



PARENTHOOD FOR NICKYANKA
Actor Priyanka Chopra and singer Nick Jonas have announced that they have turned parents to a baby through surrogacy

LEISURE P2



'MASTER OF MINDFULNESS'
Thich Nhat Hanh, the Zen Buddhist monk, who came to prominence as an opponent of the Vietnam War, dies

INTERNATIONAL P10



MEDVEDEV SAILS ON
Daniil Medvedev reaches 4th round for the fourth straight year in Australian Open beating Botoc van de Zandschulp

SPORTS P12

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RAPE OF MINOR
Life term for man, 20-year jail for wife

AGENCIES
Bhubaneswar, Jan 22: A special court in Cuttack Saturday sentenced a man to life imprisonment till his last breath on charges of kidnapping a minor girl and raping her in 2019. The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) court also awarded 20 years jail term



to his wife. After examining witnesses and appreciating evidence, the special court in Cuttack

convicted the couple of committing the crime and pronounced the judgement. The court also directed the State Legal Services Authority to pay ₹5 lakh to the victim as compensation. Special public prosecutor Biswajit Ray said the convicted couple, Amit Bindhani and Asha Lohar alias Chunia, had kidnapped a 10-year-old

girl from Satichaura area in Cuttack city July 18, 2019. They took her to Jamshedpur in Jharkhand with a view to selling her off. There, Amit, aided and abetted by Chunia, had raped the girl on several occasions. "The court, after examining 12 witnesses, has pronounced the judgement," added Ray.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

EC EXTENDS BAN ON RALLIES TILL JAN 31
New Delhi: The Election Commission (EC) Saturday extended the ban on physical rallies and roadshows till January 31, but gave relaxation for physical public meetings of parties or contesting candidates for phase 1 from January 28 and for phase 2 from February 1. The EC has also enhanced the limit of people allowed for door-to-door campaign. Instead of five, now 10 people, excluding security personnel, will be allowed for door-to-door campaigns. **MORE P7**

CRYPTOS SUFFER \$1 TRILLION LOSS
New Delhi: Bitcoin, along with other digital cryptocurrencies, crashed to its lowest level Saturday and the continuing meltdown has wiped out over \$1 trillion from the global crypto market value. Bitcoin was hovering at \$35,000 per coin and the largest digital asset by market value has lost nearly 50 per cent since reaching its peak in November 2021. Bitcoin hit an all-time high of roughly \$69,000 in November. **MORE P11**

DUMMY RUN



Haryana tableau artistes during a press preview ahead of the Republic Day Parade 2022 in New Delhi, Saturday

'Abide With Me' dropped from Beating Retreat

A brochure released by Indian Army lists 26 tunes that will be played at this year's Beating the Retreat ceremony at Vijay Chowk

R-DAY PARADE TO HAVE 25 TABLEAUX

New Delhi: This year's Republic Day parade will have 16 marching contingents, 17 military bands and 25 tableaux of various states, departments and armed forces, the Indian Army said in a statement Saturday. The Army will be represented by a mounted column of cavalry, 14 mechanised columns, six marching contingents and a flypast by advanced light helicopters of its aviation wing at the Republic Day parade-2022 (RDP-2022), it said. **More P7**

New Delhi, Jan 22: One of Mahatma Gandhi's favourite Christian hymns "Abide With Me" has been dropped from this year's Beating Retreat ceremony January 29, according to a brochure released by the Indian Army Saturday. The decision to omit the popular hymn comes a day after the Centre 'shifted' the 'eternal flame' from Amar Jawan Jyoti at India Gate to the nearby National War Memorial. "Abide With Me", written by Scottish Anglican poet and hymnologist Henry Francis Lyte in 1847, has been part of the Beating Retreat ceremony since 1950. It is a prayer for God to remain with the speaker through life and in death. This year's ceremony will conclude with "Sare Jahan Se Achha", the brochure stated. The Beating Retreat used to end with the "Abide With Me" hymn. The brochure also listed 26 tunes that will be played at this year's ceremony at Vijay Chowk. The 26 tunes that will be played at this year's ceremony include "Hey Kanchha", "Channa Billauri", "Jai Janam Bhumii", "Nriytra Sarita", "Vijay Josh", "Kesaria Banna", "Veer Siachen", "Hathroi", "Vijay Ghosh", "Ladaakoo", "Swadeshi", "Amar Chattan", "Golden Arrows" and

"Swarn Jayanti", according to the brochure. "Veer Sainik", "Fanfare by Buglers", "INS India", "Yashasvee", "Jai Bharati", "Kerala", "Siki A Mole", "Hind Ki Sena", "Kadam Kadam Badhaye Ja", "Drummers Call", "Ae Mere Watan Ke Logon" are also part of the 26 tunes that will be played on the evening of January 29, the brochure noted. Beating Retreat is a centuries-old military tradition dating from the days when troops disengaged from battle at sunset, it mentioned. As soon as the buglers sounded the Retreat, the troops ceased fighting, sheathed their arms and withdrew from the battlefield, it added. According to reports, 44 buglers, 16 trumpeters and 75 drummers from six bands will perform the tunes this year with the final exit marked by "Sare Jahan Se Achha". The ceremony will begin with Fanfare by Buglers, followed by Veer Sainik by the Massed Bands and six tunes by the Pipes and Drums band.

6 killed in Mumbai high-rise blaze

The inferno erupted in a 20-storey Sachinam Heights building around 7am Saturday when many of its residents were asleep



PM Narendra Modi announces ₹2 lakh ex gratia for the next kin of each deceased and ₹50,000 for the injured

Prima facie, the blaze was caused by a short-circuit and announced on Twitter that ex-gratia of ₹2 lakh would be provided to the family members of each deceased from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF), and added that the injured would be given ₹50,000 each. Maharashtra Tourism Minister Aaditya Thackeray, who visited the site, said the government will

provide a compensation of ₹5 lakh to the family members of each deceased. He said prima facie the blaze was caused by a short-circuit.

Some residents of the building alleged that three nearby private hospitals refused to admit the injured persons and their negative Covid-19 certificates. Senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis alleged that due to the denial of admission by these facilities, the number of deceased went up. Talking about the incident, the civic official said, "The fire broke out on the 19th floor of the building. On being alerted, the fire brigade personnel and police rushed the spot. Several persons were rescued, of whom 29 were taken to different nearby hospitals as some of them had suffered injuries, while others complained of health problems, like suffocation."

Assembly polls in J&K after delimitation: Shah

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Jammu, Jan 22: Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir will be held after the completion of the ongoing delimitation process and statehood will be restored once the situation in the union territory becomes normal, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said Saturday. Virtually releasing India's first 'District Good Governance Index', he said Jammu and Kashmir is a priority for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and multipronged efforts are being made for the all-round development of the union territory. "As far as the democratic process is concerned, the delimitation process has started. After its completion, we will hold the (assem-

bled) elections. Some people have said many things, but I want to tell you that I had given assurance in Parliament that the statehood of Jammu and Kashmir will be restored. Once the situation in Jammu and Kashmir becomes normal, the statehood of Jammu and Kashmir will be restored." Shah said some people want to create confusion in the minds of the people of the valley and he wants to request everyone not to fall into their trap. He said democracy has reached the lowest level of society after the implementation of the panchayati raj system and that is why some people are worried. He said Jammu and Kashmir can be developed only through democracy, and people can be happy and youths can get jobs also through democracy.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Believe me, I will vote for your leader. Just stop him from visiting us to have food with us

11 perish, 25 injured in two road mishaps

While six passengers including an infant died in Balasore road mishap, five perished in a head-on collision between an SUV and a truck in Subarnapur

PNN/AGENCIES

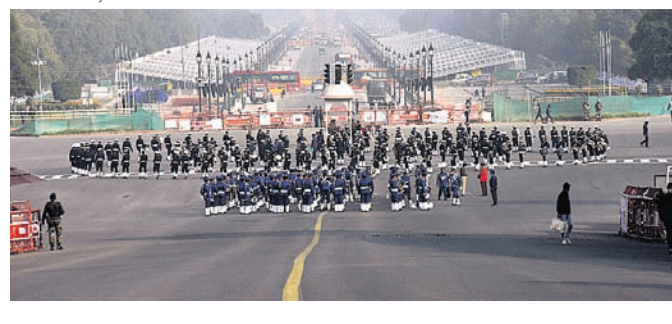
Balasore/Subarnapur, Jan 22: At least 11 people were killed and 25 others injured in two separate road mishaps in the state Saturday. In the first incident, a coal-laden truck hit a bus named "Shantilata" from the rear at Bidu Chhak on National Highway-16 under Soro police limits in Balasore district around 1:40pm Saturday, police said. The goods vehicle rammed into the bus causing it to fall into a roadside ditch, a senior officer said. "The bus was standing on the road to lift passengers when the

mishap happened. It was en route to Bhubaneswar from Mayurbhanj. The truck overturned on the road after the accident," he said.

Following the collision, both the bus and the truck swerved off the road leading to the death of six passengers including an infant, they said. The identities of the deceased are yet to be ascertained. A woman and a child were among the deceased, Balasore Regional Transport Officer Rashmi Dalabehera said. The injured have been admitted to hospitals in Soro and in Balasore town, he added. One of the locals, who was waiting for a bus opposite the accident spot, said, "The coal-laden truck suddenly hit the bus from behind when some passengers were stepping down. One of our local girls died while her parents were closely saved as they disembarked from the bus at the stoppage." The injured were later rushed to



Soro hospital while six critical patients have been shifted to the Balasore district headquarters hospital (DHH) for treatment, sources said. In the second incident, at least five people, including three of a family, were killed, and five others injured in a head-on collision between an SUV and a truck in Subarnapur district Saturday, police said. The accident took place on Mahanadi Bridge early during the day when the 10 occupants of SUV were returning home in Nimma village in Ullunda block from Kaudiamunda village, a police officer said. Five of them died on the spot, while the remaining five were trapped inside the vehicle, and police rescued them by using gas cutters, he said. The deceased were identified as



DEFER BOOSTERS, VAX BY 3 MONTHS FOR COV +VE: MIN

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 22: The Health Ministry has asked the states and UTs to defer vaccination, including the precaution dose, by three months if the beneficiary tests positive. "In case of individuals having lab test proven SARS-2 Covid-19 illness, all Covid vaccinations including precaution dose to be deferred by three months after recovery," said Vikas Sheel, Additional Secretary & Mission Director (NHM) in a letter to states and UTs. The letter further reads that the requests had been made from various quarters for guidance with regard to the administration of precaution dose to the eligible persons having Covid illness. The guidance is based on scientific evidence and recommendation of NTGAI, it adds further.



CM ANNOUNCES ₹2L EX GRATIA

Bhubaneswar: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Saturday expressed profound grief over the death of 11 persons in the road mishaps in Balasore and Subarnapur announced an ex gratia of ₹2 lakh for the families of each victim. He also directed the officials concerned to ensure better treatment of the injured persons, said sources at the Chief Minister's Office. Asish Pandia, Pramod Pandia, Siddhi Pandia, Trayambak Meher and Subham Pandia, who were residents of Nimma village.

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP	MAX 29.8°C	25.6°C
	MIN 19.0°C	18.4°C
Humidity	91%	91%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast
Fog/mist in the morning

leisure



DEPP TO PLAY LOUIS XV IN FRENCH ACTRESS-DIRECTOR'S UPCOMING FILM

Johnny Depp will star as French king Louis XV in the next film directed by French Cesar-winning actress and director Maiwenn. The shoot will begin this summer, *Variety* has confirmed.

JULIA FOX HITS BACK AT ATTENTION CLAIMS

Actress Julia Fox has hit back at claims she is dating Kanye West for "attention." The 31-year-old insisted that their relationship is real and denied accusations that she is with the 44-year-old rapper for fame and money.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Without apparent reason you may go into your shell today. No doubt you will acknowledge the contribution of others, but Ganesh says you have to do more than that; you will have to share your knowledge with your peers. Besides this, Ganesh says you need to cut down on your spending.

TAURUS
Ganesh sees you being very planned and focuses, poised and practical in handling your affairs today. You'll be able to take identify the best strategy, course of action that the situations demand. This day you would be performing like a specialist, a real expert and will not fail to accomplish whatever you have set out to do.

GEMINI
You are on your way to falling in love. Your parents or children are likely to fetch you substantial gains, financially or otherwise. You may want to make a few changes at work, probably a new business strategy.

CANCER
A shopping spree with your darling is likely to be the highlight of the day, even though you will be paying for almost everything. Though you have decided to be this lavish out of sheer love, your sweetheart will more than return the favour with a sweaty thank you 'return gift' in the evening.

LEO
Seems today is just one of those days when things simply refuse to go your way. It happens to the best of us, says Ganesh, and there isn't much one can do about it except slog it out and find that hidden reserve of moral support. On a brighter note, Ganesh observes the possibility of you meeting the right person who shall help you rekindle your imagination.

VIRGO
Today is the right time to start a new project, while older projects which had been postponed will be finished. Over the next week you will try to boost your energy levels. Parties will lead to a lot of entertainment and joy, Ganesh says children will bring home pride which will put you in even higher spirits.

LIBRA
Well, today is just not your day. The prospects sure aren't looking too good. However, there's no point in getting anxious over this triviality. Remember, 'not good' does not necessarily mean bad.

SCORPIO
Life is the best teacher, they say. And today, you even experience this. You may learn to survive the neck-tight competition in the market. This may invite a lot of envy, but nothing shall bother you. Ganesh reminds you of the adage, 'To err is human, to forgive is divine,' so, it's fine even if you commit some errors.

SAGITTARIUS
Going to private parties is a high probability today. All in all, make the most of it as you get nostalgic with old friends and make plans with new ones. Moreover, relatives will be pleased to meet you after a long time.

CAPRICORN
It's time to prove your extraordinary skills as a professional, says Ganesh. You will go out of your way, and even double your efforts to accomplish set goals, and chances are that you might succeed. Family and friends will be glad that could take out time to spend some happy hours with them.

AQUARIUS
It's a day you may want to spend with yourself. But it may still not bring the desired peace and tranquility. An unpleasant situation may force you to deal with reality, says Ganesh. You now realise how much strength you derive from your devotion to God.

PISCES
Of late, the harder you try, the more it seems you have to do. You are likely to put your foot down today and spend some time taking care of yourself and playing truant with your responsibilities. Recharge your batteries fully while you are at it, says Ganesh.

Priyanka, Nick welcome first child

Los Angeles : Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas have taken the surrogacy route to have a baby. PC made the surprise announcement at Friday/Saturday midnight.

Taking to Instagram, Priyanka said: "We are overjoyed to confirm that we have welcomed a baby via surrogate." She added: "We respectfully ask for privacy during this special time as we focus on our family."

Immediately after the announcement, more than 1.73 million of Priyanka's followers shared her joy on Instagram, showering her with heart emojis.

They celebrities who celebrated included the late basketball star Kobe Bryant's wife and philanthropist, Vanessa, Kal Penn, Shefalee Shah, Katrina Kaif, Lara Datta, Sania Mirza, Bhumi Pednekar and Radhika Jones, editor of 'Vanity Fair', where Priyanka is on the cover of the February 2022 edition.

Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas' story has been nothing short of a fairytale. Their story began at the haute fashion event Met Gala 2017, when they both walked the red carpet together and the rest, as they say, is history. IANS



Ajit's nat'l theatre fest begins



A scene from the play *Pratibimba*

Bhubaneswar: Ajit Natya Mahotsav, a three-day national theatre festival kicked off here at Rabintra Mandap, Saturday. Organised by City-based theatre troupe Abhinaya Jagruti Institute of Theatre (AJIT), the festival marked the 22nd foundation day of the troupe.

On the inaugural evening, AJIT presented the play *Pratibimba*, designed and directed by Ajit Das. Deepak Ranjan Pati (Aman) assisted in the production.

The play revolves around a couple living in a border village and three terrorists who suddenly barge into their home to escape police encounter. The couple, who

had earlier lost their only son in a terror attack, tries to convince the ultras to surrender before the police.

They will not achieve anything by killing innocent citizens, the couple tells the trio. After some dramatic interactions, the terrorists get convinced and kill their mission leader and surrender before the police.

The artistes who played important characters included Kishore Khandual, Rakhi, Bibhu, Pruthweeraj, Uma and Himansu. Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademy secretary Prabodh Kumar Rath was the chief guest of the evening. PNN

UNIQUE B'DAY CELEBRATION

Shruti to have live Insta sessions on social issues

Chennai: Actress and singer Shruti Haasan will conduct a series of live Instagram sessions on various social issues as part of her birthday celebrations this year.

Sources close to Shruti, whose birthday falls January 28, said the actress has been overwhelmed with all the love pouring in from her fans who have begun celebrating the month as her birthday month.

A source said: "This year, on her birthday, Shruti has decided to address issues pertaining to society. She will be doing a series of live sessions, starting January 27 on topics such as mental health, women in films and media, and sustainability in fashion."

"On January 27, the session will be on mental health, while on January 28, which happens to be her birthday, the session will be on Women in Films and Media. On January 29, the topic will be Sustainability in Fashion."

"Through these live sessions, Shruti wants to draw attention towards topics that are usually brushed under the carpet or aren't discussed as often as they should be."

Commenting on the same, Shruti said: "The idea behind the live sessions is to open up a discussion on these topics. There are many ways to celebrate one's birthday but my idea of a celebration is to open honest discussions, especially about the things I care about and believe need more talking." IANS



Suryamayee goes de-glam for Samapaju Ra Raghu

Bhubaneswar: Odia actress Suryamayee, best known for playing glamorous roles, will go de-glam in her next movie *Samapaju Ra Raghu*.

The actress said, "After doing so many glamorous characters, I would be seen in a deglamorised character, for change. I am playing Sukanti, a strong and brave woman and will appear in the most ordinary costume with tanned skin and gray hair: You can say Sukanti is the hero of the movie and Raghu (played by actor Manoj Mishra) is following her footsteps."

Sukanti has different shades for which she took nearly a month to understand the character and put in a lot of effort to

infuse life into it, added the actress.

Directed by Chinmay Mishra and produced by Manoj Mishra, the movie is set to release in the month end. The film is extensively shot in a hilly hamlet Samapaju in Boudh district.

