder

AGENCIES

**Puri, Jan 19:** The Additional District Sessions Judge here, Rajkishore Lenka, Wednesday acquitted eight accused chargesheeted in murder of Guna Singhari in 2012.

According to prosecution, miscreants allegedly gunned down Bhagaban Mahapatra alias Guna Singhari near his Manikarnika Sahi residence here September 12, 2012.

Police arrested eight persons, including Krushanachandra Pratihari and Sarbeswar Apat, in connection with the murder.

They were later forwarded to the sessions court for trial.

Since Guna was a temple servitor and a member of civic body council a lot of hue and cry was raised among the servitor community.

While advocate Prasant Mishra conducted the case for defence, Satyanarayan Tripathy Public Prosecutor presented the case for prosecution.

## Man shoots dogs; animal rights activists file FIR

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 19:** Animal rights activists, Wednesday, filed an FIR against an individual under Khandagiri police station for allegedly attempting to murder two stray dogs and requested the authorities to take stringent action under animal cruelty act.

As per sources, Rashmi Ranjan Swain, member of Sevahin Sankalp, accused Kitab Patnaik of killing a dog and leaving another severely injured in Jagamara Area. She also claimed to have two eye witnesses who saw the entire incident and sought the organisation's help following the brutal incident.

"Patnaik, also known as Babuma, killed a dog and left another fight-



ing for her life. The incident was witnessed by Phagu Bhaina and Deepak Kumar Behera, who informed us about the incident in time. We gave immediate treatment to the dogs and observed that both have been injured by gunshots fired from the gun of Patnaik," Swain in the FIR alleged.

"While one dog was fatally injured and was taken to the veterinary hospital for postmortem, the other dog is being treated at Sevahin Sankalp. We request you take strict action against the culprit," the FIR added.

# Omicron wave may cut future severity of Covid-19: Study

*The findings of the yet-to-be peer-reviewed study are consistent with the previous observations of Omicron displacing Delta, since the variant can elicit immunity which neutralises Delta*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

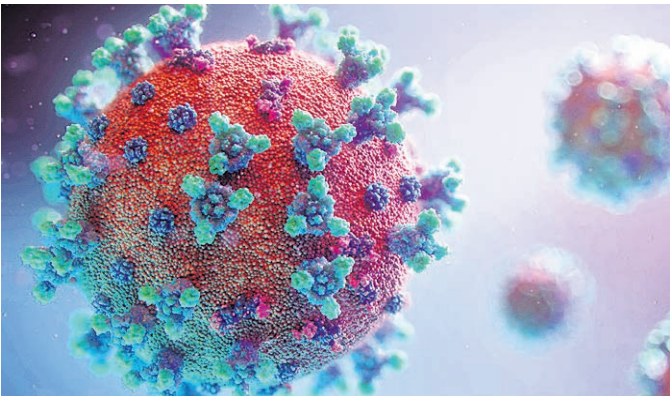
**Johannesburg, Jan 19:** The Omicron variant of coronavirus may reduce the incidence of severe Covid-19 disease, and the infection may become less disruptive to individuals and society in future, according to a study conducted by researchers in South Africa.

The findings of the yet-to-be peer-reviewed study are consistent with the previous observations of Omicron displacing Delta, since the variant can elicit immunity which neutralises Delta.

The researchers from Africa Health Research Institute observed in samples from 23 people infected with Omicron in November and December that the variant escapes neutralising immunity elicited by Delta infection.

This indicates that Omicron can re-infect Delta infected individuals but not vice-versa, giving Omicron an advantage over Delta, they said.

The implications of such displacement would depend on whether Omicron is indeed less pathogenic than Delta. If so, then the incidence of Covid-19 severe disease would be reduced and the infection may shift to become less disruptive to individuals and society, they authors of the study noted.



The finding is an update to the study by the same research team which found enhancement of immunity against Delta variant with Omicron infection.

"We were able to add study participants to see more clearly the effect of vaccination," Professor Alex Sigal, from Africa Health Research Institute tweeted Tuesday.

The earlier part of the study, posted on the pre-print repository MedRxiv, used data from 15 previously vaccinated and unvaccinated people who were infected with the Omicron variant.

**Researchers claim that Omicron can re-infect Delta-infected individuals but not vice-versa, giving Omicron an advantage over Delta**

The scientists used plasma, a blood product which contains antibodies, from the participants to test the ability of the antibodies to control both Omicron and Delta in the lab - a so-called 'neutralisation' test.

The results show a developing antibody response to Omicron, with neutralisation increasing 14-fold over this time.

However, the team also observed that the participants developed some enhanced immunity against the Delta variant, with Delta neu-

tralisation increasing 4.4-fold.

The study also showed that vaccinated participants were able to mount a better neutralising response against Delta, while the response in unvaccinated participants was more variable.

Hopefully, all this means Delta is on its way out as Omicron may shut the door on Delta re-infections. Provided enough people vaccinate. The unvaccinated lose out on the extra Omicron protection and don't gain a boost to Delta, said Sigal.

The Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2, the virus which causes COVID-19, was first identified in November last year in South Africa and Botswana.

The variant has been shown to be highly transmissible and have extensive evasion of neutralising antibody immunity elicited by vaccination and previous SARS-CoV-2 infection.

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The supreme end is the freedom of the spirit.

SRI AUROBINDO



# Breaking COVID’s Grip

Two years into the worst pandemic in a century, it is tempting to think that the world is stuck in a time warp, unable to shake off a virus that has so far killed more than 5.5 million people and wrecked countless livelihoods. But the truth is that in the 15 months since the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) facility first gained the support of the international community, much has changed.

In September 2020, we did not know whether scientists would be able to develop a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine. Now we have several. Nor did we know back then that industry would succeed in scaling up production. But, in the event, 11 billion doses were manufactured last year.

Sadly, these successes also serve to highlight where the world has failed in its efforts to combat the pandemic. Although the world produced enough COVID-19 vaccine doses in 2021 to vaccinate every adult on the planet, more than three billion people, most of them living in lower-income countries, have yet to receive their first dose. High-income countries have an average vaccination rate of over 75 per cent and are now focusing on booster programmes. In Africa, by contrast, roughly 10 per cent of the population is fully vaccinated, on average, and health systems are still catching up with primary vaccinations.

COVAX’s recent delivery of its one billionth COVID-19 vaccine dose represents significant progress toward increasing supply, ensuring equitable access, and thus remedying the current appalling global disparity. This milestone also shows that COVAX – and multilateralism – can work, despite hoarding or restricting exports of vaccines and ingredients by some governments.

Given this momentum, it is essential that COVAX – a partnership established by the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, the World Health Organisation, UNICEF, and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance – continues to receive the world’s backing. Otherwise, as rich countries press ahead with booster rollouts in the face of the Omicron variant, lower-income countries risk falling even further behind.

Such an outcome would constitute not only a moral failure, but also a public-health catastrophe. We all know by now that no one is safe from COVID-19 until everyone is safe. Until we can vaccinate people in all parts of the world, the coronavirus will continue to mutate, resulting in the emergence of new and potentially more dangerous variants. There is a significant risk that we will become trapped in an endless cycle of booster vaccinations, chasing the virus rather than getting ahead of it.

Alternatively, by protecting people everywhere, we can reboot the global economy and fully resume trade, commerce, and travel. This will require renewed commitments by high-income countries and vaccine manufacturers to put orders for those most in need first. Providing equitable vaccine access also means ensuring that COVAX has the flexibility to respond to future needs, including those related to booster programmes, variant-adapted vaccines, or simply additional doses.

Progress in combating the pandemic over the last year has been slower than everyone involved in COVAX – including me, as chair of Gavi – wanted and expected, and many lessons need to be learned. And despite the widespread and growing perception that Omicron is somehow less dangerous than previous variants of this coronavirus, we are still very much in the midst of a global crisis.

But while further supply-side and demand-side challenges will arise in 2022, we are at last in a position where breaking COVID-19 is a realistic prospect. Speed is of the essence, and the faster we limit the virus’ ability to spread, the sooner we will end the cycles of havoc it has wreaked on our societies and economies. That requires ensuring rapid, fair, and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines to people in all countries.

The delivery of COVAX’s one billionth dose proves that, when push comes to shove, we can collaborate effectively to tackle massive global challenges. But this achievement is also a timely reminder that much more remains to be done.

COVAX and the other international organisations committed to vaccine equity cannot end the pandemic without the help of governments, industry, and civil society. By working together, we have a chance to break the grip of COVID-19 once and for all. We must make the most of it.



José Manuel Barroso

COVAX's recent delivery of its one billionth COVID-19 vaccine dose represents significant progress toward increasing supply, ensuring equitable access, and thus remedying the current appalling global disparity



Asad Mirza

IT SEEMS THAT PUTIN'S OBSESSION WITH UKRAINE IS DUE TO BOTH STRATEGIC AND HISTORICAL FACTORS

## SPECTRUM ECONOMY

# Public finance credibility during uncertainty



Biplab Kumar Guru

AT THIS JUNCTURE, TIGHTENING OF MONETARY OR FISCAL POLICY IS UNCALLED FOR SO ALSO ANY MARKED FISCAL SLIPPAGES, OTHERWISE A FISCAL CRISIS CAN BE AROUND THE CORNER

## WISDOM CORNER

- “

There are only two forces in the world, the sword and the spirit. In the long run the sword will always be conquered by the spirit.

NAPOLÉON BONAPARTE
- “

It is easy to hate and it is difficult to love. This is how the whole scheme of things works. All good things are difficult to achieve; and bad things are very easy to get.

CONFUCIUS
- “

Do the difficult things while they are easy and do the great things while they are small. A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step.

LAO TZU

## WORDSWORTH

### Rigmarole

It now means some lengthy and complicated procedure but an older sense was of an incoherent set of statements or a wandering discourse – the history of this word is more than a little odd and takes some recounting. In medieval times, there was a game called ragman, which seems to have been like consequences but with predefined statements. It used a rolled-up scroll containing descriptions of characters, each with a string attached. Players selected a string at random, the scroll was then unrolled and the associated passage read out, to the hilarity of all present (these were simpler times). There are also some suspicions that the same system was used for a gambling game. The origin of the name for the game is obscure: the oldest form was ragman, said as three syllables, and this suggests it may have been French in origin – a character called Rageman the Good appeared in some French verses of about 1290. Others think it might have come from rag in the sense of tatters, used as a name for a devil (as in ragamuffin, originally a demon). The name was transferred to various English statutes at the end of the thirteenth century, which were written on scrolls. With the seals and ribbons of their signers sticking out, these reminded people of the scroll used in the game. The most famous such document was the one in 1291 in which the Scottish nobility and gentry subscribed allegiance to Edward I before John Balliol took the Scots throne. It seems the terms ragman and ragman roll passed into the language as a description of a long and rambling discourse, no doubt from the disconnected nature of documents like the rolls of allegiance. It later seems to have fallen out of use; it reappeared in the eighteenth century in various spellings, such as riggmon-rowle, but it eventually settled down as rigmarole, in the process losing any clear connection with the older term.

# 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)

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## FOCUS GEOPOLITICS

# PUTIN’S POLITICAL CHESS



Moscow has been especially unsettled by the prospect of Ukraine being admitted to NATO and has warned of serious measures to counteract that scenario

from any further enlargement including military cooperation with Ukraine as well as other states in Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and in Central Asia.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov declared that both texts are part of a whole and are not to be understood as being “a menu, where you can choose one or the other.”

