



GLOBAL RECOGNITION

Actor Sushmita Sen has bagged an international award for her performance in TV series Aarya 2

LEISURE P2



STAMPEDE KILLS 29

At least 29 died in a stampede of worshippers at a Christian ceremony in Liberia early Thursday

INTERNATIONAL P10



SECOND ODI TODAY

KL Rahul-led India look to level the three-match series when they lock horns with South Africa in the second ODI

SPORTS P12

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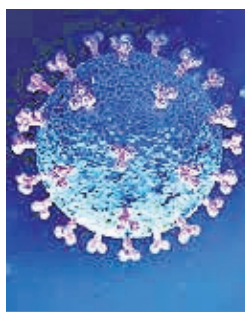
ADMISSIONS OPEN

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

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PLA help sought in return of Arunachal youth

Itanagar: The Indian Army through hotline has contacted the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) and sought return of abducted Arunachal Pradesh teenager Miram Taron, defence sources said Thursday. A defence PRO tweeted, "17-yr-old youth Miram Taron of Zido, Arunachal Pradesh, was reportedly captured by the PLA across the LAC. On receipt of info, Indian Army imdty contacted PLA through a hotline. Assistance from PLA has been sought to locate and return him as per protocol." An Arunachal Pradesh government official said here that the state government had also sought the Defence Ministry's intervention to ensure the safe return of the youth. P7



Covid cases break 249-day record

New Delhi: India logged 3,17,532 new coronavirus infections, the highest in 249 days, taking the total tally of Covid-19 cases to 3,82,18,773, which includes 9,287 cases of the Omicron variant, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated Thursday. The active cases rose to 19,24,051, the highest in 234 days, while the death toll climbed to 4,87,693 with 491 fresh fatalities, the data updated at 8 am stated. There has been a 3.63 per cent increase in Omicron cases since Wednesday, the ministry said. The country had reported 3,11,170 cases May 15 last year.

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DAREDEVILRY ON DISPLAY



Indo-Tibetan Border Police personnel display their biking skills during a rehearsal for the upcoming Republic Day parade on wintry morning in New Delhi, Thursday

SC upholds 27% OBC quota in med courses

The apex court says it is necessary to avoid any further delays in the admission process and allow counselling to begin immediately

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 20: Merit cannot be reduced to narrow definitions of performance in an open competitive examination which only provides formal equality of opportunity, the Supreme Court said Thursday as it upheld 27 per cent Other Backward Classes (OBC) reservation in All India Quota (AIQ) seats in the NEET for UG and PG medical courses.

Justifying quota for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) on existing quota for current academic year, the bench said, "We are still in the midst of the pandemic and any delay in the recruitment of doctors would impact the ability to manage the pandemic. Hence, it is necessary to avoid any further delays in the admission process and allow counselling to begin immediately."

A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud and AS Bopanna



Competitive exams assess basic current competency to allocate educational resources but are not reflective of excellence, said the SC

passed the order detailing reasons for upholding the 27 per cent OBC reservation and allowing 10 per cent EWS quota on existing criteria for this year. "In view of the discussion above, we hold that the reservation for OBC candidates in the AIQ seats for UG and PG medical and dental courses is constitutionally valid..." the bench said.

The bench said, "Merit cannot be reduced to narrow definitions of performance in an open competitive examination which only provides formal equality of opportunity. Competitive examinations assess basic current compe-

tency to allocate educational resources but are not reflective of excellence, capabilities and potential of an individual which are also shaped by lived experiences, subsequent training and individual character."

The top court said that crucially, open competitive examinations do not reflect the social, economic and cultural advantage that accrues to certain classes and contributes to their success in such exams.

"High scores in an examination are not a proxy for merit. Merit should be socially contextualized and re-conceptualized as an instrument that advances social goods like equality that we as a society value. In such a context, reservation is not at odds with merit but furthers its distributive consequences," the bench said.

On the EWS quota, the top court said the argument of the petitioners on the validity of quota was not limited to the permissibility of reservation in the AIQ seats. "Rather, the petitioners challenged the very criteria for the determination of the EWS, which would not only require us to hear the matter at length but would also entail us to hear all interested parties," the SC said.

BrahMos new version test-fired successfully

The missile with the modified control system has been fine tuned to achieve an enhanced capability

AGENCIES

Delhi, Jan 20: India Thursday successfully test-fired BrahMos supersonic cruise missile with enhanced capabilities.

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in a statement said that BrahMos supersonic cruise missile with increased indigenous content and improved performance was successfully test-fired at 10:30am from Integrated Test Range, Chandipur off the coast of Odisha.



The launch was conducted by BrahMos Aerospace in close coordination with DRDO teams.

In this text book flight, the missile followed the predicted trajectory, meeting all mission objectives. The flight test is a major milestone in the way forward for BrahMos programme.

The highly manoeuvrable missile cruised at supersonic speed for its maximum range and all mission objectives were met.

The missile was equipped with the advanced indigenous technologies and followed a modified optimal trajectory for enhanced efficiency and improved performance. The missile with the modified control system has been fine tuned to achieve an enhanced capability.

This flight test was monitored by all the sensors of the range instrumentation including telemetry, radar and electro-optical tracking systems deployed across the eastern coast and the down range ships.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh complimented the BrahMos, DRDO teams and industry for the successful flight test.

G Sathesh Reddy, Chairman DRDO, appreciated the scientists and engineers for continuously putting efforts to maximise the weapon systems efficiency and more focus on indigenous content.

BJP MLA CHASED AWAY BY VILLAGERS

AGENCIES

Muzaffarnagar, Jan 20: BJP MLA Vikram Saini faced the ire of people in Munwarpur village here who forced him to return to his car and leave the venue, a video of which went viral on social media.

The villagers raised slogans against Saini, who had visited the village Wednesday as part of election campaigning.

In the video, the Khatauli MLA is seen getting back to his car in anger after the protest by the locals.

He later told reporters that those who opposed his visit were under the influence of alcohol.

Saini has been known to make inflammatory statements. In 2019, he threatened to 'bomb' those who felt unsafe in India. A year before that, he had said, "Our country is called Hindustan, which means a nation for Hindus." He has also threatened to "break the limbs of those who kill cows". Uttar Pradesh is going to polls in seven phases beginning February 10.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Who do you think should handle this- Ministry of Defence or Ministry of Tourism?

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	59464.62 ↓ 634.20
NIFTY	17757.00 ↓ 181.40
DOLLAR	74.77 ↑ ₹0.07
EURO	84.35 ↓ ₹0.05
GOLD	₹48,501 ↑ ₹124
SILVER	₹65,321 ↑ ₹916

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	28.4°C	27.8°C
TEMP MIN	13.8°C	13.6°C
Humidity	90%	88%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Mainly clear sky

Enforce Covid norms at nomination centres: SEC

The SEC has noticed people gathering in large numbers for filing of nominations and holding public meetings which contravene the guidelines

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 20: Expressing concern over large gatherings during filing of nominations for panchayat elections, the State Election Commission (SEC) has asked the Director General of Police (DGP) to ensure strict enforcement of Covid-19 guidelines.

SEC Secretary RN Sahu has written a letter to DGP Sunil Kumar Bansal in this regard Thursday. Sahu said that the Commission has laid down Covid-19 guidelines for strict enforcement at different stages of the election process.

PANCHAYAT POLLS



There was threabare discussion in the conference of collectors and superintendents of police January 15, 2022 where it was decided to strictly enforce the guidelines and DSP rank officers have also been appointed as Covid observers in different districts, Sahu pointed out.

However, the Commission has noticed that people are gathering in large numbers for filing of nominations and are holding public

meetings which contravene the guidelines, the secretary mentioned.

"A large number of candidates are expected to file nominations on the last day tomorrow (Friday). The Commission hereby directs that necessary instructions shall be issued to all SPs, including Covid observers, to ensure that large gatherings do not take place for filing nominations and holding meetings in public places," Sahu told the DGP.

The SEC has forwarded copies of the letter to all district Collectors and SPs for information and necessary action.

As per the guidelines of the SEC, either the candidate or one proposer can enter the election officer's office maintaining proper social distance while filing the nomination papers. Only one vehicle is allowed for the purpose of filing nomination.

Cuttack stadium all set to host BWF Odisha Open 2022

The mega sporting event will be held without spectators and in strict adherence to Covid guidelines and norms laid down by the state govt and BWF

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, Jan 20: With just five days left for the 2022 Odisha Open to kick-start, the state government is leaving no stone unturned to host the inaugural edition of the international badminton tournament, which will witness over 300 players from 18 countries vie for the top honours.

The 2022 Odisha Open is a BWF

Super 100 tournament that will take place at the Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium in Cuttack from January 25 to 30.

The Odisha Open, however, will be held behind closed doors without spectators and strict adherence to Covid guidelines and norms laid down by the State government and Badminton World Federation (BWF).

Speaking about the preparedness, Sports Minister Tusharkanti Behera said, "Odisha is hosting this event for the first time and our collective efforts are to ensure an overall safe and secure environment for players to participate in their respective games."

The Sports and Youth Services



department is working closely with Badminton Association of India and Odisha State Badminton Association to ensure that the event is as per BWF standards and is conducted smoothly with safety of players being given utmost priority, he said.

"Covid protocols have also been

clearly defined. We look forward to hosting all the players and officials and wish them a wonderful stay in Odisha and good luck for their event," added Behera.

The minister further said the state government has always taken great strides to promote sports, across several disciplines, and badminton is one of them. Hosting this inaugural edition of the Odisha Open is another step in getting more sportspersons from the state ecosystem to aspire and grow in the sport.

"Very soon, our Badminton High Performance Centre will also be completed and get operational," he stated.

As per the protocols laid down by Odisha government and Badminton World Federation (BWF), RT-PCR test is mandatory for all players and officials and they have to arrive before January 23 to participate in the event.

Players also need to carry their RTPCR negative reports (72 hours) at the time of arrival along with their vaccination certificate. Moreover, as per the BWF guidelines, no player will be allowed to enter the venue (event and practice) without a prior negative RT-PCR report. The State Badminton Association has also been asked to intimate players on these guidelines, officials said.

Global unemployment to reach 207mn in 2022

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Geneva, Jan 20: Global unemployment is expected to remain above pre-Covid-19 levels until at least 2023 and is estimated at 207 million this year, almost 21 million more than in 2019, according to a report from the International Labour Organisation that gives assessments on how labour market recovery has unfolded worldwide.

The Geneva-based United Nations agency has downgraded its forecast for labour market recovery in 2022, projecting a deficit in hours worked globally equivalent

to 52 million full-time jobs, relative to the fourth quarter of 2019. The previous full-year estimate in May 2021 projected a deficit of 26 million full-time equivalent jobs.

While this latest projection is an improvement on the situation in 2021, it remains almost two per cent below the number of global hours worked pre-pandemic, according to the ILO World Employment and Social Outlook - Trends 2022 report.

The report warns of slow and uncertain recovery as the pandemic continues to have a significant impact on global labour markets.

leisure



ALICIA SILVERSTONE DONATES 1,000 VEGAN MEALS AT MUMBAI HOSPITAL

Hollywood star Alicia Silverstone teamed up with the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India to provide underprivileged relatives of patients at Mumbai's BYL Nair Charitable Hospital with 1,000 vegan meals.

GINA RODRIGUEZ TO STAR IN PEDRO'S HIT DARK COMEDY ADAPTATION

Spanish filmmaker Pedro Almodóvar's hit dark comedy *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* will be adapted for an Apple TV Plus series. Actress Gina Rodriguez is attached to star as Pepa Marcos and Almodóvar is slated to executive produce the show via his El Deseo banner.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You are enthusiastic about mixing with people today, and you will feel like combining business and leisure. You will be encouraged to take part in group activities as you have the ability to work and have fun at the same time. Ganesha says that as a matter of fact you may emerge wiser from others' ideas.

TAURUS
This day you will tend to be too bossy, too harsh on your subordinates or employees and end up making them miserable as well as hostile. Their insubordination could corrode the respect you get and, in addition, make things unworkable. This acrimony and ill will is sure to spread and foul up your larger professional connections and interests. Ganesha urges you to be particularly sane and sensible. Conduct yourself as you would normally do.

GEMINI
Routine work bores you, and today you will go all out to break free from the shackles of boredom. The results, however, may not be as dramatic. You will have to depend on your children, if any, to rescue you from the tyranny of routine. Monetary gains can be expected either in the form of inheritance of ancestral property or as increment in your basic salary.

CANCER
You wish to display your social prestige and monetary clout in front of your relatives. But you have to pay a heavy price for that. Your past experience will teach you something, which will stand in good stead for future dealings.

LEO
You will see some change in your daily schedule today. It is a good day to start a new job or business activity. You will focus more attention on your personality today. You will try to improve yourself and bring your hidden talents to the fore. Make the most of this opportunity to implement your plans, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
Ganesha says you realise the importance of family matters today. You have great skills when it comes to negotiations, and you will use them in settling disputes amicably. Ganesha says you have learned the lessons of life on staying level-headed, and that you keenly believe that opposition eventually leads to progress.

LIBRA
Ganesha says today you will use your mental competency to complete all your work on time. You may not give complete attention to your family as you will be spending time in the office or at work. Your extraordinary intelligence will be showcased at work today. Ganesha says do not forget your family which has played a huge role in your success.

SCORPIO
Try to take a chill pill as you may be worried about petty issues today. Do not let them hinder your happiness and take a toll on your health. However, the day looks promising towards the end. Friends are just a phone call away, call them and set out for a destination unknown to distress and rejuvenate.

SAGITTARIUS
It's time for some entertainment. Movies, picnics and dining out is on your mind. Invite your beloved and enjoy quality time with each other. Also, you will spend time with you family and friends, and attend a music concert together.

CAPRICORN
Though you leave no stone unturned to identify the opportunities coming your way, you need to keep your guards on whenever you are a part of a legal matter. Financially, you're likely to bear some heavy losses, and if you're a dealer or a broker, the chances of suffering from them are even higher. Take some precautionary measures well in advance, advises Ganesha.

AQUARIUS
Today, you will wish there were two of you! You are deluged with pending work, and even doubling up efforts will not seem enough. You may even cancel your movie date, deciding to deal with your sweetheart's tantrums later. It's your boss you are worried about, says Ganesha.

PISCES
Bright prospects will greet whatever new ventures you decide to focus on today, says Ganesha. It is a good time to implement your plans. Apart from short-term monetary gains, you may also find yourself pursuing activities which bring you intangible rewards, like goodwill for example.

Sushmita euphoric about int'l honour



MUMBAI: Actress and former Miss Universe Sushmita Sen is elated on being conferred the International Association of Working Women Award for an outstanding performance by a female actor in a TV series for her show *Aarya 2*.

The award is presented by the DC South Asian Film Festival (DCSAFF), which is currently underway virtually starting from January 16 to January 30.

The actress credits the team of *Aarya* for working tirelessly for the show that is now gaining global recognition. Sharing her excitement, the actress said in a statement, "I am overwhelmed with all the love and appreciation being showered on *Aarya 2*. The entire team has worked strenuously to put together a work of art that would be loved by everyone."

"It's euphoric to win the International Association of Working Women Award for an outstanding performance by a female actor in a television series. I would like to thank the organisers of the DC South Asian Film Festival for bestowing this honour on me and the entire team. This is surreal!" the statement further said.

Talking about DCSAFF, the film fest which started in 2012 featuring Shyam Benegal's classic film *Mammo* as the opening title, is currently in its 10th edition and will feature films from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Canada, and the US and many regional languages. IANS

Mihir's School Master to have an OTT release today

BHUBANESWAR: The first independent Odia OTT platform AAO NXT would stream late actor Mihir Das' *School Master*, made in 1985 and the first film in which the actor appeared in an important character, at 10.30pm to pay tribute on the 11th day of his death.

"He will always be remembered through his amazing films. In *School Master*, Mihir had played the younger son of a school headmaster played by late Govind Tej. This movie will be officially released on



AAO NXT to pay tribute to the actor," read a statement issued by the OTT platform. Written by Gopal Chhotray

and directed by Tej, *School Master* revolves around the struggle of a headmaster and his wife played by actress Sujata Anand. They even had to mortgage their home to educate their sons played by Uttam Mohanty and Mihir Das. When they wanted their sons to repay the debt incurred for them, the siblings paid no heed.

The movie also featured Baishali Parida, Sangita Das and Dukhiram Swain in pivotal roles. Prafulla Kar had scored its music. IANS



'Lucky to work with people who open new horizons'

MUMBAI: Actress Parineeti Chopra feels lucky to have worked with filmmakers who have brought the best out of her and helped her in honing her craft.

In her opinion, it's important to collaborate with people who push an artiste to do better.

Parineeti says, "I'm lucky to have been directed by some of the best cinematic geniuses in Indian cinema. Such experiences have only enriched me and made me a better performer. As an actor, one needs to constantly evolve and col-

laborate with people who can push you to excel, who can open horizons for you and make your craft better."

She adds, "From being groomed by Aditya Chopra, to working with filmmakers like Rohit Shetty (*Golmaal Again*), Maneesh Sharma (*Shuddh Desi Romance*), Dibakar Banerjee (*Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar*), Amole Gupte (*Saina*), Habib Faisal (*Ishaqzaade*), Vinil Mathew (*Hasee Toh Phasee*), Anurag Singh (*Kesari*), Ribhu Dasgupta (*The Girl On The Train*), I couldn't have imagined a more fulfilling journey in cinema for myself." IANS

New film studio in space by 2024

Named *SEE-1*, the module is intended to host films, television, music and sports events as well as artists, producers and creatives who want to make content in the low orbit, micro-gravity environment



Space Entertainment Enterprise (S.E.E.), the company co-producing Tom Cruise's upcoming space movie, plans to launch a sports arena and production studio in space by 2024. S.E.E. has unveiled plans to build a space station module that contains a sports and entertainment arena as well as a content studio by

December 2024, reports variety.com.

Named *SEE-1*, the module is intended to host films, television, music and sports events as well as artists, producers and creatives who want to make content in the low orbit, micro-gravity environment. The facilities will enable development, production, recording, broadcasting and live streaming

of content.

S.E.E. intends to produce its own content and events in the module as well as making it available to third-parties.

Axiom Space, who in January 2022 won NASA's approval to build

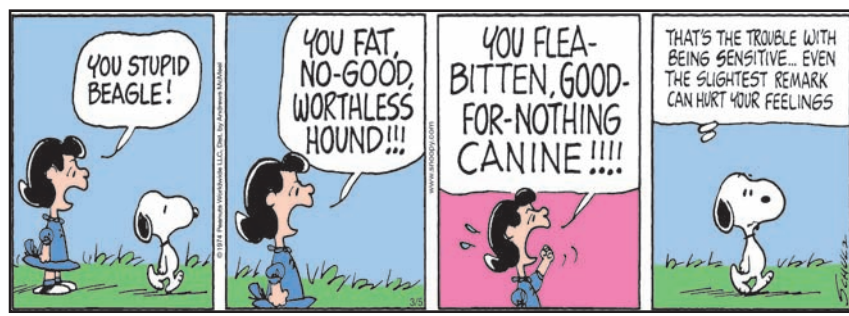
a commercial component of the International Space Station (ISS), will undertake the construction of *SEE-1*. The module will dock on Axiom's commercial arm, named Axiom Station, which will also host other commercial ventures, including space tourism.

Axiom Station will then separate from the ISS in 2028.

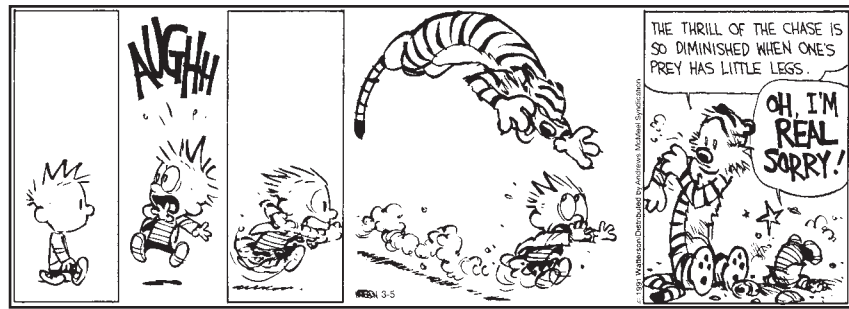
S.E.E., which was co-founded in the UK by entrepreneurs and producers Elena and Dmitry Lesnevsky is currently planning a fundraising round.