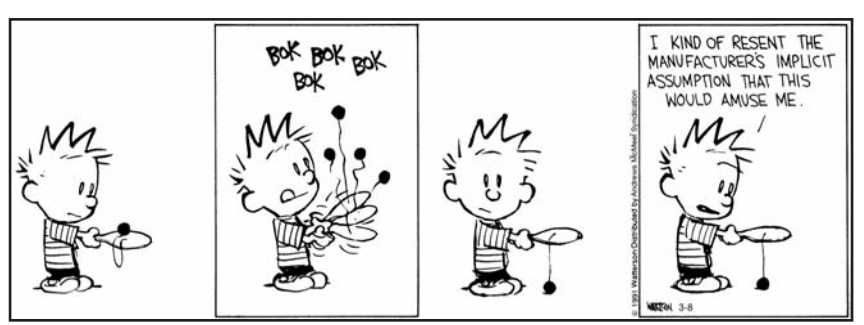
Partha Sarathi Ray and Mamata Nanda will also be seen in pivotal roles in the movie. PNN



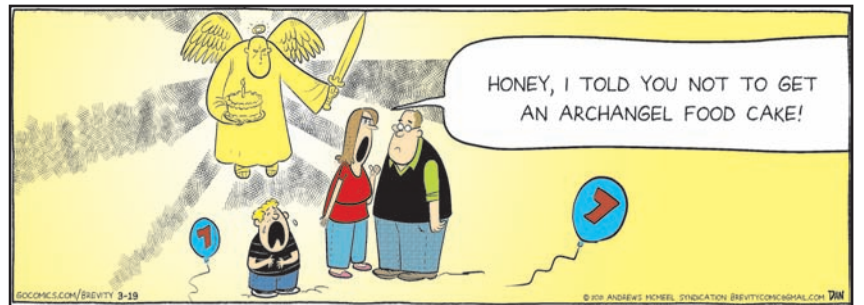
PEANUTS



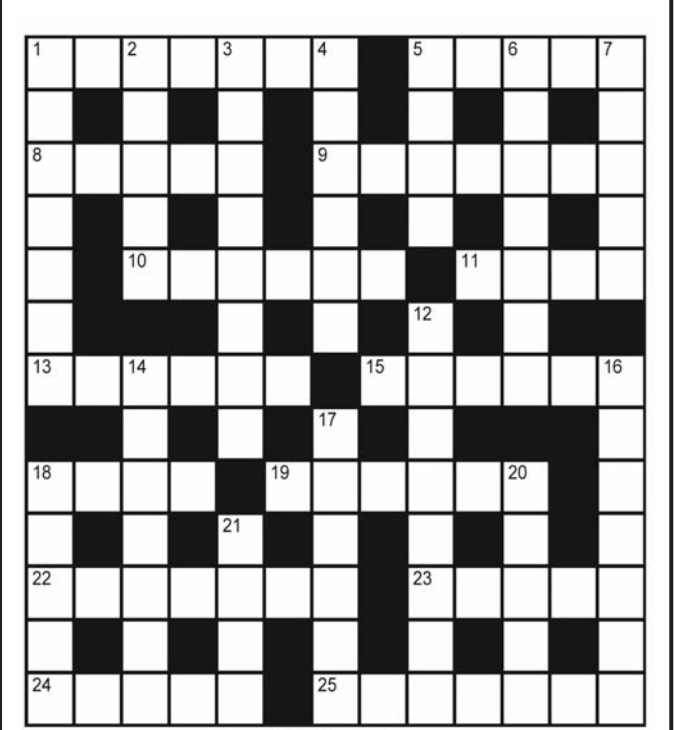
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



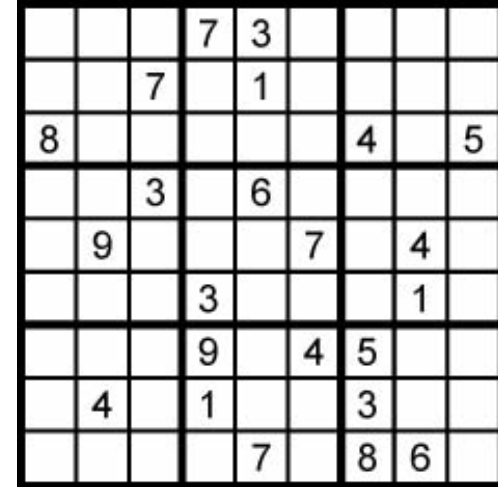
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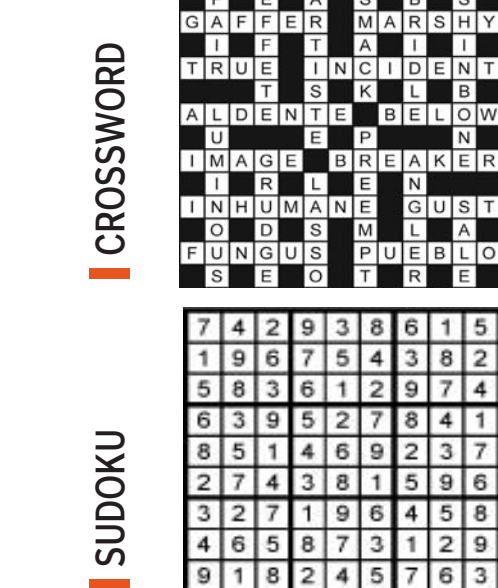
- Copyright ©2022 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 1 Shrivels up
 - 5 Deadly snake
 - 8 Perspicacity
 - 9 Get hold of
 - 10 High regard
 - 11 Lion's den
 - 13 Portable computer
 - 15 Chinese temple
 - 18 Trampled
 - 19 Home appliance
 - 22 Heat related
 - 23 Up and about
 - 24 Kind of cabinet
 - 25 Wrinkled
 - Down**
 - 1 Squanderer
 - 2 Uncle's wife
 - 3 Kind of microscope
 - 4 Hush-hush
 - 5 Sugar source
 - 6 Bluster
 - 7 Fragrant oil
 - 12 Soak
 - 14 Legume's offering
 - 16 Steamed
 - 17 Common seasoning
 - 18 Demolish
 - 20 Light seekers
 - 21 Muscat is its capital

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS

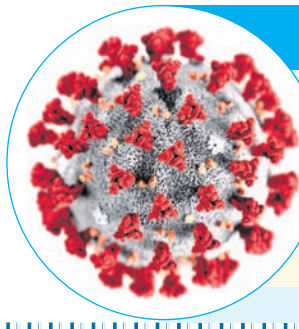


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



BEAUTIFICATION DRIVE

An artist draws murals alongside a road near the Capital Hospital as part of a beautification drive in Bhubaneswar, Saturday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	347,576,949	276,970,810	5,605,384
India	3,89,03,731	3,63,01,482	4,88,884
Odisha	11,96,140	11,10,767	8,514

PREP FOR R-DAY FETE



A man buys a Tricolour from a Khadi outlet at Choudhury Bazar in Cuttack, Saturday, ahead of the Republic Day celebration. (Bottom) Commandoes of Odisha Police's Special Operation Group during a rehearsal for the state-level Republic Day celebration at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar

WFP pat for state's food security initiatives

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 22: The United Nations (UN) World Food Programme (WFP) Saturday hosted a multi stakeholder consultation session on food security in Odisha on digital mode.

At least 80 policy makers, state government officials, NGO partners, academicians and representatives of corporate houses participated in the session.

The objective of the session was to collect feedback from different sectors to make the WFP's Strategic Plan 2023-2027 for Odisha more inclusive and effective, sources said.

"We are glad for our partnership with Odisha as the state is very much focused on ensuring food security to all. Odisha has been a centre for innovative schemes for improving food and nutrition security," said WFP India Country Director Bishow Parajuli while initiating the deliberation.

The world has taken note of the innovative programmes launched by Odisha and how these schemes provided a food security lifeline during the Covid-19 pandemic, he added.



Application of biometric technology in making Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) error free, rice fortification, nutritious food in midday meal, state food security scheme, women-led take home ration production model are some of such interventions, Parajuli claimed.

Addressing the session, Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra said, "The state government is fully committed to reduce poverty and malnutrition. There has been a significant reduction in rural poverty and improvement in food security in Odisha in the last few years."

The partnership between the WFP and Odisha has been very effective since last two decades and six more partnership agreements in new areas have been initiated in the last year alone, Mahapatra said.

The Chief Secretary asked the WFP to undertake more technological application for enhancing outreach of the food security net and improving access to food security, more particularly for the poor and vulnerable sections.

He emphasised upon alignment of the strategic plan towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets and making it more

The UN body hosted a consultation session with policy makers, government officials and NGO partners to collect inputs for finalising its Strategic Plan 2023-2027

outcome-oriented. Mahapatra assured that the state government would continue working with WFP in the coming years for implementation of the strategic plan.

Development Commissioner PK Jena pleaded for targeting the specific areas and communities that are more vulnerable to malnutrition and bringing them at par with the rapidly improving state parameters. Jena emphasised upon expeditious achievement of SDG-2 through partnerships.

"The strategic plan for food security would be finalised soon in collaboration with the Odisha government. We would incorporate the inputs from today's interactive session in the strategic plan," said Parajuli.

Demo for reopening of Srimandir

Puri: Supporters of the Jagannath Sena staged a demonstration outside the Jagannath Temple in Puri Saturday, demanding the reopening of the 12th-century shrine. The temple has been closed for devotees from January 10 to February 3 in the wake of the rising number of Covid-19 cases. The Jagannath Sena supporters demonstrated in front of the Lions' Gate of the 12th-century shrine. "When elections can continue, markets and other temples can stay open, there is no point in keeping 'Srimandir' closed," said Sena convener Priyadarshi Pattnayak. The closure of the temple has affected livelihood of priests, shopkeepers, traders and others, he added.

Odia IAS's ailing father airlifted to Surat; CP provides green corridor



Indramani Pani being taken to BPIA with police escort

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 22: The Commissionerate Police (CP) Saturday facilitated a green corridor for the obstruction free movement of an ambulance carrying Odia IAS officer Banchhanidhi Pani's critically ill father from SCB Medical College and Hospital (SCBMCH) to Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) for airlifting to Gujarat.

The Dhenkanal-born IAS officer is presently posted as the Municipal Commissioner of Surat city in Gujarat.

Pani's father Indramani had been undergoing treatment at the SCBMCH for the past few months. Friday, Pani appealed twin city

Commissioner of Police Saumendra Priyadarshi to provide a green corridor from SCBMCH to BPIA where his father would later be airlifted to Surat for advanced treatment.

Priyadarshi instructed Traffic DCP S Susree, who is also the nodal officer to make necessary arrangement in this regard, to arrange for the green corridor.

Subsequently, an ambulance carrying Indramani, who was undergoing treatment in the Intensive Care Unit at the Medicine ward of the SCBMCH, left the hospital at 9.48 am Saturday. The vehicle was escorted by the pilot vehicle of Cuttack UPD and advanced traffic clearance vehicle of traffic police. The

DHENKANAL-BORN IAS OFFICER BANCHHANIDHI PANI IS PRESENTLY POSTED AS THE MUNICIPAL COMMISSIONER OF SURAT CITY IN GUJARAT

HIS FATHER INDRAMANI PANI WAS UNDER INTENSIVE CARE AT THE SCBMCH FOR PAST COUPLE OF DAYS

TWIN CITY POLICE COMMISSIONER SAUMENDRA PRIYADARSHI INSTRUCTED TRAFFIC DCP S SUSREE, WHO IS ALSO THE NODAL OFFICER TO MAKE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENT IN THIS REGARD, TO ARRANGE FOR THE GREEN CORRIDOR

THE AMBULANCE TOOK ONLY AROUND 29 MINUTES TO REACH BPIA AT 10.12 AM WHERE INDRAMANI WAS AIRLIFTED TO SURAT

pilot vehicle of Bhubaneswar UPD escorted the ambulance till the airport after it reached Bhubaneswar Police's jurisdiction.

The vehicle took only around 29 minutes to reach the City airport at 10.12 am. Critically ill Indramani was later airlifted to Surat.

Traffic officials informed Orissa POST that the twin city traffic police have already provided green corridor facilities more than 20 times till now.

Reach voters with our achievements: Naveen

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 22: Biju Janata Dal (BJD) president Naveen Patnaik Saturday advised his party leaders to reach out to the voters with achievements of the state government during their campaign and bring their blessings.

As the party is set to campaign for the panchayat election, Patnaik addressed his party MPs, MLAs, district observers and district presidents through virtual platform Saturday.

"I know all of you are actively involved in the panchayat election for the victory of our party candidates. We all know that the people of Odisha have faith in BJD and have blessed us in every



Patnaik addressed BJD MPs, MLAs, district observers and presidents through virtual platform ahead of the three-tier panchayat elections

election," he said.

Stating the Opposition parties don't have any issue, Patnaik said, "They will use misinformation as their weapon. So, I request you to tell people about the achievements of our government and counter the opposition."

Highlighting some of the major achievements of the BJD government, he said that the distribution of smart health cards under Biju Swasthaya Kalyan Yojana has brought hope and happiness among people.

During the Covid-19 pandemic,

the state government has ensured disbursement of Rs 10,000 crore interest-free loans to the members of Mission Shakti, Naveen said.

Among other schemes, he mentioned that the Rs 10,000 assistance to each landless farmer under Kalia scheme, pucca houses for homeless people in rural areas, and welfare schemes for tribal people have shown way to other states.

As the third wave of Covid-19 is going on, he advised the BJD leaders to strictly follow Covid-19 norms during the election campaigning. Odisha is the number 1 state in the country in management of Covid-19 and has been able to save precious human lives, Naveen said.

Fake spices unit busted in Cuttack; one detained

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Jan 22: The Commissionerate Police Saturday claimed to have busted a fake spice manufacturing unit in Jagatpur area of the city here.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Jagatpur police raided the unit. During the search, police found huge quantities of fake turmeric and chilli powder.

The team seized equipment worth around ₹1 lakh from the unit. Preliminary investigation revealed that the unit was manufacture of fake spices for last several months.

It was supplying the fake spices to various places by using the brand names of some reputed companies, sources said.

"The unit did not have the required licence. We have registered a case in this regard and detained the owner of the unit," said a police officer.

Earlier, the Commissionerate Police had busted a fake sauce making unit at 42 Mouza on the city outskirts and seized huge quantities of fake tomato and chilli sauce. The unit was processing rotten pumpkins, chemicals and harmful colours to manufacture tomato sauce, sources said.

A veteran of the Azad Hind Fauz recounts her days

DEBI MOHANTY

Bharati Asha Choudhry, 93, has seen history being rewritten from close quarters. In fact, she played an active part in it. Inspired by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's Tokyo conference speech, she had served the Indian National Army (INA). One of the last surviving officers of the Rani of Jhansi regiment, the women's wing of the INA, Bharati reminisces those glorious days.

"It was an entirely different era, nationalism ruled every heart," she tells Orissa Post from Patna.

Born to Sati Sen and freedom fighter father Anand Mohan Sahay, February 2, 1928, in Kobe, Japan, she, post her school days, was admitted to the Showa Women's University, Tokyo, for higher education. Her mother, Sati, was a niece of 'Deshbandu' Chittaranjan Das.

Bharati turns 94 next month. Yet, she does her chores herself, walks upright and her spirit and memory would stun even a youngster. Bharati treasures the fond memories of her first meeting with Bose. Netaji was in Tokyo. A year ago, July 12, 1943, he had announced the formation of the Rani of Jhansi regiment.

Bharati was 16 when she and

her younger sister met Bose at Tokyo's Imperial Hotel. The sisters, as advised by their mother, were about to touch the legendary leader's feet. "Netaji stopped us, and asked us to stand tall and say Jai Hind, instead," recalls Bharati.

Col. Lakshmi Swaminathan (also known as Lakshmi Sahgal) led the Rani of Jhansi regiment, raised with volunteers from the expatriate Indian population in Southeast Asia.

The following year, Bharati joined the regiment as a Sub-Lieutenant in Singapore and soon was in the training camp at Bangkok. There were two squads in the women's regiment - combat and nursing. Bharati had opted for the former.

Like others, Bharati underwent rigorous training. Training was conducted in Singapore, Malaysia and Bangkok. Bharati's unit of 50 girls was commanded by Capt. Janaki Davar. They got up at 5 in the morning and soon rushed to the physical training session before breakfast: Oatmeal and banana.

At the core of the training were discipline and ethics. They were trained from riding a cycle to handling anti-aircraft guns, pistols, rifles to driving jeep. "We engaged into mock wars near hills. In the evening, Hindi classes were held as most of the girls



During jungle training, my friend Lt. Anjali Bhowmick was hit and we had to hide from continuous enemy strikes. After the enemy left, we took her to the base and during roll call defying pain, for one last time, she said 'Jai Hind' and collapsed. She died. We did not mourn because she lost her life for the country's Independence

BHARATI ASHA CHOUDHRY | AZAD HIND FAUZ VETERAN

didn't know the language well," she reminisces.

Once, Netaji visited the training camp. He spoke about the reason why they were fighting. For him, the women fighters were equal to their male counterparts. He called the women fighters, Ranis, as he wanted them to be as brave as Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi.

The women soldiers also displayed exemplary bravery. Talking about several survival attempts during the World War II, Bharati says, "During jungle training, my friend Lt. Anjali Bhowmick was hit and we had to hide from continuous enemy strikes. After the enemy left, we took her to the base and during roll call defying pain, for one last time, she said 'Jai Hind' and collapsed. She died. We did not mourn because she lost her life for the country's Independence."

Bharati also recalled how she

was fired upon by an enemy aircraft while aboard a ship that submerged before crashing onto an island. "Netaji never gave up, he was a true leader. He was never harsh, spoke softly and was always focused," remembers Bharati who went on to become Lieutenant later.

"I feel myself fortunate to have been in the INA," she says. She also expresses satisfaction for the progress of Hindustan. "Those who once ruled us now shower respect and love on our country," adds Bharati.

She is also happy that a grand statue of Netaji Bose is going to be installed at India Gate, New Delhi. "It's a very good idea. The youths will get to know about the great patriot. The tale of the valour of the Azad Hind Fauz and Netaji's dedication to the motherland should be part of school curriculum, it will motivate the children," she believes.



Bharati Asha Choudhry

Below 10k nCoV cases for second straight day

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 22: With the detection of 8,845 fresh Covid-19 infections, Odisha saw a sharp decline in daily new cases Saturday. The coastal state had logged 9,833 Covid-19 cases Friday and 10,368 cases Thursday.

Also, as per a Health department bulletin, Saturday's spike is the lowest in the last 10 days, reducing by 18.5 per cent from 10,856 a week ago.

According to the state Information and Public Relation (I&PR) department, out of the 8,845 new cases, 927 were from the 0-18 age group. While 5,128 cases were recorded from the quarantine centres, 3,717 were local contact cases.

Khurda district, of which state Capital Bhubaneswar is a part, continued to remain in top of the daily infection list with 2,528 new cases, followed by Sundargarh (1,001), Cuttack (628), Balasore (290),



- Saturday's spike was the lowest in the last 10 days, reducing by 18.5 per cent from 10,856 a week ago
- The active cases in the state also fell from 89,702 to 88,150 Saturday
- TPR dropped to 12.89 per cent from 13.21 per cent reported Friday

Kalahandi (239), Bolangir (232), Rayagada (221), Jajpur (209), Sonepur (207), Nuapada (205) and Koraput (203).

A record number of 10,390 Covid patients were cured Friday, taking the total recoveries in the state to 10,99,423.

On the other hand, the active cases in the state fell from 89,702 to 88,150 Saturday. The daily test positivity rate (TPR) also dropped to 12.89 per cent from 13.21 per cent reported Friday as 68,625 samples were tested for Covid-19.

Khurda district remained in the red zone with 32,405 active cases.

Sundargarh, Cuttack, Balasore and Sambalpur are also in the red zone, where current infections are over 2,500 each.

Puri, Jajpur and Mayurbhanj are among the 13 districts that are in the yellow zone with over 1,000 under-treatment patients each.

Meanwhile, the state reported seven more Covid deaths, pushing the total fatalities to 8,514. Two deaths were reported from Angul district, and one each in Cuttack, Puri, Bhadrak, Mayurbhanj and Jajpur districts. Fifty-three other patients have died due to comorbidities so far.

CIVIC WOES



A huge pile of junk near the post-mortem ward of the Capital Hospital in Bhubaneswar goes unnoticed by authorities

Digital TV channel editor held for misinformation

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 22: The Commissionerate Police Saturday arrested the editor of a digital TV channel for sharing objectionable and false allegations against several people and a prominent private school in City on his social media account. The accused has been identified as Prakash Chandra Ratha of Niali in Cuttack district.

Ratha was earlier arrested by Chandrasekharpur police in 2020 for defaming the private school sharing false and concocted information on social media, like illegal land grab and other criminal acts by the school authorities. The accused was released by the police who served a notice under section 41(A) of CrPC warning him to not engage in similar activities in future.

However, he did not pay any heed to the police notice and continued to smear the image of the school. Police again arrested Ratha and forwarded him to a court Saturday for violating the notice.