While Russia expects NATO and the US to comply with its demands, Moscow, in return, has offered only a vague commitment to “not create conditions or situations that threaten the national security of the other parties.” The draft treaty imposes no requirements for Moscow to redeploy Russian forces. December 23, 2021, Putin, during a four-hour press conference, repeated his stance that “any further NATO movement to the east is unacceptable.” A few days later, the Kremlin described NATO expansion as “a matter of life and death” for Russia. December 26, Russia warned Finland and Sweden against joining NATO.

Initially there was no response from either the US or NATO, as both said that they have scheduled meetings with Russian leaders in the second week of January,

and it would give them a chance to parley before making their stand clear. The Geneva talks between Russia and the US were followed by other sessions in Brussels with NATO and Vienna with Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) delegates aimed at averting a crisis. But at all three meetings there were no signs of progress from either side. While both sides dug in on their positions with Ukraine’s future hanging in the balance, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said ‘no progress’ was made on the central demand on NATO expansion.

Meanwhile, Michael Carpenter, the US ambassador to the OSCE, has said that Washington and its allies are supporting the on-going dialogue to scale down tensions with Russia. He further said: “We’re facing a crisis in European security. The drumbeat of war is sounding loud, and the rhetoric has gotten rather shrill.” This came as Russia said that the talks with the West over the situation in Ukraine have hit a ‘dead end’.

Recently, Moscow has been especially unsettled by the prospect of Ukraine being admitted to NATO and has warned of serious measures to counteract that

scenario. It seems that Putin’s obsession with Ukraine is due to both strategic and historical factors. The Russian-Ukrainian ties date back to even before the emergence of Soviet Union – and even before the days of the Russian empire beginning in the 18th century. Further Putin wants to stem his country’s decline in global influence. Moscow’s leverage in places like Ukraine is one way to preserve that influence. Ukraine is also a key component of Russia’s plans for a Eurasian customs union with some other former Soviet states.

Ukraine’s move toward the Western bloc in the name of having a democratic state has made the Russian establishment feel betrayed because Kiev’s national identity and history is much more linked to Russia than Turkic states in Central Asia and Baltic States in Eastern Europe, which were also part of the USSR. The emotional presence of Kiev in the Russian heart has not changed much. Putin has continued to call Ukraine ‘Little Russia’, quoting a former Russian general, Anton Denikin. Russian influence has significantly decreased over time across the Balkans, where Moscow was once the leading power. It has already lost Baltic States to the EU after the Soviet fall. As a result, Moscow feels that it can’t concede Ukraine to the West.

Moreover, Russia may not like to have too many pro-EU neighbours with NATO sympathies along its western border. Lithuania and Estonia, the two Baltic States neighbouring Russia, already joined the union much to the dismay of the Russian establishment. So it would do everything in order to maintain its influence over Ukraine. There is little doubt anymore that Vladimir Putin is seeking nothing less than a transformation in European security, with a much-reduced NATO presence along its borders.

*The writer is a political commentator based in New Delhi.* **IANS**

### Congress hypocrisy

Sir, The Congress last week released its first list of candidates in Uttar Pradesh with 125 names, including 50 women, many of whom are known voices of ‘struggle’ and ‘fight’ against injustice in the state. Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also called the list a ‘historic initiative’ for taking the party’s announcement of giving 40 percent tickets to women to the ground and said her party was in favour of going for a positive campaign only. With this announcement, Priyanka stood by her pronouncement that women would get their due share in the party with an objective to empower women in politics. But, similar push is missing in Punjab where only nine women candidates out of 86 have been nominated in last Saturday’s list. This comes around roughly 10 per cent. One fails to understand as to why the Congress chose to undermine women in Punjab to treat them at par with their counterparts in UP? Priyanka, one who pull the strings in the party along with her brother Rahul, should answer the critical question raised among the public. Otherwise, it amounts to gimmickry because Congress even struggles to find suitable candidates to field in UP and is on the verge of losing security deposits in most of the constituencies. In this context, it is hypocrisy on its part to nominate more women in UP where its electoral fortune is abysmal, but chose to not field in Punjab, the party’s stronghold.

*The writer is Assistant Professor of Economics at KIIT University.*

Deba Prasad Nayak, CUTTACK



of the day quote

Delta (variant) was the reason for more cases during the second wave. The third wave happened before it was completely over. Now, both Delta and Omicron are contributing to the surge in Covid cases

VEENA GEORGE | KERALA HEALTH MINISTER

Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi is not a common man, he is a dishonest man

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | AAM AADMI PARTY LEADER

If Nitish Kumar will amend the existing Liquor Prohibition law, then I will support him. If he denies it, I will make an effort for Tejashwi Yadav to make him the Chief Minister in future. The popularity of Nitish Kumar plummeted due to his liquor ban decision. Yesterday, he shut liquor and tomorrow women (kal inhone daru band kar diya or kal ye 'mehraru' (women) band kar denge

SHYAM BAHADUR SINGH | EX- THREE-TIME JANATA DAL (UNITED) MLA

SHORT TAKES

Militants attack CRPF bunker

**Srinagar:** Militants fired at a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) bunker in Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag town Wednesday but no one was injured, police said. Militants fired at the bunker on the KP Road in Anantnag, a police officer said. "No damage was caused in this incident. The area has been cordoned off for searches," police said.

2 charred to death as truck catches fire

**Thane:** Two persons were charred to death after a truck carrying liquid sulfur met with an accident and hit an autorickshaw, which led to both the vehicles catching fire at Ambarnath township in Thane district of Maharashtra Wednesday afternoon, police said. The accident occurred near a nullah in Ambarnath east area and the two deceased were occupants of the autorickshaw, they said.

Late CDS Rawat's brother joins BJP

**New Delhi:** Vijay Rawat, brother of India's first Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat who recently died in a helicopter crash, joined the BJP Wednesday. The BJP may field him as its candidate in poll-bound Uttarakhand, sources said. Vijay Rawat, who retired as a colonel from the army, joined the BJP in the presence of Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami and Rajya Sabha MP Anil Baluni.

Missing techie found dead

**Vijayawada:** A woman techie, who was missing from her residence in Guntur since Sunday, has been found dead in Vijayawada under suspicious circumstances, police said. The body of an unidentified woman was found by the roadside at Shikhamani Centre in Vijayawada Tuesday.

BHU starts course in Hindu studies

**Varanasi (UP):** The Banaras Hindu University (BHU) in Varanasi has started a new course - masters in Hindu Studies. According to a BHU spokesperson, the postgraduate course is the first-of-its-kind to be offered by a university in the country. He said it is an interdisciplinary programme designed in line with the National Education Policy, 2020.



I am also happy that our socialist ideology is expanding. I hope that our ideology will reach there and work to save the constitution and democracy

AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF

MATTER OF CONCERN

The percentage of water birds at the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve (KNP & TR) in Assam declined by 28.61 per cent in one year, officials said



DISBURSAL OF COVID DEATH CLAIMS

SC pulls up states, summons AP, Bihar chief secretaries

The top court told the state governments to reach out to the families who lost their loved ones to Covid-19, and emphasised, the governments should not wait for them to file applications to claim compensation

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Jan 19:** In an effort to provide some help to over 10,000 children who lost both their parents to Covid-19, the Supreme Court Wednesday directed all state governments to reach out to those kids and pay them compensation.

The apex court, which was annoyed over non-disbursal of ₹50,000 ex-gratia to the kin of those who lost their lives due to Covid-19, pulled up the state governments and summoned the Andhra Pradesh and Bihar Chief Secretaries virtually to seek explanation during the course of the day.

It also issued a show cause notice to Andhra Pradesh Chief Secretary Sameer Sharma as to why contempt action be not initiated against him for non-compliance of top court's earlier order on disbursal of claims.

A bench of Justices M R Shah and Sanjiv Khanna took note of the submissions of petitioner Gaurav Bansal and advocate Sumeer Sodhi, appearing for intervenors, that over 10,000 children have been orphaned due to Covid and other reasons since the start of the pandemic and they be compensated.

"It is stated that in the entire country as per the information uploaded on Baal Swaraj portal (of NCPCR) approximately 10,000 children have lost their both the parent or a surviving parent. It will be very diffi-

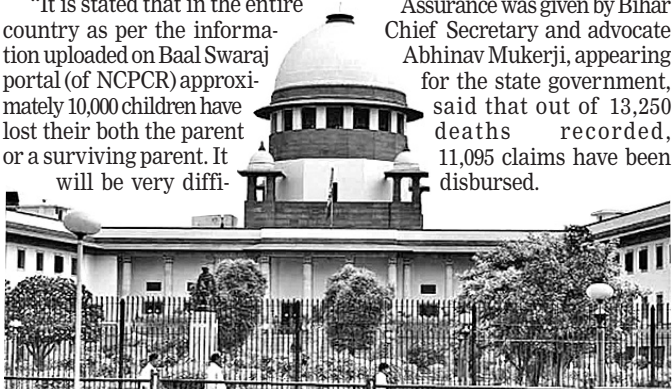
cult for them to make their application or submit the claim for compensation. "We direct the concerned states to reach out to those children, who have lost both their parents and whose particulars are already uploaded in the Baal Swaraj portal and so that the amount of compensation can be paid to them," the bench said.

"We also direct the concerned states to share the full information/particulars with regard to the number of deaths recorded by the concerned states as well as the particulars/information uploaded in Baal Swaraj portal to the concerned State legal service Authority," it added.

The bench said it would pass a detailed order by Thursday. The apex court was hearing a batch of pleas by Bansal and intervenors, seeking ex-gratia assistance to family members of Covid-19 victims.

The bench noted from the chart submitted by Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bharti, appearing for the Centre, that majority of the states have rejected number of claims and gave example of Gujarat (4,234), Maharashtra (49,113), Tamil Nadu (10,138) and Telangana (1,489).

Assurance was given by Bihar Chief Secretary and advocate Abhinav Mukerji, appearing for the state government, said that out of 13,250 deaths recorded, 11,095 claims have been disbursed.



SC to consider hearing PIL challenging use of EVMs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 19:** The Supreme Court Wednesday agreed to consider listing a PIL challenging the Constitutional validity of a provision of the Representation of People Act which had led to the introduction of electronic voting machines (EVMs) instead of ballot papers for polls in the country.

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) N V Ramana heard the submissions of lawyer M L Sharma, who filed the plea in his personal capacity, that the petition required hearing in view of



upcoming assembly polls in five states - Uttar Pradesh, Goa, Punjab, Manipur and Uttarakhand.

"We will see it... I may list it before some other bench as well," the CJI said. Sharma said Section 61A of the Representation of People Act, which permitted the use of

EVMs, was not passed by Parliament and hence cannot be imposed.

"I have filed the petition which is supported with the evidence on the record. A judicial note can be taken note of the case... Let the election be held through ballot papers," the lawyer said. The plea, which made the Union Law ministry a party, sought declaration of the provision as "void, illegal and unconstitutional" as there was no provision of EVM. The upcoming assembly polls in the five states will be held between February 10 and March 10.

Docs remove mobile phone swallowed by Tihar inmate

THE INCIDENT TOOK PLACE JANUARY 5 WHEN THE INMATE LODGED AT JAIL NO. 1 SWALLOWED A MOBILE PHONE TO HIDE IT FROM THE STAFF WHILE HE WAS BEING SEARCHED

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Jan 19:** Doctors at Delhi's GB Pant Hospital have successfully removed a mobile phone from the stomach of a Tihar inmate who had swallowed it in a bid to hide it from the authorities during a surprise check.

Director General (Prison), Sandeep Goel, told IANS that the mobile phone was removed via endoscopy and the prisoner has been sent back to the jail.

The inmate was immediately taken to the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital in the city from where he was referred to the GB Pant Hospital.

Doctors at the GB Pant Hospital,



who performed the endoscopy, told IANS that it was not the first time that they performed the procedure of removing a foreign object from a person's stomach.