"*SEE-1* is an incredible opportunity for humanity to move into a different realm and start an exciting new chapter in space," said Dmitry and Elena Lesnevsky in a statement. IANS

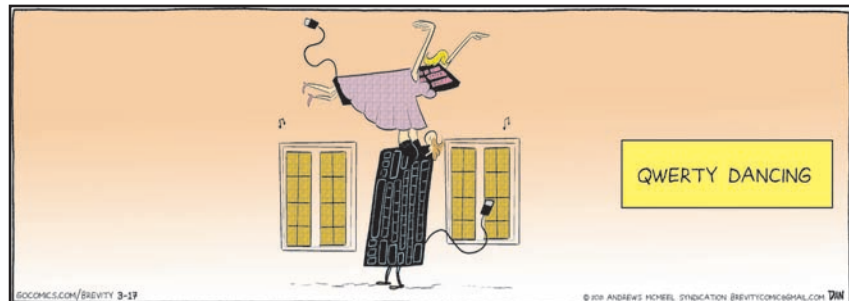
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

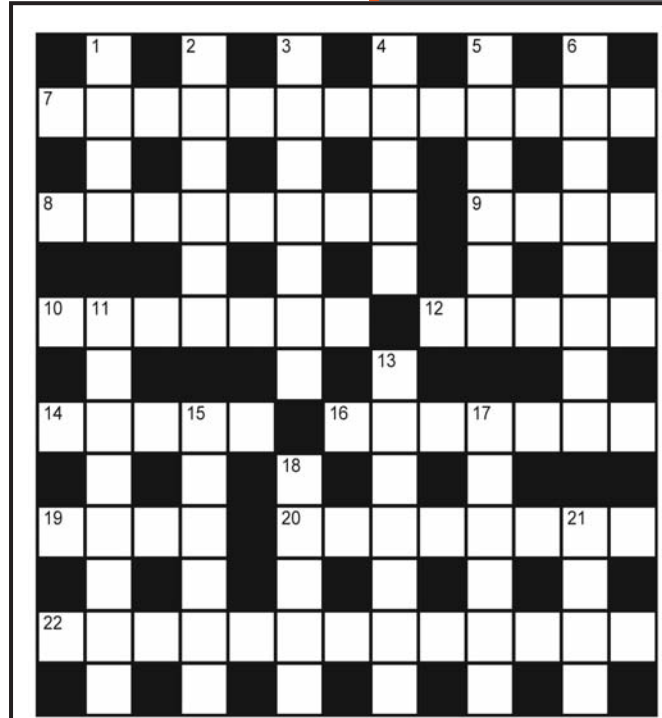


BREVITY



FUN post

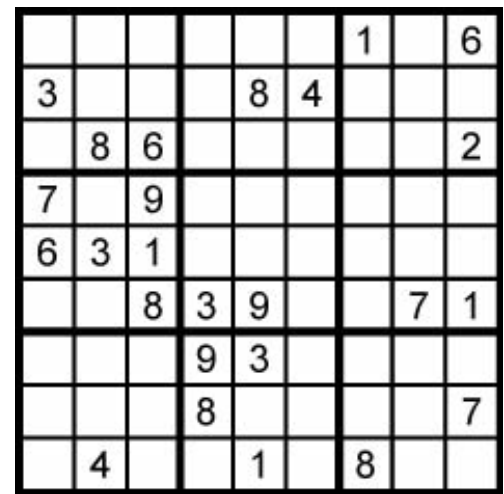
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Meteors (8,5)
 - 8 V formation, often
 - 9 Women in habits
 - 10 Austere
 - 12 Pressing
 - 14 Greyish brown
 - 16 Words to a noisy child (2,5)
 - 19 Race pace
 - 20 Stalemate
 - 22 Some carnival attractions (5-2-6)
- Down**
- 1 Loafer, e.g.
 - 2 Labourer
 - 3 Like modern cameras
 - 4 White heron
 - 5 Kind of cuisine
 - 6 Hair colour
 - 11 Grasslands
 - 13 Port city on the English Channel (2,5)
 - 15 Gate crasher?
 - 17 Diacritical mark in a German dictionary
 - 18 Words of wisdom
 - 21 Relinquish

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU

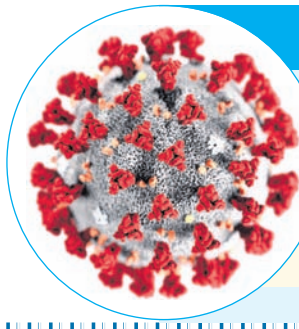


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



CLAY ART

Sculptors at work during a camp organised by the Odisha Lalit Kala Akademi and Odia Language Literature and Culture department at Netaji Birthplace Museum in Cuttack, Thursday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	34,01,98,964	27,34,65,002	55,86,163
India	3,82,18,773	3,58,07,029	4,87,693
Odisha	11,77,462	10,89,033	8,501

HC seeks report on Dinkia baton charge

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Jan 20: The Orissa High Court Thursday directed the Home department of the state government to file a status report in connection with the baton charge on unarmed agitators by police during land acquisition for a steel plant at Dinkia in Jagatsinghpur district January 14.

A division bench of Chief Justice S Muralidhar also asked the Home department to send essential commodities to Dinkia while taking up two PILs in connection with the alleged police brutality.

Several villagers of Dinkia, including women and children, were allegedly injured in the baton charge while they were opposing land acquisition for a steel plant of JSW company. The villagers alleged that the eviction drive was carried out without any consultation with the betel farmers.



A FILE PHOTO

Protesting the alleged police brutality, lawyer Khirod Rout and others filed two separate PILs in the HC. The Chief Secretary, revenue department secretary, JSW company, Jagatsinghpur SP and Erasama Tehsildar have been made parties to the cases. The petitioners pleaded for the immediate withdrawal of police

force from Dinkia and an impartial probe into the incident.

They also sought the HC intervention for immediate release of the arrested agitators and withdrawal of the cases registered against the locals. The petitioners urged the court to take the necessary steps for providing appropriate compensation to the injured villagers.

FRICITION POINT

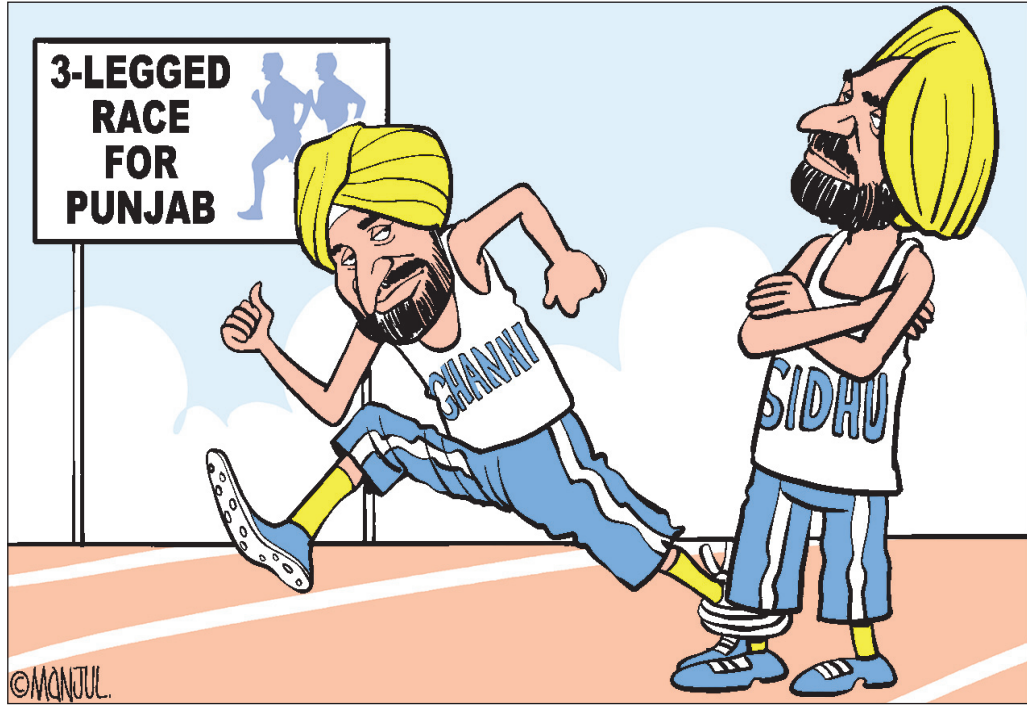
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Protesting the alleged police brutality, lawyer Khirod Rout and others filed two PILs in the HC

The Chief Secretary, Revenue secretary, JSW company, Jagatsinghpur SP and Erasama Tehsildar have been made parties to the cases

Moreover, they urged the court to safeguard the human rights of the locals of Dinkia and ask the authorities not to raze any betel vine in the locality till further order in the cases.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Nabard OKs ₹951cr for 176 road projects

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Jan 20: The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) Thursday sanctioned ₹951 crore to the state government for the construction of 176 rural roads, an official said.

The assistance has been sanctioned under the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) for 176 rural road projects in all 30 districts of the coastal state, said Nabard chief general manager (Odisha Regional Office) C Udayabhaskar in a statement.

The projects with a combined length of 1,434km will improve rural connectivity for 9.92 lakh people in 959 villages.

This sanction is in line with the priority given by the state government for developing critical rural infrastructure such as drinking water supply, irrigation, and rural connectivity (roads and bridges).

These infrastructure projects will play a key role in supporting the rural economy by improving the livelihood of people, Udayabhaskar said.

The national bank has made a cumulative sanction of ₹3,852 crore for Odisha during the current financial year for critical rural infrastructure projects under RIDF.

Centre releases ₹2,152 cr to state

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Jan 20: The Centre Thursday authorised the release of an advance instalment of tax devolution to the tune of ₹2,152.66 to Odisha.

The Union Finance Ministry informed that this amount is in addition to the regular devolution for the month of January 2022, which was also released Thursday.

Odisha would receive a total of ₹4,305.32 crore in January this



year," the Finance Ministry said.

Significantly, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Thursday authorised the release of

an advance instalment of tax devolution to the tune of ₹47,541 crore to the state governments.

It is pertinent to mention that the Centre had released the first advance instalment of tax amounting to ₹47,541 crore to states November 22 last year.

With the release of the second advance instalment, the states would receive an additional amount of ₹90,082 crore under tax devolution over and above what has been budgeted till January

this year, sources said. It is worth mentioning here that the release from the Centre in terms of back-to-back loan amounting to ₹1.59 lakh crore to state governments in lieu of GST Compensation shortfall in 2021-22 fiscal was completed by October last year.

This is in line with the commitment of the Centre to strengthen the hands of the states to accelerate their capital and developmental expenditure to ameliorate the deleterious effects of Covid-19 pandemic.

OCS Mains begins amid Cov protocols

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Jan 20: The Odisha Civil Service (OCS) Mains examination-2020, conducted by the Odisha Public Service Commission (OPSC), commenced Thursday amid strict adherence to the Covid-19 protocols.

The examination will continue till February 8. A total of 4,754 candidates had cleared the preliminary examinations, sources said.

The main examination is being conducted in two sittings at 16 centres under five zones across the state, sources said.

The first sitting of the examination is being conducted from 9am to 12 noon while the second sitting begins at 2pm and continues till 5pm, sources added.

The OPSC has asked District Collectors to take necessary steps for the smooth conduct of the examination. Members of the OPSC have been assigned to inspect the examination centres, said commission's secretary Ashok Kumar Dash.

Earlier, many candidates had urged the OPSC to postpone the examination in the wake of the recent surge in Covid-19 cases in Odisha. They had sought the intervention of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik into the issue.

However, the OPSC refused to postpone the examination. In a no-



The examination that will continue till February 8 is being conducted in two sittings at 16 centres under five zones across the state

The OPSC has asked District Collectors to take necessary steps for the smooth conduct of the exam

Members of the OPSC have been assigned to inspect the exam centres

tification January 15, the public service commission asked the candidates to sit for the examination by adhering to the Covid-19 protocols, including social distancing. Candidates were seen holding demonstrations in the city to press for their demands.

The commission asked the students to wear N95 masks during the examination and permitted them to carry hand sanitizer in transparent bottles to the examination centres.

The OPSC also made it clear that the examination halls have been thoroughly sanitised for the safety of the candidates.



Up in arms over R-Day tableau rejection

Members of Paika community display martial arts at the Governor's House Square in Bhubaneswar, Thursday, as part of protests against the rejection of Odisha's Republic Day tableau by the Defence Ministry

OP PHOTO

2 Red Panda pairs restocked in the wild by Darjeeling Zoo



PC: THE DARJEELING ZOO

Two pairs of Red Pandas, an endangered species, were restocked in the Singalila National Park from the Darjeeling Zoo. The move also marked the second such restocking by the zoo since 2003-04.

Over the decades, the population of Red Pandas is decreasing because of a number of threats to their habitats. The effort at restocking them in the wild was to ensure that their population in the wild remains stable.

"A similar attempt was made in 2003-04, when the zoo had released two female Red Pandas. The effort this time round has been made following advanced studies and technology-based inputs, and with better equipment such as satellite collars," Darjeeling Zoo director Basavraj Holeyachi told media over phone.

As per the World Wide Fund-India (WWF India), Red Panda, the arboreal mammal, thrives best at 2,200-4,800 me-

tres in deciduous and coniferous forest with dense understories of bamboo.

There are only about 2,500 Red Pandas left in the world. Listed as 'Endangered' in the IUCN red list of threatened species and under Schedule-I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972, Red Panda is found across the contiguous areas of Nepal, Darjeeling, Sikkim, Bhutan, Tawang and other western districts of Arunachal Pradesh and even in parts of Meghalaya.

Saket Badola of Traffic India, working to raise awareness about wildlife trafficking, tweeted while appreciating the step by the zoo: "The major threats faced by Red Pandas include their illegal extraction from the wild for pet trade and their poaching for pelt that is used to make traditional fur articles."

The four Red Pandas - Smile, Shifu, Noel and Yeshe, aged 4, 6, 8, and 9 years respectively, were released in the soft release facility located within the park two

days ago. The facility is spread across 2 hectares of land within the National Park. Once the Red Pandas are totally wild, they will be released outside the facility. Behavioural analysis and other research were done continuously while turning the zoo-bred Red Pandas into wild ones to some extent.

"The soft release will make them completely wild. We need to reduce the human imprint. We don't want to see humans as their benefactors," Holeyachi said, adding that the entire process went on for almost 7-8 months.

The Red Pandas' pedigree and genetic analysis were carried out to ensure that animals with same parentage are not released in the wild. Most distant individuals were selected from among the population.

"Through pedigree analysis, with the help of experts from Rotterdam Zoo, the Netherlands, the genetic study was carried out with the assistance of the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad," Holeyachi said.

Darjeeling Zoo is famous for conservation breeding of Red Pandas, Snow Leopards, Himalayan Herbivores, and Himalayan Pheasants since the 1990s. Recently, two zoo-bred Goral and Red Jungle Fowls were released in the wild.

January-February is the breeding season for Red Pandas. It would be only by June that the zoo team would come to know if the Red Pandas have bred among themselves as the litter will be seen only then.

"Otherwise also, we will be monitoring them for 72 weeks. So, if not this breeding season, next breeding season we are sure to get some good news," said an elated Holeyachi.

STF seals building worth ₹1cr of drug trafficker

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 20: The Special Task Force (STF) of the state Crime Branch has sealed a residential complex worth ₹1 crore owned by notorious interstate drug trafficker Lal Mohammad Sk alias Lulu Sk at Nadia in West Bengal (WB), an official said Thursday.

With the assistance of WB Police, the STF had arrested Lulu Sk from Baranaldaha under Palashipara police limits in Nadia district of the neighbouring state late January 7 night.

"The house of the main accused in the STF Case 35/2021 was seized and the

process is on to identify other ill-gotten properties from drug trafficking. The inter-state brown sugar/heroin trafficker from Palasi, Nadia, West Bengal was arrested last week. (sic)," the STF tweeted.

"Efforts are on to check if the accused has amassed some more assets with the ill-gotten money. The STF will seize all such properties, if any, owned by the notorious drug trafficker," said a senior STF official.

The official added, "We'll soon move the competent authority (eastern region) in Kolkata under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances

(NDPS) Act (Section A- Z) for confiscation of the assets."

About the crackdown, the official said they learnt about Lulu Sk from Safikul Sk, another drug trafficker from Murshidabad in WB, who was arrested by the STF during a raid in Tangi area of Khurda district October 20, last year.

"During interrogation, Safikul Sk confessed to have procured the contraband from Lulu Sk," said the official.

Recently, the STF had confiscated properties worth over ₹2 crore owned by another drug trafficker Sk Samiruddin alias Taklu Raja.

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PANCHAYAT POLLS

POLL FERVOUR

SEC REMOVES GRS FOR ALLOWING MEET IN OFFICE



SEC also reviewed the removal of the hoardings, banners, posters from government buildings and public places through videoconferencing with all district Collectors

The Purusottampur Panchayat office was allegedly misused for holding a meeting by a political party, which is against the poll norms

one Susant Chhatria had reportedly won the bid by promising to pay ₹44,000 for the development of the Jagannath temple at the village under Puintala block.

The auction was done at a meeting attended by the heads of three villages - Bandanakata, Kasurpali, and Bileisarda - at the Jagannath temple where the alleged bidding took place.

Chhatria had said, "I have agreed to pay under one condition that none will contest against me. If I get elected unopposed, then my expenditure on campaigning will be saved. I will give that money for the development of the temple."

Earlier, the SEC had asked the district administration to submit a report on the matter. Additional district magistrate Mahendra Mohapatra and Puintala BDO had submitted the report to the Collector Chanchal Rana who had forwarded it to the SEC.

Meanwhile, the SEC has reviewed the removal of the hoardings, banners, posters from government buildings and public places through videoconferencing with all district Collectors.



A group of BJD candidates on their way to file nominations for the upcoming panchayat elections in Puri, Thursday

State logs 7 deaths, highest in 3 months

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Jan 20: Odisha recorded 10,368 fresh coronavirus cases Thursday raising the tally to 11,77,462, while the single-day death count of seven was the highest in more than three months, the state health department said in a bulletin. The state had logged 11,607 new cases and six deaths Wednesday.

At least 1,090 children were among the new coronavirus-positive patients, it said.

The toll mounted to 8,501 with four deaths in Bhubaneswar alone and one each in Sambalpur, Khurda and Ganjam districts, the Health department bulletin said. Fifty-three

40 Capital Hospital docs test Cov +ve

BHUBANESWAR: At least 130 frontline workers of the Capital Hospital here have tested positive for Covid-19 in the ongoing third wave of the pandemic so far, affecting the services. The frontline workers who tested positive include 40 doctors, 30 staff nurses, 40 laboratory technicians and more than 15 pharmacists. "As many as 130 of our frontline workers have tested positive for Covid-19. The hospital services have been severely affected. We are forced to manage the daily affairs with fewer hands," said Capital Hospital Director Laxmidhar Sahoo.

other COVID-19 patients have died due to comorbidities so far.

The toll mounted to 8,501 with four deaths in Bhubaneswar alone and one each in Sambalpur, Khurda and Ganjam districts, the Health department bulletin said. Fifty-three

the past 24 hours, the bulletin said.

Khurda district, of which state Capital Bhubaneswar is a part, reported more than a quarter of the fresh cases with 3,036 infections, followed by 1,505 in Sundargarh and 940 in Cuttack, it said.

The TPBR was recorded at 32.7 per cent in Sundargarh and 31.8 in Khurda. Seventeen more districts are in the red category with a positivity ratio of more than 7.5 per cent. Cuttack, Balasore and Sambalpur are also in the red zone, where the number of current infections in each district is over 2,500. Puri, Mayurbhanj and Jajpur are among the 12 districts that are in the yellow zone with over 1,000 patients each.