Police, while examining his mobile and PC sets, also found that Ratha was involved in sharing false information about several individuals on his social media accounts.

BJD urges SEC to remove Central govt posters

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 22: Reiterating its earlier demand, the ruling BJD Saturday urged the State Election Commission (SEC) for removal of hoardings, banners and posters of the BJP-led Central government, put up at petrol pumps and other places across the state.

A delegation of BJD met the

State Election Commissioner Aditya Prasad Padhi Saturday and submitted a memorandum demanding the removal of posters and banners, putting up which is against the Model Code of Conduct in force ahead of the panchayat elections in state.

"We are pained to bring your kind notice that despite our request, at several locations

PANCHAYAT POLLS

The panchayat elections in state is scheduled to be held in five phases between February 16 and 24

in Odisha, the BJP-led Central government's hoardings are still

being displayed," read the memorandum. The delegation also submitted photographic and videographic evidences to the commission.

The BJD also reiterated that despite earlier requests, the BJP-led Central government's hoardings at petrol pumps continue to violate the Model Code of Conduct of Panchayat Elections.

"They have not been taken down even now," the BJD alleged.

Earlier, the party had also met the SEC January 18 demanding the removal of hoardings at petrol pumps. They had demanded to remove those at the earliest possible.

The panchayat polls will be held in five phases between February 16 and 24. Counting of votes will take place February 26, 27 and 28.

Odisha NCC to shine at R-Day Parade '22

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Jan 22: The eve of 75th Republic Day parade witnessed the participation of a contingent consisting of 57 cadets, both Senior Division (Boys) and Senior Wing (Girls), of Odisha NCC Directorate with enthusiasm and fervor.

The team was selected and trained over a period of 90 days on different facets of NCC like drill, GK, personality development, small arms firing, 3D marble mosaic designing and various cultural activities, to depict the heritage and culture of Odisha.

The team was led by Contingent Commander Lt Col LN Mahapatra, Associated NCC Officers Maj Bijoy Kumar Biswal, Principal of UN College Soro, Balasore, and Capt Reeta Rani Mishra of Women's College Rayagada.

In spite of a setback to training amidst the Covid-19 Pandemic, Odisha rose to the occasion by contributing 15 cadets for Rajpath marching contingent and 5 cadets for giving Guard of Honour to the Prime Minister on the eve of the Prime Minister Rally.

This achievement is the best performance by Odisha at the Republic Day parade in the past six years. The participants of Rajpath parade of 26 January from Odisha NCC are - Sridhar



Sahoo, Soumya Ranjan Mandangi, Sankweta Hembram, Choudhury Sarada Prasad Nanda, Ashutosh Pradhan, Harmeet Singh, Rohit Deep, Sachin Katala, Pritimayee Mohanty, Preeti Mahananda, Anusaya Jena, Ankita Mohanty, Pragnyasikha Senapati, Shubhasmita Barik, Banasmita Nayak. The Guard of Honour cadets are Chinmaya Malik, Narayana Sethi, Arabinda Nayak, Ranajit Mohapatra and Silpa Badatya.

NCC inculcates the spirit of National unity in the youth of India. This outstanding achievement by such a large contingent of the NCC cadets participating in the Republic Day Parade will motivate the youth of Odisha to not just excel in their respective areas of expertise, but also find a cause and purpose in service of the Nation as responsible citizens and leaders of resplendent India.

TURNED OVER



Locals of Bhimtangi area in Bhubaneswar crowding near a car that lost control and fell off the Punama Gate flyover the night before, Saturday

Car falls off City flyover, driver escapes unhurt

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 22: Locals of Bhimtangi area under the Airfield police limits here woke up to a miraculous incident with the spotting of a damaged car lying upside down in the middle of the main road.

The car fell off the Punama Gate Rail Over Bridge (ROB) in the wee hours of Saturday. However, the driver, who reportedly hails from Nayagarh district, miraculously escaped unhurt and is yet to lodge any report with the police in this regard.

Local sources claimed that the black car was crossing the ROB towards Bhimtangi from Palaspalli area at a breakneck speed. The driver lost balance and fell off the bridge after hitting the railing of the over bridge. The vehicle was almost completely damaged after it fell off the ROB. As the vehicle fell right in the middle of the road beside the ROB during the wee hours, and the shops and stall remain at a safe distance from the spot, there has been no casualty reported.

World's 1st molecule-level analysis led by Indian-origin researcher

A team of researchers, including an Indian-origin scientist, at the prestigious University of British Columbia has become the first in the world to conduct a molecular-level structural analysis of the Omicron spike protein, which could help accelerate the development of more effective treatments against the variant. Spike protein helps the virus enter and infect cells.

Sriram Subramaniam, professor in UBC and faculty of Medicines at the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, said that Omicron has greater binding affinity than the original SARS-CoV-2 virus, with levels more comparable to what seen with the Delta variant.

The findings, published in the Science Journal, shed new light on why Omicron is highly transmissible and will help accelerate the development of more effective treatments, according to a statement issued by the Vancouver-based university.

The analysis, done at near atomic resolution using a cryo-electron microscope, reveals how the heavily mutated variant infects human cells and is highly evasive of immunity.

Subramaniam discussed the implications of his team's research and underlined that "vaccination remains our best defence against the Omicron variant".

The findings show strong antibody evasion and binding with human cells that contribute to increased transmissibility, and that vaccination remains the best defence, the university said.

Subramaniam said, "The Omicron variant is unprecedented for having 37 spike protein mutations. That's three to five times more mutations than any other variant we've seen".

This is important for two reasons. Firstly, because the spike protein is how the virus attaches to and infects human cells. Secondly, because antibodies attach to the spike protein in order to neutralise the virus, he said.

"Therefore, small mutations on the spike protein have potentially big implications for how the virus is transmitted, how our body fights it off, and the effectiveness of treatments. Our study used cryo-electron microscopy and other tests to understand how mutations impact the behaviour of the Omicron variant at a molecular level," Subramaniam said.

City eyes top spot in cycling challenge

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 22: With an aim to promote a healthier lifestyle amid the Covid-19 pandemic, the Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited (BSCL) Saturday urged citizens to register themselves for the Inter-City Freedom 2 Walk & Cycle campaign.

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has introduced the Inter-City Freedom 2 Walk and Cycle initiative for the smart cities across the country to inspire and encourage citizens to participate in the 'Stay Fit - Stay Healthy' challenge.

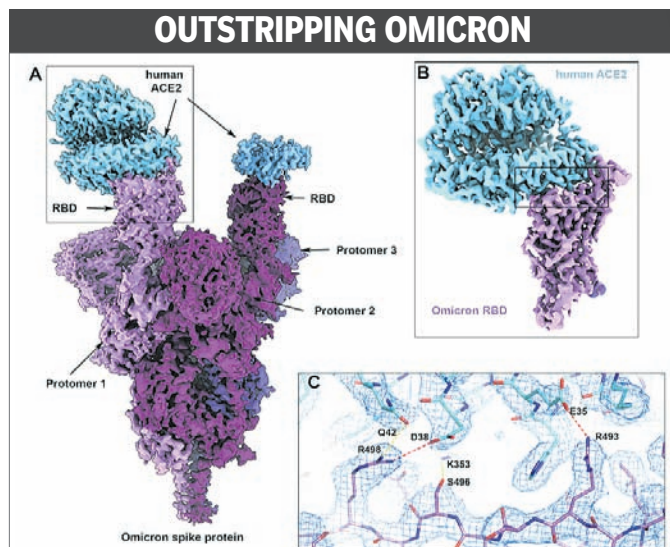
"The cities with the highest kilometres of walking and cycling will be recognised for their efforts. More participation from the citizens will increase Bhubaneswar Smart City's chances to win the challenge," said BSCL General

Manager Kamaljit Das. The participants will have to connect themselves to a device to track their activities either through Fitbit, Strava, or Google Fit app. Citizens

can register themselves for the challenge by scanning the QR code on cycling and walking, Das added. "The citizens must activate Strava application before commencing the cycle ride. The application will calculate the number of kilometers travelled by the participants and automatically update the data on city's Decathlon page in 24 hours. The participating citizens are required to record their activities till January 26," he added.

It can be mentioned here that Bhubaneswar was adjudged as the second best city in the country for promoting cycling-friendly initiative during the first phase of the competition held in July last year. At least 107 smart cities had participated in the competition.

The top 11 cities were awarded ₹1 crore each to scale up their cycling events.



He said that several mutations (R493, S496 and R498) create new salt bridges and hydrogen bonds between the spike protein and the human cell receptor known as ACE2.

This appears to increase binding affinity, how strongly the virus attaches to human cells, while other mutations (K417N) decrease the strength of this bond, Subramaniam said.

He said it is remarkable that the Omicron variant evolved to retain

its ability to bind with human cells efficiently despite such extensive mutations.

"Our experiments confirm what we're seeing in the real world, that the Omicron spike protein is far better than other variants at evading monoclonal antibodies that are commonly used as treatments, as well as at evading the immunity produced by both vaccines and natural infection," he said.

Notably, Omicron was less eva-



The good news is that knowing the molecular structure of the spike protein will allow us to develop more effective treatments against Omicron and related variants in the future. Understanding how the virus attaches to and infects human cells means we can develop better the binding of neutralising antibodies and treatments that will be effective across the entire range of variants, and how those can be used to develop variant-resistant treatments

SRIRAM SUBRAMANIAM | FACULTY OF MEDICINES, DEPARTMENT OF BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

sive of the immunity created by vaccines, compared to immunity stemming from natural infection in unvaccinated Covid-19

patients, he said. Both the characteristics seen as a result of spike protein mutations, strong binding with human cells and increased antibody evasion, are likely contributing factors to the increased transmissibility of the Omicron variant, he said.

These are the underlying mechanisms fuelling the variant's rapid spread and why Omicron could become the dominant variant of SARS-CoV-2 very quickly, he said.

"The good news is that knowing the molecular structure of the spike protein will allow us to develop more effective treatments against Omicron and related variants in the future. Understanding how the virus attaches to and infects human cells means we can develop treatments that disrupt that process and neutralise the virus. An important focus for our team is to understand better the binding of neutralising antibodies and treatments that will be effective across the entire range of variants, and how those can be used to develop variant-resistant treatments," Subramaniam added.

Omicron was first identified in South Africa and Botswana in November and is driving the current wave of infections. PTI

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SHORT TAKES

Minister's brother contests for ZP

Bhanjanagar: Jitendra Keshari Arukha, the youth BJD leader of Bhanjanagar block in Ganjam district, has filed his nomination for Zilla Parishad zone-51. He is an MCA student and the younger brother of Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister Bikram Keshari Arukha. In the last panchayat elections, Jitendra was elected as samiti member from Baunsalundi panchayat and later was unanimously elected as vice chairperson of the block. Lingaraj Pradhan, another BJD passout, has also filed his nomination. MBA student Sasmita Behera, backed by BJP, has filed her nomination as ZP candidate in zone-50.

Woman burns to death

Keonjhar: An elderly woman died from critical burns after she accidentally caught fire while warming herself near a bonfire at Badanugaon under Ghatagaon police limits in Keonjhar district late Friday night. The deceased was identified as Sambhari Behera. After the mishap, her family members had rushed her to the district headquarters hospital, but she succumbed during treatment. Police have registered a case of unnatural death.

Youth electrocuted

Udala: A youth was electrocuted after coming in contact with an 11-kv transmission wire while working on his paddy field at Kirkiha village under this police limits in Mayurbhanj district, Saturday. The deceased was identified as Dwitiya Khandai, 26, in the village. He was found completely burnt with his body suspended from the transmission wire. The matter came to the fore after villagers noticed his burnt body and informed the Udala police. Police registered a case and launched an investigation after sending the body for post-mortem.

BJD MLA's brother BJP's ZP candidate

Keonjhar: If politics makes strange bedfellows, then siblings are no exceptions to it. The saying has proved true again as Satyabrata Nayak, the elder brother of BJD's Patana MLA Jagannath Nayak filed nominations for Zilla Parishad zone-21 under the Assembly seat on a BJP ticket. This has created a stir in political circles as Satyabrata has chosen to contest from BJD despite his brother being an MLA of ruling BJD from the Patana Assembly segment. Notably, Satyabrata's father Kanhu Charan Nayak was an MLA from the Patana Assembly segment in 1990 from former Janata Dal. This might prove to be a challenge for Jagannath Nayak in ensuring victory of all the party candidates.

Min Tudu booked, probe on

ASSAULT ON GOVT OFFICIALS



POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Jan 22: Town police here launched an investigation into the alleged assault of two government officials by Mayurbhanj MP and Union Minister of State for Water Resources and Tribal Affairs Bishweswar Tudu at his office.

The probe was undertaken by police over complaints filed by two government officials at the Town police station in Baripada. The Rajya Rajaswa Amala Sangha, a state

body of revenue clerks has flayed the incident. However, the minister has rejected the charges stating that they were sent back home after some discussions.

However, the telephonic discussion of the minister with the two officials has gone viral on social media.

It is alleged that Tudu thrashed the two officials after calling them to the party office for a discussion on utilisation of MPLAD fund. The two were critically injured in

the attack and were admitted to PRM Medical College and Hospital here. One of them has got his hand broken in the attack. The two officials lodged a complaint with the District Collector Friday.

District Planning Board Deputy Director Ashwini Mallik and Assistant Director Debashis Mohapatra reached the office for a discussion with the minister. The officials were reluctant to meet him at his office due to enforcement of model code of conduct in the state for the upcoming panchayat polls. However, he refused to listen to them and forced them to meet him.

It was alleged that during discussion, the minister flew into a rage and attacked Debashis with a chair after hurling abuses at them. As Ashwini opposed, the minister also attacked him. Debashis has got his left hand fractured in the attack. However, Tudu has denied the allegations of attacking the government officials.

No nominations in five panchayats

POST NEWS NETWORK

Deogarh, Jan 22: People have shown a new way of venting their anger as a means of protest against lack of development. This time, panchayat elections in five panchayats of Deogarh district will not be held as no aspirants have filed their nominations for posts of sarpanch, samiti members and zilla parishad members.

According to reports, locals are sore over absence of mobile towers in Paraposi, Gandam, Jharagoga, Dimirikuda and Jharmunda panchayats under Tileibani block. Over years, they have been suffering in the communication front as the areas lack mobile network.

Angry locals of these five panchayats had announced their decision to boycott polls through public address systems. They had urged people not to file nominations.

Gauging the mood of the vot-

Network woes

ers, those who had been aspiring to contest polls this time refrained from filing their nominations. They feared that they would suffer the consequence of the public ire.

PD Lucas Pradhan, Tileibani BDO Krushnachandra Dalapati and Deogarh tehsildar had visited the five panchayats and tried to convince the people to participate in the elections, but failed to prevail upon the angry locals. The officials also urged people to cooperate in the election process. They also assured the locals that effort is already on to set up mobile towers in these areas while the district administration has issued NOC for the purpose. However, the angry villagers refused to budge from their stand. Panchayat executive officer Laba Kisha said that nobody has filed nomination owing to the adamant stand of the locals.

'Auctioned' sarpanch post

Four candidates jump into fray

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bolangir, Jan 22: At least four candidates filed their nomination papers for the alleged auctioned sarpanch post of Bileisarada gram panchayat in Bolangir district. Apart from Susant Chhatra, who had reportedly won the bid by promising to pay ₹44,000 for the development of the Jagannath temple at the village under Puntala block, his nephew, Bilasini Sharma and Prabhudutta Panda have also filed their nomination papers. Following media report of the alleged auction of sarpanch post at Bileisarada gram panchayat, State Election Commissioner AP Padhi Thursday had asked the Bolangir Collector to ensure that no willing person is obstructed from filing nomination papers for the post of sarpanch. Chhatra claimed that he won the bidding and agreed to pay ₹44,000 if he wins the elections uncontested.

POLL PREP



Boxes meant for carrying election materials being despatched to various block offices from the district Collectorate in Kendrapara, Saturday

Sore VIMSAR authorities file FIR

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Jan 22: The authorities of Veer Surendra Sai Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR) in Burla have expressed their displeasure over sealing of the principal's office at the institute and filed a complaint at Burla police station, Saturday.

The principal's office was sealed following an order of the court of senior civil judge in Sonepur, Friday. The law officer Ashok Panigrahi of VIMSAR legal cell has alleged that the office was sealed without serving them any prior intimation or notice.

Moreover, the applicant Khirod Sahu was absent but his name finds mention in the seizure list, he alleged. The office was sealed in haste when the Covid pandemic is continuing in the state. Earlier, the authorities praying for a stay order had filed a petition in the Orissa High Court challenging the order of Sonepur court.

The Orissa High Court failed to pass an order due to closure of the

SEALING OF PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE



court for which a separate petition will be filed to issue a stay order on the order of the Sonepur court and a review of the order. Meanwhile, the VIMSAR authorities have filed a complaint at Burla police station, IIC Kamal Lochan Panda said.

Notably, the Sambalpur Court Saturday attached all the movable property of the Principal of Veer Surendra Sai Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR) in order to execute a decree over non-payment of dues to sacked staff.

The order of attachment of properties belonging to the Office of VIMSAR Principal was passed by the Civil Judge Court (senior division) in Sonepur and executed by Sambalpur Court Saturday.

The Civil Judge Court had pronounced its verdict while hearing a previously filed case pertaining to the disengagement of as many as 27 contractual staff of the VIMSAR in 2007.

According to the source, two pairs of table and chair; two sofa sets, 16 computers, six wooden tables, one glass table, 41 steel almirahs, 20 wooden almirahs, seven printers, three copiers and an official car (bearing registration number OD-15 H-0833) including two buses were attached by the court for the purpose of payment of dues.

Three contractual staff, namely former office attendant Sambhunath Sahu, former sweeper Rebatika Kanta Kalet and former gatekeeper Khirod Kumar Sahoo had moved the labour court challenging their disengagement from service.

Going by astrologer's word, couple casts hats into ring

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Jan 22: Posing faith on the predictions of an astrologer, a couple has thrown their hats into the ring of polls at Lipinda panchayat under Jujumara block in Sambalpur district. It has become a hot topic of discussion in various circles.

BJD leader Prafulla Mircha and his wife Munmun Majhi filed their nominations for sarpanch post Friday. Their nominations have remained valid, said BDO Suraj Biswal. Altogether, four people have filed nominations for the sarpanch post.

According to sources, the BJD had decided to file him as Zilla Parishad candidate, but he denied the offer and contested for sarpanch. He was elected as sarpanch in the last election. Locals had levelled charges of corruption against him in connection with MGNREGS and several Vigilance cases had been filed for irregularities. A case pertaining to possession of disproportionate as-



sets is pending against him.

His wife was earlier elected as Zilla Parishad member. She is also a known woman leader in Jujumara.

Contacted, Prafulla said that his wife will withdraw her nomination. "An astrologer had told me that I would win the poll if four people file nominations. Three people were interested to file nominations. I told my wife to be the fourth one to file nomination. She would take back her nomination," he reasoned out.

Kotia: ZP rivals urged to withdraw nominations

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput, Jan 22: The members of the all-party committee formed for Kotia panchayat held talks with two independent candidates who are in the fray against the consensus candidate Mamata Jani, Saturday on the sidelines of nomination scrutiny. Notably, BJD, BJP and the Congress have chosen Jani as the con-

sensus candidate for Zilla Parishad seat (Pottangi zone-1) in Kotia panchayat Friday. Jani is a graduate and a resident of Thuria. Jani's rivals are Tikai Gemel and Sabina Budia. They have filed their nominations for the same zone as independent candidates. All-party committee members Koraput BJD president Ishwar Chandra Panigrahi, BJP leader Jayaram Pangi, Pottangi MLA Pritam Padhi, Koraput

MLA Raghuram Padal, former MLA Ramchandra Kadam and Prafulla Pangi talked to both the rival candidates to take back their nominations so that Jani would win uncontested. The talks are expected to be fruitful Sunday. The last date of withdrawal of nominations is January 25.