"It was probably the tenth time we were doing such a procedure," said Siddharth Srivastava from the Department of

Gastroenterology, GB Pant Hospital.

He said that the presence of the mobile phone was established with the help of an X-Ray and later on they performed an endoscopy and removed it through the patient's mouth with the help of a snare.

He further said that in 2021, the doctors at the hospital had pub-

Tourists visit the historic Taj Mahal shrouded in fog, during the winter season in Agra

Delhi: Unattended bags near metro station cause alarm

Last week, an IED stuffed with RDX and ammonium nitrate was found inside an unattended bag at the Ghazipur flower market

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 19:** Ahead of Republic Day celebrations, two unattended bags were found in east Delhi's Trilokpuri area Wednesday, but nothing suspicious was found in the bags except for laptop and personal belongings, officials said.

According to fire officials, they received a call at 1 pm regarding the bags near metro pillar number 59, block-15, Trilokpuri. Delhi

Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) Priyanka Kashyap said a PCR call was received at the Kalyanpuri Police Station regarding two bags lying unattended near Metro flyover pillar number 59 in Trilokpuri.

"As we received the call, our staff rushed to the spot and isolated the place. Two bags were found at the spot. A bomb disposal squad also reached there and after examination, nothing suspicious

Bomb threat at CRPF HQs turns out to be hoax

**New Delhi:** A bomb threat call was reported from the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) headquarters in Delhi Wednesday evening which was later declared a hoax, officials said. They said a call was received at the police control room at 6:36 PM from the paramilitary force which stated that a "bomb has been planted" in the five-storey building located inside the Central Government Offices (CGO) complex on Lodhi Road in the national capital.

was found in the bags," she said.

The documents found in the bag were found to be that of a person named Suresh Gupta who has been called and further inquiry is on, she added. Items in the bags included laptop, mobile phone, personal care items and other documents, the DCP said. Last week, an

improvised explosive device (IED) stuffed with RDX and ammonium nitrate was found inside an unattended bag at the Ghazipur flower market. The explosive was kept in an iron box and concealed in the black coloured backpack. The IED was later destroyed by using a controlled explosion technique after it was lowered into a deep pit located in the area.

Ahead of Republic Day, the Delhi-National Capital Region has been put under a "very high-security" cover after police received inputs from Intelligence agencies about a possible terror attack, officials said.

Operation of sub-conventional aerial platforms, including UAVs, paragliders and hot air balloons, over the national capital has been prohibited in the city from January 20 in view of the Republic Day celebrations, according to a Delhi Police order issued Tuesday.

ED seizes ₹8-cr cash from CM's relative; ₹21L gold

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi/Chandigarh, Jan 19:** The ED Wednesday said it has seized cash amounting to over ₹10 crore, including about ₹8 crore from a relative of Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi, during raids conducted in connection with an anti-money laundering investigation against illegal sand-mining operations in the poll-bound state.

In a statement, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) said "incriminating" documents related to "illegal" sand mining and property transactions, mobile phones, gold worth more than ₹21 lakh and a Rolex watch worth ₹12 lakh were



also seized during the searches that ended Wednesday. Agency sources also refuted allegations of high-handedness during the raids, saying the action launched on Tuesday was undertaken by following "due legal procedures and no personal comments or individual threats were made".

LET'S VISIT TAJ



UNI PHOTO

LIQUOR WILL BE CHEAP IN MP



AGENCIES

**Bhopal, Jan 19:** In the new Excise Policy for the next Financial Year, the BJP government in Madhya Pradesh has decided to allow the sale of liquor at all airports in the state and select supermarkets in four big cities, and issue home bar licenses to those earning ₹one crore or more annually.

In the Excise Policy 2022-23, approved by the state Cabinet Tuesday, the government also decided to slash retail prices of liquor by 20 per cent in a bid to "make them practical".

Explaining the rationale behind the proposed cut in rates of alcohol, an official said that the prices will become competitive with neighbouring states. Meanwhile, the opposition Congress took a swipe saying the state government is not willing to provide any relief to common people by slashing taxes on fuel but is reducing the prices of liquor. The Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan also cleared the Madhya Pradesh Heritage (Traditional) Liquor Policy.

Under the new Excise Policy, counters selling liquor can be opened at all the airports in MP while licenses for (opening) such outlets can now be issued in select supermarkets in Indore, Bhopal, Jabalpur and Gwalior at a fixed fee, an official statement said.

PM to meet Central Asian leaders virtually

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 19:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will host the first India-Central Asia Summit in a virtual format January 27 during which the leaders are expected to deliberate on steps to take forward relations to newer heights as well as the evolving regional security situation.

The virtual summit will be held with the participation of the five presidents - Kazakhstan's Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Uzbekistan's Shavkat Mirziyoyev, Emomali Rahmon, of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan's Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov and Sadyr Japarov of Kyrgyz Republic.

This will be the first engagement of its kind between India and the Central Asian countries at the level of leaders, the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement. The summit will be held a day after the Republic Day and sources said this year too like 2021, there will be no foreign head of state or government as the chief guest for the Republic Day event in view of the Covid-19 pandemic and the rising cases.

The first India-Central Asia Summit, the MEA said, is a reflection of India's growing engagement with the Central Asian countries, which are a part of India's "extended neighbourhood".





NO MVA IN GOA

# Shiv Sena, NCP to go without Congress

The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the Shiv Sena Wednesday announced a pre-poll alliance between the two parties for Goa Assembly polls

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Panaji, Jan 19:** The hope of stitching an MVA like alliance in Goa has not taken off as Congress is unwilling to ally with the Shiv Sena and NCP. The three parties have formed Maha Vikas Aghadi in Maharashtra but in Goa the Congress is already in alliance with Goa Forward Party.

The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the Shiv Sena Wednesday announced a pre-poll alliance between the two parties for the February 14 Goa Assembly polls. The alliance is expected to announce its candidates over the next few days.

The Congress is not willing to concede more seats to the allies and sources say it thinks that the NCP and the Shiv Sena in the fray will split BJP votes.

Addressing a joint press conference in Panaji, Sena Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut and NCP's senior



leader Praful Patel said that the two parties had approached the Congress to extend Maharashtra's Maha Vikas Aghadi alliance to Goa, but added that they did not receive a favourable response from the Congress leadership.

"We had thought that we should extend the MVA from Maharashtra to Goa. Congress should play the major role and we (NCP and Shiv Sena) would contest on some seats," Patel said, adding that the Congress did not accept the proposal presented to it by Shiv Sena and NCP leaders.

According to Raut both parties would contest between "10-12 seats" each out of the 40 which go to polls next month.

"In Goa there is a lot of confusion on the ground. There's BJP, Congress, TMC, AAP other par-

ties and in this overall confusion, NCP and Shiv Sena though we may not be in a position to form a government, we will have a respectable number of seats where we will have important role to play in formation of like-minded government," Raut said.

The Shiv Sena leader in the past had met Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra for the same but things did not work out as Congress assessment is that people will vote for a change. NCP leader Praful Patel has said that his party will contest with Shiv Sena in the state.

The Congress had alleged that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Trinamool Congress were contesting in Goa to split the opposition vote and help the BJP. Congress Senior observer of

Goa, P Chidambaram said the people are voting either for the BJP or for a regime change.

Chidambaram in a statement said, "My assessment that the AAP (and the TMC) will only fracture the non-BJP vote in Goa has been confirmed by Arvind Kejriwal. The contest in Goa is between Congress and BJP."

"Those who want a regime change (after 10 years of misrule) will vote for the Congress. Those who want the regime to continue will vote for the BJP. The choice before the voter in Goa is stark and clear. Do you want a regime change or not I appeal to the voters of Goa to vote for a regime change and vote Congress," he added.

The Congress is facing a tough battle in Goa while trying to be ahead of the BJP as the Trinamool Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party are spoiling the grand old party's game in the state.

The Congress is trying to put up a strong face and has denied any alliance talks with the Trinamool despite speculations in the political circles. Jittered by the Congress stance, the Trinamool has launched an offensive against the Congress.

"The Trinamool has been saying that they are open to alliances, but Congress is not willing to accept and behaving like an emperor,"

## Two ex-CMs in TMC's list

Two former Chief Ministers have been named in Trinamool Congress' first list of candidates for the February 14 Assembly elections in Goa. Former CMs Luizinho Faleiro and Churchill Alemão will be contesting from Fatorda and Benaulim in South Goa, respectively, according to the list of candidates officially released by the party Tuesday. The list of 11 candidates also includes Alemão's daughter Valanka, who will be contesting from the Navelim Assembly constituency, besides naming former BJP MLA Kiran Kandolkar, among others. The Trinamool Congress is contesting the polls in alliance with the Maharashtratrawadi Gomantak Party.

Trinamool leader Mahua Moitra said, adding "Need of hour in Goa is to defeat BJP - no one should be on their high horse. AITC will not, repeat not, shy away from walking the last mile."

The Assembly polls in Goa will be held in a single phase February 14. The counting of votes will take place March 10.

# Tamil Nadu mulls alternatives to single-use plastic



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chennai, Jan 19:** As part of its ambitious Meendum Manjapai (return of cloth bag) campaign, the Tamil Nadu government is to develop alternatives for single-use plastics. The state is also planning an extensive campaign among youth and children against the bad effects of plastic and how to get rid of it and instead use alternatives.

The state government, according to officials of the Department of Environment, is planning to introduce modern school bags made of jute and other alternative materials and to popularise them among children and youth.

The environment department will rope in self-help groups in all districts to make alternative products to single-use plastic. According to Tamil Nadu principal secretary (environment), Supriya Sahu, there are 14 alternatives to single-use plastic.

Speaking to IANS, Sahu said, "The alternatives to single-use plastics are being made and they have to come in the market in large numbers. Until then people will resort to single-use plastics and we are in the process of creating a campaign among youths and school children against the menace of plastic."

Sahu also said that the department has issued orders to conduct surprise checks at commercial establishments to ensure that the ban is effected in toto. However, with no alternatives to single-use plastics in place, people are still using plastic bags and other items.

MR Manojkumar, environmental activist and chairman, Tamil

**TN government is planning to introduce modern school bags made of jute and other alternative materials and to popularise them among children and youth**

Nadu state institute for research and studies of environmental protection based out of Kanniyakumari, told IANS, "Of course, the government has banned the use of single-use plastics. But where is the alternative? We have to revert clearly to the Meendum Manjapai campaign as yellow cloth bags were part of our culture and this plastic culture is use and throw. Let us revert back to cloth bags, jute bags and other bags that can be reused thus saving the environment and our culture as well."

Senior officers of the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board also agreed that the ban cannot be effective unless alternatives are provided. A TNPCB official told IANS that cloth and jute bags are the main alternatives and large numbers are already being introduced into the market. He said, "Cloth bags and jute bags are the main alternatives at present and large numbers are already in the market. However, this is not enough and there need to be more volumes of these bags in the market so that the plastic ban can be effectively implemented, thus saving the environment."

# Amit Palekar is AAP's CM face for Goa polls

AAP is contesting the state assembly polls in Goa under its own steam and has steered clear of alliance offers from the TMC, Congress and others regional parties

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Panaji, Jan 19:** Describing Amit Palekar as a fresh, committed face, Aam Aadmi Party national convener Arvind Kejriwal Wednesday nominated this 46-year-old lawyer as the party's chief ministerial candidate for the 2022 state assembly polls in Goa.

Kejriwal, who is in the coastal state on a two-day visit, said that Palekar would be contesting from the St Cruz assembly constituency in North Goa.

"We said we will give a Goa CM face whose heart beats for Goa and who is willing to give his life for Goa, who can take everyone along in Goa irrespective of religion, caste. And most importantly, he should be an honest man. That man is Amit Palekar," Kejriwal told reporters.