ED conducts raids, nabs bizman in PMLA case

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 20: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Thursday said it has carried out search operations at various premises of a Cuttack and Odisha-based businessman Pawan Kumar Jajodia in connection with a Prevention of Money Laundering case.

The official said during the searches, various incriminating documents were seized by them indicating the proceeds of the crime.

"Documents related to plots, properties and buildings worth ₹23 crore have been seized by us," said an ED official.

Earlier, an FIR was registered by the State Vigilance Cell and EOW of Odisha under Section 420 and 120B of the IPC against Pawan Kumar Jajodia.

In the FIR, it was alleged that Jajodia has caused loss to the government exchequer to an extent of ₹21.86 crore by using false billings, non-existing addresses for companies under different names and style and also using fake and untraceable IDs.

The ED initiated a money laundering investigation on the basis of this FIR. The ED formed a team of elite officials and started probing the matter. They said they have some crucial evidence against Jajodia.

The ED official said first they filed the arrest memo and then approached the court seeking custodial remand of Jajodia. The court after hearing their contention agreed to allow their move and granted them six days time to interrogate Jajodia. Further Investigation is under progress.

Medical negligence: Couple gets ₹2 lakh following NHRC order

BHUBANESWAR: A couple who had lost their newborn two hours after her birth at Gurudihatia of Cuttack in 2019 has received ₹2 lakh compensation following the intervention of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). Earlier, the NHRC had directed the state Chief Secretary to pay the compensation after the Special Secretary for state Medical, Health & Family Welfare Department had agreed in its report that the baby died as the staff at Gurudihatia Primary Health Centre (PHC) failed to attend to the pregnant mother, Kuni Maharana, 27, in time. The Special Secretary also accepted that the staff did not turn up on the date despite duty roster which resulted in the victim delivering her child in the autorickshaw, leading to the death of the child without getting any medical help. Following the NHRC directions, the Chief District Medical and Public Health Officer of Cuttack paid ₹2 lakh to Maharana and her husband.

Havildar accused of bigamy

BHUBANESWAR: A woman Thursday brought allegations of bigamy and torture against her husband. A case (9/22) has been registered in this regard at the Mahila police station on the basis of the complaint lodged by the victim Wednesday. The accused havildar identified as Sadashiv Swain is posted at the Dhauli police station. The victim accused Swain of illegally marrying her in a temple two years ago without obtaining a divorce from his first wife. She alleged Swain has been physically abusing her for last few months. Mahila police Thursday arrested the accused who was later released after a notice was served against him under Section 41(A) of the CrPC.

5 years' jail for ponzi firm chief

CUTTACK: A special court dealing with chit fund cases here Thursday awarded five years of imprisonment to Sai Samrudhi Realcon India Limited chief Sandip Kumar Das after convicting him in the multicore ponzi scam. The court also imposed a penalty of ₹3.10 lakh on Das. It made it clear that non-payment of the penalty amount would invite an additional jail term of one year and 10 months. As per the case proceedings, Das had collected deposits to the tune of ₹3.5 lakh from common depositors by promising attractive returns. However, he did not repay the amounts to the depositors. Rasananda Swain, a depositor, had filed an FIR in this regard with Puri police. Subsequently, the police had arrested Das. A chargesheet had been filed against Das in 2017.

CP seizes 9 bikes; 2 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 20: The Commissionerate Police Thursday claimed to have arrested two bike lifters and seized nine motorcycles from their possession.

The accused were identified as Dasarathi Dalai alias Dasia, 26, of Raghunath Nagar in Dumduma area here, and Ajit Kumar Jena, 42, of Khandisri village under Chandrapur police limits in Nayagarh district.

A person had Monday lodged a complaint with the Khandagiri police about the theft of his scooter which was parked outside his residence. Police later started investigation into the matter by registering case (21/22) in this regard.

The accused duo was arrested by Khandagiri police Wednesday night and on the basis of information elicited from them during interrogation, the police seized nine stolen motor cycles including the one lifted Monday.

- Stole bikes to impress girl friend
- Stolen bikes sold at ₹300 apiece
- Got into stealing when he was a juvenile

Police, during the course of investigation, came to know that the prime accused, Dasia, has been stealing two wheelers since 2012 when he was a juvenile. He used to steal motor cycles of different brands to please his girlfriend and sell those bikes at much cheaper prices later, police sources claimed. He even sold some stolen bikes at ₹300 only.

As many as 18 bike theft cases are pending against Dasia at Khandagiri and Nayapalli police stations of the Capital city.

Commissionerate Police Thursday produced both the accused before a court that later sent them to judicial custody.

Youths celebrate b-day on road; 12 vehicles seized

Bhubaneswar: A group of youths was spotted while celebrating a birthday party at Delta Square under Khandagiri police limits here Wednesday night, by the twin city Police Commissioner Saumendra Priyadarshi, an official said Thursday.

"This is a violation of night curfew in force and Covid-19 safety protocols," Priyadarshi said. Acting on instructions of the Commissioner and after getting information about the incident, Khandagiri police reached the spot. The youths fled the scene leaving behind their vehicles. Khandagiri police seized 12 two-wheelers from the spot. A detailed probe was underway when the last report came in.

GHOSTS OF THE MOUNTAINS

Snow leopard, 2 cubs caught on cam in Himachal's highs

The graceful golden-eyed animal with thick fur, padded paws and a long tail, is found in the rocky regions at an altitude from 2,700 to 6,000 metres (8,900 ft to 20,000 ft)

How often does one come across a critically endangered, elusive snow leopard, a flagship species for the high-altitude Himalayas? Rarely or never for some, believe wildlife experts. But Assistant Public Relations Officer Ajay Banyal spotted a roaming mother snow leopard with two cubs through the snow just close to Kaza, the headquarters of Spiti which is some 350 km from the state capital Shimla, Wednesday evening. He captured the snow leopards, known as the 'ghost of the mountains' that live above the tree line on steep and rocky peaks, in his mobile camera close to the Langcha-Kaza road, just three km away from Kaza in

the Spiti Valley in Himachal Pradesh. "It was a lucky encounter with the elusive snow leopard," Banyal told IANS over phone from Kaza where he is posted.

"In the past two and a half years of my posting in Kaza, I was trying to spot the snow leopard across the Spiti Valley, a home to the snow leopard, during my assignments. It was a chance encounter last evening when I spotted a snow leopard family while I was traveling in a vehicle," an excited and energetic Banyal said. He also captured a video clip to raise public awareness and support for snow leopard conservation.

Recent studies by the state Forest department using camera traps have suggested a healthy increase in the population of the mammal, especially in the Spiti Valley that supports its sufficient prey 'blue sheep'. The Pin Valley in the Spiti Valley is a national park and is the habitat for rare animals and birds, including the snow leopard. The national park is some 40 km from the place where Banyal encountered the snow leopards. Elated over the snow leopards'



sighting, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) Ajay Srivastava, a 1988-batch IFS officer, told IANS Thursday that the Spiti landscape has been regarded as one of the country's best.

India has identified three large landscapes - Hemis-Spiti across Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh; Nanda Devi-Gangotri in Uttarakhand; and Khangchendzonga - Tawang across Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh where the Central government is committing to landscape restoration for snow leopard conservation.

India has been party to the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection (GSLEP) Programme since 2013. Srivastava, who was earlier posted as PCCF (wildlife)-cum-Chief Wildlife Warden, said as per studies conducted by the Wildlife Wing in collaboration with the Nature Conservation Foundation, the Spiti landscape is home to some 70 snow leopards, a healthy population.

Studies also report a bulk of snow leopard's occurrence is noted outside the protected areas, indicating a deep-rooted man-animal

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As a flagship species, Himachal Pradesh has adopted it as its state animal

bondage.

The graceful golden-eyed animal with thick fur, padded paws and a long tail, is found in rocky regions at an altitude from 2,700 to 6,000 metres (8,900 ft to 20,000 ft). As a flagship species, Himachal Pradesh has adopted it as its state animal.

The estimation, carried out by laying camera traps, reveals that the density of snow leopard ranges from 0.08 to 0.37 individuals per 100 sq km in the trans-Himalayan re-

gions of Spiti, Pin Valley and upper Kinnaur with recording the highest densities, both of the predator and its prey, mainly the blue sheep (bharal) and the mountain ibex.

The study covers the entire potential of the snow leopard habitat, covering an area of 26,112 sq km by utilising a stratified sampling design. Nature Conservation Foundation Assistant Programme Director Ajay Bijour told IANS.

The snow leopard landscape is dominated by Buddhists, who mostly grow peas and potatoes and have adapted themselves to co-exist with the wild animals as the species are deeply embedded in their folklore.

However, wildlife experts have been expressing concern over the rising population of the abandoned dogs in high mountains that might pose a threat to the species and their food chain.

A first-of-its-kind latest study by the state Wildlife Wing through the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) suggests that the rise in population of feral dogs in the habitat of the snow leopard is a matter of concern.

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SHORT TAKES

Five injured in wild boar attack

Parjang: As many as five persons including a woman were injured after a wild boar strayed into Basantpada and Baghuabola Sahi villages under this block in Dhenkanal district and attacked the villagers, Thursday. The animal strayed into Basantpada and attacked a villager when he working in his cow shed. Later, it strayed into Baghuabola Sahi and attacked four more persons. It ran back into the jungle after the villagers raised an alarm. Later, the injured persons were rescued and rushed in a 108-ambulance to Kamakhyanagar hospital. One of them was shifted to the district headquarters hospital after his condition deteriorated.

Techie chooses politics over job

Sambalpur: Jayant Pradhan of Jujumara block in Sambalpur district is an engineer by profession, but his urge to serve people drew him to politics. As a mechanical engineer, Pradhan had a job with a private company with monthly ₹72,000 salary and other perks. He has filed his nomination for samiti member Wednesday. During the Covid pandemic, he stayed in the village and got to know the problems of the people. He was involved in various programmes and activities in the locality. "Serving people will give one immense pleasure and peace," he said.

From teaching to politics

Bhadrak: Urmila Nayak, a resident of Jagdalpur in Bhadrak district started her teachership in 2008, but took voluntary retirement in January 2022 to step into politics. She along with her supporters has filed her nomination as samiti member at the Bhadrak block office, Thursday. She made it clear that her intention is purely to serve people by joining politics.

Daughter of former MLA to run for ZP

Nabarangpur: The daughter of a former legislator and a dentist by profession, Lipika Majhi threw her hat into the poll ring after she filed her nominations for the Zilla Parishad zone-2 under Papadahandi block in Nabarangpur district. Majhi, the daughter of former Dabugaon MLA Bhujabala Majhi of Congress, filed her nominations as a candidate from the same party. After completing Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) in 2019, she is practicing at a private clinic in Bhubaneswar. She was attracted towards politics after seeing her father serving people from close quarters. However, she will continue with her medical practice as a dentist along with politics.

Botched-up road: NH-20 patch sank several times

Aradi, Jan 20: Poor-quality construction work has resulted in a 30 feet long and one foot deep crack on a patch of NH-20 stretching from Sathibankuda to Bodaka area of Olaga panchayat under Chandbali block of Bhadrak, hundreds of locals alleged Thursday. The stretch of the national highway, which is also an embankment of the Baitarani River, has gone under water several times in last seven years. Despite the fact that this patch of the highway is being repaired every year and lakhs of rupees are being spent in this regard, the particular stretch keeps on sinking. Around two years ago, a team of experts had visited the location and tested the soil. Accordingly, it had advised the department officials concerned, the locals added. A source said that the road had earlier sunk during flood in 2020 and was repaired by a contract firm, but it was of little use. Hundreds of light and heavy vehicles ply through this route every day, which connects Aradi in Bhadrak district with Cuttack and Bhubaneswar via Jajpur. Road connectivity frequently gets disrupted due to sinkages. On being contacted, junior engineer Subhasmita Pani said, "The embankment is going down time and again for being hit by Baitarani river water. One more dyke is required to be constructed in this area, which would entail huge funding."

HOMAGE TO ANCESTORS



Santal tribals through Baitarani river ghat at Bhimkund in Mayurbhanj district during Damodar Mela for immersion of their ancestors' ashes. The mela concluded Thursday.

KOTIA PANCHAYAT POLLS

BJD, BJP, Cong to field joint candidates

Koraput, Jan 20: All three main political parties in Odisha have unanimously decided to field joint candidates for the upcoming rural polls in Kotia panchayat of Koraput district. While the all-party meet was on, Salur MLA Pidika Rajana Dora visited Neredibalsa village and took stock of various projects undertaken by the Andhra government. The three political parties, BJD, BJP and Congress, will field candidates for the post of sarpanch, samiti members and Zilla Parishad members in the Kotia panchayat. The mat-



An all-party meeting is underway at Koraput

ter came to the fore at an all-party meeting held in Koraput, Thursday. Kotia panchayat has 28 revenue villages consisting of 13 wards with more than 5,000 voters. Notably, Kotia has been on the edge, repeatedly hitting the headlines over frequent incursions by officials and public representatives of Andhra Pradesh in the area and displays of brazen highhanded-

ness. The neighbouring state is carrying out developmental works in the panchayat and distributing freebies to people claiming the panchayat land as its own. This was stated here by BJD president, Ishwar Chandra Panigrahi to mediapersons, Wednesday Panigrahi said that the candidates will be fielded on the premises of 'Age Mati, Pachhare Party' (Motherland first, Party next) while interacting with mediapersons. Similarly, Tara Prasad Bahinipati, senior Congress leader and Jeypore MLA, also confirmed the development. Jayram Pangi, former MP and senior BJP leader, said the candidates will be nominated for the Kotia panchayat after a discussion with all the three mainstream parties. Among others, Koraput MLA Raghuram Padal, his Pottangi counterpart Pritam Padhi, former Pottangi MLA Rama Chandra Kadam, Koraput district Congress president Meenakshi Bahinipati and BJD leader Prafulla Pangi attended the meeting. Meanwhile, six people have filed their nominations for sarpanch while eight have filed nomination papers for ward members and samiti members on the fourth day of nomination filing.

PRE-POLL VIOLENCE Four critical in Ganjam

Chikiti/ Patrapur, Jan 20: At least four persons sustained critical injuries in separate incidents of pre-poll violence on the fourth day of filing of nomination papers for the panchayat polls in Ganjam district, Thursday. The incident occurred during filing of nomination papers in Chikiti under Chikiti Assembly segment and in Patrapur block of the district. In the first incident, three supporters of a particular political party were attacked with iron rods by a group of over 10 persons. The incident occurred when a woman candidate for the post of samiti member from Jagmohanpur village was returning after filing her nominations. In the second incident, P Nokeya of a particular group sustained critical injuries when members of an opposite group attacked him at Babanpur village under Jarada police limits in Patrapur block. He was returning from Khambhari panchayat after filing of nomination papers when he was attacked by the members of the opposite group.

Online studies hit sans network; parents fume

Keonjhar, Jan 20: Online studies of students have been affected due to lack of mobile network in Talapada panchayat under Telkoi block of Keonjhar district at a time when schools have been closed in view of the third wave of coronavirus pandemic. Disappointed with the administration's apathy, angry locals of this area have warned of hunger strike from February 1. Locals here are worried about the online studies of their wards being affected in absence of network. They said that mobile network is available at a place which is six kilometres away from their village. Their kids have to walk to the place to avail network, which is difficult on their part routinely. Villages like Guruma, Talapada, Similipal, Gangamatia under this panchayat do not get any network coverage. BSNL towers are at Panga and Badakhmani. People of these villages had earlier approached the District Collector and the Telkoi BDO to



make provision of mobile towers. But, no step had been taken in this regard. Once again, the locals have taken up the issue with the district administration. They stated that a Jio tower was set up in the area a year ago, which is yet to be made functional. The disappointed and angry villagers have warned of hunger strike in front of the block office from February 1 if no step is taken to solve the problem by January 31.

10-YR JAIL TERM FOR MATRICIDE

Keonjhar, Jan 20: A local court here sentenced a man to 10 years of imprisonment after convicting him for matricide, Thursday. The court of district and sessions judge Chittaranjan Mohapatra also slapped a penalty of ₹20,000 on him, apart from the punishment. The convict was identified as Bidyadhar Nayak, 40, a native of Rebanapalasal village under Harichandanpur block in the district. In default, Nayak will have to undergo an additional year of imprisonment. The judge passed the order after examining the statements of 11 witnesses. According to the case diary, Nayak assaulted his mother Malati Nayak, 58, with a wooden plank and rendered her critical over a trivial issue, February 10, 2018. The woman died the next day. Police arrested the accused and produced him in court after the deceased brother lodged a complaint at Daitari police station.

Newborn declared 'dead' comes alive during burial, dies

THE BABY'S FATHER HAS FILED A COMPLAINT AT KARANJIA POLICE STATION AGAINST A DOCTOR ALLEGING UTTER NEGLECT IN TREATMENT OF HIS CHILD



POST NEWS NETWORK

Patana, Jan 20: In a shocking incident, a newborn, allegedly declared 'dead' by doctors at Karanjia sub-divisional hospital Wednesday night, was later found to be alive at the burial ground. After being kept in the ICU again, however, the baby died Thursday. The father of the baby has filed a complaint at Karanjia police station against a doctor for neglecting the treatment of the newborn. IIC of Karanjia police station, Ranjan Sethi said that after receiving the complaint, an investigation into the matter has been started. Locals have demanded action against the doctor. The woman who delivered the child has been identified as Raimani and the father as Sania Munda from remote Khadikapada village under Saharpada block of Keonjhar district. The doctors at Karanjia sub-divisional hospital in neighbouring Mayurbhanj district allegedly failed to carry out necessary verification soon after birth of the baby boy Wednesday night. A source said that, while the woman was still undergoing treatment at the health facility, the upset father Sania car-

rried the baby in a bag and arranged for burial at their village. After digging a pit they were about to bury him. Surprisingly, the feeble newborn was found to be breathing and crying in a very low pitch. Stupefied, the family members rushed to Karanjia sub-divisional hospital again. The baby was taken to the hospital for health check-up. Hundreds of locals demanded proper treatment of the newborn. "Some staff-member of the hospital completed the formalities and packed the baby boy in a bag. When we offered prayers and picked up the newborn for burial, we found him alive. We rushed to the hospital for treatment," paternal aunt of the baby Bela Munda said. Tension ran high as the villagers assembled in front of the hospital and raised their voices against the alleged carelessness of the hospital authorities.

LACK OF INTERNET CONNECTIVITY

Digital campaign may backfire in South Odisha

Bissamcuttack, Jan 20: The state government is laying stress on digital campaign mode for the upcoming panchayat polls due to surge in spread of Covid-19 infections in the state. However, the move is unlikely to gain pace with majority of the regions in undivided Koraput district lacking in mobile and internet connectivity. Thus, it will be a challenge for the candidates to reach out to voters in areas without network facilities. As a result, candidates will not mind violating Covid norms and carry out their campaign physically in their respective areas. According to reports, over 962 villages in Rayagada district and 552 villages in Koraput lack internet connectivity. The issue was raised by Koraput MP Saptagiri Ulaka in the Parliament. The undivided Koraput district was bifurcated into four separate districts of Rayagada, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur and Koraput in 1992. The formation of four separate districts has com-



Over 962 villages of Rayagada and 552 villages of Koraput lack internet connectivity. The issue was raised by Koraput MP Saptagiri Ulaka in the Parliament

pleted 30 years by now. Majority of the regions in these four districts are yet to see internet facilities. As a result, people of these areas have remained cut-off from the rest of the world even in this digital age. Notably, three-tier panchayat polls will be held in February for which the nominated candidates have started filing their nominations. Restrictions have been imposed in conducting physical campaigning due to spike in Covid-19 infections. The candidates have been asked not to move from villages to villages in rallies and processions and use public address systems (PAS) for campaigning. They have been asked instead to use social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and Twitter more and more for campaigning and reach out to the voters. This seems to be a remote possibility as many of the areas in Rayagada district also lack internet

connectivity. The Raskola, Kurli, Kanabai and Sahada panchayats under Bissamcuttack block do not have internet facilities. Similar is the case with 13 villages in Dukumu panchayat and three villages in Jhigidi panchayat. In the absence of internet facilities, it will be a challenge for the candidates to reach out to their voters, some political leaders associated with these areas said. This has put the candidates of various political parties in a fix. In the absence of campaign, the voters will find it difficult to vote for their choicest candidates. It is apprehended that candidates might violate the Covid norms imposed by the state government and go for physical campaigns. In this situation, the role of district administration becomes all the more important. It is to be seen if the district administration will take any action against the candidates participating in physical campaign in violation of Covid norms. When contacted, Devi Prasad Pattanaik, a candidate for the post of samiti member said that he will move on his bike and only meet two to three supporters per day.