Nine people have filed their nominations for sarpanch while 14 have filed papers for ward members.

BJD fields new faces, rebels fume

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Jan 22: The ruling Biju Janata Dal has fielded new faces for the upcoming Zilla Parishad polls in Ganjam district with an aim to cash in on their clean image during the elections, a report said.

The move has sparked sharp resentment among the party members and longtime associates as they were found sulking and pondering over their next move.

As the high-decibel campaign picks up for the polls, these splinter groups are likely to turn the fortunes against the party and dent its prospects in the polls.

The district has 69 Zilla Parishad zones, out of which 50 per cent seats have been reserved for the women. Many of the party's women members who had won in the 2017 polls have been denied a ticket this time. However, they have remained tight-lipped fearing disciplinary action against them by the party high command.

Notably, BJD had registered a one-sided victory by winning in 64 out of 69 zones in the last polls.

Election observers apprehend that this time the party might not score so well and its margin is likely to go down as the senior leaders have been left neglected during ticket distribution. The party might get a majority but its margin is likely to go down in comparison to last panchayat polls.

The party has a district office in Berhampur. However, the details of the nominated candidates are not available

GANJAM ZP ZONES



BJD district president Ramesh Chandra Chyau Patnaik said that the MLAs have given tickets to candidates in their respective areas

with the party leaders. What has surprised many is that even the district president does not have a list of candidates for all the 69 zones.

When contacted, BJD district president Ramesh Chandra Chyau Patnaik said that the state party unit has given the tickets to the MLAs who are distributing the same among the nominated candidates in their respective areas.

Prafulla Mallick, state minister of steel and mines has been appointed as the district observer for the upcoming panchayat polls. Meanwhile, Mallick visited Berhampur and conducted a review of the upcoming polls. He stressed on repeating

the victory of 2017 polls this year too and advised all the MLAs for proper management of the polls.

On the other hand, the ruling party is laying more stress on winning the zones in Sanakhemundi and Gopalpur Assembly segments. Gopalpur MLA Pradip Panigrahi has been sacked from the party while Sanakhemundi Assembly segment is now with Congress. The political secretary of Chief Minister Gopabandhu Das is in charge of poll management in Gopalpur which has four Zilla Parishad zones.

The saffron party had won from two zones of Gopalpur in 2017 polls but this time the ruling party is trying to wrest all the four zones.

Similarly, Sanakhemundi Assembly segment has four zones out of which three are under Dharakote block and one under Sanakhemundi block. The BJP had won from one zone in the 2017 polls but this time the ruling party is trying to wrest all the four zones.

Bhubaneswar (Central) MLA Ananta Narayan Jena has been appointed as the special observer for Sanakhemundi despite the presence of former local MLA in the area. Jena is touring Dharakote and Sanakhemundi blocks and reviewing the election management on a day-to-day basis.

Meanwhile, BJP has prepared its own strategy to challenge the ruling BJD while the Congress hopes that it will win more zones than the previous elections.

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<p>MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS NOTIFICATION</p> <p>New Delhi, the 14th December, 2021</p> <p>S.O. 5195(E).—In exercise of powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 3A of the National Highways Act, 1956 (48 of 1956) (hereinafter referred to as the said Act), the Central Government, after being satisfied that for the public purpose, the land, the brief description of which is given in the Schedule below, is required for building (widening/two lane with paved shoulder/four laning etc.), maintenance, management and operation of NH18 in the stretch of land from Km 1.5 to Km 7 (at Bangiriposi, PO-Bangiriposi, P/S-Bangiriposi, Dist-Mayurbhanj) in the district of MAYURBHANJ in the state of ODISHA, hereby declares its intention to acquire such land.</p> <p>Any person interested in the said land may, within twenty-one days from the date of publication of this notification in the Official Gazette, object to the use of such land for the aforesaid purpose under sub-section(1) of section 3C of the said Act.</p> <p>Every such objection shall be made to the Competent Authority, namely, Tahasildar cum Land Acquisition Officer, Semiliguda in writing and shall set out the grounds thereof and the Competent Authority shall give the objector an opportunity of being heard, either in person or by a legal practitioner, and may, after hearing all such objections and after making such further enquiry, if any, as the Competent Authority thinks necessary, by order, either allow or disallow the objections.</p> <p>Any order made by the Competent Authority under sub-section (2) of section 3C of the said Act shall be final.</p> <p>The land plans and other details of the land to be acquired under their notification are available and can be inspected by the interested person at the aforesaid office of the Competent Authority.</p> <p>SCHEDULE</p> <p>Brief Description of the land to be acquired with or without structures falling NH18 in the stretch of land from Km 1.5 to Km 7 (At-Bangiriposi, PO-Bangiriposi, P/S-Bangiriposi, Dist-Mayurbhanj) in the district of MAYURBHANJ in the state of ODISHA</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Sl. 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FOCUS STATE BUDGET

HEALTHCARE PRIORITIES



Health sector needs sizeable boost in allocations for meeting COVID-induced healthcare needs as well as improving health infrastructure for providing accessible and affordable care

services. This long standing gap in health workforce ought to be addressed so that CHCs function fully. Gap in supply of health workforce is being addressed through setting up medical colleges across districts. The intention of this policy may be good. However, feasibility is quite ambitious as many struggle to function completely as specialty and super-specialty departments are non-functional due to lack of health workforce. Without thinly spreading the resources, it is wiser to set up one regional medical college combining two to three congruent districts. It is economically prudent but, may not be politically sagacious.

COVID has exposed the pre-existing weakness of the health systems across states of India. Odisha could manage both the waves diligently due to meticulous planning and earlier learning from disaster management. There's no room to be complacent as there are glaring gaps in the rural health infrastructure especially health workforce at both primary and secondary care level. As the pandemic sternly affected non-COVID health services more healthcare workers should be deployed at the grassroots level so that routine health services are not affected. A dedicated fund may be created taking into consideration caseload, hospitalisation and other epidemiological indicators to improve testing infrastructure, public health activities, capacity building and COVID-led hospitalisation expenditure.

Besides, there are two other priority areas. The budget should give some directions for performance-based budgeting connecting input, output and outcomes. Further, as a departure from input-based budgeting, a district should be considered as a unit of resource allocation taking into account population and morbidity profile and not based on number of healthcare institutions.

The writer is an Additional Professor in Indian Institute of Public Health, Bhubaneswar. Views are personal.

The world has been witnessing one of the worst health disasters since 2019 and the economic and human toll that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought on mankind is huge. No country is left unscathed by the virus which gets mutated over a period of time annulling the impact of vaccines. Indian economy was gradually recovering from the slowdown that it observed during the last financial year. It was hit by another wave further creating uncertainties on the economic performance. In the midst of uncertainties, the finance minister of Odisha will present the State Budget 2022-23 in February. This piece describes the health priorities of the state for the upcoming Budget.

During 2021-22, the state observed substantial growth of GST collection, mining royalty, stamp duty and registration fees which provides cushion for additional spending in 2022-23. On the expenditure side, apart from restoring employment and livelihood of the millions and incentive to revive the economy, health sector needs sizeable boost in allocations for meeting COVID-induced healthcare needs as well as improving health infrastructure for providing accessible and affordable care. Though the state has shown strong resilience to effectively manage the COVID-19 situation in comparison to many advanced states during the last two years, specific attention is required to restructure and improve the pre-existing weaknesses of the health system in the forthcoming Budget along with some bold reforms in resource management pertaining to health sector.

Health spending in absolute terms though has gone up from ₹4,793 crore in 2016-17 BE to ₹9,164 crore in 2021-22, it has stagnated at more or less 5% of total State Budget during last five years. It is important to raise this to at least 8% of total State Budget in the 2022-23 BE as proposed in the NHP 2017. Assuming a 20% increase in the total size of the Budget compared to the previous year given the revenue buoyancy, we are expect-

ing approximately ₹2 lakh crore in 2022-23 BE, up from ₹1.7 lakh crore in 2021-22 BE. If 7-8% of Budget is allocated towards health, it would be around ₹14,000-16,000 crore which is a quantum jump in the pandemic year. Elevated expenditure is called for reducing high out of pocket expenditure (OOPE) which stands at 56% of the total health expenditure against the national average of 49%. A large proportion of OOPE being due to expenditure on medicine and diagnostic services, initiatives such as Niramaya and BSKY are required to be funded and implemented properly to reduce the burden of OOPE. Though drug budget has been increasing in the recent years, fixing drug distribution and supply chain especially at the lower end of the supply chain assumes significance. This prescription is beyond the remit of the budgetary policy, however, performance based budgeting as practiced in many developed countries should be introduced. Moreover, given that BSKY will lead to higher utilisation after distribution of e-cards, budgetary allocations for Niramaya should be raised to 10% of the health budget from approximately 7% during 2021-22 BE. Primary care needs considerable rise in allocations for design-

ing components of health prevention, promotion, basic curative care, management of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and communicable diseases in order to meet the changing epidemiological profile of the people. The health wellness centre (HWC) declared by the Union government in 2018 is considered as a vehicle for delivery of comprehensive primary care. However, the development has been quite patchy in the state and this Budget should provide some direction to this. Odisha has converted around 1000 PHCs and SCs to HWCs whereas it is mandated to transform all existing SCs and PHCs as per the Government of India guideline and one of critical gaps is shortage of staff especially staff nurse, lady health visitors and community medical officers. The task is colossal in the year ahead and this Budget may introduce a separate fund dedicated to primary care. Even if the NHP announces 70% of total health budget to primary care, the state may start with 50% to primary care, 30% to secondary care especially improving the widening gaps in health workforce especially specialist doctors at CHCs and 20% to tertiary care. Except a few, most of the CHCs end up with providing MCH, RCH and basic curative care



Dr Sarit Kumar Rout

INITIATIVES SUCH AS NIRAMAYA AND BSKY ARE REQUIRED TO BE FUNDED AND IMPLEMENTED PROPERLY TO REDUCE THE BURDEN OF HIGH OUT OF POCKET EXPENDITURE



Aakar Patel

It is not safe to be dismissive about words like genocide, but unfortunately that is what India is doing today

If you can always smile at life, life will always smile at you.

THE MOTHER

Dangerous Ground

Is it safe for women to be alone on India's roads and do they feel constantly threatened and fearful of their safety? To know the answer to this I put this question to 50 men who assured me that women felt safe and there was no problem. Of course, the men had no idea whether this was actually the case because they had never faced the situation themselves. Who should we ask if women feel safe? Women, of course.

The world is concerned today that India is encouraging calls for genocide. The Economist, the world's most respected English publication, carried a report in its 15th January edition headlined: "Playing with fire: India's government is ignoring, and sometimes even encouraging, hatred of minorities." The same day CNN ran a story headlined: "India's Hindu extremists are calling for genocide against Muslims. Why is little being done to stop them?"

A few days before that the New York Times carried the headline: "As Hindu Extremists Call for Killing of Muslims, India's Leaders Keep Silent." In London, the Times headline was "Lawyers write to India's chief judge over Hindu hate speech against Muslims." Time magazine has carried an article: "Is India Headed for an Anti-Muslim Genocide?"

I could go on but this much is perhaps sufficient to know that this is what the world is saying about us. The reports are not mere opinion pieces. They refer to events in our country and the attacks on India's Christians and Muslims in recent weeks and the inaction of the government. After the world voiced its alarm an FIR was filed against those who openly called for the mass murder of Muslims at a Hindu function in Hariwar. And even after it was filed, arrests were slow in coming and only after external pressure.

The government has brushed aside the allegation that it is encouraging violence and does not accept that India has become less safe for Muslims under Hindutva and the BJP. The question is whether that is true and to know the answer to that we have to ask those who feel threatened and insecure. Not those who, according to the rest of the world, are issuing and encouraging the threats. To know if Muslims feel concerned and afraid we have to ask Muslims. And since I have, I can tell you that they do feel concerned and afraid about what we have done and are doing to our country. And they have reason to feel worried because we have given them that reason.

The most obscene things can be said about them today in public with no fear of shame or punishment. The lack of fear of punishment comes from a ruling party which does not pretend to conceal what it thinks of minorities. The lack of shame emanates from the fact that we have desensitised Indian society. Our demonisation and dehumanisation of minorities and especially Muslims is so complete that calls for the abduction of and sexual violence against Muslim girls are acceptable in our society today and can be made in public spaces. The damage we have done to India internally and externally will be lasting. This is because the world will not stop talking about it merely because we have denied it, and what is happening will continue because the ruling party sees it as being in its political interest.

The Attorney General of India has approved sanction for a Hindu priest to be tried for contempt of court. "I find that the statement made by Yati Narsinghanand that 'those who believe in this system, in these politicians, in the Supreme Court and in the Army will all die the death of a dog' is a direct attempt to lower the authority of the Supreme Court in the minds of the general public." This is what the Attorney General has said after an activist sent him a letter seeking his sanction. Why is this not something the government itself did? The answer lies in reflecting on what the outside world is saying about us. That the Union government and the ruling party are unconcerned about such calls made in public. I have been writing for three decades but have not seen a time as this when there is a loss of control over what is said in the public domain. I have also seen, as many of us have, the results of what happens on the streets of our cities when violence against communities is encouraged.

We are on dangerous ground and the world is worried for us. It would be wise if we listened to what they are saying and step back from the precipice on which we find ourselves. It is not safe to be dismissive about words like genocide, but unfortunately that is what India is doing today.

WISDOM CORNER

If faith in ourselves had been more extensively taught and practiced, I am sure a very large portion of the evils and miseries that we have would have vanished. SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

The world is a dangerous place to live; not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don't do anything about it. ALBERT EINSTEIN

The shepherd drives the wolf from the sheep's throat, for which the sheep thanks the shepherd as his liberator, while the wolf denounces him for the same act as the destroyer of liberty. Plainly, the sheep and the wolf are not agreed upon a definition of liberty. ABRAHAM LINCOLN

WORDSWORTH

Ripsnorter

This delightful word from rural America, meaning something violent, extravagant, vigorous or a striking example of its kind, has become known everywhere that English is spoken. Its first appearance was attributed to Davy Crockett ("Of all the ripsnorters I ever tutched upon, that never war one that could pull her boat alongside of Grace Peabody"). But as the word appeared in one of a series of almanacs bearing his name in 1840, four years after he died at the Alamo, we must take the link with a pinch of salt — as we must such other supposed coinages of his as circumfluted and scentoriferous, part of the largely fictitious tall-talking vocabulary of mountain men that the almanacs almost single-handedly invented. Snorter has had various senses that imply that something is an extreme or remarkable case of its kind. To take one example, around the time that ripsnorter appeared, snorter was applied to an especially ferocious storm, a sense that is alluded to in the slightly opaque example from the Crockett almanacs that was quoted here. Rip may be a more-or-less meaningless intensifier, as it is in words like rip-roaring, though its sense of "rip" or "tear" may contribute energy and vigour. However, the storm sense of ripsnorter's second element suggest rip might have another of its meanings, a stretch of broken water, as in rip tide and rip current.

LOL

Tough mice

Three rats are sitting at the bar talking bragging about their bravery and toughness. The first says, "I'm so tough, once I ate a whole bagful of rat poison!"



The second says, "Well I'm so tough, once I was caught in a rat trap and I bit it apart!" Then the third rat gets up and says, "Later guys, I'm off home to harass the cat."

SPECTRUM CLIMATE CHANGE

Asia's emissions-reduction plan for the world

Masatsugu Asakawa, Sri Mulyani Indrawati, & Carlos Dominguez

ULTIMATELY, THE BATTLE AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE WILL BE WON OR LOST IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

World leaders came together in Glasgow last November to map out a path to mitigate the worst effects of climate change. But while the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) was undoubtedly a historic moment, most countries are just beginning their work to meet new goals to reduce carbon-dioxide emissions.

That is why the announcement by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Indonesian and Philippine governments at COP26 stood out. In launching our partnership for a pilot Energy Transition Mechanism (ETM), we were not making a vague commitment to achieve a distant goal. Instead, we jointly formulated a concrete plan for an equitable, scalable, affordable, and just energy initiative to help Asian countries retire or repurpose half of their coal-fired power plants and increase their reliance on clean energy. The ETM is a transformative climate scheme that has the potential to become the world's largest CO2 reduction programme.

The ETM will take a financial approach to retiring or repurposing coal-fired power plants ahead of schedule, while scaling up investments in clean energy. This dual strategy will benefit communities,

investors, regional economies, and the environment. Although clean-energy costs are declining rapidly in many countries, many coal-fired electricity plants operate under secure, long-term purchase agreements. And in Asia, those facilities are younger: the region is home to 90% of all coal-fired power plants under 20 years old. Without a policy intervention, those plants are unlikely to be retired in the near term. Every year they remain active will result in more CO2 emissions and crowd out demand for clean, renewable energy.

The ETM will use a blend of public, private, and philanthropic funds to fill the market in the right direction — retiring coal early and creating demand for more clean energy. We estimate that this model, if scaled up in just three Southeast Asian countries — Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam — could retire up to 50% of their coal-fired power plants over the next 10 to 15 years. That would reduce annual CO2 emissions by an estimated 200 million tons, the equivalent of taking 61 million passenger vehicles off the road.

We recognise that the shift to a low-carbon, clean-energy future must work for everyone. That is why the ETM will emphasise a just and equitable energy transition by providing technical assistance and

re-skilling for workers including power-industry employees, particularly women. We are actively engaging with NGOs, civic organisations, and other stakeholders to ensure that no community or worker is left behind in the green transition.

The ETM's approach is unique and unprecedented in the Asia-Pacific region. The scheme leverages a convening authority — in this case, the ADB — to bring together private investors, governments, and civil-society representatives and sustain a mutually beneficial partnership based on transparency and trust.

Because the initiative is regionally led, it must work for local people and economies — and that means ensuring that electricity remains affordable. By catalysing outside investments, the ETM will scale up clean-energy projects without requiring new government subsidies. This means it will add to the efforts that governments like ours are already undertaking, thereby helping to accelerate the region's clean-energy transition.

By significantly shortening the life of coal-fired power plants, the ETM will unlock new investments for sustainable and renewable energy. That would make Indonesia and the Philippines even more attractive destinations for clean,

twenty-first-century power projects and give communities the energy security they need.

Ultimately, the battle against climate change will be won or lost in the Asia-Pacific region. We are confident that the ETM model will not only help to solve the region's own challenges but also can be scaled and exported around the world, empowering developing countries to undertake the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy without sacrificing other development objectives.

Our region's growing population and economies make it indispensable to the global climate response. Through the ETM, we aim to show how countries can concurrently increase clean energy investments and reduce emissions. Only by working together will we reach our net-zero destination in Southeast Asia — and elsewhere — faster and more fairly.

Masatsugu Asakawa is President of the Asian Development Bank. Sri Mulyani Indrawati is Finance Minister of Indonesia. Carlos Dominguez is Chairperson-designate of the Climate Change Commission of the Philippines. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

Distorting history

Sir, The eternal flame at the Amar Jawan Jyoti underneath India Gate in Delhi was an iconic symbol of the nation's tributes to the soldiers who have died for the country in various wars and conflicts since Independence. Established in 1972, it was to mark India's victory over Pakistan in the 1971 War, which resulted in the creation of Bangladesh. Now the government has put out the eternal flame of the Amar Jawan Jyoti and merged it with the one instituted at the National War Memorial in 2019 a few hundred meters away. In the era of globalisation the word 'merger' is a general phenomenon. Now it is being used with history. Merger means destroying the old truth in some way. The same thing is being done by the present government at the Centre. History is the study of past events. People know what happened in the past by looking at things from the past including sources (like books, newspapers, scripts and letters), buildings and artefacts (like pottery, tools, coins and human or animal remains). Now the government is destroying history by creating a new version of history. New history can never become a history if we destroy our past, because we are breaking the continuity. Breaking the continuity in fact violates the natural law. So the outcome of unnatural steps will be dangerous in the long run.

Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

Clean India

Sir, Human beings are designed to be competitive and if there is a prize at the end of the competition then the competition gets fierce. This can be used to bring about a lot of behavioural changes in people. The government deserves a pat on its back for bringing sea changes by introducing the Swachh Bharat Mission but still there's a lot to be achieved. In order to achieve the goal of a clean India a little faster, every city should announce a prize for the cleanest compound or the cleanest society and there should be a cash prize with the award so that the competition to be adjudged the cleanest compound or the cleanest society in every city gets fiercer. India is known as the cultural hub of the world, let us show the world we are actually deserving of the title.

Noopur Baruah, TEZPUR (ASSAM)

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

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national

of the day quote

The COVID-19 situation in the national capital is in control
SATYENDAR JAIN | DELHI HEALTH MINISTER

A new airport will be constructed in Dolu tea garden area near Silchar and the government will send a proposal to the Centre for the same in the next two to three weeks
HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

The Kejriwal government is conducting various surveys to zero in on measures to boost the capital's economy and increase job opportunities during COVID-19 times
MANISH SIDOSIA | DELHI DEPUTY CM

SHORT TAKES

Delhi man held

New Delhi: Delhi Police has arrested a 32-year-old man who used to befrend women through matrimonial websites and extort money by threatening them to share their private pictures and videos on social media, an official said here Saturday. The accused, identified as Sahil Sachdeva, a resident of Saharanpur in Uttar Pradesh, was a sharp minded person having Btech and MBA degrees.

Bizman ends life

Kolkata: A businessman allegedly jumped off the terrace of his apartment in Kolkata Saturday morning, police said. The incident happened in the Tiljala police station area around 6 am, they said. Preliminary investigation revealed that the businessman, Suraj Agarwal, had a huge amount of debt and was under mental stress, a police officer said. "His wife and child were not at home today. He went to the terrace of his flat like every morning and allegedly jumped off," the officer said.

Two boys drown

Thane: Two boys drowned after they went for a swim in a water-filled pit at a firing range in Maharashtra's Thane city Saturday, an official said. The incident took place at a firing range in Vartak Nagar area of the city around 3.30 pm, said Santosh Kadam, chief of the regional disaster management cell of the Thane Municipal Corporation. Cousins Gautam Walmiki (12) and Nirbhay Chouhan (15) had ventured into the pit for a swim when they drowned unable to gauge its depth, the official said.

Racket busted

Thane: Two persons have been arrested and a minor detained in connection with a racket involved in generating fake SIM cards in Maharashtra's Thane district, police said Saturday. A huge stock of activated black SIM cards and fabricated identity cards were seized from the accused, said Yogesh Chavan, deputy commissioner of police Zone-II Bhiwandi. Based on a tip-off, a team from the Bhoiwada police station raided a locality in Nagaon of Bhiwandi and nabbed the accused selling SIM cards to customers Thursday, he said.

Acid attack

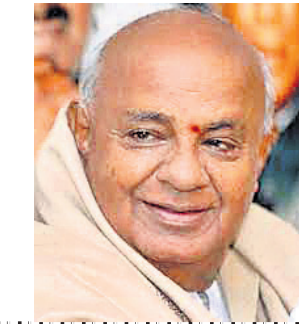
Nagpur: A man allegedly threw acid on his wife and injured her over a quarrel in Maharashtra's Nagpur city on Saturday, police said. The incident took place in Rameshwari area under Ajni police station limits around 9.30 am, an official said. The accused Suresh Zhengte (42) intercepted his wife, who was riding a bicycle to work, and threw a glass of acid on her face and fled the scene on his two-wheeler, the official said.



The government is committed to provide quality education to students in the state and various steps have been taken in this regard in the last three years
ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CM

DEVE GOWDA TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID

Former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda Saturday tested positive for Covid-19



Swing constituencies under special focus

Lucknow, Jan 22: Major political parties are paying special attention towards 47 assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh where the victory margin was less than 5,000 votes in the last assembly election. According to the Election Commission data, of these 47 seats (out of total 403), 23 were won by BJP, 13 by Samajwadi Party, eight had gone to Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), and one each had fallen in the kitty of Congress, Apna Dal, and Rastriya Lok Dal.

Considering the fact that a little vote-swing could help them corner these seats, parties have been meticulously selecting right candidates there to improve their tally. "All political parties are giving special focus on these seats thinking that with a little more push, they can win these seats and increase the tally. Victory is everything in politics but margin matters. Higher margin shows acceptability of the leaders so political parties this time are finalizing their candidates keeping these factors in mind," political analyst Siddharth Kalhans said.

"Internal surveys of the parties on a specific seat are playing an important role in finalization of candidates," he said. The BJP is confident that their Hindutva plus development push in the current



BATTLE FOR UP
Akhilesh Yadav, with his newly forged alliances with some caste-based regional parties, is upbeat that results would be in his favour across constituencies

The BJP is confident that their Hindutva plus development push in the current elections could fetch them good results across seats. Akhilesh Yadav too, with his newly forged alliances with some caste-based regional parties, is upbeat that results would be in his favour across constituencies. The SP is buoyant over defection of backward castes leaders like Swami Prasad Maurya, Dara Singh Chauhan, and Dharam Singh Saini to its side. OBC section constitutes around 50 per cent of the state's population and is an important factor in tilting the balance in the high-octane battle for ballots in UP. In 2017 polls, the lowest victory margin was on Dumariyaganj seat in Siddharth Nagar, where BJP

Rajendra Kumar of BSP, while in Rampur, Maniharan Devendra Kumar Nim of BJP had scored victory by 595 votes over BSP's Ravindra Kumar Malhu. In the Mubarakpur seat, BSP's Shah Alam alias Guddu Jamali had won the seat by a margin of 688 beating the SP's nominee. This time Guddu has walked out of BSP and is trying for an SP ticket. Another case is Kannauj (SC) seat which BJP had lost in 2017 by 2,500 votes. The saffron party has this time fielded IPS-turned-politician Asim Arun from the constituency.

When asked about the victory margins and party's preparations for winning such seats which it lost in 2017, SP MLC Rajpal Kashyap said, "We are taking all steps to convince voters. From ticket selection to ground survey all aspects are being taken care of." "As the resentment is brewing among people against the BJP, we are set to gain on all such seats. Also, our cadre remained active in all such constituencies and was with the people during difficult times, including COVID pandemic," Kashyap said. BJP spokesperson Rakesh Tripathi said despite all opposition gimmicks, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath are still hot favorites among the voters.

EC extends ban on rallies till Jan 31

For the phase 1 polling, February 10, political parties and contesting candidates can hold "physical public meetings" with a cap of 500 people from January 28. For the phase 2 polling February 14, such meetings can be held from February 1



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 22: The Election Commission Saturday extended the ban on physical rallies and roadshows till January 31 in the five poll-going states, but allowed public meetings with a maximum of 500 people in the constituencies going to poll in the first two phases and relaxed door-to-door campaign rules. In a statement, it said the limit of five persons for door-to-door campaign has now been enhanced to 10 persons, excluding security personnel. For the phase 1 polling on February 10, political parties and contesting candidates can hold "physical public meetings" with a cap of 500 people from January 28. For the phase 2 polling on February 14, such meetings can be held from February 1.

Video vans for publicity have also been permitted at designated open spaces with COVID-19 restrictions. Announcing the dates for elections in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Punjab and Manipur on January 8, the poll panel had announced a ban on physical rallies, roadshows and bike rallies and similar campaign events till January 15. January 15, the commission extended the ban until January 22. It had, however, granted a relaxation for political parties to hold indoor meetings of maximum 300 people or 50 per cent of the capacity of the hall. After considering the present situation, facts and circumstances, as also the inputs received in a series of virtual meets on Saturday, the Commission said it has decided that no roadshows, padayatras, cycle, bike or vehicle rallies and procession will be allowed till January 31. Since contesting candidates for Phase 1 elections will be finalised on January 27, the Commission has decided to allow "physical public meetings" of the political parties concerned and contesting candidates "in designated open spaces with a maximum of 500 persons or 50 per cent of the capacity of the ground or the prescribed limit set by state disaster management authorities (SDMA), whichever number is lesser, from January 28 till February 8", excluding the 48-hour silence period. Similarly, since contesting candidates for Phase 2 elections will be finalised on January 31, the Commission decided to allow physical meetings of the political parties concerned and contesting candidates from February 1 till February 12 (excluding the silence period). The EC has already granted relaxation for the political parties to the extent that indoor meetings of a maximum of 300 persons or 50 per cent of the capacity of the hall or the prescribed limit set by SDMA is allowed.

KERALA NUN RAPE CASE

Prosecution to appeal against acquittal

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 22: The prosecution which was in a state of shock when it heard a lower court acquitting Catholic Bishop Franco Mulakkal in the nun rape case, on Saturday decided to appeal the verdict at the Kerala High Court.

The special prosecutor in the case Jithesh Babu submitted the legal advice to this effect to the Kottayam SP, who will go forward in the appeal, as the time period for it is 90 days, from the date of the verdict which came from the Kottayam Additional district court judge G. Gopakumar on January 14, whose verdict enabled Franco to walk out free.

Incidentally, soon after the verdict came, the former Kottayam SP Harisankar, who oversaw the probe, said he was supremely confident that the verdict would be against the accused. "This was the least expected as the witnesses did a very clean job. An appeal should be filed," said Harisankar, then. The trial in the case extended over 105 days with 39 witnesses being examined and 122 documents produced before the court. While serving as Bishop of the Jalandhar Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church, he was accused of raping a nun, who belonged to the Missionaries of Jesus congregation. During his visits between 2014 and 2016 to Kerala, he was accused of raping the 43-year old nun on 13 occasions. Later, he was removed from the charge of the Jalandhar diocese. A complaint was filed against him in June 2018 in Kerala and Mulakkal was arrested on September 21, 2018 on rape charges. He secured bail on October 16, 2018. The charge sheet names 83 witnesses.

COVID PRECAUTION



A worker sanitises a classroom at a school ahead of its reopening in Mumbai

DEATH OF FOUR INDIANS

Indian missions ascertaining details

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 22: With a family of four Indians, including an infant, found dead near the US-Canada border, government sources here said Indian missions are in touch with Canadian authorities for ascertaining the details of the tragedy and the post-mortem of the victims is likely to be carried out on January 24.

US authorities have detained seven people without proper documentation, as well as one US citizen, for allegedly being involved in human smuggling activity from Canada to the US, they said. The sources said that on January 19, US authorities in Minnesota State, near the US-Canada border, came across a group of people who were

82 Tihar jail officials to face action

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 22: The Economic Offence Wing (EOW) of Delhi Police have reportedly written to Tihar Jail authorities to take action against 82 jail officials who allegedly helped multimillionaire conman Sukesh Chandrashekar by providing him luxury facilities inside the prison.

The letter has been accessed by IANS in which the EOW has even mentioned the name of all 82 jail officials.

"During investigation conducted by the EOW, seven jail officials were arrested in the case as they were found involved in facilitating the organized crime syndicate run by the kingpin Sukesh V. Chandrashekar operating from the Barrack No 204, Ward No 3, Jail



Sukesh Chandrashekar

No 10 of Rohini jail," said the police official quoting the letter. The official said further, during the course of investigation, the CCTV footage of ten cameras of Rohini Jail was collected and examined during which it was found that the view of CCTV cameras installed in the Barrack of accused Sukesh was completely blocked by using curtains and putting mineral water bottles box in front of

the camera. The EOW has mentioned in the letter that no action was taken to remove the object from the view of the camera and for this jail officials got hefty amount from Sukesh and his associates. "Entries made in the CCTV register by the warden Neeraj Maan, deployed at CCTV control room at Rohini Jail, in this regard, were not only ignored rather Warden Neeraj Maan was put under pressure and discouraged from making such entries by Senior Jail Officials. This clearly established that the staff including senior officers in Rohini Jail No 10 connived with accused Sukesh and facilitated him to carry out his criminal activities from inside the jail, a safe haven for Sukesh," read the letter accessed by IANS.

R-Day parade to have 25 tableaux, 16 marching contingents

THE SIX MARCHING CONTINGENTS OF THE INDIAN ARMY WILL BE OF RAJPUT REGIMENT, ASSAM REGIMENT, JAMMU AND KASHMIR LIGHT INFANTRY, SIKH LIGHT INFANTRY, ARMY ORDNANCE CORPS REGIMENT AND PARACHUTE REGIMENT, ACCORDING TO THE STATEMENT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 22: This year's Republic Day parade will have 16 marching contingents, 17 military bands and 25 tableaux of various states, departments and armed forces, the Indian Army said in a statement Saturday. The Army will be represented by a mounted column of cavalry, 14 mechanised columns, six marching contingents and a flypast by advanced light helicopters of its aviation wing at the Republic Day parade-2022 (RDP-2022), it said. The mechanised columns of the Army will show one PT-76 tank, one Centurion tank, two MBT Arjun MK-I tanks, one APC TOPAS ar-

moured personnel carriers, one BMP-I infantry fighting vehicle and two BMP-II infantry fighting vehicles, it stated. One 75/24 Pack howitzer, two Dhanush howitzers, one PMS bridge-laying system, two Sarvatra bridge-laying systems, one HT-16 electronic warfare system, two Taran Shakti electronic warfare systems, one Tiger Cat missile system and two Akash missile systems will also be part of the mechanised columns. The six marching contingents of the Indian Army will be of Rajput Regiment, Assam Regiment, Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry, Sikh Light Infantry, Army Ordnance Corps Regiment and



A security personnel guards at Rajpath for Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi

Parachute Regiment, according to the statement. One marching contingent each of the Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy will

also participate in RDP-2022, the statement said. From the central paramilitary forces, five marching contingents

of Central Reserve Police Force, Central Industrial Police Force (CISF), Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and Border Security Force (BSF) will participate in RDP-2022, it stated. Overall, there will be 16 marching contingents from the armed forces, central paramilitary forces, Delhi Police, National Cadet Corps (NCC), National Service Scheme (NSS) along with 17 military bands, pipes and drum bands at the parade, it noted. Two Param Vir Chakra and one Ashok Chakra awardees will also participate in this year's parade. Before the commencement of RDP-2022, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lead the nation in paying homage to the soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice by laying a wreath at the National War Memorial, the statement said. RDP-2022 will begin at 10.30 am and end at 12 noon, it said. Twenty-five tableaux of various states, departments and armed forces will be part of RDP-2022, it said. Two teams - one male team of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and one female team of Border Security Officer (BSO) - will do the motorcycle display. Lieutenant General Vijay Kumar Mishra, General Officer Commanding Delhi Area, will be the parade commander and Major General Alok Kacker, Chief of Staff Delhi Area, will be the second-in-command of the parade, the statement said.

'Every stateless day an affront to federalism'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Jan 22: Political parties in Jammu and Kashmir reacted to Union minister Amit Shah's remarks Saturday that the UT's statehood would be restored once the situation gets normal, saying the Centre's statement was self-contradictory and that every stateless day was an affront to federalism.

"After quite literally terrorising people of Jammu and Kashmir into silence to create a false normalcy narrative, GoI's admission that situation still isn't normal is self-contradictory. Also proves that silence shouldn't be misconstrued as normalcy," PDP president and former chief minister Mehbooba Mufti wrote on Twitter.

Reacting to Shah's remarks, Peoples Conference chief Sajad Lone asked who will define normalcy.

"Who will define normalcy? And in a federal structure, can we really use normalcy as an excuse to assume power. Irrespective of the definition of normalcy, possibly coined by the union government, every single stateless day is an affront to federalism and to the people of J&K," Lone said on Twitter.



He said 'non-popular' governments mean a 'humiliating existence' for the inhabitants of that particular place.

"And to the people of India who are mute bystanders, Inshallah you too will one day taste statelessness and helplessness. We don't wish it for even on our worst enemies (sic)," Lone said.

The People's Conference chairman said the central rule in any place is a "kick in the teeth for federalism."

"And self-styled pat on the back, oh, doing so well, this is all so nauseating," he added.

CPI(M) leader MY Tarigami said the people of the Union territory were being denied the right of participation and representation which was one of the fundamental principles of good governance.

"One of the principle fundamentals of good governance is participation and representation, a right which continues to be denied to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Releasing such indexes is intended to help the government in optics-wise," he said.

Tarigami said the 'ground reality' of dilapidated roads, erratic power supply, inaccessibility of

Who will define normalcy? And in a federal structure, can we really use normalcy as an excuse to assume power. Irrespective of the definition of normalcy, possibly coined by the union government, every single stateless day is an affront to federalism and to the people of J&K

SAJAD LONE | PEOPLES CONFERENCE CHIEF

portable water combined with huge unemployment, social unrest is reflecting the 'contrasting picture'.

Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir will be held after completion of the ongoing delimitation process and statehood will be restored once situation in the union territory becomes normal, Shah said Saturday.

Virtually releasing India's first 'District Good Governance Index', he said Jammu and Kashmir is a priority for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and multipronged efforts are being made for the all round development of the union territory.

₹50,000CR INVESTMENTS TO COME TO J&K: SHAH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 22: Union Home Minister Amit Shah Saturday said ₹50,000 crore investments will come to Jammu and Kashmir in the next few years and agreements have already been signed for ₹12,000 crore.

Virtually launching the District Good Governance Index (DGGI) in Jammu Kashmir, he said all investments together will generate employment opportunities for five lakh youths. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made the best industrial policy ever for Jammu and Kashmir, under which investments of about ₹50,000 crore is going to come in Jammu and Kashmir and that will provide employment to five lakh youths," he said. The home minister said on one hand, investments during last 70 years was ₹12,000 crore. However, he said, in a single year, MoUs for investments worth ₹12,000 crore have been signed and ground breaking ceremonies worth ₹2,000 crore have also taken place.

"Today, I once again want to tell my young friends, especially the young friends of the Valley that



you should walk on the path of development laid by Modi. No one can stop Jammu and Kashmir from becoming the most developed region of the country," he said.

The home minister urged youths of the Valley to focus on the development initiatives undertaken in the Union Territory and said they should participate in the development process, the political process and in the democratic process and make their future bright. Referring to the outcomes of the DGGI, Shah said the achievements of Jammu and Kashmir will reach every state and this will lead to healthy competition of good governance in every district

of the country. "The district is an important unit if good governance is to be taken to the grassroots level in true sense and unless there is good governance at the district level, then it has no meaning," he said. He said the competition between districts through the Good Governance Index will be of great benefit to the general public of Jammu and Kashmir. The District Good Governance Index of J&K covers 10 sectors of governance and 58 indices with 116 data items, which include, agriculture, services, commerce & industry, human resources, environment, justice & public safety, social welfare and development.

Health workers trek snowy peaks during vax drive

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Srinagar, Jan 22: In a Himalayan village in Kashmir, young health worker Masrat Farid packed her bag with vaccines on a frigid morning in January as strong winds swept snow through the air.

She is part of a team of health workers undertaking a door-to-door campaign in the region to deliver vaccine shots to teens and boosters to old people in remote mountain villages.

"We have to fight the infection. We have to keep going," Farid said as she made her way through the knee-high snow in Gagangeer, a hamlet lying between forests.

Farid and her colleagues have vaccinated thousands in the last year, mostly in villages that they reach by trekking long distances across rugged countryside.