Palekar joined the party a few months ago but was indirectly thrust with high profile political and activism-linked assignments. Palekar belongs to the Bhandari samaj, one of the largest non Brahmin caste groupings in Goa.

Kejriwal last year had promised that the party would field a Chief Ministerial face from the Bhandari



**We said we will give a Goa CM face whose heart beats for Goa and who is willing to give his life for Goa, who can take everyone along in Goa irrespective of religion, caste. And most importantly, he should be an honest man. That man is Amit Palekar**  
ARVIND KEJRIWAL | NATIONAL CONVENER, AAP

samaj, a caste grouping which the Delhi Chief Minister said had been largely deprived of political representation at the very top.

"You have seen the dirty politics of the last five years and in the last two months you have seen it fall at such a level that the Goans have begun to feel ashamed. We have entered politics to change this and are asking for one chance to bring a change," Palekar said soon after accepting the mantle.

"I was a victim of scams. Despite being a state ranker, because my father had no money I didn't get a government job. And I decided that one day I will fight against this injustice. I want to thank Arvind Kejriwal for this opportunity," he also said.



Waves break on the rocks in the backdrop of Kanyakumari Amman Temple in the tri-sea area of Kanyakumari, Wednesday

# Fishermen in TN yet to get paid for flood rescue work

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chennai, Jan 19:** Fishermen in Tamil Nadu who had rescued people stranded during the floods in October, November 2021, are yet to receive the compensation they were promised.

Fisheries department officials, while speaking to IANS said that the compensation was delayed due to some minor glitches in tallying according to the government norms.

Owners of fishing boats who had arranged men for rescue missions along with boats are waiting for the promised compensation. M Karuppuswamy, a fishing boat owner who had arranged and sent 31 boats for rescue operations is one among them.

**While the fishing season was hit due to heavy rains, the fishermen were expecting the compensation promised by the government before the Pongal**

While speaking to IANS, he said I am waiting for the compensation as the fishermen who had gone for the rescue mission is expecting money and we thought that they will settle it before Pongal but it did not happen. However I am not disappointed, the government will definitely honour the com-



mitment soon.

While the fishing season was hit due to heavy rains and warnings from the meteorological department, the fishermen were expecting the compensation promised

by the government before the Pongal.

Around 250 fishermen were deployed for the rescue operation and fisheries department sources told IANS that they were yet to

sanction the amount as Greater Chennai Corporation has to transfer the compensation money which they have not.

However, Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) officials told IANS that they had paid advance money of ₹2.5 lakh per village before the fishermen were engaged and that the rest of the amount would be paid after the final settlement bill is received from the fisheries department.

Fisheries department officials said that the bill amount is approximately around 1.25 crore and that the final payment would be dispatched to the respective district headquarters for distribution once they get a clearance from the Greater Chennai Corporation.

# Mathematics to be easier for school students in TN

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chennai, Jan 19:** An effort to make mathematics learning easier through an activity-based learning project will be launched in Tamil Nadu soon, officials said Tuesday.

'Magizh Kanitham' (Learning Mathematics with Joy) will, according to Samagra Shiksha officials, kindle interest among children to learn mathematics. This new teaching concept will teach basic mathematics, algebra, and geometry through 180-minute videos.

The state Education Department is planning to implement the Magizh Kanitham in 6,948 government middle schools across Tamil Nadu with immediate effect.

State Samagra Shiksha officials said that the assessment done on the students has revealed that most of the students in middle schools were



**A new teaching concept, Magizh Kanitham, will teach basic mathematics, algebra, and geometry through videos**

finding mathematics difficult and considered it a dreaded subject.

They expressed hope that the students would get basic knowledge of the subject through video learning and get a grip of the subject through this innovative method of learning.

The involvement of mathemat-

ics teachers in analysing the students is also an important part of the new concept of learning the subject.

The School Education Department is conducting an on-line training programme for mathematics teachers January 20 and 21 to give them a basic knowledge on the new concept.

# Cooped up in cage: Leopardess dies in TN zoo

**Leopardess 'Jaya' had died Monday after it was squeezed inside the poorly maintained rusty cage at the zoo**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chennai, Jan 19:** The Postmortem report of a 14-year-old leopardess at Arignar Anna Zoological park has revealed that esophageal rupture and pulmonary hemorrhage as the primary reasons for the death.

The leopardess, 'Jaya' had died Monday after it was squeezed inside the poorly maintained rusty cage at the zoo. The postmortem conducted by the veterinarians of the Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (TANUVAS) said that the leopardess ribs were squeezed leading to the cut-off of oxygen flow to its lungs.

A zoo official, while speaking to IANS on conditions of anonymity,



said, "Nasal swab samples of animals, including lions and leopards, were taken and 14 samples were sent to the National Institute of High-Security Animal Diseases for testing. The samples of this leopardess were also taken but while releasing the animal the cage got jammed and the animal was squeezed inside.

We could not rescue it."

Tamil Nadu Chief Wildlife Warden, Shekar Kumar Neeraj while speaking to IANS said, "National level experts will be roped in for a total review of the management practices in the zoo. Some shortcomings are observed here and I have already written to

the Central Zoo Authority to depute expert veterinarians on a consultancy basis."

Covid has affected the Zoo with 70 staff becoming positive and the animals were also affected. According to staff in the zoo, during the pandemic of 2021, several lions had tested positive due to Covid-19 and two died of the disease.

It may be noted that the Vandalur Zoo, which houses the Arignar Anna Zoological Park, is going through a deep financial crisis and a proposal for sanctioning an amount of ₹12 crore was presented to the state government. The zoo is mainly affected due to the paucity of funds as the gate collection, which has been the major source of revenue, has dropped drastically following shutdowns and closures due to pandemic.

The zoo department is expecting the state government to provide the necessary support as well as rope in a few private corporate companies so that their CSR funds could be used for this project.



of the day quote

A conspiracy has been hatched to trap me in this case (ED raids at many places in Punjab)

CHARANJIT SINGH CHANNI  
PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER

Every third day a riot would break out in the state. Development automatically gets hampered if there is curfew anywhere.

YOGI ADITYANATH | UTTAR PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER

First of all, I would like to congratulate and extend best wishes. I am also happy that our socialist ideology is expanding. I hope that our ideology will reach there and work to save the Constitution and democracy

SATYENDRA JAIN | DELHI HEALTH MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

R-Day: Curbs on charter flights

**New Delhi:** Restrictions have been imposed at the Delhi airport on charter flights and airlines' non-scheduled flights due to approaching Republic Day January 26, stated a notice to airmen (NOTAM) issued by the Airports Authority of India (AAI). No landing or take off will be permitted from the Delhi airport for airlines' non-scheduled flights and general aviation companies' charter flights between 10.15 am-1.15 pm till January 24.

Air pollution rises in Maha, Gujarat

**New Delhi:** Most cities in Maharashtra and Gujarat indicated a rising trend in annual PM2.5 levels with a drop through 2020 (during lockdowns) followed by a rebound and a rising trend visible in 2021, an analysis by the Centre for Science & Environment (CSE) said. Stating that the air pollution is rapidly becoming a matter of concern in the two western states, the new analysis of regional air pollution levels said cities in Gujarat are more polluted than those in Maharashtra.

T'gana: 3 killed in road mishap

**Hyderabad:** Three persons were killed and three others injured in a road accident in Telangana's Nirmal district Wednesday, police said. An auto-rickshaw carrying six people fell into a canal near Bellai in Kaddam mandal of Nirmal district. Three of the occupants died on the spot while three others were rescued by locals.

1.12cr domestic air passengers in Dec

**New Delhi:** Around 1.12 crore domestic passengers travelled by air in December, approximately 6.7 per cent higher than the 1.05 crore who travelled in November, the country's aviation regulator said Wednesday. Overall, 8.38 crore people travelled on domestic flights in 2021 as compared to 6.3 crore in 2020, showing a jump of 33 per cent, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said.

Boat capsizes, 10 missing

**Patna:** At least three persons were drowned and 10 others were missing after an overloaded boat, on which a tractor was also taken, capsized on the Gandak river in Bihar's West Champaran district Wednesday, police said. Police said there were around 20 people, mainly farmers, on the boat, as well as tractor.



China is building a strategic bridge in our country. The PLA's spirits are being emboldened due to the silence of the Prime Minister. Now, the fear is the PM may go to inaugurate even this bridge  
RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

AP GOVT EMPLOYEES TO SERVE STRIKE NOTICE JAN 21

Andhra Pradesh Joint Action Committee (AP-JAC) of government employees Wednesday ruled out talks with the government on pay revision and decided to serve strike notice January 21



COVID SURGE

Fresh cases hit eight-month high

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Jan 19:** India reported new coronavirus infections at an eight-month high Wednesday and a government scientist warned it will take weeks before data on hospitalisations and deaths will show how severe the latest wave driven by the Omicron variant will be.

The federal authorities have said Omicron was causing fewer hospitalisations and deaths than the Delta variant, which killed hundreds of thousands last year.

But Tarun Bhatnagar from the ICMR-National Institute of Epidemiology in Chennai said the impact of the current run-up in infections will show up with a lag.

"We have to worry about hospitalisation and deaths and that will come later," he told Reuters in a phone interview. "There will always be a lag of two-three weeks." India reported 282,970 new infections over the last 24 hours, the highest in eight months, bringing the total to 37.9 million, second-highest globally behind the United States. Deaths crept up to 441 fatalities, including 83 from a previous wave that the southern state of Kerala is recording only now, making the nationally tally one of the highest this year.

While infection rates have recently fallen in India's big cities, experts say cases nationally could peak by the middle of next month. About 70% of its 939 million adult population has received two primary vaccine doses and a booster campaign for health workers and at-risk population is underway. But millions still await their first shot and Bhatnagar cited reports from some states that those unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated



Over 159.54cr jabs administered till date

**NEW DELHI:** The cumulative COVID-19 vaccine doses administered in the country crossed 159.54 crore Wednesday, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare stated. More than 62 lakh (62,39,005) vaccine doses were administered in the day till 7 pm. Over 61 lakh precaution doses have been administered to frontline workers, healthcare workers, and citizens aged 60 and above, the ministry stated. A total of 3,82,93,986 doses have been given to adolescents in the age group of 15 to 18 years, according to the health ministry's interim data. government rolled out the countrywide vaccination drive January 16 last year with healthcare workers getting jabbed in the first phase.

make up more than 90% of intensive care patients. India also reported on Wednesday the first major rise in Covid-19 testing in a week after the health ministry warned states of the risks of missing the spread of the virus. States performed about 1.9 million tests Tuesday, the highest since January 12 and near India's daily testing capacity of more than 2 million.

Spurious liquor kills 5; SIT set up

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Shimla/Mandi, Jan 19:** Five people have died and two are admitted to a hospital in a serious condition after they consumed spurious liquor in Himachal Pradesh's Mandi district, state DGP Sanjay Kundu stated in a press note issued in Shimla.

A four-member special investigation team (SIT) headed by DIG (central range) Madhu Sudan and Kangra Superintendent of Police Kushal Chand Sharma, Mandi SP Shalini Agnihotri and Shimla CID SP (Crime) Virender Kalia as its members has been set up to investigate the matter, he added.

On Monday evening, some people are alleged to have consumed 'Santra brand' country liquor, manufactured by VRV Foods



Limited in Kangra, and '999 Power Star Fine Whiskey' -- made by Empire Alcobrev, Chandigarh -- near Salapper in Mandi district, he said in a statement.

On Tuesday morning, they fell ill. Subsequently, two people were brought to CHC Sundernagar and

admitted there. From CHC Sundernagar, in an incubated condition, they were referred to Medical College, Ner Chowk and one of them was admitted there at 11.30 pm Tuesday and the other at 2.50 am Wednesday, he added.