Form No.URC-2 Advertisement giving notice about registration under Part I of Chapter XXI [Pursuant to section 374(b) of the companies Act, 2013 and rule 4 (1) of the companies (Authorised to Register) Rules, 2014] Notice is hereby given that in pursuance of sub-section (2) of section 366 of the Companies Act, 2013, an application has been made to the Registrar at Central Registration Center (CRC) Delhi, that M/s. SHREE DURGA CONSTRUCTION & EQUIPMENT (PAN: ADUFS2660R), having office at Ground Floor, Em-18, Basanti Colony, Rourkela, Odisha-769012, a partnership firm convert to private limited company named and styled as M/S. SHREE DURGA CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT PRIVATE LIMITED, to be registered under Part I of Chapter XXI of the Companies Act 2013, as a company limited by shares. The principal objects of the company are as follows: 1. To take over all the assets and liabilities of the registered partnership firm as a going concern business named as M/s. SHREE DURGA CONSTRUCTION & EQUIPMENT (PAN: ADUFS2660R) having business office at EM/18, Basanti Colony, Rourkela, Odisha-769012 engaged in the business of retail and trading of construction equipments and related business activities together with all its rights, including intellectual property rights, privileges, goodwill, licenses, assets & liabilities where upon the said concern shall stand dissolved 2. To carry on the business as builders, property developers, Engineering Contractors, Civil, mechanical and labour contractors, building and erection engineers, consultants and to carry on the business as retail and trading of construction equipments and related business activities, machineries, spare parts, lubricants used for civil, electrical and mechanical contractors, designers and engineers, structural, contractors, earth work contractors, consulting engineers, architects, developers, builders, general construction contractors, contractors for repairs, reconstructions, renovation, demolitions etc. 3. To engage in business of providing repair services for heavy machinery and equipment of a type used primarily by the construction industries, such as bulldozers, concrete mixers; cranes, except industrial plant overhead and truck-type cranes; dredging machinery; pavers; and power shovels.. A copy of the draft memorandum and articles of association of the proposed company may be inspected at the office (Principal place of business) at Ground Floor, EM-18, Basanti Colony, Rourkela, Sundargarh, Odisha - 769012, proposed registered office address Plot No.89/1182, C/o . Nalini Panigrahi, NH-6, Infront of Satsang Vihar, Dhankaua, Sambalpur. Pin Code-768006, Odisha. Notice is hereby given that any person objecting to this application may communicate their objection in writing to the Registrar at (address), within twenty one days from the date of publication of this notice, with a copy to the company at its registered office. Dated this 19th January, 2022 Name(s) of Applicants- 1. Mr. Ramesh Panigrahi 2. Ms. Nalini Panigrahi

Let us offer our work to the Divine; this is the sure means of progressing. Go and prepare yourself and the best preparation is to be useful to the Divine's work.

THE MOTHER



Iran's Vienna Gambit

In a qualifying match last November for the 2022 soccer World Cup, Iran trailed Lebanon 0-1 at the end of the scheduled 90 minutes. On social media, skeptical Iranians were getting ready to blame their team's imminent defeat on Iran's hardline leaders, who supposedly wanted to lose the match in order to please Iran's Lebanese proxy, Hezbollah. But, in the four minutes of stoppage time, Iran scored two goals to secure victory.

Today, the clock is ticking for Iran's leaders in the high-stakes negotiations in Vienna aimed at reviving the 2015 nuclear deal. According to their American counterparts, at least, they are not showing the requisite urgency.

But it was former US President Donald Trump who unilaterally withdrew in 2018 from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (as the 2015 deal is formally known) and reimposed harsh economic sanctions on Iran. Despite the crushing blow, Iran remained in the agreement for another 14 months before increasing its nuclear enrichment level beyond the limits set by the JCPOA.

After six weeks of talks in Vienna, even reports of slow progress helped spark a 10% rebound in Iran's currency, the rial, which had fallen to new lows late last year when the negotiations started badly. But prospects are slim that the parties will reach a deal before the United States and Europe lose patience with Iran's rapid march toward weapons-grade enrichment.

Failure in Vienna would jeopardise peace across the Middle East. Israel is trying to slow down Iran's nuclear programme, which directly threatens its regional hegemony, but its acts of sabotage and assassinations may trigger a wider regional conflict that could drag in the US.

Iran's need for respite from sanctions is equally urgent, because its new hardline president, Ebrahim Raisi, must deliver on his promise of economic growth. Annual inflation has been running at 44% since Raisi's election in June 2021. In the absence of new revenue from oil exports, his administration will not be able to jump-start the economy without pushing inflation higher. Iranians, whose living standards have declined to the level of 20 years ago, are thus nervously waiting for good news from Vienna.

With no clear solution to these problems in sight, Iran has tried to raise the cost of any future US exit. It frustrated US negotiators by waiting for five months (from June to November) before starting the current round of Vienna talks, and refuses to seat its delegation in the same room with the Americans. Iran has also continued to enhance its nuclear enrichment, reducing the time it needs to make a bomb from one year under the JCPOA to a few weeks today. Whether these steps will result in a more advantageous agreement for the Islamic Republic is doubtful.

In any case, some hardliners believe that Iran's economic malaise is essentially domestic, and can thus be cured even with US sanctions in place. The country's import dependence and banking crisis, they argue, should be fixed before entering nuclear negotiations, because greater economic resilience would do more for Iran than a deal reached from a weak position. This is the logic behind Iran's "Resistance Economy," as well as Raisi's campaign pledge not to tie the country's economic fate to the JCPOA.

Other Iranian hardliners think a rising regional power with strict Islamic values will gain little from engaging with the West. They see the current nuclear standoff as an opportunity to redirect Iran's economy eastward, including through long-term partnership agreements with China and Russia.

But Raisi's ambitious promises of new jobs and housing will be impossible to fulfill if the economy fails to recover. The government's predicament is reflected in the proposed budget for 2022-23, which assumes that US sanctions will continue and is the most contractionary in years.

With Iran's main pension funds in the red and having to draw on public money to stay afloat, another six million retirees also may face a loss of real income. It is, therefore, a rare week when teachers or pensioners are not protesting against economic austerity.

Perhaps Raisi's deepest fear is of repeating the singular failure of former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a fellow conservative and hardliner, whose negligence regarding international concerns about Iran's nuclear programme led the UN to impose sanctions in 2010. A desire to avoid presiding over their return may be Raisi's strongest incentive to reach a compromise in Vienna. Against this backdrop, the recent statement by Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, that negotiating with the enemy does not amount to surrender may be just the signal that Iranian nuclear negotiators need to reach a deal in the few weeks left to play ball before the final whistle.

The writer, Professor of Economics at Virginia Tech, is a research fellow at the Economic Research Forum in Cairo and an associate of the Middle East Initiative at the Harvard Kennedy School Belfer Center.

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WISDOM CORNER

For me, becoming isn't about arriving somewhere or achieving a certain aim. I see it instead as forward motion, a means of evolving, a way to reach continuously toward a better self. The journey doesn't end. MICHELLE OBAMA

Everyone has inside of him a piece of good news. The good news is that you don't know how great you can be! How much you can love! What you can accomplish! And what your potential is! ANNE FRANK

Find out who you are and be that person. That's what your soul was put on this earth to be. Find that truth, live that truth, and everything else will come. ELLEN DEGENERES

WORDSWORTH

Cli-fi

This suddenly fashionable term, a shortening of climate fiction, is obviously based on sci-fi, an abbreviation for science fiction or SF. Climate fiction is fundamentally dystopian. Its focus is the effect of climate change on human life, perhaps including its continuing existence. Most commentators list JG Ballard's The Drowned World of 1962 as an early example, a prophetic tale in which melting ice-caps and rising sea levels led to the destruction of civilisation, though the cause was solar flares, not human-derived changes to the climate. In the past decade it has become a frequent theme in SF. Examples are Kim Stanley Robinson's Science in the Capitol trilogy that began with Forty Signs of Rain in 2004, and The Windup Girl by Paolo Bacigalupi in 2009. Rhe journalist Dan Bloom claims to have invented the term cli-fi in 2007. It appeared in an article by Scott Thill in December 2010 and Margaret Atwood was another early user, in a Twitter message the following year. This helped to bring the word, and the genre, to much wider public attention. Some commentators have tried to remove any taint of SF associations from such works by arguing that mainstream cli-fi works are set in the present day or the near future rather than looking speculatively at longer-term implications.

FOCUS SINO-US RELATIONS

COLD WAR THAT WASN'T

US President Joe Biden has repeatedly cast his country's rivalry with China as a battle between democracy and autocracy, an ideological clash reminiscent of the Cold War. This narrative is inaccurate - the United States and China are locked in a competition for strategic dominance - and all but precludes resolution. Whereas demands related to tangible assets and security concerns can be accommodated, ideological struggles typically end one way: with the unconditional defeat of one of the parties.



The US is an exhausted power, and it is now being challenged by a rising one. To ensure that this well-known geopolitical dynamic does not end in war, the US must abandon jingoistic rhetoric and replace megaphone diplomacy with wise and creative statesmanship



Shlomo Ben-Ami

THE US SHOULD NOT BE ATTEMPTING TO "DEFEAT" CHINA, AS IT DID THE SOVIET UNION, BECAUSE, CHINA IS NOT ON A QUEST TO SPREAD "SOCIALISM WITH CHINESE TRAITS" AROUND THE WORLD



Djavad Salehi-Isfahani

The risk that the United Nations will reimpose the economic sanctions on Iran that were ended by the 2015 nuclear deal hangs over the presidency of hardliner Ebrahim Raisi like a sword of Damocles

The US should not be attempting to "defeat" China, as it did the Soviet Union, because, first and foremost, China is not on a quest to spread "socialism with Chinese characteristics" around the world. When Chinese President Xi Jinping declared in 2017 that "war without the smoke of gunpowder in the ideological domain is ubiquitous, and the struggle without armament in the political sphere has never stopped," he was mainly demanding that outsiders respect China's institutions and cultural traditions.

This partly reflects Chinese nationalism, fed by historical narratives, especially the memory of the "century of humiliation" (1839-1949), during which China faced interventions and subjugation by Western powers and Japan. But it is also pragmatic: The Communist Party of China recognises that some domestic trends could destabilise the country and eventually even undermine the CPC's rule.

For example, China's economic rise has produced an educated, well-connected, and fast-growing middle class. If these increasingly powerful consumers rejected restrictions on private-sector activity or limits to free expression, the CPC would have trouble on its hands. Given this, the CPC views US advocacy of political freedom and human rights in China as an effort to subvert its rule.

Even America's drive to export liberal democracy to Asia and Africa has been less an ideological problem for China than a strategic one. Functioning democracies are likely to be harder bargain-

ing partners for China and might even be brought into US-led anti-Chinese alliances.

On this front, China's fears have probably been assuaged by recent developments. With the chaotic US withdrawal from Afghanistan and the Taliban's quick reconquest of the country, America's democratic "crusade" - to borrow the language of former US President George W. Bush - seems to have reached an ignominious conclusion.

But even if the US is not bringing new countries into the democratic fold, its existing alliance system is formidable, and Biden is committed to strengthening it further. For example, he has worked to resuscitate NATO; created AUKUS, a new defense and technology alliance with the United Kingdom and Australia; and deepened security cooperation among key democracies in the Indo-Pacific (Australia, India, Japan, and the US, known as the "Quad").

This focus on alliances is probably the biggest difference between Biden's China policy and that of his predecessor, Donald Trump, who spearheaded the shift toward confrontation.

For China, this difference is worrying. Though the US cannot contain China alone, it can apply strong diplomatic pressure if it has other powers on its side, and

China is in no position to create an alliance system that can match that of the US. Far from stabilizing the situation, however, this imbalance could fuel China's insecurity, making constructive engagement all the more difficult. America's position is hardly unassailable, either: Biden's touted Summit for Democracy exposed the limits of ideology as a mobilising tool for a global anti-China coalition. It does not help that America's own democracy is plagued by polarisation, paralysis, and discontent. Add to that the world's highest number of COVID-19 deaths and the "shining city on a hill" has lost its luster, to say the least.

While the US is no ancient Rome - not least because it retains extraordinary advantages in crucial areas, from defense and diplomacy to technology and finance - it is suffering from what the historian Edward Gibbon described as "the natural and inevitable effect of immoderate greatness." It has failed to adapt its democratic institutions to meet the needs of its population and its responsibilities as a world power.

Ultimately, the US is an exhausted power, and it is now being challenged by a rising one. This dynamic is as longstanding as it is dangerous. As the ancient historian Thucydides explained, the rise of Athens, and the fear that

this instilled in Sparta, made the catastrophic Peloponnesian War inevitable. Harvard's Graham Allison notes that there have been 16 similar cases in the last 500 years. War broke out in 12 of them.

To avoid what Allison calls the Thucydides Trap, the US must abandon jingoistic rhetoric and Manichean thinking, replacing megaphone diplomacy with wise and creative statesmanship. The choice is not between capitulating to China and crushing it. The US must recognise China's legitimate concerns and aspirations, and it must be prepared to negotiate accordingly.

The US must accept that the days of American hegemony are over. In today's multipolar world, different political cultures and systems will have to learn to coexist. The ideological defeat of the Soviet Union did not exactly usher in a liberal democracy. Perhaps more important, even if China somehow suddenly became a liberal democracy, its historical grievances and territorial aspirations would remain, as is the case with Russia today. In this sense, ideological competition is beside the point.

The writer, a former Israeli Foreign Minister, is Vice President of the Toledo International Center for Peace.

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SPECTRUM ECONOMY

Challenges and expectations

There is much talk of reforms and the economy standing on sound footing. Experts believe that the next fiscal could see both investments and consumption drive growth with exports providing a helping hand. But the main problem is that of resource crunch of the government, both at the Centre and states, and overcoming this to continue development programmes and infrastructure related work remains a big question.

Moreover, labour shortage, pandemic-related closures, rising energy and commodity prices and a scarcity of some key materials are all holding back growth and adding to cost pressures. Inflation has increased significantly in this recovery phase and there are indications that inflationary pressures are proving stronger and more persistent than expected. Added to this is the fact that India's unemployment rate hit a four-month high in December, as per data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE).

Meanwhile, the Indian economy faces headwinds from global developments and Omicron and inflation continued to remain a concern buffeted by the build-up of cost pressures. These are part of the

Financial Stability Report (FSR) released by the Reserve Bank of India December 29. The RBI pointed out that the government's fiscal deficit target of 6.8 per cent for the current fiscal is likely to come under strain following the second supplementary demand for grants (₹3.7 lakh crore) presented in December 2021. While the economy expanded beyond the pre-pandemic level, the virus is adding to inequality. "The pace of the recovery remains uneven across sectors, inflation formation is being subjected to repetitive supply shocks and the outlook is overcast with global risks. Omicron haunts near-term prospects", the RBI observed.

In spite of the imposition of GST, resource mobilisation has not been up to expected levels. This has put the Centre in a precarious position. One may mention here two developments in the education sector. While the Major Research Project (MRP) of higher education regulator, UGC has been lying dormant allegedly due to lack of funds from the Centre, other listed closed programmes include Emeritus Fellowship, Dr S Radhakrishnan, Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Humanities & Social Sciences, Post-Doctoral Fellowship to Women Candidates and Post- Doctoral

Fellowship to SC/ST Candidates. The National Fellowship for Scheduled Caste students is also shown to have been discontinued in 2018-19.

The other is the grim fact that almost 55 lakh post matric scholarships for SC students are held up across states, including poll bound ones, even as the academic session winds up to a close. Poll bound Uttar Pradesh managed to disburse scholarship amount to just 1.3 lakh students by December-end against an identified 13 lakh student beneficiaries, as per latest Central government data.

The problem has another dimension which pertains to investments and lack of technology upgradation to make manufacturing in the country reach global standards. Private investment and innovation as also attracting foreign is lagging in a big way. Notably, India's total investments are about 30 per cent of GDP, which amounted to ₹60 trillion in 2020-21. The corporate sector accounted for only half of these investments, lower than in most other country. To push investment higher, which appears not quite plausible, it would rather be impossible to make a case for national investment recovery unless corporate and households sectors

show strong signs of improved financials.

However, the silver lining is a recent report of a proposal by the Centre that US electronics giant Apple generates annual production output worth \$50 billion in India over the next 5-6 years and expands its locally made product kitty beyond iPhones to include MacBooks, iPads, air pods and watches. Foxconn and Wistron are already manufacturing for Apple in India at a top rate though the volumes are negligible when compared to what they manufacture in China. Whether this will finally materialise remains to be seen as the possibility of corporate investments picking up looks far-fetched.

A section of experts believe that the recently announced production linked incentives (PLIs) may help in export promotion or import substitution but may not boost investments in the country. Thus, the only option before the government is disinvestment of profitable public sector units, which again is opposed by most economists as the Indian private sector is interested in them just to reap easy profits, not to modernise and diversify through innovation and technology upgradation.

-INFA

Bogus claim on MSP

Sir, It is a bogus claim that legalised MSP would entail very high expenditure from exchequer. The anti-peasant pro-corporate stand of the BJP government is evident from just one instance. During its first term at the Centre, the NDA government provided tax exemptions to corporate entities amounting to a whopping ₹4.32 lakh crore, according to Budget documents of various years. If one adds tax loss of ₹1.46 crore in 2019-2020 and ₹1,65,837.97 (estimated) in 20-2021 due to slash of corporate tax rate to 22%, it would be ₹7,32 lakh crore. Also the government is spending thousands of crores of rupees in constructing a new Parliament House, sky-high statues, construction of temples, renovation of Hindu pilgrimage sites, and procurement of special jet planes for the PM and around ₹44 lakh towards salary and allowances of each of the 545 MPs per year. On the contrary, the government has slashed fertilizer subsidy by over 45% and food subsidy by more than 50% in the current fiscal. The combined net profit of the listed companies was up 57.6 per cent to ₹5.31 lakh crore in financial year 20-21. On the other hand, more than 4 lakh peasants have committed suicide having being denied remunerative prices for their produce and enmeshed in debt trap. Eighty-three crore Indians survive on ₹20 per day, whereas India's 100 top billionaires saw their fortunes increase by ₹12,97,822 crore since March last year when the Covid-19 pandemic hit the country. This amount is enough to give 14 crore poorest Indians a cheque for ₹94,045 each.

Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

Sanskrit University

Sir, The Karnataka government's move to establish a Sanskrit University has met with stiff resistance from Narayana Gowda of Karnataka Rakshana Vedike. His objection is that the Kannadiga tax payers' money need not be spent on the Sanskrit University. Gowda has vowed that he would not allow the government to establish the university for Sanskrit as Devanagari language and it is the mother of all Indian languages. It is not going to be imposed on anybody. Promotion of the Sanskrit language will not undermine the existence of Kannada. Opposition to the establishment of Sanskrit University is at the height of absurdity. Since Sanskrit is not an alien language, people interested in the study of Sanskrit must not be discouraged. Sanskrit is learnt in addition to, not in lieu of, Kannada. Supremacy of Kannada in Karnataka over any other language is unassailable.