But bone-chilling cold and snowy inhospitable terrain are not their only obstacles.

Some residents are still vaccine-hesitant and winning their trust is more difficult than braving the Himalayan winter.

"Most young girls are hesitant, fueled by misinformation and mistrust," Farid said during a recent



vaccination drive in a snow-covered mountain village. She was referring to the false belief that the vaccine impacts or even prevents pregnancy.

"We are not only inoculating them against the coronavirus, we must also educate them about the vaccines to earn their trust," she said.

In a new phase that began this month, the health workers are inoculating teens in the age group of 15 to 18 and giving booster shots to people above age 60 with health problems.

The boosters, which Indian health officials call a "precautionary" shot, are being given to high-risk groups who were among

the first to receive vaccines last year and whose immunity may be waning.

Jaffar Ali, a health official, said the top challenge so far this year has been harsh weather — unlike last year when some of his colleagues were harassed by locals during the vaccination campaign, as many residents thought the shots caused

We are not only inoculating them against the coronavirus, we must also educate them about the vaccines to earn their trust

MASRAT FARID | HEALTH WORKER

impotence, serious side effects or could even kill.

So far, health workers have fully vaccinated over 72% of eligible people out of the region's 14 million population, according to official data.

Health officials recently hiked to some villages which were cut off from the nearest towns due to heavy snowfall and vaccinated residents there — including Khag, a forested village where the residents are mostly tribal and live in houses made from mud, stone or wood.

Arsha Begum, an elderly blind woman, expressed her gratitude as a medical team visited her home and gave her a booster shot inside her house.

"It would not have been possible for me to go to a hospital in this harsh weather. I am immensely thankful to them," she said.

MLA says schoolgirl's suicide due to pressure on religious conversion

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Coimbatore, Jan 22: MLA and president of All India Mahila Morcha Vanathi Srinivasan Saturday expressed the need for a CBI inquiry into the alleged suicide of a 17-year-old school student who, the MLA said, was driven to death owing to torture for forcible conversion.

In a video message, the student had named a few people in the school for the pressure brought upon her for religious conversion and that forced to take the extreme step, said the MLA in a statement here. The video could lend credence to the declaration the girl made while dying, said the statement.

Blaming the police for not taking action on the complaint from the student's parents, the MLA said the warden of the school hostel was taken into custody only after protests. Thanjavur Superintendent of Police Ravali Priya said there was no proof that suicide was the result of torture for conversion, the MLA said.

Considering this, the MLA said Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin should let some other police officer probe into the matter and announce a compensation for the girl's parents. The girl consumed poison January 9 and the Thirukattupalli police received the first information from her parents January 15.

The warden was remanded after the Thanjavur judicial magistrate took the dying declaration of the girl and following the recording of statement by the police. "The case is now under investigation," she said and warned against anyone circulating or revealing the identity, photo, video, address of the victimised juvenile or her dying declaration in the social media as it is an offence.

The girl's condition deteriorated January 15 and she was taken to the Thanjavur College Hospital. There, she gave her declaration implicating the warden, and died January 19, said the police. According to the FIR, the student was staying at



'No room for forcible conversions in TN'

CHENNAI: There is no room at all for forcible conversions in Tamil Nadu, Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department Minister, PK Sekar Babu said here Saturday. Taking potshots at the Tamil Nadu unit of the BJP, Sekar Babu said, ahead of the 'Thai Poosam' festival last year the saffron party had taken out 'Vel' (spear) rallies in the state chanting slogans of 'Veera Vel' and 'Vetri Vel'. He asked, "do you now see display of Vel (by BJP people) anywhere," adding the BJP did not organise such events this year coinciding with the festival, the Minister told reporters. Unlike the BJP, his party the DMK and Chief Minister MK Stalin regarded all religions equally, Babu said. Against such a background, there is no room at all for forcible conversions in Tamil Nadu, the Minister asserted.

the hostel and that the warden allegedly forced her to do domestic chores January 9. She allegedly attempted to take her life as she could not bear the cruelty.

But, the BJP activists in the district claimed the girl died by suicide as she was forced to convert to Christianity. They even staged an agitation condemning the police. The party's state president K Annamalai demanded an impartial enquiry into the case and said a fact-finding committee comprising the BJP women's wing leaders has initiated an independent enquiry.

Rain, snow to continue in J&K till Monday



A snow clearing machine removes snow from a road during fresh snowfall in Tangmarg near Srinagar, Saturday.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, Jan 22: Rain and snow lashed Jammu and Kashmir Saturday as the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted more precipitation from January 22.

A statement by IMD said: "A fresh active western disturbance most likely to affect Jammu and Kashmir and adjoining areas from January 22."

"Under the influence of this system, widespread rain/snow most likely to occur during January 22 and 23. The system will most likely concentrate over Jammu division, Pir Panjal range and South Kashmir. Moderate rain in plains with snow over higher reaches (heavy rain/snow at isolated places) of Jammu division is expected during the above period."

"Light snow over plains and moderate snow over middle and

Tamil culture much older than was earlier thought of: CM

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Jan 22: The next phase of archaeological excavations in seven sites of Tamil Nadu will commence from February and help establish that the history of Indian subcontinent began from the landscape of Tamil Nadu, Chief Minister MK Stalin said.

In a statement Thursday, the chief minister said that the findings of these excavations will underline the antiquity, culture, and values of Tamil society and the state government has sanctioned an amount of ₹5 crore for the project.

The chief minister also said that excavations conducted earlier at Keezhadi and other archaeological sites earlier have proved that Tamil culture was older by several more centuries than was earlier thought of.

Excavations will take place at Keezhadi and its surrounding areas like Konthagai, Aagaram, and Manalur. This is the eighth phase of excavations that will take place in these areas in the Sivaganga district of South Tamil Nadu.

The other places where excavations are scheduled to be held are Sivakalai in Thoothukudi district (third phase), Gangaikondacholapuram in Ariyalur district (Phase III), Myladumparai in Krishnagiri district (Phase II), Vembakottai in Virudhunagar district, Thulukkarpatti in Tirunelveli district, and Perumpalai in Dharmapuri district (Phase I).

The archaeology department will also conduct a reconnaissance survey in the sea off the Korkai coast in Thoothukudi dis-

trict where the river Tamirabarani flows into the sea. This will be conducted in association with the National Institute of Ocean Technology and Indian Maritime University.

RK Mukundan, a retired Sociology Professor from a foreign university while speaking to IANS said: "The archaeological surveys conducted at Keezhadi and other areas of Tamil Nadu have beyond any doubts proved that the Tamil culture is much older than what was believed to be. The excavations to be carried out are expected to provide more proof on the style of life, the culture of Tamil, and other crucial points to establish that we were one of the most sophisticated and a highly established race in the Indian subcontinent."



HC warns police to behave properly in girl suicide case

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Jan 22: Madurai bench of the Madras High Court while hearing an urgent petition in the case related to the suicide of a 17-year-old girl warned the Thanjavur police to behave appropriately.

The girl died of consuming poison January 19 and there were allegations that she was forced by the Christian aided school authorities to convert which she had refused leading to her suicide.

The girl's father Muruganantham and another person who had recorded the girl's statement before she passed away, complained to the court that the Thanjavur police were pressurising

them. The person had claimed that the girl had told him that she was forced into religious conversion and that this was the reason for her suicide attempt. The girl passed away later.

Justice GR Swaminathan of the Madurai bench of the Madras high court told Thanjavur police Friday, "The police should conduct themselves appropriately so as not to give rise to such allegations."

Muruganantham has filed a petition in the high court seeking to transfer the case to the CB CID or any other independent investigation agency and wanted the court to fix a time frame to complete the investigation. The court will resume hearing of the case Monday.

of the day quote

About 1,000 drones will light up the sky for 10 minutes at the 'Beating the Retreat Ceremony' next week

JITENDRA SINGH | UNION MINISTER

Shocked by the report that 4 Indian nationals, including an infant have lost their lives at the Canada-US border

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

It is a matter of great sadness that the immortal flame for our brave soldiers will be extinguished. Some people cannot understand patriotism and sacrifice - never mind... We will once again light the 'Amar Jawan Jyoti' for our soldiers

RAHUL GANDHI | FORMER CONGRESS CHIEF

SHORT TAKES

2 terrorists killed

Srinagar: Two Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists were killed in an encounter between the terrorists and the security forces at Kilbal area in Jammu and Kashmir's Shopian district, officials said Saturday. "One more terrorist killed... incriminating materials including arms and ammunition recovered. Search going on," a police officer said. The firefight between terrorists and security forces took place after a joint team of the police and the security forces cordoned off the area and launched a search operation.

Gold seized

Hyderabad: Gold valued at Rs 1.36 crore was seized from a passenger at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport here, Customs officials said Saturday. The passenger had arrived by GE 025 from Dubai on Friday. The officials detected and seized 2,715,800 grams of gold items valued at Rs 1.36 crore from him. Gold chains and gold in paste form were concealed inside hand baggage and check-in baggage.

Quake jolts J&K

Jammu: An earthquake measuring 4.0 on the Richter scale struck Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday, with no immediate reports of any casualties or damage to property. A disaster management official said the tremor occurred at 2.53 a.m., and the coordinates were latitude 36.06 degrees north and longitude 75.82 degrees east. "The epicentre was located in Doda region 10 km inside the earth's crust," the official said.

Four injured

Hemtabad (WB): At least four people have been injured in a parcel bomb blast in a pharmacy in West Bengal's Uttar Dinajpur district, police said Saturday. The incident took place at Bahariail in Hemtabad on Friday afternoon, a senior police officer said. The condition of two of the injured persons is critical, while the other two are stable, he said. An electric rickshaw driver and a woman have been identified in connection with the incident, the IPS officer said.

Woman found dead

New Delhi: A 52-year-old woman was found dead in her house in the national capital, an official said here on Saturday. The deceased has been identified as Shashi Lata Pandey, a resident of G-66, Saket in south Delhi. Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Benita Mary Jaiker said a PCR call was received at Saket Police Station around 7.09 p.m. on Friday stating that a scuffle broke out between an elderly couple after which both were injured and the man was taken to a hospital while her wife is lying dead at the residence in Saket.



India sees the Indo-Pacific as a free, open, inclusive region, which embraces all in a common pursuit of progress and prosperity

FS SHRINGLA | INDIA'S FOREIGN SECRETARY

K'TAKA CROSSES 6 CR COVID TESTS

Karnataka has crossed 6 crore Covid-19 tests Saturday which is third highest in the country, said Health and Family Welfare Minister K. Sudhakar



Residents recall Mumbai fire horror

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 22: Residents of the Mumbai building where fire claimed six lives Saturday said they heard a loud sound followed by black smoke, and recalled the frenzy of those living there to get out to safety.

"We heard a big noise and rushed outside. There was black smoke coming out of some floors above us. We immediately rushed downstairs and came into the open area," a resident said.

At least six persons were killed and 23 others injured in a major fire that broke out on the 19th floor of Sachinam Heights, a residential building in Tardeo area of central Mumbai on Saturday morning.

A 50-year-old woman who lives on the fifth floor said, "I heard some noise like firecrackers and realised that something is wrong. As we were all scared, I fell down twice while helping my husband to climb down the staircase." "I don't recall how I reached the open area," she said.

Residents of the Matrumandir building near Sachinam Heights attributed the blaze to an AC compressor explosion. "We were on the



Police personnel stand guard after a blaze on the 18th floor of Kamlia building in Tardeo area of Mumbai

terrace early in the morning when we heard a loud noise, which sounded like some kind of an explosion. We saw the fire and smoke coming out of a flat and immediately called the fire brigade," a resident of Matrumandir told reporters.

"We then called other fellow residents of our society to make arrangements for rescued citizens of that building to rest in the open space area of our building," he

melee of residents trying to get out. Many were injured. Some sustained head injuries. The injured included many senior citizens," he said. A woman who lived on the 14th floor of the building said she came to know of the blaze after being woken up by a friend, following which they rushed outside. Another woman living on the fourth floor said, "We came to know of the fire shortly after 7 am. When we came outside the building, there was a 'fat-fat' sound outside a cabin (which presumably housed the AC compressor). "There was smoke first and then there were flames," she said.

Asked how she came out of the building, she said she used the stairs. Many residents of the Sachinam building were shifted to the Matrumandir building, where they were given tea and snacks by people there.

The blaze erupted around 7 am in Sachinam Heights building located opposite Bhatia Hospital at Gowalia Tank, when many of its residents were still asleep, a Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) official said. It took around six hours to extinguish the blaze, the official said.

"Suddenly the lights went off. I saw smoke in gallery. There was a

Work on time-bound targets, PM tells DMs



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 22: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday asked district magistrates to work on time-bound targets to increase ease of living for people and asserted that the country's goal today is to achieve 100 percent saturation of services and facilities.

Modi also called for a direct and emotional connection between administration and the public to ensure 'top to bottom' as well as 'bottom to top' governance flow. In his remarks at the virtual interaction with DMs and some chief ministers, Modi said the teamwork of Centre, states and local administration was yielding good results in aspirational districts.

"Today, aspirational districts are eliminating the barriers to the progress of the country. With the efforts of all of you, aspirational districts are becoming accelerators of growth instead of impediments," he told the DMs.

The prime minister said that these districts have proved that due to the elimination of silos in implementation, optimum utilisation of resources takes place. He emphasised the exponential benefits of this reform and said when silos end, one plus one doesn't become two but eleven.

"We see this collective power in the aspirational districts today," Modi said. Launched by the prime minister in January 2018, the aspirational districts programme aims to quickly and effectively transform 112 most under-developed districts across the country. The prime minister said various ministries and departments

The Prime Minister told the DMs that seeing the successes achieved in the aspirational districts, the country has now expanded its targets further

of the government have prepared a list of 142 districts that are not so much lagging in development but are weak on one or two parameters. He stressed the need to work with the same collective approach as is being done in the aspirational districts.

"This is a new challenge for all the governments - the government of India, the state government, the district administration, and the government machinery. Now we have to complete this challenge together," Modi said.

The prime minister told the DMs that seeing the successes achieved in the aspirational districts, the country has now expanded its targets further. The prime minister drew the attention of the officers towards the changed mindset and reiterated that today, the country's goal is to achieve 100 percent saturation of services and facilities.

"We have a long way to go compared to the milestones we have achieved so far and have to work on a much bigger scale," he said and called for time-bound targets for taking roads to all the villages of the districts, Ayushman Bharat cards, bank accounts to every person, Ujjwala gas connection, insurance, pension housing for everyone.

Govt officer, village head found drunk in Bihar

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Patna, Jan 22: Government officials and public representatives of Bihar who have taken oath not to consume liquor in their entire life, are found in drunken state these days.

One incident has been reported in Arwal district when an official of Bihar agriculture department, traveling on the car, rammed a Paan vend at Jay Bigha village under Mehandia police station on Friday evening. The Paan vendor, who was inside the shop, was injured in this accident.

Following the accident, a large number of local vendors present at the spot, overpowered the alleged driver and handed him over to local police.

"The errant driver of the car is identified as Pintu Singh alias Om Singh, an agriculture officer in Buxar and a native of Arrah. He was driving the car in a drunken state. During breath analysis, we found 151 points which confirms that he was under the influence of alcohol at the time of the accident," said Amit Kumar, SHO of Mehandia police station.

Pintu was returning from Dhanbad to his native place Arrah via NH 139 connecting Aurangabad and Arwal. The second incident took place in Katihar district when a newly elected Mukhiya (village head) was found in rash and negligent driving on Friday night.

He was on the way to his native village. Rajiv Kumar Jha, the SHO of Pranpur police station said: "He was driving the vehicle at a very fast speed. The local villagers informed that a car was speeding on the road. We chased the vehicle and managed to stop them. During breath analysis, he was found in a drunken state."

VACATION FUN



Tourists amid snowfall at Ridge in Shimla

Active Covid cases highest in 237 days

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 22: India added 3,37,704 new coronavirus infections taking the total tally of COVID-19 cases to 3,89,03,731, which includes 10,050 cases of the Omicron variant, according to Union health ministry data updated on Saturday.

The active cases have increased to 21,13,365, the highest in 237 days, while the death toll has climbed to 4,88,884 with 488 fresh fatalities.

The data stated that 71.34 crore tests have been conducted so far and 19,60,954 tests were conducted in the



covery rate has decreased to 93.31 per cent, the ministry said. The daily positivity rate was recorded at 17.22 per cent while the weekly positivity rate was recorded at 16.65 per cent.

The data stated that 71.34 crore tests have been conducted so far and 19,60,954 tests were conducted in the

The active cases have increased to 21,13,365, the highest in 237 days, while the death toll has climbed to 4,88,884 with 488 fresh fatalities

last 24 hours. So far, 161.16 crore COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered, it said

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 2020, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16.

It went past 60 lakh on September

28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19, 2020. India crossed two crore cases on May 4 and three crore cases on June 23 last year.

The 488 new fatalities include 106 from Kerala, 52 from Maharashtra, 38 from Delhi and 35 from West Bengal. A total of 4,88,884 deaths have been reported so far in the country including 1,42,023 from Maharashtra, 51,607 from Kerala, 38,537 from Karnataka, 37,145 from Tamil Nadu, 25,541 from Delhi, 23,022 from Uttar Pradesh and 20,265 from West Bengal. The ministry said that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities.

2 held for honey trapping priest

Dakshina Kannada (Karnataka): Karnataka police have arrested two persons including a married woman on charges of honey trapping a priest and extorting Rs 49 lakh from him in Mangaluru, Dakshina Kannada district, police said Saturday. According to police, Bhavya, 30, a resident of Somavarpet in Kodagu district and Kumar a.k.a Raju, a resident of Arakalagodu in Hassan district have been arrested in this connection. The police said, the accused invited the priest from Chikkamagalur to their home in Padavinangady in Mangaluru to perform special pooja. They told the priest they wanted a solution for family disputes. When the priest came to their home, the lady behaved intimately with him and took photos.

67% of population under 18 yrs feel climate change global emergency

A sample size of 34,749 adults and 31,390 under 18 from India was taken for the G20 People's Climate Vote 2021 Report by the UNDP and the Oxford University

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 22: In India, about 67 per cent of the population under the age of 18 years consider climate change a global emergency, compared to about 58 per cent of adults, according to a new UNDP report.

A sample size of 34,749 adults and 31,390 under 18 from India was taken for the G20 People's Climate Vote 2021 Report by the UNDP and the Oxford University. According to the global report, youth across the world are more aware of the severity of climate change and are seeking urgent policy-action on the climate front more strongly.

In India, about 67 per cent of the population under the age of 18 years consider climate change a global emergency, compared to about 58 per cent of adults, according to the report.

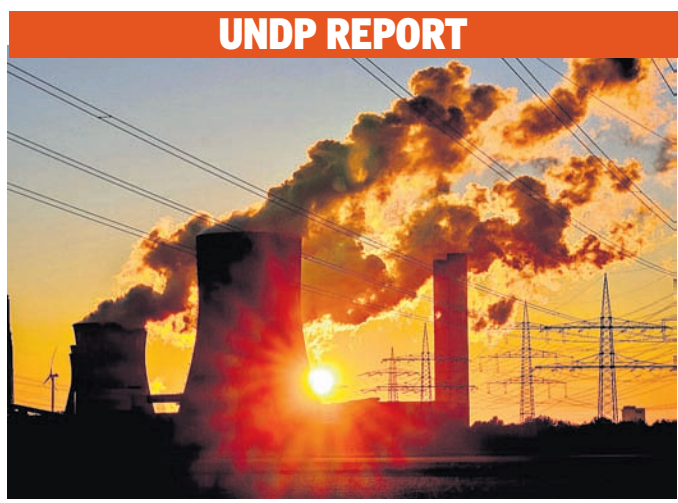
In the age group of 18-35 years,

61 per cent believe in a climate emergency while it goes down to 59 per cent in the age group of 36-59 years and further reduces to 49 per cent in over 60 years age group, it said.