One of them died at 6.30 am Wednesday and the other at 9 am, he said, adding that it was then that the Mandi Police was informed about the deaths. A total of five people have died so far and two are hospitalised in a serious condition, he added.

A first information report under sections 304 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder), 308 (attempt to commit culpable homicide) and 120B (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code was registered at the Sundernagar Police Station Wednesday, he said.

'Any website, YouTube channel spreading lies will be blocked'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 19:** Days after 20 YouTube channels and two websites were blocked for spreading anti-India propaganda and fake news, Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur Wednesday warned that the government will continue to take such action against those "hatching conspiracy" against the country.

"I had ordered for action against them... I am happy that many big countries across the world took cognisance of it. YouTube also came forward and took action to block them," Thakur told reporters here while replying to queries on the issue. In a "closely coordi-

nated" effort with intelligence agencies, the I&B ministry had in December last year ordered the blocking of 20 YouTube channels and two websites as they were spreading anti-India propaganda and fake news.

In a statement in December, the ministry had said that these 20 YouTube channels and the websites belonged to "a coordinated disinformation network" operating from Pakistan and spreading fake news about various sensitive subjects related to India".

The channels were used to post "divisive content in a coordinated manner on topics like Kashmir, Indian army, minority communities in India, Ram Mandir, General Bipin Rawat, etc", it had said.

Covishield, Covaxin cleared for regular market approval

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Jan 19:** India's two main vaccines -- Bharat Biotech's Covaxin and Serum Institute of India's Covishield -- Wednesday got the nod for regular market authorisation.

An expert panel of Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) -- India's regulatory body for pharmaceuticals, medical devices and cosmetics -- Wednesday recommended granting regular market approval to Covishield and Covaxin, which are currently only authorised for emergency use in the country, subject to certain conditions.

"CDSCO has recommended for upgrade of Covishield and Covaxin's status from restricted use in emergency situations to grant of new drug permission with conditions in adult population. The DCGI (Drugs Controller General of India) will evaluate the recommendations and give its decision," CDSCO said in a tweet.

Indian vaccines manufacturer Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech had submitted applications to the DCGI seeking regular



SII and Bharat Biotech had earlier submitted applications to the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) seeking regular market authorisation for Covishield and Covaxin

market authorisation for their respective Covid vaccines.

Prakash Kumar Singh, director of government and regulatory af-

fairs at Serum Institute, had submitted an application to the DCGI October 26 last year on this matter. The DCGI had sought more data and documents from the Pune-based company following which Singh recently submitted a response along with more data and information.

Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech had submitted complete information on chemistry, manufacturing, and controls, along with the pre-clinical and clinical data while seeking regular market authorisation for Covaxin. Covaxin and Covishield were granted Emergency Use Authorisation (EUA) January 3.

said, "I had joined the SP in 1995 due to my faith in Mulayam Singh Yadav's policies. I have been serving the people of Jalalabad since 1996 but now your (Akhilesh Yadav's) SP has deviated from Mulayam Singh's policies." "The ticket from here has been given to a candidate, who, during the BSP regime, committed atrocities on traders and other sections of the society. Hurt by your decision, I am resigning," he added. When contacted, Singh told PTI over the phone that he has not joined the BJP yet but applied for its ticket.

"If I get the BJP ticket, I will contest from here otherwise I will help whosoever gets the BJP ticket from here and ensure his victory," he said. "My aim is to ensure the defeat of SP candidate Neeraj Maurya. All my supporters are with me," he added.

Maha: MVA trumps over BJP in Nagar Panchayat polls

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, Jan 19:** The ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) allies trumped the Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) by unitedly bagging a majority of the 1,649 seats in the crucial Nagar Panchayat held in 32 of the state's 36 districts, officials said here Wednesday.

The BJP emerged as the single largest party bagging 384 seats against the MVA tally of 944 comprising Nationalist Congress Party's 344, Congress 316 and Shiv Sena's 284 seats.

The counting for 163 seats in 9 Nagar Panchayats of Gadchiroli district, which went to the polls, shall be conducted Thursday.

Besides the four major parties, the CPI-M bagged 11 seats, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena and Bahujan Samaj Party got 4 each, other parties secured 85 seats and a chunk of 206 seats were won by independents.

The election results evoked sharp reactions from both the MVA and the BJP as they could have ramifications in the upcoming local bodies and major civic corporations. The NCP termed the outcome as the BJP's "rejection" by the people of the state, Congress expressed immense "satisfaction" while the Sena also made "inroads" into newer territories.

NCP National Spokesperson and Minority Affairs Minister Nawab Malik said that the "people of the state have rejected the BJP" and the MVA allies who fought separately, jointly or unitedly in different areas have been accepted by the masses.

Woman, 4 kids die after inhaling toxic smoke from brazier



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 19:** A 30-year-old woman and her four children died allegedly after inhaling toxic smoke emanating from an 'angithi' (brazier) kept in their room in Shahdara's Seemapuri area Wednesday, police said.

According to police, a PCR call was received around 1.30 pm regarding four to five people lying unconscious in a room on the fifth floor of a house in Old Seemapuri. Upon reaching there, the woman and three of her kids were found dead while the fourth and the youngest one was taken to a hospital but declared dead by doctors, a senior police officer said. During inquiry, it was found that one Mohit Kalia (35) along with his wife Radha and four children -- two daughters and two sons -- lived in the rented accommodation, he said. The flat belongs to Amarpal Singh (60), a resident of Shalimar Garden. Preliminary inquiry suggests they all died of suffocation due to the brazier kept inside the room amid severe cold conditions as the small room had no ventilation, police said.



# international

## of the day quote

The pandemic has revealed the huge disparities that exist within and between countries in access to quality healthcare, medicines, diagnostics and vaccines

**CYRIL RAMAPHOSA** | SOUTH AFRICAN PRESIDENT

Cryptoassets can provide exciting new opportunities, offering people new ways to transact and invest – but it's important that consumers are not being sold products with misleading claims

**RISHI SUNAK** | CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER

We are concerned about the impact omicron is having on already exhausted health workers and overburdened health systems

**TEODOS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS** | WHO DIRECTOR-GENERAL

## SHORT TAKES

### French actor dies after ski mishap

**Lyon:** French actor Gaspard Ulliel, known for appearing in Chanel perfume ads as well as film and television roles, died Wednesday after a skiing accident in the Alps, according to his agent's office. He was 37. Ulliel portrayed the young Hannibal Lecter in 2007's "Hannibal Rising" and fashion mogul Yves Saint Laurent in the 2014 biopic "Saint Laurent." He is also in the upcoming Marvel series "Moon Knight," and was the advertising face of the Chanel men's fragrance Bleu de Chanel. Ulliel was hospitalised Tuesday after the accident in the Savoie region's Rosiere ski area, the Savoie prosecutor's office said. The office of the actor's agent said Ulliel died on Wednesday. It provided no details.

### Oil flow resumes after pipeline blast

**Ankara:** A pipeline that carries oil from Iraq to world markets resumed operating Wednesday after an explosion in southeastern Turkey forced it to shut down for several hours. No one was hurt in the explosion late Tuesday near the town of Pazarcik in Kahramanmaraş province. The blast caused a huge fire, and authorities also closed a highway, state-run Turkish news outlet Anadolu Agency reported. The pipeline carries oil from the Kirkuk oil fields in northern Iraq to the Turkish port of Ceyhan. A statement from Turkey's pipeline company, BOTAS, said the oil flow resumed after "all necessary precautions" were taken. The cause of the explosion was under investigation. But the Kahramanmaraş governor's office said preliminary findings indicate an electricity pole that toppled over in severe weather triggered the blast.

### Nursing home fire kills 6 in Spain

**Madrid:** Six residents of a nursing home in eastern Spain perished after a fire broke out in the night, authorities said Wednesday. Valencia's regional head, Ximo Puig, said that 17 more residents were hospitalised, with three in serious condition. Firefighters said that they rescued 25 residents out of a total of 70 that were evacuated from the nursing home in the municipality of Moncada just north of Valencia. Firefighter chief José Basset told Spanish news agency EFE that the fire appears to have started in a bedroom on the second floor. He said that when the firefighters arrived "there was a large number of people asking for help who were trapped by the smoke."

## 'In the name of God, go': UK PM faces demands to resign

*It's a stunning reversal of fortune for a politician who just over two years ago led the Conservatives to their biggest election victory in almost 40 years*

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**London, Jan 19:** British Prime Minister Boris Johnson defied calls to resign in a feisty performance Wednesday in Parliament—but it may be too little to prevent his Conservative Party's lawmakers from trying to oust him over a string of lockdown-flouting government parties.

Pressure on the prime minister grew as one Conservative lawmaker defected to the opposition Labour Party and a former member of Johnson's Cabinet told him: "In the name of God, go!"

The demand from ex-Brexit minister David Davis came during a combative Prime Minister's Questions session in the House of Commons, where Johnson defended his government's record running the economy, fighting crime and combating the coronavirus pandemic.

He also tried to brush aside questions about the "partygate" scandal that threatens his career.

"We delivered while they dithered," he said of opposition politicians, several of whom told Johnson he was regarded by Britons as a charlatan, a hypocrite, a liar and "stupid."

The opposition Labour Party was boosted by the defection to their ranks of Conservative law-



maker Christian Wakeford, who told the prime minister, "both you and the Conservative Party as a whole have shown themselves incapable of offering the leadership and government this country deserves."

Johnson brushed aside calls to quit, but his defiant performance was met with muted cheers on the Conservative side of the House of Commons.

Conservative legislators are judging whether to trigger a no-confidence vote in Johnson amid public anger over the "partygate" scandal. It's a stunning reversal of fortune for a politician who just over two years ago led the Conservatives to their biggest election victory in almost 40 years.

Under Conservative Party rules, a no-confidence vote in the party's



**Our strength depends on preserving our unity and that includes unity within Ukraine**  
**ANTONY BLINKEN** | US SECRETARY OF STATE

### Justice Ayesha Malik to be Pak's first woman Supreme Court judge

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Islamabad, Jan 19:** A parliamentary panel in Pakistan Wednesday approved the elevation of High Court judge Ayesha Malik to the Supreme Court, moving a step closer to appoint the first woman judge of the apex court in the conservative Muslim-majority country.

The name of Justice Malik, currently working as a judge of the Lahore High Court, was sent to the Parliamentary Committee on Judges Appointment by the Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed earlier this month.

The bipartisan Parliamentary Committee headed by Senator Farooq H Naek of Pakistan People's Party, in its meeting held in Islamabad endorsed her nomination, removing the last big hurdle in her elevation to the apex court.

The committee while approving her nomination created an exception by setting aside the seniority principle because Justice Malik, who is on the fourth position on the seniority list of the judges of the Lahore High Court, would be the first woman top judge, according to Naek. "We have approved Justice Ayesha's name in national interest," he said.

Normally seniority of high courts judges is considered while approving their elevation to the Supreme Court and it was the reason when her name was rejected by the JCP last year. Even the latest JCP meeting held on January 6 hotly contested the issue before finally granting approval of Malik's nomination by a marginal difference of five members of JCP supporting her while four opposing the nomination.

## Russia says it will take nothing less but NATO expansion ban



ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Moscow, Jan 19:** Russia maintained a tough posture amid the tensions over its troop buildup near Ukraine, with a top diplomat warning Wednesday that Moscow will accept nothing less but 'watertight' US guarantees precluding NATO's expansion to Ukraine.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov, who led the Russian delegation at the security talks with the US in Geneva last week, reaffirmed that Moscow has no intentions of invading Ukraine as the West fears, but said that receiving Western security guarantees is the categoric imperative for Moscow.