KV Seetharamaiah, BANGALORE

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

national

of the day quote

Farmers' income never doubled but their woes multiplied by 100 times

RANDEEP SINGH SURJEWALA | CONGRESS CHIEF SPOKESPERSON

Government will re-examine the COVID-19 curbs that are in place, and will take a decision regarding relaxation, including the weekend curfew on January 21

BASAVARAJ BOMMAI | KARNATAKA CM

SP patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav's daughter-in-law and its leader Swami Prasad Maurya's daughter believe the BJP's rule is safe for women

ANURAG THAKUR | UNION MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

BSF foils smuggling bid

New Delhi: The Border Security Force (BSF) Thursday said that it foiled another attempt of smuggling of contraband by engaging a 'flying object' coming from Pakistan in Punjab's Amritsar Sector and seized over seven kg heroin dropped by it in the area. The attempt to smuggle contraband by Pakistan was thwarted by the BSF troops on the intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday.

Youth held for theft

New Delhi: The Delhi Police Thursday arrested a 20-year-old man who allegedly committed theft at the house of his neighbour in order to marry his girlfriend on Valentine's Day. The accused used to watch crime serials and got the idea of committing the theft from one of them. A senior police officer said that the accused has been identified as Mohammad Jaid.

Drug addicts kill bus conductor

New Delhi: Two drug addicts killed a bus conductor in a fit of rage when they robbed him and found only Rs 250 in his wallet in the Jagatpuri area of the national capital, a senior police official said Thursday. The incident occurred when the bus conductor, identified as Deepak, was sleeping in the vehicle.

Two labourers die

Gurugram: Two labourers died after a heap of soil fell on them at a construction site at plot no D-323 in Sector-56 of Gurugram, police said. Malkhaan (28) and Guddo (29), both natives of Madhya Pradesh, were buried alive in the incident while three other labourers had a narrow escape, an official of Sector-56 police station said.

Man arrested

New Delhi: The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) Thursday said that its Indore Zonal Unit has arrested a person in Raipur, Chhattisgarh for smuggling gold. The DRI said 3.33 kg foreign origin gold worth Rs 1.65 crore was recovered from him. The DRI team had got a tip off about smuggling of foreign-origin gold.

Rhino killed

Golaghat (Assam): A carcass of an adult female rhino, suspected to be killed by poachers, with its horn missing was detected inside Kaziranga National Park in Assam, senior officials said Thursday. This is the first case of suspected poaching of the world famous one-horned rhino in Assam this year.



“Wherever elections are held, people in the opposition are raided. This is being done to intimidate and threaten (opposition parties).” **Why (Chief Minister) Yogi Adityanath's relatives were not raided in Uttar Pradesh? Why were relatives of Uttarakhand or Goa CMs not raided? Why does it happen only in those states where their (BJP) opponents are in power?**

BHUPESH BAGHEL | CHHATTISGARH CM

Army contacts PLA, seeks return of Arunachal youth

Arunachal Pradesh's MP Tapir Gao said Wednesday that PLA Tuesday abducted a 17-year-old boy from inside the Indian territory in state's Upper Siang district

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE



Itanagar, Jan 20: The Indian Army has sought assistance of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) to locate missing boy Miram Taron on their side and return him as per established protocol, sources in defence establishment said Thursday. Arunachal Pradesh's MP Tapir Gao said Wednesday that PLA Tuesday abducted a 17-year-old boy from inside the Indian territory in state's Upper Siang district. Sources in defence establishment said on Thursday that when the Indian Army received the information about Taron, it immediately contacted the PLA through estab-

lished mechanism of hotline informing that an individual, who was collecting herbs and hunting, has lost his way and cannot be found. Assistance from PLA has been sought to locate the individual on their side and return him as per established protocol, sources noted. Gao said on Wednesday that the incident took place near the place where Tsangpo river enters India in Arunachal Pradesh. Tsangpo is called as Siang in

Arunachal Pradesh and Brahmaputra in Assam. The MP also said that he has informed Union Minister of State for Home Nisith Pramanik about the incident and requested him to take necessary action in this regard. In September 2020, the PLA had abducted five youths from Arunachal Pradesh's Upper Subansiri district and released them after about a week. The latest incident came at a time when the Indian Army continues to be engaged in a stand-off with PLA in eastern Ladakh since April 2020. There have been 14 rounds of military-level talks between India and China to resolve the standoff. However, disengagement process is yet to be done in areas of Hot Springs, Depsang bulge and Demchok in eastern Ladakh. Each side currently has around 50,000 to 60,000 troops along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh. India shares a 3,400 km-long LAC with China from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh.

5G ROW

Boeing clears Air India for flights to US

The Air India flights that have resumed their operations from Thursday are Delhi-New York, New York-Delhi, Delhi-Chicago, Chicago-Delhi, Delhi-San Francisco and San Francisco-Delhi



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 20: Air India said it has resumed six India-US flights on Boeing B777 aircraft Thursday after the plane manufacturer gave the clearance to operate them.

The airline also said all flights to the US will normalise from Friday. Air India had cancelled eight flights on India-US routes Wednesday due to deployment of 5G internet in North America which could interfere with aircraft's radio altimeters.

US aviation regulator Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), in a fresh directive on Thursday, said radio altimeters fitted in certain types of aircraft, including B777, will not be affected by 5G services. Subsequently, an Air India spokesperson told PTI that Boeing has cleared the carrier to operate to the US on B777 aircraft.

"Accordingly, first flight left this morning to JFK (New York). Other flights leaving in the day are to Chicago and SFO (San Francisco). Arrangements to carry stranded passengers are being worked out. Matter regarding B777 flying into the USA has been sorted," the spokesperson said on Thursday.

The Air India flights that have resumed their operations from Thursday are Delhi-New York, New York-Delhi, Delhi-Chicago, Chicago-

Delhi, Delhi-San Francisco and San Francisco-Delhi.

Along with these six flights, two other flights - Mumbai-Newark and Newark-Mumbai - were cancelled by Air India on Wednesday. Boeing did not respond to PTI's request for a statement on this matter.

Later during the day, Air India said on Twitter that while flight operations to and from destinations in the US were affected during last two days, normal flights operations will recommence to and from the US "effective 0001 hrs of January 21".

The US aviation regulator had on 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".

Radio altimeter measures height of the aircraft above the ground, allowing it to do low-visibility landings. The frequency band on which altimeter works is close to that on which 5G system works.

FAA stated on Thursday that it has made progress during the last two weeks to safely reduce the risk of delays and cancellations as altimeter manufacturers evaluate data from wireless companies to determine how robust each model is.

Pregnant forest guard beaten up

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pune, Jan 20: A former sarpanch and his wife allegedly thrashed an on-duty woman forest guard, who is three months pregnant, along with her husband at a village in Satara district of Maharashtra, following which the accused couple has been arrested, police said on Thursday.

The incident took place Wednesday at Palsawade village in the western Maharashtra district, located around 120 kms from here, and a complaint in this connection was lodged by the woman forest guard, they said.

According to police, the accused man, Ramchandra Jankar, who is president of the village forest management committee, was angry with the woman forest guard for taking the contractual forest labourers along with her "without his permission".

A video of the assault incident has gone viral on social media. Sharing the video on his Twitter handle on Thursday, Maharashtra Environment Minister Aaditya Thackeray said, "The accused has been arrested this morning and will face the law at its strictest. Such acts will not be tolerated."

MAHA SCHOOLS TO REOPEN

Maharashtra minister Varsha Gaikwad Thursday said the state government has allowed reopening of schools for Classes 1 to 9 for offline classroom sessions from January 24



PROPOSED CHANGES IN IAS CADRE RULES

Mamata writes to PM

IN THE LETTER TO THE PM ON THE ISSUE, HER SECOND IN A WEEK, BANERJEE SAID THE AMENDMENT WILL "DESTROY" THE FEDERAL POLITY AND BASIC STRUCTURE OF THE CONSTITUTION



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Jan 20: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Thursday wrote yet another letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging him to withdraw the proposal to amend IAS (Cadre) Rules, 1954, as it would "create a fear psychosis among officers and impact their performance."

In the letter to the PM on the issue, her second in a week, Banerjee said the amendment will "destroy" the federal polity and basic structure of the Constitution. She warned him of "greater movements" in case the Centre does not reconsider its decision.

"I humbly urge you to kindly reconsider this move by the central government and not to go ahead with the proposed amendments and request you not to push us to the points of greater movements on this issue to protect the soul of this great democracy that India is and has been (sic)," the CM wrote.

Banerjee also said that the proposed changes, if implemented, will "irreparably damage the spirit of mutual accommodation between the Centre and the state".

The Union government has proposed an amendment to IAS (Cadre) rules, which would enable it to post IAS officers on central deputation, bypassing reservations of state governments.

On January 13, too, the CM had

written to Modi, requesting him not to go ahead with the amendment. "I'm constrained to invite your kind attention to the issue of IAS Cadre management yet again, twice in a week's time. I had written to you on this, conveying my reservations... But I had to write again, further reiterating my points, because the central government has, meanwhile, further accentuated its stand, proposing yet another revised draft, taking the matter to further non-federal extremes," she wrote in her letter to Modi on Thursday.

The CM pointed out that the proposal's "very grain is against the foundations of our great federal polity and the basic structure of India's Constitutional scheme".

"It will create fear psychosis and impact their performance, effectiveness and accountability to the state government. This will destroy the fundamental principle of the Services which postulates that an officer serving in connection with the affairs of the state is accountable to the state government alone," Banerjee emphasised.

In her earlier letter, too, Banerjee had expressed her reservations on the proposed amendments, insisting that it is against the "spirit of cooperative federalism". "I beseech you to kindly withdraw the proposed amendments which will not only harm the country but will also lead to demolition of our country," she had said.



IN SYNC

Artists practice during rehearsals for the upcoming Republic Day Parade, on a cold morning at Vijay Chowk in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

Amar Jawan Jyoti flame to merge with National War Memorial flame

THE ETERNAL FLAME KNOWN AS AMAR JAWAN JYOTI WAS BUILT IN 1972 UNDERNEATH THE INDIA GATE ARCH TO COMMEMORATE THE SOLDIERS MARTYRED IN THE INDO-PAK WAR OF 1971

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

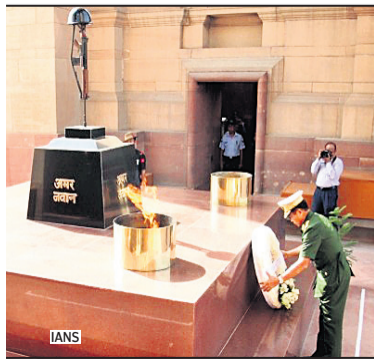
New Delhi, Jan 20: The eternal flame at the India Gate will be extinguished after 50 years on Friday and will be merged with the flame at the adjoining National War Memorial (NWM) in the run-up to the Republic Day.

The eternal flame known as Amar Jawan Jyoti was built in 1972 underneath the India Gate arch to commemorate the soldiers martyred in the Indo-Pak War of

1971. It is a memorial symbolised by an inverted bayonet and soldier's helmet over it with an eternal flame burning beside it.

The existence of Amar Jawan Jyoti was questioned two years ago after the National War Memorial came into being and the nation got a new eternal flame there.

Back then, the Indian Army had stated that Amar Jawan Jyoti will continue as it is an "inseparable" part of the country's history.



THE EXISTENCE OF AMAR JAWAN JYOTI WAS QUESTIONED TWO YEARS AGO AFTER THE NATIONAL WAR MEMORIAL CAME INTO BEING AND THE NATION GOT A NEW ETERNAL FLAME THERE

IT IS A MEMORIAL SYMBOLISED BY AN INVERTED BAYONET AND SOLDIER'S HELMET OVER IT WITH AN ETERNAL FLAME BURNING BESIDE IT

Earlier, tri-services chiefs and visiting delegates used to pay respect at the Amar Jawan Jyoti. Even on all important days like Republic Day and Independence Day, tri-services chiefs used to pay respect at Amar Jawan Jyoti.

But with the new eternal flame at the National War Memorial and wreath-laying ceremony on all designated days being carried out at the memorial, the force will now merge the Amar Jawan Jyoti with the other. The National War

Memorial was built in memory of all soldiers and unsung heroes who laid down their lives defending the nation since Independence.

It is spread over 40 acres in the India Gate complex behind the canopy, and is dedicated to soldiers killed during the Indo-China War in 1962, Indo-Pak Wars in 1947, 1965 and 1971, Indian Peace Keeping Force Operations in Sri Lanka and in the Kargil Conflict of 1999, besides those killed in the UN peace-keeping missions.

Yadavs back with Akhilesh, after fling with BJP

AGENCIES

Lucknow, Jan 20: If there is one vote bank that the Samajwadi Party can be completely sure of in the upcoming Assembly elections, it is the Yadavs.

The Yadav community that had partially shifted to the BJP in 2017 Assembly polls and then again in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, is now back with the Samajwadi Party.

The Yadavs are now placing their bets on Akhilesh Yadav because they feel that with the support of other non-Yadav backward castes, the Samajwadi Party is much better placed for elections.

"We were upset with the family split in the Samajwadi Party in 2017. The style of Akhilesh's leadership was not like that of Mulayam Singh and so a number of us felt that we should go with BJP," says Utkarsh Yadav, a software engineer from Firozabad.

However, Utkarsh admits that they were disillusioned with the BJP and since the family ties have also been repaired, they are back with SP. The main reason for Yadav's disillusionment with the BJP is that the party and the government did not promote any Yadav leader.

"Tell me one Yadav leader who has been promoted by the BJP? They have promoted Maurya, Kurmi, Nishad, Saini, Gurjar but

BATTLE FOR UP



not Yadav. Why? If the BJP does not treat us well, we might as well return to our parent party," says Sushil Yadav, a businessman from Kanpur. Sushil further says that SP can no longer be termed as a 'Yadav only' party. "Akhilesh has broad-based the party's base.

The state president, Naresh Uttam Patel, is a non-Yadav OBC. The 72-member committee has over 40 per cent OBCs, 10 Brahmins, 11 Muslims, more than six Dalits (including three former Bahujan Samaj Party leaders), five women

and within this there is a balanced representation of all the regions of the state. The committee has only seven Yadavs," he says to prove his point.

"Moreover, with the recent influx of OBC leaders from the BJP, further proves that SP is now the rallying point for OBCs," he adds.

Responding to the allegation that the Samajwadi Party belongs to just one family, Dadda Yadav, a septuagenarian farmer in Etawah, defends the Yadav clan. Yadavs are also apparently upset at the man-

Chandra Shekhar to contest against Yogi

Lucknow: In a major development, Bhim Army chief Chandra Shekhar Azad will contest from Gorakhpur as Azad Samaj Party (ASP) candidate against Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Chandra Shekhar had announced his decision to field candidates in around 33 seats in Uttar Pradesh after his alliance talks with Samajwadi Party failed. Though the battle between Yogi Adityanath and Chandra Shekhar will mainly be one of perception, the Bhim Army hopes that other opposition parties will not field their candidates in Gorakhpur and support Chandra Shekhar.



SP to revive Yash Bharti awards if voted to power

Lucknow: Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav said Thursday that he will revive the Yash Bharti awards when he comes to power. He also said that his government would revive the old pension system of government employees which had been a long pending demand. Addressing a press conference here Thursday, Akhilesh said that the Yash Bharti awards were set up to honour the people from Uttar Pradesh who had excelled in their fields.

ner in which Mulayam and Akhilesh were targeted by the Yogi Adityanath government. In 2017 and 2019, about 26-27 per cent of the Yadavs backed the BJP, according to Lokniti, a centre for the study of developing societies findings.

Akhilesh to contest from Karhal in Mainpuri: Akhilesh will contest the Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls

from Karhal in Mainpuri district. According to party sources, a decision was taken at a meeting here Thursday. Karhal is a Samajwadi bastion and Mulayam Singh Yadav represents the Mainpuri parliamentary constituency in the Lok Sabha. Karhal has over 1.44 lakh Yadav voters and is considered 'safe' for the Samajwadi leadership.

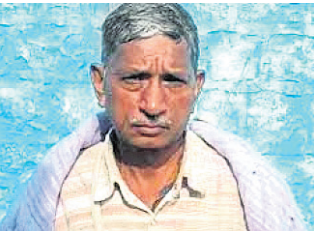
THIS MAN SET TO CONTEST HIS 94TH ELECTION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Agra, Jan 20: The Kheragarh Assembly seat in Uttar Pradesh's Agra will witness a unique contestant - 74-year-old Hasanuram Ambedkari, who is all set to contest his 94th election this time.

He has filed his nomination papers as an independent candidate. Ambedkari said he works as a farm labour and has a MNREGA job card. He does not have any formal schooling, but can read and write Hindi, Urdu, and English.

A member of the All India Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation (BAMCEF) founded by Kanshi Ram, Ambedkari said that he fought all elections according to the ideology of Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar. He has been unsuccessfully contesting elections since 1985 for various bodies, including the Lok Sabha, state Assembly, and panchayat elections from different seats. In 1988, his nomination for the post of the President of India was rejected.



He said, "I contest elections to lose. The winning politicians forget the masses. I want to set a record of losing elections 100 times. I do not care who my opponents are as I contest elections to give an option to voters who believe in Ambedkar's ideology."



JOY RIDE: Tourists enjoying horse riding in Pahalgam Jammu and Kashmir

UNI PHOTO

'Attend R-Day function as official duty'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jammu, Jan 20: All government employees and those of public sector undertakings in J&K were asked Thursday to attend the main Republic Day function in Jammu city as part of their official duty.

An order issued by the General Administration Department said: "The main function of the Republic Day 2022 is being held at Maulana Azad Stadium Jammu, where the Hon'ble Lt Governor will preside over the function and take the salute."

"All officers/officials of the government and public sector undertakings stationed in Jammu are



called upon to attend the function as part of their official duty," it said, adding that all heads of the departments and chief executives of public sector undertakings shall ensure their own participation and also of the employees subordinate to them in the function.

TOP OPPN LEADERS TO CAMPAIGN

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Jan 20: Several top opposition leaders will be campaigning in Uttar Pradesh against the ruling BJP in the upcoming seven-phase Assembly elections.

West Bengal Chief Minister Trinamool Congress (TMC) chief Mamata Banerjee, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) president Sharad Pawar, Rashtriya Janta Dal (RJD) leader and former Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejaswi Yadav, Shiv Sena minister Aditya Thackeray along with Sanjay Raut and will be seen in action in Uttar Pradesh, leading the opposition

attack against the BJP. According to Samajwadi Party national vice-president Kiranmoy Nanda, Mamata Banerjee will campaign virtually for the SP in Lucknow February 8 and she may also campaign digitally in Varanasi.

NCP state unit spokesperson Vishal Nath Tiwari said Sharad Pawar will campaign for the Samajwadi Party in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections.

SP chief Akhilesh Yadav has already announced that NCP leader K. K. Sharma will contest as the joint candidate of the SP-NCP alliance from the Anupshahr Assembly seat in Bulandshahr district. Sharad

UP POLLS



Pawar may be present with TMC chief Mamata Banerjee during the virtual campaign in Lucknow February 8, Tiwari said. RJD leader

Tejaswi Yadav will campaign in support of the SP in the east UP Assembly constituencies bordering Bihar, as well as in other segments. RJD state president Ashok Singh will be the SP-RJD joint candidate from Sareni in Rae Bareilly district.

Rahul Yadav, son-in-law of RJD leader Lalu Yadav, is in the fray as the SP-RJD joint candidate from Sikandrabad Assembly seat in Bulandshahr district. Shiv Sena state secretary Vishwajeet Singh said the party central leadership is in talks with the Congress, which is part of the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA), for pre-poll alliance in UP.

Jerri hamlet declared as 'milk village' in J&K

THE MILK VILLAGE, WHICH HOUSES 73 INDIVIDUAL DAIRY UNITS WITH 370 COWS, WILL GIVE FINANCIAL SECURITY TO THE LOCAL FARMERS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Jan 20: The Jammu and Kashmir administration has declared Jerri settlement in Reasi district as the first 'milk village' of the Union Territory and sanctioned 57 more dairy farms under the Integrated Dairy Development Scheme (IDDS) for the hamlet, officials said.