"Strong advocates for green development, the youth are 'walking the talk' by making climate conscious choices in their lifestyles such as buying sustainably sourced products and opting for eco-friendly transportation as well devoting their skills to harness innovative ideas to aid action towards the climate crisis," the report said.

Stopping burning polluting fuels was a popular policy in the UK, Australia, Canada, Germany and France, with majority support among both under-18s and adults in these countries, it said.

"There were much lower levels of support elsewhere, with just 30 per cent of adults in India and Saudi Arabia supporting this pol-



icy, compared to 36 per cent and 32 per cent of under-18s in these countries, respectively," the report said. Support among adults and under-18s on policies such as conserving forests and land to address climate

change varied depending on the country. "It was 10 percentage points higher among adults than under-18s in the UK, for example, whereas in Brazil, Russia and India it was higher among under-18s

than adults, 10 per cent, nine per cent and nine per cent higher, respectively," it said.

In the G20 Peoples' Climate Vote, people aged 18 and over (adults) and those under 18, were asked whether they considered climate change a global emergency. "In all countries, large majorities of adults said that climate change is a global emergency, ranging from the United Kingdom (81 per cent) and Italy (80 per cent), to Argentina and India, on 57 per cent and 58 per cent respectively," it said.

Stopping burning fuels that pollute was a popular policy in Australia, Canada, and the European G20 members, with majority support among under-18s and adults, apart from Italy.

"There were much lower levels of support elsewhere, with just 30 per cent of adults supporting this policy in India and Saudi Arabia," it said. On public support for con-

servation of forests and land, more under-18s supported this policy than adults in India (62 per cent versus 43 per cent), the report said.

Popular support for environmental stewards was relatively inconsistent among under-18s and adults, and between countries, likely driven by cultural and social differences.

"Support was highest among under-18s in Australia (64 per cent) and adults in the United Kingdom (61 per cent), and was relatively low in Saudi Arabia, India, and South Korea," it said. On climate friendly farming, the US saw the largest difference, with 72 per cent of under-18s support climate-friendly farming, compared with just 60 per cent of adults, and India, where 51 per cent of under-18s support, compared with 43 per cent of adults. "This indicates a need for more education among adults on the benefits of climate-friendly farming," it said.

international



It was an absolutely mind-blowing story. It's so tragic to see a family die like that, victims of human traffickers and of people who took advantage of their desire to build a better life
JUSTIN TRUDEAU | PRIME MINISTER, CANADA

CLOTH MASKS ARE USELESS: EXPERTS

Prominent public health officials in the US have increasingly highlighted the limitations of cloth face masks, pushing for more effective respirator masks such as N95s as the Omicron variant is rapidly spreading across the country, a shift in messaging from earlier in the pandemic, the Washington Examiner reported



of the day quote

I'd offered my good offices several times, and we hope that this is something that can be solved peacefully and that the situation in Kashmir is a situation in which human rights are respected and in which people can live in peace and security
ANTONIO GUTERRES | SECRETARY GENERAL, UN

Obviously, we don't want to see the North Korean military program continue to be able to pose a threat to our South Korean allies or to the region. So we continue to call on Kim Jong-un to sit down and discuss the way forward
JOHN KIRBY | PRESS SECRETARY, PENTAGON

The hope is that we can go from a pandemic to an endemic. That should ensure that we would have much less unpredictability. But let me be clear: that is not yet the case today
ALEXANDER DE CROO | PRIME MINISTER, BELGIUM

SHORT TAKES

WH Military Office director resigns

New York: Indian-origin Maju Varghese is leaving his position as the director of the White House Military Office, according to a media report quoting him. "Right now, it's best for me and my family that I kind of just try to strike a little bit more of a balance," CNN quoted Varghese explaining his decision to leave the White House. At the White House, his role included working with the military to ensure medical support, emergency medical services and presidential transportation, communications and organising official ceremonies and functions.

Deaths in prison airstrike up at 82

Cairo: The death toll from a Saudi-led coalition airstrike that hit a prison run by Yemen's Houthi rebels climbed to at least 82 detainees, the rebels and an aid group said Saturday. Internet access in the Arab world's poorest country remained largely down. The airstrike in northern Saada province Friday was part of an intense air and ground offensive that marked an escalation in Yemen's years-long civil war. The conflict pits the internationally recognized government, aided by the Saudi-led coalition, against the Iranian-backed rebels.

Ireland lifts most Covid restrictions

London: Irish Prime Minister Michael Martin announced Friday most pandemic restrictions will be scrapped, including early closing times and other curbs on hospitality venues, declaring the country had "weathered the Omicron storm". The stringent rules, befitting last month as the variant prompted a surge of new infections -- forcing nightclubs to close over the Christmas period -- will be lifted from 0600 GMT Saturday after new cases and other key indicators eased in recent weeks. "I have stood here on many dark days but today is a good day," Martin said.

6.4-magnitude quake jolts Japan

Tokyo: An earthquake measuring 6.4 on the Richter scale struck off Japan's Oita Prefecture Saturday, authorities said, adding no tsunami warning was issued. The Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) said the tremor occurred at 1.08 a.m. at the Hyuganada seaside area and at the depth of 40 km, reports Xinhua news agency.

Russia toughens posture amid Ukraine tensions

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Moscow, Jan 22: With tens of thousands of Russian troops positioned near Ukraine, the Kremlin has kept the US and its allies guessing about its next moves in the worst security crisis to emerge between Moscow and the West since the Cold War.

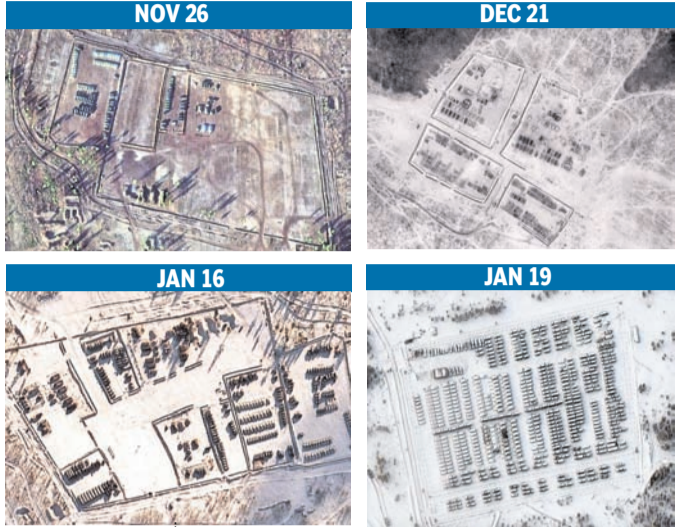
The military muscle-flexing reflects a bold attempt by the Kremlin to halt decades of NATO expansion after the end of the Cold War. In talks with the United States, Russia demands legally binding guarantees that the alliance will not embrace Ukraine and other former Soviet nations, or place weapons there. It also wants NATO to pull back its forces from countries in Central and Eastern Europe that joined the alliance since the 1990s.

Putin has described NATO membership for Ukraine and the others as well as the alliance's weapons deployments there as a red line for Moscow, warning that he would order unspecified "military-technical measures" if the demands aren't met.

Putin pointed to NATO drills with the Ukrainian military, increasingly frequent visits of the alliance warships in the Black Sea and the flights of US bombers near Crimea to emphasize the urgency of Russia's security demands. He argued that by creating training centers in Ukraine, Western powers can establish a military foothold there even without its joining NATO.

"We have nowhere to retreat," Putin said. "They have taken it to the point where we simply must tell them 'Stop!'"

Putin noted with satisfaction that Russia has caused a "certain stress" in the West. "It's necessary to keep them in that condition for as long as possible," he said in



Amid fears of an imminent attack, Russia also has refused to rule out the possibility of military deployments to the Caribbean, and President Putin has reached out to leaders opposed to the West has further upped the ante by announcing more military drills in the region

November, ordering his diplomats to push for binding guarantees against NATO expansion.

"At this stage, the parties don't intend to compromise and want to shift responsibility for a potential conflict," said Kirill Rogov, a Moscow-based independent analyst. Adding to an estimated 100,000 troops deployed near Ukraine, Russia also has moved more troops from Siberia and the Far East for joint drills with its ally Belarus, which also borders Ukraine. In those exercises, Russian military units have moved to areas near Belarus' southern border, which is about 75 kilometers from Kyiv.

Earlier this week, the Russian Defense Ministry also announced a series of naval maneuvers in

the Black Sea and more distant areas such as the Mediterranean, northeastern Atlantic and the Pacific. The exercises that will start this month and last through February would involve over 140 ships, dozens of aircraft and more than 10,000 personnel.

After the US and its allies rejected Russia's demands for a halt to NATO expansion, Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov kept the door open for the deployment of military assets to Cuba and Venezuela.

Defence aid of \$200mn from US to Ukraine

Kyiv: The first shipment of the United States' \$200 million security support package for Ukraine arrived in Kyiv, the US Embassy said Saturday. The delivery followed US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit to Kyiv this week amid concerns from Kyiv and its Western allies over tens of thousands of Russian troops amassed at the border with Ukraine. Washington approved the \$200 million package in December. "The United States will continue providing such assistance to support Ukraine's Armed Forces in their ongoing effort to defend Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity against Russian aggression," it said on Facebook. Ukraine's defence minister thanked the US for the aid.

NYC Mayor receives first salary in crypto

AGENCIES

Washington, Jan 22: Even in the midst of a crypto slump, New York City Mayor Eric Adams isn't backing out of his plans to take his first three paychecks in Bitcoin and Ethereum. Bitcoin fell beneath \$36,000 Friday dragging the entire cryptocurrency market cap below \$2 trillion.

The newly elected Mayor Eric Adams officially received his first paycheck yesterday, which was converted to Bitcoin and Ethereum via Coinbase's Direct Deposit, media report says.

Adams announced he would take his first three paychecks in Bitcoin last November (which, of course, was just before Bitcoin reached a record \$69,000). The move came out of a Twitter exchange between Adams and Miami Mayor Francis Suarez, who said he would receive his next paycheck in Bitcoin. Adams wanted to take things a bit further; though, electing to get not one, but three paychecks in digital currency, as part of his bid to turn NYC into "the center of cryptocurrency."

'MASTER OF MINDFULNESS' Influential Zen Buddhist monk passes away at 95



REUTERS

Washington, Jan 22: Thich Nhat Hanh, the Zen Buddhist monk, poet and peace activist who in the 1960s came to prominence as an opponent of the Vietnam War, died Saturday aged 95 surrounded by his followers in the temple where his spiritual journey began.

"The International Plum Village Community of Engaged Buddhism announces that our beloved teacher Thich Nhat Hanh passed away peacefully at Tu Hieu Temple in Hue, Vietnam," said his official Twitter account.

He suffered a stroke in 2014 which left him unable to speak and returned to Vietnam to live out his final days in the Hue, his place of birth.

Born Nguyen Xuan Bao in 1926, he was ordained as a monk as modern Vietnam's founding revolutionary Ho Chi Minh led efforts to liberate the Southeast Asian country from its French colonial rulers.

Thich Nhat Hanh's works and promotion of the idea of mindfulness and meditation have enjoyed a renewed popularity as the world reels from the effects of a coronavirus pandemic that has killed over a million people and upended daily life.

"Hope is important, because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear a hardship today. If you can refrain from hoping, you can bring yourself entirely into the present moment and discover the joy that is already here," wrote Thich Nhat Hanh.

RESIDENTS OF BORDER CITY BRACE FOR THE UNKNOWN



KHARKIV: Residents in Ukraine's second biggest city Kharkiv said they hoped for the best but would prepare for the worst, as Russia massed tens of thousands of troops near Ukraine's borders and diplomatic talks failed to produce a breakthrough.

Kharkiv, an industrial city in eastern Ukraine that is home to tank, aircraft and tractor factories, lies 42 km (26 miles) from the Russian border. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy has identified it as a possible target of a Russian attack.

Kharkiv's mayor, Igor Terekhov, has said the city of 1.4 million will be "calm and collected" and he would not allow anybody to take it. Interviewed

this week, some residents said they would stay and fight, others might move.

Zelenskiy said in an interview published Friday that an attack on Kharkiv was "feasible", though a spokesman later said the president was laying out a hypothetical scenario.

IT programmer Anton Sergeev thought Russia may be just sabre-rattling, and recalled an unsuccessful attempt by Russian-backed separatist forces to capture the city in 2014. "They already were 'welcomed' here so they have learned it's better to stay away. Or they will go back home in zinc coffins. And their mothers will cry," he said.

Run? No. No way! I was born here. I grew up here. I am staying no matter what. And if I have to join the city defence, I'll do it
OLEKSIY KORMYLETS | RESIDENT OF KHARKIV

'Germany will not supply weapons to Kyiv for now'

Berlin: Berlin is ruling out arms deliveries to Ukraine in the standoff with Russia for now, German Defence Minister Christine Lambrecht said in an interview published Saturday, a few days after Britain started supplying Kyiv with anti-tank weapons.

"I can understand the wish to support Ukraine, and that's exactly what we are doing already," Lambrecht told the Welt am Sonntag weekly.

"Ukraine will receive a complete field hospital together with the necessary training in February, all co-financed by Germany for 5.3 million euros (\$6.01 million)," she said, not-



ing that Germany has been treating severely injured Ukrainian troops in its military hospitals for years. But Berlin is not ready to supply

Kyiv with weapons for the time being, the minister said.

"We have to do everything to de-escalate. Currently arms deliveries would not be helpful in this respect, there is agreement on this in the German government," Lambrecht said.

"The most powerful weapon... is for NATO allies, EU member states and the G7 to make it clear (to Russia) that every fresh aggression will be answered with massive consequences."

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, however, has stressed Berlin's policy of not supplying lethal weapons to conflict zones.

MARCH FOR LIFE



Anti-abortion activists attend the annual 'March for Life', in Washington

REUTERS

After loss, Trump ordered Pentagon to seize voting machines

"EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY, THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE SHALL SEIZE, COLLECT, RETAIN AND ANALYZE ALL MACHINES, EQUIPMENT, ELECTRONICALLY STORED INFORMATION, AND MATERIAL RECORDS REQUIRED FOR RETENTION," SAID THE THREE-PAGE DRAFT

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Washington, Jan 22: A draft executive order written by Donald Trump's White House in the weeks after his defeat in the 2020 election directed the nation's top military leader to seize voting machines, a report said Friday.

The explosive document, released by the National Archives and obtained by Politico, highlights the extreme measures Trump may have been willing to take to cling to power against the will of voters who picked Joe Biden to be

their next president.

Dated December 16 2020, the order sought to appoint a special counsel to bring charges on any fraud allegations that arose from the seizures. But it was never signed.

It is among 750-plus records turned over to the House of Representatives select committee investigating the 2021 Capitol assault after the Supreme Court rejected Trump's appeal to block their release.

The document reprises many of the debunked conspiracy theories about hacked voting machines



that were pushed by figures in Trump's orbit now being targeted

by congressional investigators, including right-wing attorney Sidney

Powell. She falsely told reporters the election had been targeted by "communist money through Venezuela, Cuba, and likely China."

Powell and former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani led unsuccessful efforts to have courts throw out election results in key swing states in the weeks after Trump's defeat.

The draft order bears similarities with a plot outlined in a Powerpoint presentation to keep Trump in office that former White House chief of staff Mark Meadows turned over to the select committee last year.

That document envisaged US

Marshals seizing ballots for a 50-state hand recount.

The draft executive order that emerged Friday focuses specifically on touchscreen ballot-marking devices made by Dominion that were used in Georgia, where a hand recount and machine recount affirmed Biden's win.

It repeats false allegations about Dominion being "owned or heavily controlled and influenced by foreign agents, countries, and interests" and alleging that its machines are deliberately designed to create "systemic fraud."

of the day quote

We are already in 2022 and there are still many people staying in rented premises. In the interest of consumers, we as developers feel the Centre should consider something on the interest subvention

RAJAN N BANDEKAR | PRESIDENT, NATIONAL REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Given by conservative estimate of each hotspot enabling 2-3 direct and indirect employment opportunities, the creation of 10 million hotspots as per the NDCP target by 2022 would potentially generate 20-30 million job opportunity in the small and medium scale sectors

K RAJARAMAN | TELECOM SECRETARY

We targeted a young crowd earlier but are now looking at even those in the age group of 40-55 years who need not be cycling enthusiasts, considering the advantages of our product that comes with three modes

JITHU SUKUMARAN NAIR | CEO AND FOUNDER, VAAN ELECTRIC MOBILITY

SHORT TAKES

FabIndia plans ₹4K crore IPO

New Delhi: Lifestyle retail brand FabIndia plans to raise up to Rs 4,000 crore through an initial public offer and in a novel approach, the company's promoters also plan to gift more than 7 lakh shares to artisans and farmers. Saturday, the company filed the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) with markets watchdog Sebi for the offer that will include fresh issue of shares worth up to Rs 500 crore. Besides, there will be an Offer For Sale (OFS) of up to 2,50,50,543 shares. Market sources said the Initial Public Offer (IPO) is expected to be worth around Rs 4,000 crore.

PFS unable to hold board meeting

New Delhi: Power solution provider PTC India arm PTC India Financial Services (PFS) board could not hold its scheduled board meeting Saturday in the absence of all independent directors, a source said. Wednesday, the three independent directors -- Kamlesh Shivji Vikamsey, Santosh B Nayar and Thomas Mathew -- resigned en masse from the board of PFS citing corporate governance issues. The source told PTI that the PFS cannot hold board meeting in the absence of all three independent directors as per the norms of Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI). The source also stated that now the company will have to seek SEBI permission or exemption for holding its board meeting.

OVL to produce gas from Brazil

New Delhi: ONGC Videsh Ltd, the overseas investment arm of state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), has declared a 2019 gas discovery in deepsea block BM-SEAL-4, Brazil, located in the Sergipe Alagoas Basin. Brazil's Petrobras is the operator of the block with 75 per cent Participating Interest (PI) while OVL has the remaining 25 per cent stake. The company said it after detailed evaluation (has) now enters into the development stage with the submission of the Declaration of Commerciality (DoC) for the block BM-SEAL-4.



We have requested Finance Minister to allow domestic travel for individuals and corporates to be a deductible expense in their IT returns

GURBAKSH SINGH KOHLI | VICE PRESIDENT, FEDERATION OF HOTEL & RESTAURANT ASSOCIATIONS

WEF ANNUAL MEETING SHIFTED

The World Economic Forum (WEF) announced that it will hold its 2022 annual meeting from May 22 to 26 in Davos-Klosters, Switzerland. "Under the theme, 'working Together, restoring Trust', the Annual Meeting 2022 will be the first global in-person leadership event since the start of the pandemic," the WEF said in a statement



Cryptos suffer \$1tn loss as Bitcoin tanks

The crypto crash came as the US Federal Reserve raised the possibility of boosting interest rates as soon as March and withdrawing stimulus from the market

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 22: Bitcoin, along with other digital cryptocurrencies, crashed to its lowest level on Saturday and the continuing meltdown has wiped out over \$1 trillion from the global crypto market value.

Bitcoin was hovering at \$35,000 per coin and the largest digital asset by market value has lost nearly 50 per cent since reaching its peak in November 2021. Bitcoin hit an all-time high of roughly \$69,000 in November.

The crypto crash came as the US Federal Reserve raised the possibility of boosting interest rates as soon as March and withdrawing stimulus from the market.