The talks in Geneva and a related NATO-Russia meeting in Brussels last week were held as Russia has amassed an estimated 100,000 troops near Ukraine in what the West fears might herald an invasion.

In a move that further beefs up forces near Ukraine, Russia has moved an unspecified number of troops from the country's far east

to its ally Belarus for major war games this month. Belarus shares a border with Ukraine.

Amid the soaring tensions, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Ukraine on Wednesday to reassure it of Western support in the face of what he called "relentless" Russian aggression.

Russia has denied that it intends to attack its neighbour but demanded guarantees from the West that NATO will not expand to Ukraine or other former Soviet nations or place its troops and weapons there.

It also has urged NATO to roll back the deployments of its troops and weapons to Central and Eastern European nations that have joined the alliance after the end of the Cold War. Washington and its allies firmly rejected Moscow's demands but kept the door open to possible further talks on arms control and confidence-building measures intended to reduce the potential for hostilities.

## Rudy among Trump allies subpoenaed by January 6 panel

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Washington, Jan 19:** The House committee investigating the US Capitol insurrection issued subpoenas to Rudy Giuliani and other members of Donald Trump's legal team who filed bogus legal challenges to the 2020 election that fueled the lie that race had been stolen from the former president.

The committee is continuing to widen its scope into Trump's orbit, Tuesday demanding information and testimony from Giuliani, Jenna Ellis, Sidney Powell and Boris Epshteyn. All four publicly pushed Trump's baseless voter fraud claims in the months after the election.

"The four individuals we've subpoenaed today advanced unsupported theories about election fraud, pushed efforts to overturn the election results, or were in direct contact with the former President about attempts to stop the counting of electoral votes," Mississippi Rep. Bennie Thompson, Democratic chairman of the panel, said in a statement.

Epshteyn in a tweet called the committee illegitimate and its efforts part of a "witch hunt" against Trump and his supporters. The others who were subpoenaed did not respond to messages seeking comment. Trump's legal team sought to overturn the election results in the battleground states by filing lawsuits alleging widespread irregularities with ballots and claims by partisan poll watchers who said they couldn't see everything going on, in part because of precautions taken as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Norwegian mass killer Anders Behring Breivik sits in the makeshift courtroom in Skien prison on the second day of his hearing where he is requesting release on parole, in Skien, Norway, Wednesday. Breivik, the far-right fanatic who killed 77 people in bomb-and-gun massacres in 2011, argued Tuesday for an early release from prison, telling a parole judge he had renounced violence even as he professed white supremacist views and flashed Nazi salutes. AP PHOTO

## Barbados holds snap general election

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Bridgetown (Barbados), Jan 19:** The eastern Caribbean island of Barbados held a snap general election Wednesday after cutting ties with Queen Elizabeth II late last year and appointing its first ever president to lead the world's newest republic.

Prime Minister Mia Mottley with the Barbados Labour Party is seeking a second term for a five-year position she won in 2018, when she became the island's first female leader. She faces opponents including Verla De Peiza of the Democratic Labour Party and Joseph Atherley of the coalition Alliance Party for Progress.

Mottley's and De Peiza's parties have candidates vying to fill each of the 30 seats in the island's House of Assembly while Atherley's party has 20 such candidates. The Assembly is the lower house of the island's Parliament, with 16 seats needed for a majority.

No elections are held for the 21-

member Senate because they are appointed by Barbados' recently elected president. Barbados is one of the wealthier nations in the Caribbean, but the winner faces an economy battered by the pandemic and a still struggling tourism industry. Opposition leaders widely criticised Mottley for holding snap general elections more than a year ahead of schedule and accused her of trying to consolidate power.

Mottley rejected those accusations. Greenwood, who is based in Fiji and has been talking with people

contaminating the rainwater that people rely on to drink. New Zealand's military is sending fresh water and other much-needed supplies, but said Tuesday the ash covering Tonga's main runway will delay the flight at least another day.

On Tongatapu, at least, life is slowly returning to normal. The tsunami that swept over coastal areas after the eruption was frightening for many but rose only about 80 centimeters (2.7 feet), allowing most to escape.

"We did hold grave fears, given the magnitude of what we saw in that unprecedented blast," said Katie Greenwood, the head of delegation in the Pacific for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. "Fortunately, in those major population centers we are not seeing the catastrophic effect we thought might happen, and that's very good news."

Greenwood, who is based in Fiji and has been talking with people

in Tonga by satellite phone, said an estimated 50 homes were destroyed on Tongatapu but that nobody needed to use emergency shelters. She said about 90 people on the nearby island of 'Eua were using shelters.

U.N. Humanitarian officials and Tonga's government reported significant infrastructural damage around Tongatapu and concerns about the lack of contact from some of the low-lying islands. The Geneva-based U.N. World Health Organization reported that many people remained unaccounted for.

New Zealand's High Commission in Tonga also reported significant damage along the western coast of Tongatapu, including to resorts and the waterfront area.

**LIKE OTHER ISLAND NATIONS IN THE PACIFIC, TONGA IS REGULARLY EXPOSED TO THE EXTREMES OF NATURE, WHETHER IT BE CYCLONES OR EARTHQUAKES, MAKING PEOPLE MORE RESILIENT TO THE CHALLENGES THEY BRING**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Wellington, Jan 19:** The blast from the volcano could be heard in Alaska, and the waves crossed the ocean to cause an oil spill and two drownings in Peru. The startling satellite images resembled a massive nuclear explosion.

And yet, despite sitting almost on top of the volcano that erupted so violently Saturday, the Pacific nation of Tonga appears to have avoided the widespread devastation that many initially feared.

In its first update since the eruption, the government said Tuesday it has confirmed three deaths—two local residents and a British woman. Concerns remain over the fate of people on some of the hard-hit



smaller islands, where many houses were destroyed. Communications have been down everywhere, making assessments more difficult.

But on Tonga's main island of Tongatapu, perhaps the biggest problem is the ash that has transformed it into a gray moonscape,



of the day **quote**

Electricity will be the backbone of the entire energy system and at Hitachi Energy, we are committed to the accelerated electrification and decarbonisation of the world's transportation and rail sectors

N VENU | MD AND CEO, HITACHI ENERGY

The pandemic was an unexpected boon to our business. The break in business allowed us to reposition and strategically plan the next few stages of our growth trajectory

SASIDHAR NANDIGAM | CEO & CO-FOUNDER, CREDR

Our partnership with NIFientreC is aimed at bringing the benefits of digitisation and e-commerce to grassroots entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs taking forward the student innovations from rural areas to sell to millions of Amazon customers in India and across the globe

MANISH TIWARY | VICE PRESIDENT, AMAZON INDIA

SHORT TAKES

**IEX divests 4.93% equity stake to IOC**

**New Delhi:** Indian Energy Exchange (IEX) Wednesday announced divestment of 4.93 per cent of its equity stake in Indian Gas Exchange (IGX) to oil major Indian Oil Corporation. Energy exchange IEX and National Stock Exchange (NSE) are promoters of IGX, a gas exchange which has been set up to promote gas trading in the country. GAIL (India) Ltd, ONGC Ltd, Torrent Gas Pvt Ltd and Adani Total Gas Ltd are strategic investors in the natural gas trading platform.

**PFC, REC reduce lending rates**

**New Delhi:** State-run non-banking financial firms -- Power Finance Corporation (PFC) and REC Ltd -- have reduced their lending rates across all types of loans by 40 basis points. PFC and REC Ltd have further reduced their lending rates across all types of loans by 40 Bps, a power ministry statement said. The reduction in rates has been possible due to lower cost of borrowings by these organisations. It is pertinent to note that PFC and REC are already providing short-term loans at interest rates as low as 6.25 per cent, the ministry said.

**Digital payments adoption rise: RBI**

**Mumbai:** Digital payments across the country registered a growth of nearly 40 per cent in a year through September 2021, as per the RBI's latest index that measures the adoption of online transactions. The newly constituted RBI's digital payment index (RBI-DPI) stood at 304.06 during September 2021 as against 270.59 in March 2021 and 217.74 in September 2020. "The RBI-DPI Index continues to demonstrate significant growth in adoption and deepening of digital payments across the country" the RBI said in a statement Wednesday.

**Tata Motors forays into CNG segment**

**New Delhi:** Tata Motors Wednesday forayed into the CNG segment with the launch of Tiago and Tigor trims, priced between ₹6.09 lakh and ₹8.41 lakh respectively. The Tiago iCNG range is priced between ₹6.09 lakh and ₹7.64 lakh while the three variants of Tigor iCNG are tagged at ₹7.69 lakh, ₹8.29 lakh and ₹8.41 lakh respectively.



Our dependency on imports are helping edible oils exporting countries and their oilseed growers getting premium prices. We are making them prosperous as India continues to be the single largest importer of edible oils in the world

DAVISH JAIN | CHAIRMAN, SOPA

RENEWABLE ENERGY BOOST

# Govt okays infusion of ₹1,500cr in IREDA

*IREDA with more than 34 years of techno-commercial expertise, plays a catalytic role in the RE project financing which gives confidence to the FIs/banks to lend in the sector*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 19:** The government Wednesday approved equity infusion of ₹1,500 crore in the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA), which would raise its additional lending capacity by ₹12,000 crore. "The enhanced lending capacity will enable IREDA to finance addition renewable energy capacity of up 4000MW Present loan book size of IREDA is around ₹27,000 crore," an official told PTI. "The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, today approved the equity infusion of ₹1,500 crore in IREDA," an official statement said. Briefing reporters after the Cabinet meeting, Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Singh Thakur said the decision has been taken in the wake of the RBI's lending norms.

## ArcelorMittal gets NCLAT okay for OSPIL takeover

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 19:** The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has approved ArcelorMittal India's takeover bid for Odisha Slurry Pipeline Infrastructure Ltd (OSPIL), after it dismissed a batch of appeals filed against the LN Mittal-owned unit's resolution plan for the loan defaulter firm. A two-member Bench, comprising Jarat Kumar Jain (judicial member) and Kanthi Narahari, Tuesday approved the earlier order passed by the Cuttack Bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), which had approved ArcelorMittal India's bid for the company. Confirming the development, Senior Advocate Ramji Srinivasan, who had represented OSPIL's Resolution Professional, told PTI "The NCLAT had dismissed all the appeals filed against



the resolution plan." This is a major relief for ArcelorMittal India as OSPIL owns and operates a 253-km pipeline that connects iron ore mines in Dabuna, Odisha, to a pelletisation plant in Paradip. The NCLAT had March 2, 2020, approved a ₹2,359-crore bid of ArcelorMittal India for the debt-ridden OSPIL. NCLT had observed that ArcelorMittal India's plan provides repayment of the principal dues to all financial creditors of OSPIL, which is indeed fair and equitable and has taken care of the interests of all stakeholders.

## Hero Electric, M&M collaborate for EVs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 19:** Hero Electric and Mahindra Group (M&M) Wednesday announced a strategic pact in the electric vehicle (EV) segment. Under it, Mahindra Group will manufacture Hero Electric's most popular electric bikes - Optima & NYX - at their Pithampur plant, in Madhya Pradesh to meet the growing demands of the market, the companies said in a joint statement. "To further deepen its roots and strengthen the leadership, Hero Electric has announced a partnership with the Mahindra Group, which is leading the EV transition in the electric three and four wheelers space," Hero Electric managing director Naveen Munjal noted. "This strategic partnership will bolster these efforts through joint development and a platform sharing approach leveraging the combined strengths of the two businesses," said Rajesh Jejurikar, executive director, auto & farm sectors, Mahindra & Mahindra. The company's R&D Centre in India will be integral to this arrangement as will the manufacturing facility at Pithampur, which already supplies Peugeot with EV products, he added.