Taking a lead to carving out a hamlet of dairy farms, the women of the settlement have formed a cooperative of 11 females for collecting milk from the dairy farms and households for further transportation to the milk selling plants or other establishments. Under the integrated dairy development scheme, dairy units of five ani-



mals are provided with a 50 per cent subsidy. The scheme also has a provision for milking machine, bulk milk cooling unit at 50 per cent subsidy (maximum Rs 5 lakh), paneer making machine, khoya making, Dahi making, cream separator, ice cream making machine, butter and ghee making machine (max subsidy Rs 3.5 lakh), milk van (maximum subsidy Rs 2 lakh), milk ATM subsidy of Rs 5 lakh.

SHGs make women financially independent in J&K

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi/Srinagar, Jan 20: Handicrafts are representative of a people's culture and traditions, and the heritage of a region manually using indigenous materials and simple tools.

It is the time-honoured knowledge passed through generations, a civilisation's pride.

Creativity has no boundaries and it flows through the veins of the Union Territory of J&K. Handicrafts have remained the backbone of economy since the beginning of time. Jammu and Kashmir is a culturally rich heaven that has mesmerised and acted as a muse to a host of artists who have tried to replicate its beauty in their work.

The hilly district of Reasi of the UT of J&K is well known for its grass handicrafts as they have a quality of unique design and presentation. The district's handicrafts such as Chabadi, Binna, etc., had started to fade, but in the past year the farm women of Reasi have shown strong commitment to resurrect



PRESENTLY THE UT'S HANDICRAFTS FETCH AROUND RS 1,700 CRORE ANNUALLY. HANDICRAFTS ARE THE SECOND LARGEST INDUSTRY AFTER TOURISM IN J&K

this sector. Their focus expanded from Binna and Chabadi to laundry bags, footwear, pen stands, dry fruit trays, jewellery boxes, etc., using the local Babiyon and wild palm tree leaves for increased durability.

Earlier in August 2021 the women of Reasi district scored a position in the Union Ministry of Rural

Developments' Inspirational Stories of Aatmanirbhar Women' for bringing back the traditional craft of making grass products in Pouni block of the district.

These handicrafts are a major part of the cultural heritage in the rural areas of J&K, transferred down through generations.

BOOSTING THE ECONOMY

Handicrafts hold a significant place in J&K's economy -- carpets, wood carving, Papier Mache, copperware art, Pashmina shawls, Crewel embroidery, grass baskets, etc. have been popularised across the globe for centuries due to their high craftsmanship and universal appeal

These manually laboured items have a special affectionate energy that the machine-made goods lack and no two items are alike making each item unique

Formerly many Self Help Group (SHG) women were involved in this unorganised sector for domestic use of this craft, and if at all it was sold it was at an abysmally low rate. But with India's recent shift to eco-friendly products they fetch higher prices now. The SHGs in Bhaga village also

make various products like jute bags, traditional ornaments, paper plates, disposable leaf plates and bowls, teddy bears, spices, pickles, embroidery items, masks, cheese, kaladi (traditional cheese) and sandals among others.

The government of the UT has conducted grass handicrafts and skill development workshops in the rural village of Kheral, Malair and Saloon in the district of Reasi. Due to increase in capacity, the artisans are able to deliver premium grass handicraft product for the market, while expanding the production base. 100 SHG members of 'Naari Ki Pehchaan Cluster Level Federation' are involved in the activity. Financial support for training and raw materials is being provided by the government.

Workshops on skill showcase, design education, creativity and product development, pricing, marketing, branding and micro financing, etc., have been organised. Focus is being made on new techniques in production process like dyeing, designing, washing, etc.

of the day quote

That spike which Delhi saw can be considered as the peak of the Covid wave and it seems that we are past the peak now.... The number of daily cases has come down in the last few days. Over 13,000 cases were recorded yesterday with a positivity rate of close to 24 per cent. And today, the number of cases is lesser than that

SATYENDAR JAIN | DELHI HEALTH MINISTER

The Madhya Pradesh chief minister has no time to meet farmers affected by the irrigation projects. He doesn't even have time to meet a former chief minister and current Rajya Sabha MP. After waiting for one-and-a-half months, his (CM) office informed me that on January 21, at 11.15 am, he (Chouhan) has given me time to meet, and today, I was informed that he will not meet me as he is busy

DIGVIJAYA SINGH | CONGRESS LEADER

The Centre's plan to appropriate powers of transferring IAS and IPS officers will be "another nail" in the coffin of the country's federal structure

OMAR ABDULLAH | NATIONAL CONFERENCE LEADER

SHORT TAKES

60-yr-old held

Lakhimpur Kheri: A 60-year-old man has been arrested in Uttar Pradesh for allegedly raping a nine-year-old girl with hearing and speech impairment on the terrace of his house. Station house officer (SHO) at Fardhan police station, Rakesh Singh Yadav, said the accused was caught red-handed by the girl's parents and handed over to the police after a sound thrashing.

CISF personnel commits suicide

New Delhi: A 51-year-old CISF Additional Sub-Inspector allegedly committed suicide in his barrack in Outer North Delhi's Bhorganh by hanging himself from the ceiling, an official said Thursday. A senior police official said that they got a call on Wednesday around 9.35 p.m. A team of Delhi Police officials from Narela Industrial Area Police Station was immediately sent to the CISF barracks.

Boy killed

Amroha (Uttar Pradesh): The body of a 14-year-old boy was found lying in a pool of blood near his house. The boy, a student of Class 10, was sleeping when an unidentified person shot him in the chest and fled, the police said. The incident happened Wednesday. The minor also used to handle the grocery shop of his father who had died three years ago.

Dalit boy shot at

Agra: A Dalit boy was allegedly shot at by his friends for not greeting them while he was on his way to attend tuition classes. The boy, a student of class 10, has been shot in the leg. He is a student of a local public school and the two accused study in an inter college and are students of class 12.

7 arrested for theft

Thane: Thane Police has arrested seven persons for allegedly stealing petroleum products worth crores of rupees from a storage tank in south Mumbai, an official said Thursday. The Anti Extortion Cell (AEC) of Thane crime branch raided a dhaba (eatery) at Ambernath in the district on Wednesday and seized stolen products and four tankers, altogether worth ₹1.03 crore, he said.



The Government of India has been urged to waive the loans of farmers by making one time settlement from commercial banks. The state government is also ready to bear its share. Our government passed a bill in the assembly to ban the auction of land of farmers having agricultural land up to 5 acres. But till now, this law has not been made as the Governor has not yet cleared it

ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CM

CHECKING COVID

The Telangana government would undertake a door-to-door fever survey in the state from Friday as part of measures to check the spread of Covid



Deaths significantly less in 3rd Covid wave: Govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 20: Deaths as against active cases have been significantly lower in the third wave of COVID-19 pandemic than the previous one, the government said on Thursday underlining the current surge is not witnessing increase in severe illness or death following high vaccination uptake.

Presenting a comparison of the key indices during the second and third surge in India, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said on April 30, 2021, there were 3,86,452 new cases, 3,059 deaths and 31,70,228 active cases and the proportion of fully vaccinated people that time was 2 per cent.

On January 20, 2022, there are 3,17,532 new cases, 380 deaths and 19,24,051 active cases and the proportion of fully vaccinated people is 72 per cent, he said.

"So it shows that deaths as against active cases have been significantly fewer in the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic than the second wave, while the vaccinated population has increased significantly from the second to third wave. "By this we want to tell you that vaccination is effective. The disease remains mild and in moderate levels in fully vac-



A healthworker conducts Covid testing of a woman in Nagaon district

inated individuals," Bhushan said as he urged those who have not yet taken their first vaccine dose to take the shot and those who are overdue for their second dose to get fully inoculated.

"We track children's data too, 0-19 years age group in 2020 they contributed to 10 per cent of the total cases and 0.96 per cent of total deaths. In 2021, 0-19 years contributed to 11 per cent of the total cases and 0.70 per cent of total deaths happening because of COVID-19. Between 2020 and 2021 there is not much of a difference

either in terms of contribution of this age group or in terms of contribution of this group to total deaths," he said. ICMR Director General Dr Balram Bhargava said, "The current surge in India is not witnessing an increase in severe illness and death because of high vaccination uptake. However, we have to remember one point, those with comorbidities should monitor their health and avoid complications."

"To summarize vaccines prevent death and therefore is a must," he said. He added that the overall

Govt issues revised Covid-19 guidelines

New Delhi: Use of antivirals or monoclonal antibodies is not recommended for those less than 18 years of age, irrespective of severity of Covid infection, and if steroids are used, they should be tapered over 10 to 14 days, subject to clinical improvement, the government said Thursday. In the 'Revised Comprehensive Guidelines for Management of COVID-19 in Children and Adolescents (below 18 years)', the health ministry also said that masks are not recommended for children aged five years and below. Those aged 6-11 years may wear it depending on the ability of the child to use a mask safely and appropriately under direct supervision of parents, it said. Those aged 12 and above should wear a mask under the same conditions as adults, the ministry said. The guidelines were reviewed by a group of experts in view of the current surge that is mainly attributed to the Omicron variant of the coronavirus, which is also a variant of concern.

test performance in the country is being maintained at a level comparable with the second wave.

BJP SNUBS PARRIKAR'S SON

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Panaji, Jan 20: The name of Utpal Parrikar, son of former Goa chief minister late Manohar Parrikar, did not figure in the BJP's list of 34 candidates that it announced on Thursday for the upcoming state assembly polls, although he had sought party's candidature from the Panaji constituency.

The party said that although Utpal Parrikar was given four other options, he did not accept any of them. The BJP announced the list of candidates in Delhi for the February 14 Goa assembly elections, as per which Chief Minister Pramod Sawant will again be the party's candidate from Sanquelim constituency. While refusing to give a ticket to Utpal Parrikar from the Panaji constituency, which his father had represented for over two decades, the BJP nominated from that seat party's sitting MLA Atanasio Monserrate, one of the 10 legislators, who had joined the saffron party in July 2019 after quitting the Congress.

FOR A LIVING



Farmers transplant paddy saplings in a field in Nadia district

PTI PHOTO

DELHI RIOTS CASE

Man given 5-year jail term

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 20: A special Delhi court hearing the Delhi riot cases, on Thursday, delivered the first judgement while awarding a five-year jail term to one Deepak Yadav for burning down the house of a 73-year-old woman.

Before this, a man was acquitted by the court in July. This is the first jail term awarded to anyone in the Delhi riots case, said a police official. Additional Sessions Judge Virender Bhat awarded the jail term to the accused. Last month the court had held Dinesh Yadav guilty under sections 143 (member of an

unlawful assembly), 147 (punishment for rioting), 148 (rioting armed with a deadly weapon), 457 (house trespass), 392 (robbery), 436 (arson) of IPC read with section 149 (member of unlawful assembly guilty of a common offence) of IPC.

He was convicted for being a member of an unlawful assembly and rioting, and taking part in robbing. He was also convicted for burning down the house of an elderly woman Manori. A senior police official said that Yadav was arrested by them on June 8, 2020. The police said they had enough evidence against him to prove the case of the prosecution.

SL Navy sinks TN boat, fishermen rescued

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Jan 20: A Sri Lankan Naval boat rammed into Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu damaging the boat that developed cracks and sank. Seven fishermen, who were on-board the sinking boat were rescued by other fishermen.

The incident occurred Wednesday late at night. The All Mechanised Boat Fishermen's association president, P. Sesuraja while speaking to mediapersons said, "450 boats from Rameswaram area ventured into the sea after 4 p.m. on Wednesday. While they were fishing near Katchatheevu, a Sri Lankan Naval boat reached the spot and rammed it into a fishing boat creating a crack in the boat,



and ultimately it sank in the waters. "It's a huge loss but fortunately, the fishermen raised a distress alarm, and those fishing nearby rescued them. While no lives were lost, this is a continuing phenomenon and we are driven to the wall. The State and Central governments have to take a call soon and diplomatic pressure should be mounted

It is to be noted that several fishermen from Tamil Nadu were attacked by the Sri Lankan Navy and in 2021 alone 5 Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu lost their lives in the sea

up on the Lankans against such incidents. We will have no other way but to enter into blockades to bring this issue to the national notice." Sesuraja also said that the livelihood of the fishermen from Tamil Nadu has been badly hit as most of the fishermen are venturing to the

sea from Rameswaram and Ramanathapuram areas only twice a week and this has affected the financial situation and the livelihood.

It is to be noted that several fishermen from Tamil Nadu were attacked by the Sri Lankan Navy and in 2021 alone five Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu lost their lives in the sea.

Around 55 Indian fishermen are still languishing in Sri Lankan jails after they were arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy on charges of crossing the International Marine Boundary Line (IMBL). While 68 were arrested in December 2021 in three separate incidents on alternate days, 13 were released on bail.

Daughters to inherit fathers' self acquired, inherited properties: SC

The bench was dealing with the legal issue concerning the right of the daughter to inherit the self-acquired property of her father, in the absence of any other legal heir

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 20: In a significant verdict, the Supreme Court Thursday said the daughters of a male Hindu, dying intestate, would be entitled to inherit the self-acquired and other properties obtained in the partition by the father and get preference over other collateral members of the family.

The judgement, which came on an appeal against the Madras High Court verdict, dealt with the property rights of Hindu women and widows under the Hindu Succession Act.

"If a property of a male Hindu dying intestate (without a will) is a self-acquired property or obtained in the partition of a coparcenary or a family property, the same would devolve by inheritance and not by survivorship, and a daughter of such a male Hindu would be entitled to inherit such property in preference to other collaterals (such as sons/daughters of brothers of deceased father)," a bench of justices S Abdul Nazeer and Krishna Murari said.

The bench was dealing with the legal issue concerning the



right of the daughter to inherit the self-acquired property of her father, in the absence of any other legal heir.

Justice Murari, writing the 51-page judgment for the bench,

also dealt with the question of whether such property will devolve on to the daughter upon the death of her father, who died without a will, by inheritance or shall devolve on to "father's

brother's son by survivorship". "Right of a widow or daughter to inherit the self-acquired property or share received in the partition of a coparcenary property of a Hindu male dying intestate is well recognized not only under the old customary Hindu Law but also by various judicial pronouncements..." the verdict said.

Referring to the legal provision, it said the legislative intent was to remedy the limitation of a Hindu woman who could not claim an absolute interest in the properties inherited by her but only had a life interest in the estate so inherited.

"Section 14 (I) converted all limited estates owned by women into absolute estates and the succession of these properties in the absence of a will or testament would

take place in consonance with Section 15 of the Hindu Succession Act, 1956..." it said.

If a female Hindu dies intestate without leaving any issue, then the property inherited by her from her father or mother would go to the heirs of her father whereas the property inherited from her husband or father-in-law would go to the heirs of the husband, it said. "The basic aim of the legislature in enacting Section 15(2) (of the Hindu Succession Act) is to ensure that inherited property of a female Hindu dying issueless and intestate, goes back to the source," it said.

Dealing with the facts of the case, the bench set aside the trial court and the high court's findings dismissing the partition suit of the daughters.

international



Today we remember the murdered Jewish women, men and children, and those who survived the Holocaust. We will never forget what Germany did to them
ANNALENA BAERBOCK | GERMANY'S FOREIGN MINISTER

DRUG HAVOC

In 2021, 650 people died of drug overdose in San Francisco, a 9 per cent drop from the previous year, according to data released by the City Office of the Chief Medical Examiner



of the day quote

This stage of the pandemic is different to what we have dealt with before. Omicron is more transmissible. That is going to make it harder to keep it out, but it will also make it more challenging to control once it arrives. But just like before, when COVID changes, we change



JACINDA ARDERN | PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

Ukrainian and Western claims of an imminent Russian attack on Ukraine were a cover for staging large-scale provocations of their own, including those of military character. They may have extremely tragic consequences for the regional and global security



MARIA ZAKHAROVA | RUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESWOMAN

All experts believe that we will need high overall immunity in the population next fall as well. With this vaccine mandate, we will succeed in achieving these important additional percentage points in the vaccination rate



WOLFGANG MUECKSTEIN | AUSTRALIAN HEALTH MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Blast in Lahore market, 3 dead

Lahore: A powerful blast in Pakistan's Punjab province's provincial capital Lahore has claimed at least three lives and injured dozens, in what is being seen as a targeted terror attack. As per locals, Lahore's hub of wholesale markets, located around the Lohari Gate area, which is a congested and densely-populated vicinity, was rocked by a powerful blast, claiming lives of at least two, including one teenager, and injuring at least 25 others.

Ex-Pope under scrutiny

Berlin: A long-awaited report on sexual abuse in Germany's Munich diocese Thursday faulted retired Pope Benedict XVI's handling of four cases when he was archbishop in the 1970s and 1980s. The law firm that drew up the report said that Benedict strongly denies any wrongdoing. The report also faulted the current archbishop, a prominent ally of Pope Francis, in two cases.

US jobless claims rise to 2,86,000

Washington: The number of Americans applying for unemployment benefits rose to the highest level in three months as the fast-spreading omicron variant continued to disrupt the job market. Jobless claims rose for the third straight week — by 55,000 to 2,86,000, highest since mid-October, the Labor Department reported Thursday. The jump in claims marked the biggest one-week increase since mid-July.

Lightning strikes Polish airliner

Warsaw: LOT Polish Airlines says one of its planes was struck by lightning shortly after takeoff Thursday, prompting the plane to return to Warsaw, where it landed safely. Airline spokesman Krzysztof Moczulski said the lightning hit a Boeing 787 Dreamliner that was en route to Puerto Plata in the Dominican Republic.

Tongans relieved

Bangkok: As the massive undersea Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha'apai volcano erupted Saturday, Tongans from around the world gazed on as their relatives livestreamed images of billowing clouds of ash, gas and steam emerging from beneath the depths.

Kamala will be his running mate in 2024, says Biden

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Jan 20: US President Joe Biden has said that Vice President Kamala Harris would be his running mate if he stood for office again in 2024.

President Biden made this emphatic assertion Wednesday amid US media reports alleging dysfunction among her staff and doubt on her standing within the administration. Harris, 57, is the first woman and first Black and Asian American person ever sworn in as US vice president.

Harris was born in Oakland in California. Her mother Shyamala Gopalan migrated to the US from Tamil Nadu, while her father, Donald J Harris, moved to the US from Jamaica.

Asked by a reporter whether Biden was satisfied with Harris' work leading the voting rights effort for the White House and whether he will commit to putting her on the ticket once again, Biden replied directly. "Yes and yes," he said during a press conference held at the White House to mark the first year of his presidency.

"She's going to be my running mate, number one. And number two, I did put her in charge. I think she's doing a good job." Biden's remarks Wednesday came after Harris dismissed a question about whether she would be on the Democratic Party's ticket in 2024 in an interview with NBC recently.

"I'm sorry, we are thinking about today. I mean honestly, I know why you're asking the question... We're focused on the things in front of us," she said. Still, questions persist about whether Biden actually plans to run again in 2024. Harris has said on multiple occasions that she and Biden have not discussed whether the 79-year-old will run for reelection in 2024.

Putin will pay 'dear price': Biden

BIDEN'S COMMENTS CAME HOURS AFTER US SECRETARY OF STATE, ANTONY BLINKEN, DURING A VISIT TO KYIV ACCUSED RUSSIA OF PLANNING TO REINFORCE MORE THAN 1,00,000 TROOPS IT HAS DEPLOYED ALONG THE UKRAINIAN BORDER AND SUGGESTED THAT NUMBER COULD DOUBLE "ON RELATIVELY SHORT ORDER"

AGENCIES

Washington, Jan 20: President Joe Biden said he believes Vladimir Putin doesn't want full blown war in Ukraine and would pay a "dear price" if he moves forward with a military incursion.

Biden, speaking at a news conference to mark his one-year anniversary in office, also said he believes that Russia is preparing to take action on Ukraine, though he doesn't think the Russian president has made a final decision.

He suggested that he would limit Russia's access to the international banking system if it did further invade Ukraine. "I'm not so sure that he is certain what is he going to do," Biden said. He added, "My guess is he will move in."