## 3RD STRAIGHT YEAR NSE WORLD'S LARGEST DERIVATIVES EXCHANGE

THE YEAR 2021 WITNESSED THE TOTAL REGISTERED INVESTOR BASE ON NSE SURPASSING THE 5-CRORE MARK TO REACH A COUNT OF 5.5 CRORE INVESTORS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 19:** The National Stock Exchange of India has emerged as the world's largest derivatives exchange for the third consecutive year in 2021 in terms of the number of contracts traded, according to the Futures Industry Association (FIA). In addition, the exchange was ranked fourth by the number of trades in cash equities, as per the statistics maintained by the World Federation of Exchanges (WFE) for 2021. In a statement Wednesday NSE said it has ranked as the largest exchange globally in equity derivatives as well as currency derivatives by the number of contracts traded. In the last 10 years, the equity derivatives daily average turnover increased by 4.2 times from ₹33,305 crore in 2011 to ₹1,41,267 crore in 2021. During the same period, the cash market daily average



turnover surged by 6.2 times from ₹11,187 crore in 2011 to ₹69,644 crores in 2021. In currency derivatives, the daily average turnover increased by 83 per cent from ₹14,252 crore in 2011 to ₹26,017 crore in 2021. Academic research has shown that a well-functioning derivatives market can offer a variety of benefits, including improved liquidity and enhanced price dis-

covery for the underlying assets, the exchange said. NSE has recently announced the launch of derivatives on the Nifty Midcap Select index from January 24, 2022. The midcap segment has come into focus in the recent equity market rally with broad-based participation from all classes of investors, resulting in improved liquidity in these stocks.

It is a matter of great pride for us and our country that NSE has emerged as a global leader and achieved the distinction of being the largest derivatives exchange in the world for the 3rd consecutive year and the 4th largest exchange in cash equities by the number of trades

VIKRAM LIMAYE | MD & CEO, NSE

## SAAATHI APP FOR INVESTOR EDUCATION

Amid the growing trend of stock trading through mobiles, capital markets regulator SEBI on Wednesday launched its mobile app - Saaathi -- to create awareness among investors about the basic concepts of securities market. "This mobile app is yet another initiative of SEBI with a view to empowering investors with knowledge about securities market" said SEBI chairman Ajay Tyagi



## AMID KOTAK ROW BharatPe MD goes on voluntary leave

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 19:** BharatPe co-founder and managing director Ashneer Grover, who was recently embroiled in a controversy over purportedly using abusive language against Kotak Mahindra Bank staff, has taken a voluntary leave till March-end, as per a statement issued by the fintech company Wednesday. Grover informed the company's board about his decision to proceed on leave earlier in the day, the statement noted. For now, the Board has accepted Ashneer's decision which we agree is in the best interests of the company, our employees and investors, and the millions of merchants we support each day, it said.

It added that the company will continue to be led by its CEO Suhail Sameer and its management team. Earlier this month, an audio clip surfaced on social media with claims of Grover abusing and threatening a Kotak Mahindra Bank employee for missing out on share allotment during the initial public offering (IPO) of FSN E-Commerce Ventures, which operates online fashion and wellness company Nykaa. Grover was quick to deny the clip, saying it was fake and was put out by a scamster but he subsequently deleted the post. It later emerged that he and his wife Madhuri Grover had October 31, 2021, sent a legal notice to Kotak for failure to provide IPO financing for the Nykaa IPO. January 9, the Mumbai-based lender had responded saying it will take legal action against Grover. Kotak Mahindra Bank had acknowledged that the couple had October 30 sent a legal notice to it, without elaborating on the reasons for the same.

# Jio edges out BSNL as largest fixed line broadband provider



## Jio prepays deferred spectrum liabilities

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Jan 19:** JioFiber added 0.19 million subscribers to become the number 1 operator in the fixed broadband segment in just about two years from commercial launch, with 4.34mn FBB subs. JioFiber's market share improved 85bp month on month to 16.9 per cent, Nomura said in a report. Bharti added 0.1mn subs to reach 4.08mn FBB subs (up 68% since May-20), with market share up 60bp m-m to 15.9 per cent. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited's (BSNL) market share further declined by 185 bp to 16.4 per cent share (vs 44 per cent pre-JioFiber launch in September'19), the report said. Without significant fund-raising, Vodafone Idea's network investments and 5G rollout would likely remain constrained, at least in the near term. Hence, we expect market share gains to continue for Bharti and R-Jio, the report said. TRAI data for November shows a slight improvement in industry numbers, with Jio gaining market share at the expense of VIL, UBS said in a report. Jio remains the market leader;

**Reliance Jio Infocomm** Wednesday announced that it has paid ₹30,791 crore to the Department of Telecom towards prepayment of the entire deferred liabilities related to spectrums acquired before March 2021. Reliance Jio Infocomm is a subsidiary of Jio Platforms. The company has paid for the year 2014, 2015, 2016 and the spectrum acquired in 2021 through trading of right to use with Bharti Airtel, it said in a statement. RJIL had executed the first tranche of prepayment on the anniversary date in the month of October 2021 pertaining to spectrum acquired in auction in the year 2016, it said in a statement.

with a subscriber market share (SMS) of 36.7 per cent (+10bps). Bharti and VIL ended Nov with SMS of 30.4 per cent (flat MoM) and 22.9 per cent (down 20bps). In fixed broadband, Jio surpassed BSNL to become the country's largest FBB provider. Jio now has 4.3mn FBB subs (+0.2mn in Nov), followed by BSNL with 4.2mn subs (-0.5mn in Nov) and Airtel with 4.1mn subs (+0.1mn in Nov).

# Refiners' throughput continues to slip

REUTERS

**New Delhi, Jan 19:** Indian refiners' crude oil throughput dipped slightly in December due to unit shutdowns at some refineries and as a rapid spread of the Omicron variant of the coronavirus shadowed fuel demand outlook. Crude oil throughput in December dipped 3% to 5.08 million barrels per day (21.48 million tonne) from the previous month, but was 2.2% higher on an annual basis, provisional government data showed Wednesday. Indian refiners operated at an average rate of 101.2% in December, below November's 104.6%, but up from 99.1% in the same month last year, data showed. Refineries can operate at more than their usual capacity through technical alterations. Top refiner Indian Oil Corp last month operated its directly owned plants at 99.74% capac-



ity. Reliance, owner of the world's biggest refining complex, operated its plants at 95.46% capacity in December. In 2021, refinery throughputs recovered almost half of the 620,000 barrels per day loss in 2020, but demand for refined products recovered only by one third, the

CRUDE OIL THROUGHPUT SLIPPED 3% MONTH-ON-MONTH
REFINERY CAPACITY UTILISATION RATE DROPS TO 101.2%
FUEL CONSUMPTION IN DEC SCALED A NINE-MONTH PEAK

though a fresh coronavirus wave may slow the gradual recovery of demand in the world's third biggest oil consumer. Sales of gasoil, which account for about two-fifths of India's overall refined fuel consumption, declined in the first fortnight of January as rising Covid-19 infections hit consumer spending and truck movement in the country. Natural gas output jumped more than 19% to 2.896 billion cubic metres year-on-year, while crude oil production fell nearly 2% to around 593,000 barrels per day (2.51 million tonne), the government data showed.

# Google, Apple speak out against tech bills

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**San Francisco, Jan 19:** Google and Apple have expressed displeasure over an upcoming legislation in the US that would give more power to consumers and third-party developers. While the American Choice and Innovation Online Act would prevent platforms like Amazon, Apple, and Google from using their dominance to hamper other companies and competitors that use their platforms, the Open App Markets Act aims to promote competition on app stores. The US Senate Judiciary Committee is inching towards passing the legislation, which has been hailed by startups and smaller tech companies. According to The Verge, Apple has criticised the legislation, particularly the Open App Markets Act, saying that it would be detrimental to the safety of the App Store. Kent Walker, President Global Affairs and Chief Legal Officer of Google and Alphabet, said in a blog post that the legislation could break popular online services, making them less helpful and less secure, and damaging American



Apple has criticised the legislation saying that it would be detrimental to the safety of the App Store

competitiveness. "These bills would impose one set of rules on American companies while giving a pass to foreign companies. And they would give the Federal Trade Commission and other government agencies unprecedented power over the design of consumer products," he said. These bills could prevent us from securing our products by default, and would introduce new privacy risks for you, Walker added. The bills would also harm small businesses if tools like Gmail, Calendar and Docs were not allowed to be integrated or work together seamlessly, he argued.



# SLOPPY INDIA GO DOWN

MIDDLE-ORDER WOES CONTINUE FOR MEN IN BLUE AS VAN DER DUSSEN AND BAVUMA CENTURIES HELP SOUTH AFRICA TAKE 1-0 LEAD IN THE 3-MATCH ODI SERIES WITH 31-RUN WIN

PRESS TRUST FOR INDIA

**Paarl, Jan 19:** India's inexplicable middle-order collapse ensured that fine half-centuries from Shikhar Dhawan (79, 84b, 10x4) and Virat Kohli (51, 63b, 3x4) did not count for much as the team was handed a 31-run defeat by a resolute South Africa in the opening ODI here Wednesday.

Chasing a challenging 297, India were cruising at 138/1 before wickets fell in a heap dashing the hopes of the visitors who trail 0-1 in the three-match series. India's innings ended at 265/8.

South Africa skipper Temba Bavuma (110, 143b, 8x4) and Rassie van der Dussen (129 n o, 96b, 9x4, 4x6) had scored contrasting hundreds en route to their 204-run stand to take South Africa to 296/4 after opting to bat.

India were comfortably placed to get home when Kohli and Dhawan were in the middle but it all came crashing down with the end of their 92-run stand.

India have been guilty of relying too much on their top three in the past and once again, the middle-order could not capitalise on the platform provided by Kohli and Dhawan after they lost skipper KL Rahul (12) cheaply.

Chase master Kohli, playing his first game since his captaincy tenure ended across formats last week, hardly broke a sweat in reaching his half-century before a sweep shot off Tabraiz Shamsi (2/52), a stroke he doesn't play regularly, led to his downfall leaving him in disbelief. Dhawan looked in sublime touch during his stay and played Marco Jansen rather comfortably, collecting five of his 10 fours off the tall left-arm pacer.

The stage was set for the likes of Rishabh Pant (16), Shreyas Iyer (17) and debutant Venkatesh Iyer (2) to get the job done but they fell in quick succession, leaving India at 188/6 from a strong 138/1. Shardul Thakur (50 n o, 43b, 5x4, 1x6) tried



Rassie van der Dussen

his best towards the end but the damage had already been done.

Earlier, Jasprit Bumrah (2/48) was the stand out bowler for India in an otherwise ordinary bowling effort. After a sluggish start, Van der Dussen and Bavuma shared the second highest partnership ever against India in ODIs to ensure a competitive total for the home team.

South Africa opted to bat on a slow surface at the Boland Park. The white ball did a bit early on with

both Bumrah and Bhuvneshwar Kumar getting to move it off the pitch as well as in the air.

After an inaccurate first over, the usually accurate Bumrah got his act together and had opener Janneman Malan (6). South Africa struggled to 39/1 in 10 overs with Indian bowlers restricting the flow of runs.

Quinton de Kock (27), playing his first game since announcing his Test retirement, and Bavuma found



Temba Bavuma

the going tough with the ball not coming on to the bat. De Kock perished while trying to break the shackles. Ashwin, featuring in his first ODI since June 2017, found de Kock's stumps with a slider as the opener went for a cut shot.

It became 68/3 in the 18th over when Aiden Markram got run out from a direct hit by Venkatesh after he went for a single that was not for the taking.