Biden's comments came hours after US Secretary of State Antony Blinken during a visit to Kyiv accused Russia of planning to reinforce the more than 1,00,000 troops it has deployed along the Ukrainian border and suggested that number could double "on relatively short order".

Blinken did not elaborate, but Russia has sent an unspecified number of troops from the country's far east to its ally Belarus, which also shares a border with Ukraine, for major war games next week. The US president said he believes the decision will "solely" be Putin's and suggested he was not fully confident that Russian officials with whom top White House advisers have been negotiating are fully informed about Putin's thinking.

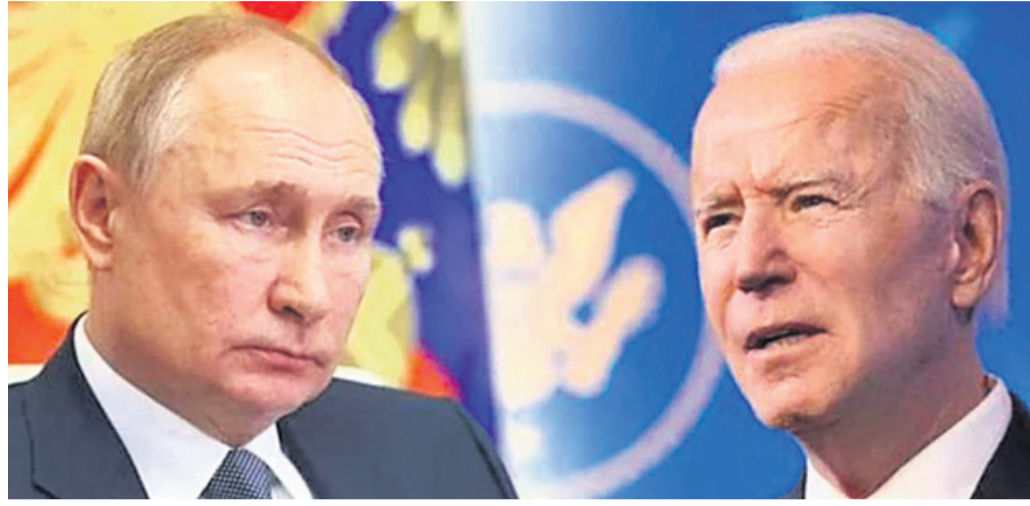
"There's a question of whether the people they're talking to know what he's going to do," Biden said.

Biden also suggested a "minor incursion" would elicit a lesser response than a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, saying "it's very important that we keep everyone in NATO on the same page." Biden later in the news conference sought to clarify that he was referring to a non-military action, such as a cyber-attack, that would be met with a similar reciprocal response.

Ukraine, meanwhile, said it was prepared for the worst and would survive whatever difficulties come its way. The president urged the country not to panic. Blinken's visit to the Ukrainian capital came two days before he is to meet in Geneva with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. That follows a series of inconclusive talks last week that failed to ease rising tensions.

Russian military activity has been increasing in recent weeks, but the US has not concluded whether Putin plans to invade or whether the show of force is intended to squeeze the security concessions without an actual conflict.

Biden, who spoke with Putin twice last month, said he's made it clear to him that Russia would face severe sanctions. Still, he said the decision for Putin could come down to "what side of the bed" he wakes up on. "He's never seen sanctions like the ones I promised will be imposed if he moves, No. 1," Biden warned. "This is not all just a cake walk for Russia," Biden said.



"They'll pay a stiff price immediately" and in the medium and long term "if they do it."

In Kyiv, Blinken reiterated Washington's demands for Russia to de-escalate the situation by removing its forces from the border area, something that Moscow has flatly refused to do. And, Blinken said he wouldn't give Russia the written response it expects to its demands when he and Lavrov meet in Geneva.

Meanwhile, a top Russian diplomat said Moscow would not back down from its insistence that the US formally ban Ukraine from ever joining NATO and reduce its and the alliance's military presence in Eastern Europe.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said Moscow had no in-

tentention of invading Ukraine but that its demands for security guarantees were non-negotiable. The US and its allies have said the Russian demands they are and that Putin is using them in part to create a pretext for invading Ukraine, which has strong ethnic and historical ties to Russia.

The former Soviet republic aspires to join the alliance, though has little hope of doing so in the foreseeable future.

Blinken urged Western nations to remain united in the face of Russian aggression. He also reassured Ukraine's leader of NATO support while calling for Ukrainians to stand strong.

Blinken told Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy that the US and its allies were steadfast in backing his country and its democratic aspirations against Russian attempts to incite division and discord through "relentless aggression."

"Our strength depends on preserving our unity and that includes unity within Ukraine," he told Zelenskyy. "I think one of Moscow's long-standing goals has been to try to sow divisions between and within our countries, and quite simply we cannot and will not let them do that."

The Biden administration had said earlier it was providing an additional \$ 200 million in defensive military aid to Ukraine. Blinken said more assistance is coming and that it would only increase should Russia invade. Zelenskyy thanked Blinken for the aid, which was approved in late December but not confirmed until Wednesday.

"This (military) support not only speaks to our strategic plans of Ukraine joining the alliance, but more importantly to the level of our military, our military supplies," he said, referring to Kyiv's desire to join NATO.

FREEZING THE MOMENT



Women wearing face masks printed with a slogan for the Beijing Winter Olympics Games take a selfie with a decoration for the Winter Olympics Games in Tiananmen Square in Beijing

UKRAINE INVASION

US says nuclear talks with Iran at 'decisive moment'

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Berlin, Jan 20: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Thursday that talks with Iran over its nuclear program are at a "decisive moment," but warned that if a deal is not reached in the coming weeks then Washington and its allies may change tactics.

Speaking in Berlin after meeting senior diplomats from Germany, France and Britain, Blinken said that the longer Iran fails to comply with the 2015 Vienna accord — intended to rein in Tehran's nuclear program — the closer it would get to being able to build an atomic weapon.

"We are indeed at a decisive moment," Blinken told reporters, adding that he believed modest progress had been made during the ongoing round of talks in the Austrian capital. "But we are not where we need to be. And if we don't get there very soon, we will have to take a different course," he said in a statement.

EMIRATES TO AGAIN FLY BOEING 777 TO US

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dubai, Jan 20: Long-haul carrier Emirates said Thursday it will resume its Boeing 777 flights to the US after halting its use of the aircraft there over concerns new 5G services in America could interfere with airplane technology that

measures altitude. International carriers that rely heavily on the wide-body Boeing 777, and other Boeing aircraft, cancelled early flights or switched to different planes Wednesday following warnings from the Federal Aviation Administration and the Chicago-based plane maker over possible in-

terference with radio altimeters. The FAA gave approval late Wednesday for more types of planes to land in low visibility near 5G signals, including the Boeing 777.

Among the most-affected airlines by the FAA decision was Dubai-based Emirates, a crucial East-West travel airline which flies

only the 777 and the double-decker Airbus A380. Flights to Boston, Houston and San Francisco, which saw Emirates deploy its Airbus A380 jumbo jet, will resume Boeing 777 flights Saturday. Tim Clark, Emirates president, apologized in a statement to the airline's customers for the disruption.

Meta, Google grilled over misinformation, Twitter next

AGENCIES

Sydney, Jan 20: An Australian government committee Thursday grilled Meta (formerly Facebook) and Google about the spread of misinformation and cyberbullying across their platforms.

Google's director of government affairs and public policy, Lucinda Longcroft, was asked by the committee about misleading Covid-19 information on YouTube, and was specifically shown at least nine United Australia Party (UAP) ads containing Covid misinformation. Conceding the existence of these



ads on YouTube, Longcroft told the panel that the platform's Covid misinformation policies are "robust, rapid, and effectively enforced", reports ZDNet.

The committee was established late last year to inquire into the practices of major technology

companies. Twitter was set to appear before the committee on Friday.

Meta representatives also appeared before the committee and were grilled about the death and rape threats directed towards Australian presenter Erin Molan

and her young daughter on Facebook. Molan had testified earlier that she submitted a request on Facebook for those threats to be removed from the platform.

"In response to the request, Facebook sent an automated response that the content would remain online".

Meta ANZ policy director Mia Garlick told the committee that they could not locate Molan's original request.

"Unfortunately, in the real world, we haven't been able to locate that original complaint and so I think a police report was made

Stampede at Church event in Liberia kills 29

The disaster occurred overnight at a religious event, either late Wednesday or in the early hours of Thursday



People gathered outside Redemption Hospital, in Monrovia where victims of a stampede were taken to.

AGENCIES

Monrovia, Jan 20: At least 29 people in Liberia, including 11 children and a pregnant woman, have died in a stampede of worshippers at a Christian ceremony in a densely populated area of the capital, Monrovia, officials said Thursday.

The stampede erupted when a gang of thugs armed with knives attacked some of the hundreds attending the ceremony at about 9 pm Wednesday night, police spokesman Moses Carter told The Associated Press. One person has been arrested, he said. The Rev. Abraham

Kromah who was holding the ceremony and who runs a church in the New Georgia township of Monrovia was also brought in for questioning about the incident, police said. The bodies have been taken to the morgue of Redemption Hospital, close to where the incident occurred in a beach area called New Kru Town.

Street gangs have become an increasing problem in Monrovia and other Liberian cities in recent years, according to residents. President George Weah was expected to visit the scene Thursday, according to Liberian media reports.

INSTA'S PAID SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE

San Francisco: Meta-owned photo-sharing platform Instagram has started testing subscriptions, a new feature allowing creators to offer paid followers access to exclusive content. Currently, only 10 US creators have gained access to the new feature, including basketball player Sedona Prince, model Kelsey Cook, actor-influencer Alan Chikin Chow, Olympic gymnast Jordan Chiles and digital creator Lonnie IIV. "Subscriptions are for creators," Instagram chief Adam Mosseri said in a video posted on Twitter.

and we worked through that process to make sure that we were taking appropriate action," Garlick was quoted as saying. In the latest crackdown on big tech, Prime Minister Scott Morrison said in December that Big tech created these platforms and they have a

responsibility to ensure their users are safe. "Big tech has big questions to answer. But we also want to hear from Australians; parents, teachers, athletes, small businesses and more, about their experience, and what needs to change," he said.

business

of the day quote

This partnership (Lotus International Pte Ltd) will provide patients access to a highly effective and proven treatment for allergic rhinitis in these key South-East Asian markets

ROBERT CROCKART | COO, GLENMARK PHARMACEUTICALS LTD

The investment industry will benefit if the Securities Transaction Tax is abolished, as both long-term capital gains (LTCG) and short-term capital gains (STCG) are in place

NIKHIL KAMATH | CO-FOUNDER, TRUE BEACON AND ZEROHDA

In India, there is no risk from 5G services to aircraft and we are fully safeguarded as we are only allocating 3300-3670 MHz, which is more than 500 MHz below the altimeter spectrum

BHARAT BHATIA | PRESIDENT, ITU-APT FOUNDATION

SHORT TAKES

NIFientreC ties up with Amazon

New Delhi: Products by grassroots innovators, outstanding traditional knowledge holders, as well as student creativity-based innovative products will be available to millions of customers by virtue of a new partnership between NIFientreC and Amazon India launched Wednesday. An MoU was signed between NIF Incubation and Entrepreneurship Council (NIFientreC), a Technology Business Incubator (TBI) hosted by the National Innovation Foundation (NIF), an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology, and Amazon India for online distribution of such ready to market products.

OneWeb, Hughes sign 6-year pact

New Delhi: Bharti Group-backed company OneWeb and satellite service provider Hughes Network Systems have signed a strategic six-year distribution agreement to provide satellite broadband services across India, a joint statement said Thursday. The services in India will be provided by Hughes and Bharti Airtel joint venture Hughes Communications India Private Ltd. The agreement follows a memorandum of understanding signed by the companies in September 2021. "We look forward to bringing them high-speed, low-latency services from HCPL, using OneWeb capacity," HCPL president and MD Partho Banerjee said.

Mineral production up 5% in Nov 2021

New Delhi: India's mineral production rose five per cent in November 2021 compared to the year-ago period, according to the mines ministry. The index of mineral production of mining and quarrying sector for November 2021 stood at 111.9, which was five per cent higher compared to the level in November 2020. The cumulative growth for the April-November period of the ongoing fiscal over the same period a year ago was 18.2 per cent.

Porsche India sales grow 62%

Mumbai: German sports luxury car manufacturer Porsche Thursday posted 62 per cent growth in its car sales in India at 474 units for 2021, driven by SUV Macan, which accounted for 39 per cent of the overall sales. The company expects this sales momentum to continue in 2022 amid a strong order bank and further expansion of its product range, it said.



Central excise taxes on fuel should be reduced from 11 per cent to 5 per cent, ATF should be brought under GST, Customs duty on repair parts should be eliminated

RONOJOY DUTTA | DIRECTOR AND CEO, INDIGO

BIGGEST EVER TENDER FOR E-BUSES

State-run Convergence Energy Services Ltd Thursday launched the biggest ever tender worth about ₹5,500 crore to procure as many as 5,580 electric buses including 130 double deckers. The cities to be covered under this "Grand Challenge" are Bangalore, Delhi, Surat, Hyderabad, and Kolkata in the first phase. The first lot of e-buses are expected to hit the roads by July this year



FDI INFLOWS SLIP 26% IN 2021: UN

The report had noted that the second wave of the Covid-19 outbreak in India weighed heavily on the country's overall economic activities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations, Jan 20: Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows to India in 2021 were 26 per cent lower, mainly because large M&A deals recorded in 2020 were not repeated, the UN trade body has said.

The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Investment Trends Monitor published Wednesday said global foreign direct investment flows showed a strong rebound in 2021, growing 77 per cent to an estimated \$1.65 trillion, from \$929 billion in 2020, surpassing their pre-Covid-19 level.

"Recovery of investment flows to developing countries is encouraging, but the stagnation of new investment in the least developed countries in industries important for productive capacities, and key Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) sectors - such as electricity, food or health - is a major cause for concern," said UNCTAD Secretary-General Rebeca Grynspan.

FDI flows in developing economies increased by 30 per cent to nearly \$870 billion, with a growth acceleration in East and South-East Asia (20 per cent), a recovery to near pre-pandemic levels in Latin America and the Caribbean, and an uptick in West Asia.



Global FDI flows grew 77% to approximately \$1.65 trillion in 2021

FDI in the US - the largest host economy - increased by 114 per cent to \$323 billion

FDI flows to South Asia decreased 24 per cent to \$54 billion in 2021 from \$71 billion in 2020. FDI in the United States - the largest host economy - increased by 114 per cent to \$323 billion, and cross-border M&As almost tripled in value to \$285 billion.

"Flows to India were 26 per cent lower, mainly because large M&A deals recorded in 2020 were not repeated," it said.

China saw a record \$179 billion of inflows - a 20% surge - driven by strong services FDI

FDI to India rose 27% to \$64 billion in 2020 from \$51 billion in 2019

Of the total increase in global FDI flows in 2021 (\$718 billion), more than \$500 billion, or almost three quarters, was recorded in developed economies. Developing economies, especially least developed countries (LDCs), saw more modest recovery growth, the report said.

The World Investment Report by UNCTAD released in June last year had said that amid the pandemic, India received \$64 billion in

foreign direct investment in 2020, the fifth-largest recipient of inflows in the world.

The report issued last year had said the pandemic boosted demand for digital infrastructure and services globally. This had led to higher values of greenfield FDI project announcements, targeting the ICT industry, rising by more than 22 per cent to \$81 billion.

Announced greenfield projects in India had contracted by 19 per cent to \$24 billion, and the second wave in April 2021 affected economic activities, "which could lead to a larger contraction in 2021", it had said.

The report described the outlook for global FDI in 2022 as positive but added that the 2021 rebound growth rate is unlikely to be repeated.

"New investment in manufacturing and GVCs remains at a low level, partly because the world has been in waves of the Covid-19 pandemic and due to the escalation of geopolitical tensions," said James Zhan, director of investment and enterprise at UNCTAD.

"Besides, it takes time for new investment to take place. There is normally a time lag between economic recovery and the recovery of new investment in manufacturing and supply chains," Zhan added.

MARKETING MAYHEM

Lords' pics removed post backlash

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 20: Nestle India Thursday said it has already withdrawn from the market packs of its popular chocolate brand KitKat which depicted images of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Mata Subhadra on wrappers.

Nestle India, the Indian subsidiary of the Swiss multinational FMCG giant Nestle, had to face on social media the wrath of consumers, who accused the company of hurting religious sentiments by using the sacred images on KitKat wrappers.

The company expressed regret and said that as a pre-emptive action, it withdrew those packs from the market last year. "We do understand the sensitivity of the matter and regret if we have inadvertently hurt anyone's sentiment. We had already withdrawn these packs from the market last year. We thank you for your understanding and support," said a Nestle spokesperson.

According to the company, these were travel packs meant to cele-



brate beautiful local destinations. Nestle, which owns brands such as Maggi, Nescafe, Milkmaid, Munch and Milkibar, said it wanted to celebrate the culture of Odisha with designs on packs representing 'Pattachitra'.

Last year, we wanted to celebrate the culture of Odisha with designs on packs representing 'Pattachitra', an art form uniquely identifiable by its vivid imagery. We wanted to encourage people to know about the art and its artisans. Our past campaigns have also shown that consumers like to

collect and keep such beautiful designs," it said.

Last year in April, Nestle India had also apologised for wrongly depicting Manipur's Keibul Lamjao National Park to be located in Meghalaya on the packaging of its KitKat chocolate after objection by authorities from the state government.

The packaging of the particular batch of the KitKat travel break chocolate had also displayed a picture of a Red Panda, a species which is not found at the Keibul Lamjao National Park.

Q3 RESULTS

RIIL profit falls nearly 3%

New Delhi: Reliance Industrial Infrastructure Ltd (RIIL) Thursday reported a 2.7 per cent decline in December quarter net profit even as revenue rose in the pandemic year. Consolidated net profit of ₹2.33 crore in October-December 2021 is compared with ₹2.39 crore net profit in the same period a year back, the company said in a statement. Revenue rose 23.4 per cent to ₹20.40 crore. "Income from roduct transportation service increased to ₹845.45 lakh from ₹792.41 lakh. Income from hiring construction machineries increased to ₹3.46 crore from ₹62.39 lakh. Income from other support services increased to ₹4.47 crore from ₹4.11 crore," it said. Other income increased to ₹4.01 crore from ₹3.87 crore.



HUL Q3 net up 18.68% to ₹2,300cr

New Delhi: FMCG major Hindustan Unilever Ltd Thursday reported an 18.68 per cent increase in consolidated net profit to ₹2,300 crore for the third quarter ended December 2021. The company had posted a net profit of ₹1,938 crore in the October-December period of the previous fiscal. Revenue from sales during the quarter under review stood at ₹13,196 crore, up 10.25 per cent, as against ₹11,969 crore in the corresponding period a year ago, Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) said in a regulatory filing. HUL's total expenses were at ₹10,329 crore in Q3 FY2021-22 as against ₹10,129 crore earlier. Shares of HUL Thursday settled at ₹2,261.60 on BSE, down 2.13 per cent from the previous close.



TAX CUT DEMANDS

REUTERS

New Delhi, Jan 20: Talks between India and Tesla Inc over potential tax benefits are deadlocked as the government is not keen to give the company any breaks without a commitment to manufacture locally, people familiar with the discussions told Reuters.

Tesla is desperate to import and sell its electric vehicles in India and has for nearly a year lobbied officials in New Delhi to reduce tariffs, which the company's bil-

LOWEST IN 15 YRS

OPEC's share in India's oil imports dips in '21



REUTERS

New Delhi, Jan 20: OPEC's share of Indian oil imports fell in 2021 to the lowest in more than a decade despite a 4% rebound in annual crude purchases by the world's third biggest oil importer, data obtained from industry sources showed.

Members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), mainly from the Middle East and Africa, saw their share of the pie in India shrinking to 70% in 2021, from a peak of 87% in 2008, a Reuters analysis of the data from 2007 to 2021 showed.