At that stage, it seemed South

Africa would find it tough to get past 200 but a fighting stand between Van der Dussen and Bavuma changed the course of the innings.

#### BRIEF SCORES

**SOUTH AFRICA 296/4** (Rassie van der Dussen 129 n o, Temba Bavuma 110; Jasprit Bumrah 2/48, R Ashwin 1/53) **beat INDIA 265/8** (Shikhar Dhawan 79, Virat Kohli 51, Shardul Thakur 50 n o; Andile Phehlukwayo 2/25, Tabraiz Shamsi 2/52) **by 31 runs.**

## Harnoor, Raghuvanshi help India U-19 post 307/5

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Tarouba (Trinidad), Jan 19:** Inform opener Harnoor Singh (88, 101b, 12x4) and Angkrish Raghuvanshi (79, 79b, 10x4, 2x6) struck fluent half centuries to guide a virus-hit India to a challenging 307/5 against Ireland in an U-19 World Cup game, in which they barely managed to put a playing XI on the field.

With six of their players forced into isolation after testing positive for COVID-19, left-handed Harnoor and Angkrish stitched a 164-run stand at the top to ensure Indian bowlers had decent total to defend.

Nishant Sindhu (36, 34b, 5x4) and Raj Bawa (42, 64b, 2x4, 1x6) shared a 64-run stand for the third wicket, ensuring that the platform created by the openers was well-utilised for a big score.

It seemed India lacked enough firepower towards the end as big hits had dried up but Rajvardhan Hangargekar hit five sixes, including a hat-trick of maximums in last over, in his fiery 16-ball 39-run unbeaten cameo that took India



past 300-run mark.

Harnoor, who has been in sparkling form, drove the ball elegantly. If it was pitched up on the middle and leg, the left-hander from Jalandhar placed and flicked exquisitely.

The ones pitched on the off-side were also driven in the cover region as Harnoor ticked the board nicely, largely going run-a-ball.

On the other hand, Angkrish chose to muscle the ball round. He cut, pulled and also drove in aggressive manner as none of the Ireland bowlers could trouble the Indian openers.

The 16-year-old from Delhi pulled left-arm spinner Matthew Humphreys over deep mid-wicket for a six to raise his half-century. It was the same bowler who trapped him leg before later. Agriksh was dismissed by spinner Jamie Forbes.

If India win the contest, they will qualify for the quarterfinals as they have a win under their belt after defeating South Africa in the opening game. However, they need to have enough players for their last Group B game against Uganda Saturday.

**Brief scores:** India U-19 307/5 (Harnoor Singh 88, Angkrish Raghuvanshi 79, Raj Bawa 42, Rajvardhan Hangargekar 39 n o, Nishant Sindhu 36; Muzamil Sherzad 3/79) v Ireland U-19. Match to continue.



## Sindhu cruises into 2nd round

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow, Jan 19:** Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu stormed into the second round of the Syed Modi International Super 300 tournament with a dominating win over compatriot Tanya Hemanth in the women's singles competition, here Wednesday.

The 26-year-old from Hyderabad, who lost in the semifinals at India Open Super 500 last week, thrashed Tanya 21-9, 21-9 in a lop-sided contest at the Babu Banarasi Das Indoor Stadium.

A former world champion, Sindhu will square off against USA's Lauren Lam, who managed to get past a fighting Ira Sharma 15-21, 21-16, 21-16.

In other women's singles matches, Samiya Imdad Farooqui, who had won the Bulgarian International and finished runners-up at Polish Open last year,

overcame a stiff resistance from Shruti Mundada 17-21, 21-11, 21-10, while Sai Uttejitha Rao Chukka, a quarterfinalist in 2018 edition, trounced Anjana Kumari 21-9, 21-12 in all-Indian matches.

Samiya will square off against compatriot Kanika Kanwal, who saw off USA's Disha Gupta 21-15, 16-21, 21-6, while Sai will cross swords with Aakarshi Kashyap, who had reached the quarters at India Open.

Prerana Neeluri, Smit Toshniwal, Anupama Upadhyaya, Kriti Bharadwaj also entered the second round of women's singles.

In the men's singles, Kaushal Dharmamer; Chirag Sen, Mithun Manjunath and Raghu Mariswamy also made winning starts to their respective campaigns.

While Kaushal stunned Singapore's Jia Heng Jason Teh 14-21, 21-11, 21-16, Chirag, elder brother of Lakshya Sen, registered an easy 21-9, 21-6 win over Ansal Yadav.

Mithun beat Alap Mishra 21-15, 21-8 and Raghu edged out Siril verma 21-19, 13-21, 21-18 in another match.

Kaushal will meet Malaysian Soong Joo Ven. Raghu takes on France's Lucas Claerbout, who defeated Siddharth Pratap Singh 21-15, 21-8, next. Seventh seed Indian pairing of Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand Pullela brushed aside Mahek Nayak and Saumya Singh 21-1, 21-4 in women's doubles competition.

Title contender Supanida Katethong, who had reached the finals of India Open Super 500 event last week, and fifth seeded Russian Evgeniya Kosetskaya also entered the second round.

While left-handed Katethong, seeded sixth Thai, beat Sri Krishna Priya Kudaravalli 21-13, 21-13, Kosetskaya defeated Vaidehi Choudhari 21-16, 21-10.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Melbourne, Jan 19:** For the first set, Naomi Osaka's rediscovered love of the game meant it was anything but fun for Madison Brengle in the third round of the Australian Open.

The defending champion conceded only four points in the first four games Wednesday and rifled forehand winners seemingly at will as she breezed to 6-0 in a mere 20 minutes. She wrapped up the match with a 6-4 win in the second set.

She will next face Amanda Anisimova, a 20-year-old American who beat Olympic gold medalist Belinda Bencic 6-2, 7-5. The winner of that is likely to face top-ranked Ash Barty, a 6-1, 6-1 winner over Lucia Bronzetti, in the fourth round.

Osaka won the Australian Open last year, her fourth Grand Slam title, but then withdrew from the French Open and skipped Wimbledon as she took a break for her mental health. She then was ousted early at the US Open.

Since the draw for the first major of the year was made, a big focus has been on a potential encounter between Osaka and Barty, the 2021 Wimbledon and 2019 French Open champion who is aiming to be the first Australian woman since 1978 to win her home championship.

Barty was front and center when the tournament celebrated its inaugural First Nations Day, albeit only for 52 minutes as she beat 142nd-ranked qualifier Bronzetti. Barty, who has Indigenous heritage, said of the day dedicated to



ASH BARTY

the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia.

Rafael Nadal didn't get it all his own way in the subsequent match on Rod Laver Arena, needing five match points before beating 126th-ranked German qualifier Yannick Hanfmann 6-2, 6-3, 6-4.

The sixth-seeded Nadal is aiming for a men's record 21st Grand Slam singles title. The Spaniard shares the men's record of 20 singles titles with Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic, and he doesn't have either of them in the draw this time.

Federer is skipping the Australian Open while he continues his recovery from injury. Djokovic, a nine-time champion at Melbourne Park, was deported after an 11-day saga that he ulti-



NAOMI OSAKA

mately lost because he didn't meet Australia's strict COVID-19 vaccination regulations.

Miomir Kecmanovic, who was originally drawn to meet Djokovic on the opening night, advanced to the third round with a 7-6(9-7), 7-5, 7-6(10-8) win over Tommy Paul of the United States.

Wimbledon finalist Matteo Berrettini and No.23 Reilly Opelka advanced in straight sets, while No. 19 Pablo Carreno Busta beat Tallon Griekspoor 6-3, 6-7(6-8), 7-6(7-3), 3-6, 6-4.

In two marathon five-setters, No.14 Denis Shapovalov held off Kwon Soon-woo 7-6(8-6), 6-7(3-7), 6-7(6-8), 7-5, 6-2 in 4 hours, 25 minutes on Margaret Court Arena, and Sebastian Korda edged Corentin

Moutet 3-6, 6-4, 6-7(2-7), 7-5, 7-6(8-6).

In the women's draw, French Open champion and fourth-seeded Barbora Krejickova beat Wang Xiyu 6-2, 6-3 to move into a third-round match against No.26 Jelena Ostapenko.

Eighth-seeded Paula Badosa advanced in straight sets and two-time Australian Open champion Victoria Azarenka moved into a third-round match against 15th-seeded Elina Svitolina, who was leading 6-3, 5-7, 5-1 when Harmony Tan retired from their second-round match.

Svitolina waited on court at Margaret Court Arena until Tan, who had received treatment on her lower left leg, was removed in a wheelchair.

## 2 members of Indian women's team test positive for Covid-19

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Jan 19:** COVID-19 breached the Indian women's football team's bio-security bubble here Wednesday ahead of the AFC Asian Cup with two members testing positive for the virus, forcing the organisers to shift them to a medical facility for isolation.

"Two members of the Indian Women's Senior National Team for the AFC Women's Asian Cup India 2022 have tested positive for COVID-19, and are currently in isolation at a designated medical care facility," the All India Football Federation (AIFF) tweeted.

"The AIFF prioritises the health

and safety of its players, and are following all the necessary health protocols as have been laid down by the AFC," the organising federation wrote in another tweet.

One of the members (a player) would have featured in the starting XI in the campaign opener against Iran, a source close to the AIFF said.

Hosts India will open their campaign in the continental showpiece against Iran at the DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai Thursday.

The two positive cases will not threaten the tournament as AIFF president Praful Patel Monday said that matches will not be cancelled if 13 players are available in each of the two competing teams.

**OLDEST PLAYER:** Kim Jung-mi (Korea); 37 years, 87 days

**YOUNGEST PLAYER:** Shilky Devi Hemam (India); 16 years, 49 days

**MOST CAPPED PLAYER:** Waraporn Boonsing (Thailand); 55

**MOST INTERNATIONAL GOALS:** Pitsamai Sornsai (Thailand); 77

**HIGHEST RANKED TEAM:** Australia; 11

## India all set for football carnival

As India gears up to host the 20th edition of the AFC Women's Asian Cup at three venues in Maharashtra, here are some highlights of the continent's football showpiece...

#### HISTORICAL FACTS

India has featured in eight earlier editions of the tournament, having finished runners-up in 1979 and 1983, and third in 1981

India has earlier hosted the tournament in 1979

Japan, who won the last two editions of the marquee event, defeating Australia 1-0 on each occasion, and China are the only teams to have won more than two successive editions

China won the title for an unprecedented seven editions on the trot from 1986 to 1999 before adding another in 2006

Lowest ranked team: Iran; 70

**MOST OVERSEAS-BASED PLAYERS:**

Australia, Philippines; 17 each

**FEWEST OVERSEAS-BASED PLAYERS:**

India, Vietnam; none

**MOST AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP SELECTIONS:**

Waraporn Boonsing, Sunisa Srangthaisong (both Thailand), Lydia Williams (Australia); 6 each

The attention of the footballing world shifts to India tomorrow, and I wish all teams the very best in the tournament. Your performances on the pitch will be watched by millions worldwide including young girls who will aspire to follow in your footsteps. The AFC Women's Asian Cup is a competition that is rich in history and continues to be the catalyst for the development of women's football in Asia

**SHAIKH SALMAN BIN EBRAHIM AL KHALIFA / AFC PRESIDENT**

Korea has featured in the summit clash of the event on four occasions, the most by any team that has never won the tournament

Australia has competed in the final of the four of the last five editions, managing only one win only once

Japan and Thailand have each competed in 16 editions of the AFC Asian Cup,

more than any other team in the history of the competition

Debutant Iran will be the 22nd different nation to compete in the tournament

Sam Kerr is one short of her 50th international goal for Australia and she would then equal the country men's football great Tim Cahill for the most goals scored by an Australian in int'l matches