India's crude imports rebounded 3.9% to 4.2 million barrels per day (bpd) in 2021, the data showed, but remained below pre-pandemic levels in 2019. Imports are expected to rise further this year as fuel demand is recovering, with the government resisting lockdowns despite surging Covid-19 cases while refiners' margins are expected to stay strong. Last year, refiners had to cut crude processing for a few months as lockdowns hit gasoil and jet fuel consumption.

In December, imports surged to an 11-month high of about 4.7 million bpd, about 5% more than in November, but still 7.8% lower than

Members of OPEC saw their share of the pie in India shrinking to 70% in 2021, from a peak of 87% in 2008

a year earlier, the data showed. "With fears of Omicron spread receding and refineries are expected to operate at full capacity because of improved cracks and fuel demand, Indian oil imports could rise by about 5%," said MK Surana, chairman of state-run Hindustan Petroleum Corp.

OPEC's share shrunk as refiners increased imports from Canada and the United States, at the expense of Africa and the Middle East, the data showed.

As US sanctions made it difficult for India to import crude from Venezuela and Iran, Indian buyers have turned to the United States, Canada, Guyana and some small producers in Africa for supplies.

US and Canadian oil accounted for a record 7.3% and 2.7% of India's imports, respectively, compared with 5.5% and 0.7% a year earlier.

Iraqi supplies to India are expected to increase in 2022 as HPCL will lift 45% more crude for its expanded refining capacity.

Vedanta to create \$10bn fund to bid for BPCL stake

REUTERS

Dubai, Jan 20: Mining firm Vedanta Resources Ltd plans to create a \$10 billion fund to bid for assets including the Indian government's stake in Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL), its chairman told Reuters Thursday.

The Indian government is seeking to privatise state-run refiner BPCL by selling its near 53% stake in the firm, worth just over \$6 billion, to private entities.

"We are in the process of creating a fund of \$10 billion," Anil Agarwal said in an interview in Dubai. "It will not only look at

(BPCL) but there are other companies being privatised. It will look at the potential of those companies also."

The fund will be made up of its own resources and outside investment, Agarwal said, adding that it may also finance the BPCL acquisition through debt.

"We will work out a structure, we are doing the due diligence," he said. "As soon as the date comes, we will firm up and work out on how we take the money and go about it."

"There is no large fund which does not want to associate with us in general. Money will never be a problem," he added.

India, Tesla in 'weird stalemate'



"If they do not want to invest anything here, how is that model going to work," said a senior government official

lionaire CEO Elon Musk says are among the highest in the world.

But Indian official sources said they have been unconvinced by Tesla's lobbying as the company has not yet shared any firm plan to invest in the country, something that would be in line with Prime

Minister Narendra Modi's "Make in India" vision to boost local manufacturing and create jobs.

A third person with direct knowledge of Tesla's thinking said the discussions with the Indian government have reached a "weird stalemate situation".

Walmart invites Indian sellers to join its US marketplace

India is already one of Walmart's top sourcing markets, and the company has set an ambitious goal of exporting \$10 billion from India each year by 2027

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bangalore, Jan 20: Retail giant Walmart Thursday announced that it is now inviting select Indian sellers to apply to join Walmart Marketplace, a curated sellers community that serves more than 120 million US shoppers each month.

The company said that its initiative expands on over 20 years of Walmart's engagement with Indian exporters.

India is already one of Walmart's top sourcing markets, and the company has set an ambitious goal of exporting \$10 billion from India

each year by 2027.

"Building on our long history of partnership with Indian exporters, Walmart is now offering Indian businesses the opportunity to further their export dreams as Marketplace sellers," Michelle Mi, Walmart Vice President, Emerging Markets and Business Development - Global Sourcing, said in a statement.

Walmart is seeking new sellers from India as part of a global drive to attract international sellers and expand the Marketplace's product assortment.

Selected sellers will be able to take advantage of Walmart



Fulfillment Services, which allows them to use Walmart's warehousing and delivery infrastructure in the US, along with platform tools that help them streamline

their operations and manage promotions and feedback.

Walmart also appropriately shares US customer insights and global supply chain best practices

They will be able to leverage our global supply chain infrastructure and receive support to help them reach millions of daily customers in the US

MICHELLE MI | VICE PRESIDENT (EMERGING MARKETS AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT), WALMART

Outstanding Make in India brands can expand their global networks, learn export best practices and diversify their product categories in concert with Walmart as they take on the world

RAJNEESH KUMAR | CHIEF CORPORATE AFFAIRS OFFICER, FLIPKART

and business planning strategies with its Marketplace sellers to help them succeed in the US.

"The opportunity to easily access global consumers can be transformative for Indian sellers," said

Rajneesh Kumar, Flipkart Chief Corporate Affairs Officer. A dedicated Cross Border Trade team has been set up in India to help sellers onboard and grow on the platform.

Medvedev negates Kyrgios, crowd

Sindhu, Prannoy in Syed Modi quarters

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Melbourne, Jan 20: Daniil Medvedev faced a hostile crowd and a full array of Nick Kyrgios' outbursts and tricks, and still remained calm for long enough to reach the third round at the Australian Open.

The 115th-ranked Kyrgios worked up the crowd, hit 'tweeners and drop shots, mixed up the pace of his groundstrokes and tossed in an under-arm serve in a bid to ruffle the second-ranked Russian.

Medvedev kept his composure, taking a quick trip to the locker room after losing the third set and recovering to win 7-6(7-1), 6-4, 4-6, 6-2 Thursday on a rowdy Rod Laver Arena.

In an on-court TV interview with former champion Jim Courier, Medvedev was asked how he managed to stay so composed.

Kyrgios usually likes to play on John Cain Arena, known locally as the People's Court because fans with ground passes can get in and the singing and chanting is always less restrained than the two main show courts. He managed to turn the all-ticketed stadium court into something more akin to a soccer stadium.

In the seventh game of the third set, Kyrgios got two break-point chances when he bunted away a backhand from Medvedev directed at his body and then took off on a circular run behind the baseline to celebrate like he had scored a goal.

When he converted the break, he danced in the change-over and worked up the crowd. Medvedev managed to lower the volume with two service breaks in the fourth set.

It was Medvedev's first win over Kyrgios following two losses in 2019. And there were cheers later when Courier suggested a new crowd favorite for the rest of the tournament.

Medvedev was the runner-up last year but avenged that loss by



beating Novak Djokovic in the US Open final. He's the quasi No.1 now, anyway, because Djokovic was deported on the eve of the tournament for failing to meet Australia's strict COVID-19 vaccination regulations.

Another contender in his half of

the draw had a more routine run to the third round, with fourth-seeded Stefanos Tsitsipas beating Sebastian Baez 7-6(7-1), 6-7(5-7), 6-3, 6-4 in a match featuring two former top-ranked junior players.

Five-time runner-up Andy Murray only lasted two rounds.

Two days after winning his first match at the Australian Open in five years, the former No.1 lost to 120th-ranked Taro Daniel 6-4, 6-4, 6-4.

Other winners among the men included No.5 Andrey Rublev, No.15 Roberto Bautista Agut, No. 20 Taylor Fritz, 2014 US Open champion

Marin Cilic and No.32 Alex de Minaur. No. 24 Dan Evans moved on when the player he was supposed to face in the second round, Arthur Rinderknech, pulled out with an injured wrist. Australian wild-card entry Chris O'Connell upset 13th-seeded Diego Schwartzman 7-6(8-6), 6-4, 6-4.

There were surprises in the women's draw on Day 4, with No. 3 Garbine Muguruza becoming the highest-seeded player to exit only minutes after No.6 Anett Kontaveit lost.

US Open champion Emma Raducanu lost to Danka Kovinic 6-4, 4-6, 6-3. Second-seeded Aryna Sabalenka served nine double-faults in her first two service games, 12 in the first set and appeared to be on the brink of a second-round defeat before recovering to hold off 100th-ranked Wang Xinyu 1-6, 6-4, 6-2.

She will next face 31st-seeded Marketa Vondrousova, the 2019 runner-up at Roland Garros who beat Liudmila Samsonova 6-2, 7-5.

Kontaveit, the runner-up at the WTA Finals, lost to 19-year-old Clara Tauson 6-2, 6-3. Tauson will make her debut in the third round at a major against 2019 Australian Open semifinalist Danielle Collins.

No.7 Iga Swiatek, the 2020 French Open champion, No. 19 Elise Mertens and Sorana Cirstea were among the other women advancing. Zhang Shuai of China moved into the third round when No.12 Elena Rybakina retired from their match while trailing 6-4, 1-0.

Sam Stosur's 6-2, 6-2 loss to No. 10 Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova ended

will look to set the record straight

against the left-handed Thai, who had

beaten the Indian last week.

Prannoy, a former top 10 player, will

clash with France's Arnaud Merkle, who

ended India's Kartikey Gulshan Kumar's

campaign with a 21-8, 21-12 win in another

second-round match.

In other results, Aakarshi Kashyap and

Malvika Bansod



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Jan 20: Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu hardly broke any sweat but HS Prannoy had to toil hard as the two Indian shuttlers progressed to the women's and men's singles quarterfinals of the Syed Modi International Super 300 tournament here Thursday.

Top seed Sindhu took just 33 minutes to get the better of American Lauren Lam 21-16, 21-13 in her second-round match, while fifth seed Prannoy staved off a stiff challenge from compatriot Priyanshu Rajawat before prevailing 21-11, 16-21, 21-18 at the BBD indoor stadium here.

Sindhu, a former World Champion, will take on sixth-seeded Thai shuttler Supanida Katethong in the last-eight stage in a repeat of the India Open Super 500 semi-finals.

The 26-year-old from Hyderabad will look to set the record straight against the left-handed Thai, who had beaten the Indian last week.

Prannoy, a former top 10 player, will clash with France's Arnaud Merkle, who ended India's Kartikey Gulshan Kumar's campaign with a 21-8, 21-12 win in another second-round match.

In other results, Aakarshi Kashyap and Malvika Bansod

have set up an exciting quarter-final clash against each other after notching up straight game wins over Sai Uttejitha Rao Chukka and Prerana Neeluri respectively.

While Aakarshi beat Sai 21-9, 21-6, Malvika defeated Prerana 21-10, 21-8 in two top-sided contests. In another women's singles second round match, India's Samiya Imad Farooqui beat compatriot Kanika Kanwal 21-6, 21-15 and will face Anupama Upadhyaya in another all-Indian clash. Anupama beat Smit Toshniwal 21-12 21-19 in another match.

In the men's singles, Mithun Manjunath fought for an hour and 20 minutes before prevailing 16-21, 21-16, 23-21 against Malaysia's Soong Joo Ven but it was curtains for Chirag Sen, Kaushal Dharmamamer and Raghu Mariswamy.

While Russia's Sergey Sirant quelled Chirag's challenge 18-21, 22-20, 21-12, Kushal lost 16-21, 13-21 to Cheam June Wei of Malaysia and Raghu went down 9-21 9-21 to Lucas Claerbout of France. Manju will cross swords with Sergey next.

Fourth seeded men's doubles pair of MR Arjun and Dhruv Kapila also reached the quarterfinals after getting a walkover from compatriots Ayush Makhija and Venkat Gaurav Prasad.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Atletico bow out of Spanish Cup tourney

MADRID: Atletico Madrid was eliminated by Real Sociedad in the round of 16 of the Copa del Rey, with the 2-0 defeat adding to its poor run and increasing the pressure on coach Diego Simeone. In the Spanish league, Sevilla missed a chance to move closer to leader Real Madrid after being held 1-1 at Valencia Wednesday. Atletico's setback against Sociedad came less than a week after it fell to Athletic Bilbao in the semifinals of the Spanish Super Cup in Saudi Arabia. Simeone's team is also struggling in the Spanish league, having lost four of its last six games in the competition and dropping 16 points behind Madrid with a game in hand.

Inter survive scare to outsmart Empoli

MILAN: Inter Milan survived a scare as it beat Empoli 3-2 after extra time to reach the Italian Cup quarterfinals. It appeared as if Empoli was about to pull off an upset in the round of 16 Wednesday when it went ahead with Nedin Bajrami's strike and an own-goal by home keeper Ionu Radu after Alexis Sanchez's opener for Inter. But Andrea Ranocchia levelled in stoppage time to send the match into extra time, where Stefano Sensi scored the winner. Inter will next play either Roma or Lecce — the only team outside Serie A left in the competition. Inter are leading Serie A.

COVID-HIT INDIA COLTS MARCH INTO QUARTERS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tarouba (Trinidad), Jan 20: Record four-time champions and title contenders India stormed into the Super League quarterfinals of the U-19 World Cup after thrashing minnows Ireland by 174 runs in a league game here, in which they barely managed to field a playing XI.

India started their campaign on a winning note, beating South Africa by 45 runs last Saturday and the win Wednesday by such a huge margin is significant as the team fielded only available 11 players after six members of the side were forced into isolation after testing COVID positive.

Put into bat at the Brian Lara stadium, India first rode on Harnoor Singh's brisk 88 and his opening partner Angkrish Raghuvanshi's run-a-ball 79 to post a challenging 307/5. Stand-in skipper Nishant Sindhu (36) and Raj Bawa (42) then shared a 64-run stand for the third wicket.

As big hits dried up towards the end, Rajvardhan Hangargekar struck five sixes, including a hat-trick of maximums in the last over, in his fiery 17-ball 39-run unbeaten cameo that took India past the 300-run mark.

The Hrishikesh Kanitkar-coached side then bundled out the opposition for 133 in 39 overs to register a comfortable win. Chasing 308, Ireland were teetering at 17/3



after losing both openers Liam Doherty (7), David Vincent (8) and Jack Dickson (0) cheaply inside seven overs.

Ireland never recovered from the early blows as right-arm medium pacer Gary Sangwan (2/23) sent back skipper Tim Tector (15) in the 15th over. Wicket-keeper Joshua Cox (28) tried to take the game deep, but it was too little and too late.

Scott Macbeth (32) only delayed the inevitable before India bowled out Ireland for 133. Left-arm orthodox spinner Aneeshwar Gautam (2/11) and off-spinner Kaushal Tambe (2/8) cleaned up the lower middle order and tail-enders.

India now need to have enough players for their last Group B game against Uganda on Saturday as besides Dhull and Rasheed, batter Aaradhya Yadav, Vasu Vats, Manav Parakh, and Siddharth Yadav also tested positive for the virus.

India aim for improved batting show

With series on the line, Rahul-led Men in Blue look to bounce back from loss in the first ODI when they take the field against South Africa in the second ODI today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Paarl, Jan 20: KL Rahul will have to show drastically improved leadership acumen when he leads India against a buoyant South African side in the second ODI Thursday, with the three-match series and his long-term Test captaincy ambitions both at stake.

Rahul was at best mediocre in terms of 'on-your-feet-thinking', something that's basic to art of captaincy, and also didn't look the part with the bat in a deflating 31-run defeat in the opening ODI where India were outplayed for the better part of the game.

The middle-order, which had been a problem since Virat Kohli's heady days as captain, is still sticking out like a sore thumb and no one knows what exactly the solution is.

Once again, it was a case of one opener — Shikhar Dhawan on this occasion — and the indomitable Kohli holding fort before the middle-order caved in on a slower pitch where there was turn and the ball gripped, making a run-of-the-mill seamer Andile Phehlukwayo look formidable.

South Africa crushed India both strategically as well as on skills and therein lay serious questions about Rahul's wares as captain.

The most dominant query was what exactly was Venkatesh Iyer



KL Rahul would be hopeful for a better performance from batters, Friday

doing in the team if he was not bowling at least four to five overs as the sixth bowler when Yuzvendra Chahal and Shardul Thakur were being taken to the cleaners by Rassie van der Dussen

and Temba Bavuma? If Venkatesh is playing as a specialist batter at No.6 then why not use Suryakumar Yadav, who is more experienced with a better range of strokes under pressure?

There wasn't a singular inspired bowling change unlike Proteas who introduced Aiden Markram's off-breaks first-up and bottled up the Indian skipper.

Shreyas Iyer's well-documented struggles against the short ball were again exposed on the day and the Mumbaier would know that a place in the Indian playing XI comes at a premium and he can't go on wasting chances like a millionaire. But going by Rahul Dravid's template, he would get his share of chances. On a slow track, where rotating the strike is a must, the likes of Rishabh Pant and the two Iyers will have to play a bigger role.

Similarly, Shardul Thakur, despite his fifty which came when the match as a contest was over and there was no pressure of a target, will have to measure up as a bowler which is his primary skill.

The difference between the two sides was how the spinners fared — Ashwin and Chahal in their combined 20 overs gave away 106 runs for a single wicket while Markram, Tabraiz Shamsi and Keshav Maharaj bowled 26 overs between them for 124 runs and snared four wickets between them.

And a series defeat against South Africa isn't going to do his case any good unless the head coach is bent on trying to make a leader out of him.

Bergwijn's added-on time brace lifts Spurs

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Leicester, Jan 20: Steven Bergwijn scored two goals deep into stoppage time to snatch Tottenham a dramatic 3-2 victory at Leicester in the Premier League's latest-ever comeback win.

The Netherlands forward looked to have earned a draw for Spurs by driving home from close range in the fifth minute of added-on time Wednesday, yet there was more drama to come.

Soon after the restart, Leicester lost possession, Harry Kane played a perfectly weighted ball behind the Leicester defense and Bergwijn ran onto it, rounded goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel and converted his shot off the post from an acute angle in the seventh extra minute.

The previous latest comeback to win came in one of the Premier League's most famous matches, when Manchester City scored in the



92nd and 94th minutes to beat Queens Park Rangers 3-2 and clinch the title in May 2012.

Kane had scored his customary goal against Leicester — it's now 18 in 17 matches against the team from the Midlands — to equalize for

Tottenham in the 38th, canceling out the 24th-minute opener by Patson Daka. James Maddison then looked to have won it for Leicester after surging into the penalty area and sending in a shot that deflected into the net off sprawl-

ing Tottenham defender Japhet Tanganga in the 76th. It was the playmaker's eighth goal in his last 11 matches in all competitions. Then came Bergwijn's late goals.

Tottenham climbed above north London rival Arsenal into fifth place and is a point behind fourth-place West Ham having played three fewer games. Leicester were returning to league action after seeing matches against Everton and Burnley get postponed over the past week because of COVID-19 cases among its opponents.

MAN UTD BEAT BRENTFORD

Manchester United staged a second-half turnaround as goals from Anthony Elanga, Mason Greenwood and Marcus Rashford earned a 3-1 win at Brentford to boost the team's top-four ambitions in the Premier League.

It was another less-than-convincing display from United Wednesday though, with Cristiano

Ronaldo ostensibly far from impressed at being substituted with 20 minutes left.

Elanga, a 19-year-old winger starting only his fourth Premier League match, broke the deadlock in the 55th minute by latching onto Fred's pass behind Brentford's defense and then nodding the ball into the corner. Brentford, by then, had wasted a host of chances to take the lead in the first half.

Greenwood then notched his first Premier League goal since October, tapping in from Bruno Fernandes' pass, to make it 2-0 in the 62nd. Rashford climbed off the bench to add the third — again off a pass from Fernandes — in the 77th for a first league win of 2022.

It was incredibly hard on Brentford, which had dominated the first league meeting between these sides since 1946 but only had Ivan Toney's late scrambled consolation to show for it.

Misfiring India draw with Iran in campaign-opener



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Navi Mumbai, Jan 20: The Indian women's team wasted innumerable chances in a completely dominating performance as Iran held them to a goalless draw in their Asian Cup opening match here Thursday.

Iran were the better side in the opening minutes during which they got two scoring chances, including a hit on the crossbar; but the home side took control of the Group A match midway into the first half.

India dished out a fine display of passing football in the second half about which head coach Thomas Dennerby spoke eloquently. But they were unlucky not to have scored any goal and win the match.

As India pressed for a goal, Iran defended doggedly as they faced a deluge of attacks. The Indians were all over — crosses, shots, toe-pokes, headers — all inside Iran box but a goal still eluded the home side.

The best chance for India came in the 76th minute but substitute Dangmei Grace's header in front of an open goal was somehow saved by goalkeeper Zohreh Koudaei, who made a remarkable recovery after being beaten.