Other digital currencies,

Crypto is reacting to the same kind of dynamics that are weighing on risk-assets globally. Unfortunately for some of the mature projects like BTC, there is so much cross-correlation within the crypto asset class it's almost a certainty that it falls, at least temporarily in a broader alt-coin valuation contraction

STEPHANE OUELLETTE | CEO AND CO-FOUNDER, FRNT FINANCIAL



■ Bitcoin, the largest digital asset, lost more than 12% Friday and dropped below \$36,000 to its lowest level since July

■ Since its peak of roughly \$69,000 in November, it has lost over 45% of its value

■ Bitcoin's decline since that November high has wiped out more than \$600 billion in market value

Ethereum, Finance Coin and Cardano also witnessed similar meltdowns. Solana, Dogecoin and Shiba Inu also saw massive drops. Bitcoin has crashed below \$36,000

– a level below which "there is not much support until the \$30,000 level," Edward Moya, senior market analyst at Oanda, said in a note. Bitcoin's decline since that November high has wiped out more than \$600 billion in its market value.

Crypto assets such as Bitcoin have matured from an obscure asset class with few users to an integral part of the digital asset revolution, raising financial stability concerns.

TAAI seeks 'One India One Tourism' approach in Budget

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 22: The Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) has sought 'One India One Tourism' approach, which is inclusive of 'One Tax Structure,' in the forthcoming Union Budget to revive the pandemic-hit domestic travel, tourism and hospitality industry.

Besides, the Association has sought bringing Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) under the ambit of GST to make air travel "more viable" for all stakeholders as well as extension of the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS). There are several aspects which can be expected in the upcoming Budget to support the entire sector of 'travel tourism and hospitality,' which will help in making this sector revive and survive, TAAI, which is headed by Jyoti Mayal, said in a statement Saturday.

"For this, it is extremely important for both the central and state governments to work in tandem to facilitate this sector and support it to be included in the concurrent list to get Industry status to make it more structured," the Association said. TAAI said the government should strive to increase the disposable income of the middle classes to spur that discretionary spending.

According to the travel agents body, concrete steps should be taken to improve cash flows and reduce the working capital burden on startups, existing MSMEs and SMEs along with access to easy credit, reducing income tax rate and GST rate, abolishment of tax collected at source (TCS) and wage support with ease of business.

Besides, strengthening MSMEs, creating a fund of funds scheme for technology adoption for use in industry 4.0, reviving the Credit Linked Capital Subsidy Scheme (CLCSS) for technology upgradation are the other steps TAAI is expecting in the forthcoming Union Budget, it said. The Association is also looking at a global bidding fund in the Union Budget 2022-23 to enable bidding support to Indian MICE companies to bring global MICE events to India, as per TAAI.

Inflation skyrockets in Sri Lanka; food prices at record high

This was for the second consecutive month after inflation recorded double digit growth for the first time in November since the index came to be compiled from 2014

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, Jan 22: Sri Lanka's benchmark inflation rate, measured by the National Consumer Price Index, accelerated to 14 per cent in December 2021, up from 11.1 per cent, the government statistics

office said Saturday, amidst a severe foreign exchange crisis.

This was for the second consecutive month after inflation recorded double digit growth for the first time in November since the index came to be compiled from 2014.

Food prices jumped 6.3 per cent while non-food prices rose 1.3 per cent in December, according to the National Consumer Price Index.

"The food sub-index was up 21.5 per cent in 12 months to December 2021, while non-foods also rose 7.6 per cent in the months," the statistics office said in a statement. As soon as the Covid-19 pan-



dem broke out in 2020, the government imposed import restrictions to try and stop dwindling of foreign reserves.

Sri Lanka currently banks on the Indian economic assistance

Early this month, the Indian government announced a billion-dollar assistance package in addition to other balance of payment support to Sri Lanka

with credit lines being made available to finance fuel and food imports.

The island nation is currently facing a severe foreign exchange crisis with falling reserves. The

Q3 RESULTS

ICICI Bank profit rises nearly 19%

New Delhi: ICICI Bank Saturday reported an 18.8 per cent jump in its December quarter consolidated net profit to Rs 6,536.55 crore, aided by growth in interest income and decline in provisions. The country's second largest private sector lender by assets had posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 5,498.15 crore in the same quarter of the previous fiscal. However, total income was lower at Rs 39,865.80 crore in the third quarter this fiscal compared to Rs 40,419.08 crore in the same quarter a year ago, according to a regulatory filing. On a standalone basis, the bank recorded a 25 per cent rise in the post-tax profit to Rs 6,194 crore for the quarter, up from Rs 4,939.59 crore in the October-December 2020. Total income on standalone basis increased to Rs 27,069.67 crore from Rs 24,416 crore in the year-ago period. At the same time, net interest income (NII) increased by 23 per cent year-on-year to Rs 12,236 crore from Rs 9,912 crore in the same quarter in the previous financial year, it said.

Yes Bank net profit surges 77%

New Delhi: Private sector lender Yes Bank Saturday reported a 77 per cent jump in profit to Rs 266.43 crore for the third quarter ended December 2021. The bank had posted a profit of Rs 150.77 crore in the October-December quarter a year ago. However, total income during the quarter under review declined to Rs 5,632.03 crore from Rs 6,408.53 crore in the same period last fiscal, Yes Bank said in a regulatory filing. Net interest income also slipped by 31 per cent to Rs 1,764 crore as compared to Rs 2,560 crore in the same quarter a year ago. The bank's gross non-performing assets (GNPAs) as a percentage of assets eased to 14.65 per cent during the quarter from 15.36 per cent in the year-ago period. On the other hand, net NPAs increased to 5.29 per cent as against 4.04 per cent at the end of the third quarter previous fiscal. Provisions other than tax and contingencies came down significantly to Rs 374.64 crore from Rs 2,089 crore.

10% DROP FROM RECORD HIGHS Nasdaq plunges into correction territory

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 22: The US stock market fell Friday as the sell-off in tech stocks intensified after Netflix posted lacklustre earnings – with the Nasdaq Composite falling deeper into correction territory and posting its worst week since 2020, Forbes reported.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 1.3 per cent, around 450 points, while the S&P 500 lost 1.9 per cent, and the tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite fell 2.7 per cent.

The Nasdaq fell further into correction territory – over 10 per cent from its record highs last November – and has plunged over 7 per cent this week alone, its worst since October 2020, the report said.

Shares of streaming giant Netflix dragged down the index, plunging 22 per cent Friday after the company's fourth-quarter earnings report showed a slowdown in subscriber growth.



Streaming rival Disney fell nearly 7 per cent, while other big tech names like Tesla and Amazon lost over 5 per cent and 6 per cent, respectively, Forbes reported.

Tech stocks have been getting hammered recently, largely thanks to a continuing surge in government bond yields this week, with the US 10-year Treasury hitting a high of 1.9 per cent Wednesday.

Investors have remained focused on the Federal Reserve and how it will deal with surging inflation, with the central bank tightening its monetary policy and preparing to raise interest rates as soon as March.

FRL directors seek loan from Amazon



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 22: Future Retail's independent directors have asked e-commerce giant Amazon if it is willing to fund Rs 3,500 crore to repay the retail company's lenders.

"FRL is in need for cash infusion urgently in order to repay its lenders. FRL is required to pay its lenders Rs 3,500 crore by January 29, failing which it will be classified as an NPA," said the letter dated January 21.

"Since you are objecting to the sale of small-format stores, the proceeds of which were to be used to repay lenders and thereby avoid NPA classification, please confirm that you are willing to fund this amount by Monday through an unsecured, long-term loan, subordinated to FRL's existing lenders or any other mutually suitable and legally acceptable structure."

Besides, the letter to e-commerce giant said, "If you do so, FRL will use such funds in order to repay FRL's existing lenders. Alternatively, you are also free to engage with the lenders so that we do not fall foul of our OTR process or obligations."

Accordingly, the independent directors asked the e-commerce giant to provide the confirmations for such funds by January 22, 2022.

"Once you have provided these confirmations in writing and agree to infuse Rs 3,500 crore in order to repay FRL's lenders by January 29, 2022, we would be happy to assess a detailed proposal and meet Amazon India Head Abhijeet Muzumdar."

Furthermore, the letter asked

Notably, the question to Amazon was posted after the e-commerce giant in an earlier letter to independent directors objected to the sale of FRL's small-format stores

Amazon, "Coming to the specific aspects of your proposal – we note that your letter refers to a potential transaction between Samara Capital and FRL as a 'solution'."

"In this regard, you are requested to confirm if Amazon can act on behalf of Samara Capital and has the authority to negotiate and finalise such transaction on its behalf."

It asked Amazon to confirm the structure for the proposed transaction, and that the Manager of Samara Capital is owned-and-controlled by resident Indians.

"As you know, FRL is in the multi-brand retail sector and FDI in this sector is restricted. You are also aware that Amazon's transaction in Future Coupons, has resulted in regulatory scrutiny, including by the Competition Commission of India, as well as enquiries by the Enforcement Directorate."

"It is therefore critical that any investment being proposed is in compliance with all applicable laws, including FDI laws, CCI regulations and SEBI regulations, and that any such transaction should not raise further regulatory scrutiny."

Jio finishes 5G plans for 1K cities

AUCTION FOR 5G SPECTRUM IS EXPECTED TO BE HELD IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF THE NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR

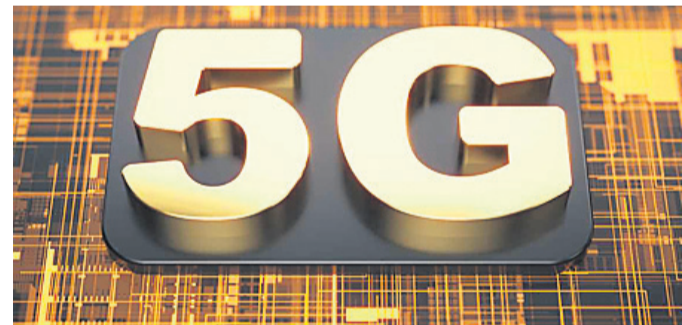
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 22: Jio has completed 5G network coverage planning for top 1,000 cities in the country and is augmenting its fibre capacity as well as running pilot access sites, a senior company official said during a presentation.

The company has created teams to focus on dedicated solutions for 5G deployment in India, Reliance Jio Infocomm President Kiran Thomas said Friday evening.

"5G coverage planning has been completed for 1,000 top cities across the country. Jio has been doing trials on advanced use cases across healthcare and industrial automation on its 5G network," Jio said in a statement.

Thomas during the presentation said that the company is running a 5G pilot in multiple cities and network planning for the roll out of 5G using 3D maps and ray tracing technology is going on. "We are using the most modern



approaches towards network planning, especially 3D maps and ray tracing technology because 5G is pretty unique technology, which requires very advanced network planning techniques, and we are undertaking that for all of India, so that as and when the approvals are received for us to roll out this network, we will be well geared up to prioritise our rollout, where we can make the maximum contribution," Thomas said.

Reliance Jio reported to close the third quarter which ended December 31 with net addition of

1.02 crore customers year-on-year (YoY) at 42.1 crore. The subscriber base, however, declined on a quarter-on-quarter basis.

"We closed the quarter at 421 million subscribers. That was a reduction of 8.4 million, but the gross addition continued to be very strong 34.6 million. And the reduction was really on account of SIM consolidation and some of the less active customers, now with tariff increases, etc, looking at consolidating uses in a single SIM," Reliance Jio head of strategy Anshuman Thakur said.

country is grappling with a shortage of almost all essentials due to the lack of dollars to pay for the imports.

Additionally, power cuts are imposed at peak hours as the state power entity is unable to obtain fuel to run turbines.

The state fuel entity has stopped oil supplies as the electricity board has large unpaid bills. The only refinery was recently shut as it was unable to pay dollars for crude imports.

Early this month, the Indian government announced a billion-dollar assistance package in addition to other balance of payment support to Sri Lanka.

The billion-dollar loan credit facility is to be used to avert a food crisis while allowing for the import of items and medicines. Additionally, there will be \$500 million for importing fuel from India.

The Sri Lankan government is also in talks with China to overcome the current financial crisis. During the visit of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi to Colombo earlier this month, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa requested Beijing's assistance in mitigating his country's deepening forex crisis and spiralling external debt, saying it will help Colombo to the best of its capacity.

Medvedev wins over crowd

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Melbourne, Jan 22: As Daniil Medvedev sat courtside trying to re-hydrate during a changeover, an image of nine-time Australian Open champion Novak Djokovic flashed up in the stadium behind him.

It was in the third set Saturday, and it was like the absent No.1 was looking over the shoulder of the player who is effectively the No.1 seed at the year's first Grand Slam tournament.

Medvedev, who lost last year's Australian Open final to Djokovic but avenged that with a victory over the Serb for the US Open title, reached the fourth round for the fourth straight year at Melbourne Park with a 6-4, 6-4, 6-2 win over Botic van de Zandschulp.

The 25-year-old Russian was a conspicuous fan favorite on Margaret Court Arena, too, two days after being unsettled by the boos and jeers of a parochial crowd on Rod Laver Arena when he ended the run of mercurial Aussie Nick Kyrgios.

He was critical of a lack of respect in that match—mostly about the noise between first and second serves—and this time offered some relationship advice to the crowd.

Medvedev later clarified he didn't have a problem with the Australian crowds and had been fully expecting to have them against him when he played Kyrgios—just not while he was in his service motion.

Medvedev avoided a showdown with Djokovic after the world's top-ranked player had his visa canceled and was deported on the eve of the tournament for failing to meet Australia's strict COVID-19 vaccination criteria.

He also avoided another match against an Australian in the fourth round when wildcard entry Chris O'Connell lost to Maxime Cressy 6-2, 6-7(6-8), 6-3, 6-2.

Cressy's win means there's two 24-year-old Americans who'll be in the fourth round of a major for their first time.

No.70-ranked Cressy is in his fourth Grand Slam tournament. No.20-ranked Taylor Fritz finally made it in his 22nd attempt, with a 6-0, 3-6, 3-6, 6-4, 6-3 win over No.15 Roberto Bautista Agut.



Fritz will next play fourth-seeded Stefanos Tsitsipas, a runner-up at the French Open and semifinalist in Australia last year, who fended off Benoit Paire 6-3, 7-5, 6-7(2-7), 6-4. No.9 Felix Auger-Aliassime progressed with a 6-4, 6-1, 6-1 win over No.24 Dan Evans.

On the women's side, two-time Grand Slam champion Simona Halep is into Week 2 at Melbourne Park for the fifth consecutive year after a 6-2, 6-1 victory over Danka Kovinic. She'll be joined by second-seeded Aryna Sabalenka, who advanced with a 4-6, 6-3, 6-1 win over No.31 Marketa Vondrousova. A contender for the No.1 rank-

ing—Sabalenka can potentially overtake Ash Barty depending on results here—the 23-year-old from Belarus admits her serve is still a work in progress.

It's something she'll be working on ahead of her next match against No.115-ranked Kaia Kanepi, who has reached the quarterfinals six times at Grand Slam events—but only once since 2013 and never in Australia.

In other third-round matches, 27th-seeded Danielle Collins of the US rallied from a set and a break down to beat 19-year-old Clara Tauson 4-6, 6-4, 7-5. She'll next meet No.19 Elise Mertens, who advanced

6-2, 6-2 over Zhang Shuai. No.7 Iga Swiatek, the 2020 French Open champion, beat No.25 Daria Kasatkina 6-2, 6-3.

None of the other players remaining the women's draw has won as many tour-level titles as Halep's 23. Halep's next opponent will be Alize Cornet, who celebrated her 32nd birthday with a 4-6, 6-4, 6-2 victory over No.29 Tamara Zidansek, a 2021 French Open semifinalist.

Cornet followed up her upset of No.3 Garbiñe Muguruza by reaching the fourth round at the Australian Open for the first time since 2009.

MUST-WIN ASIAN CUP GAME

India women eye goals against Chinese Taipei

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Navi Mumbai, Jan 22: Hosts India will need to be more clinical with their finishing when they face a struggling Chinese Taipei in a must-win group match of the women's Asian Cup here Sunday.

India were held to a goalless draw by lower-ranked Iran in their tournament opener, while Chinese Taipei were blanked 4-0 by eight-time champions China.

A FIFA World Cup play-offs spot within their grasp, India are seeking to meet their head coach Thomas Dennerby's 'realistic target' of making the quarterfinals, for which they will need to win the next match at all costs, as the home team is scheduled to play Group A heavyweights China in its last league fixture.

A win for India, which is hosting the continental showpiece for the second time after 1979, will virtually send the country into the quarterfinals of the 12-nation tournament. Besides the two top teams, two third-placed sides across the three groups will also qualify for quarterfinals.

All the semifinalists of the ongoing tournament will directly qualify for the 2023 FIFA World

Bala Devi bats for India's chances

NEW DELHI: Indian women's football path-breaker N Bala Devi feels the team has enough quality to do well in the ongoing AFC Asian Cup and secure a maiden qualification to next FIFA World Cup. "I have confidence in our squad and what they can achieve. I am positive about our chances, especially because we are playing at home," she told FIFA.Com. "Can we qualify for the World Cup? I think so. It's been tough for the last two or three years to test ourselves in competitive matches. But I feel our level is high enough to compete and that we have enough quality to make it through."

Cup in Australia and New Zealand. Two more teams from the remaining four quarterfinalists will also get direct berths to the World Cup if Australia make it to the semifinals of this tournament, which is highly probable.

That means even the teams that lose in quarterfinals can directly qualify for the World Cup if they win the play-off matches of the AFC Asian Cup February 2 and 4. The two losing quarterfinalists

will feature in the Intercontinental play-offs.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Indian team had the luxury of a good number of exposure tours and international matches last year, including against former World Cup runners-up side Brazil and that kept the team in good stead against Iran, against whom they created plethora of chances but failed to convert.

Sunday, they would be desperate to score their first goal of the marquee tournament. The hosts are playing without their star striker Bala Devi, who is recovering from a surgery, but they still dominated most of the 90 minutes against Iran.

Hammered by China in their first game, Chinese Taipei are ranked 39th in the world as against India's 55th, and they will have their task cut out against the hosts.

As far as past results are concerned, Chinese Taipei have a better head-to-head record, winning seven out of nine matches between the two nations.

However, the last time the two sides met India had emerged 1-0 winners in an international friendly at Hamad Town, Bahrain October 13, 2021.



INDIA LOOK FOR CONSOLATION WIN



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cape Town, Jan 22: Indian team's strategy is expected to undergo paradigm shift with some players getting a subtle yet stern message to lift their games as they face an embarrassing possibility of a clean sweep against South Africa in the third ODI, here Sunday.

India's strategy looked completely out of sync with modern day white ball game as the batters failed to keep the momentum in the middle overs and more importantly the bowlers, save Jasprit Bumrah, looked club class and without ideas of getting breakthroughs.

In two matches, India have been only able to pick up seven wickets—four in the first game when Proteas batted first and only three in the second.

Ravichandran Ashwin and especially Bhuvneshwar Kumar, the two senior-most bowlers looked far from threatening and the young Proteas batters like Rassie van der Dussen, Janneman Malan along with seniors like Quinton de Kock have feasted on the pedestrian stuff dished out by them.

With the two having flopped completely, it needs to be seen whether Rahul Dravid, the man who is currently calling all the shots as far as tactics is concerned, takes a dim view and at last try out Jayant Yadav and Deepak Chahar in the next game which would lend some freshness to the attack.

Worse, the first two games were played on a Boland Park strip that didn't have a lot of pace and bounce and even skipper KL Rahul admitted that conditions were more familiar with what they get back home, compared to what they are

used to getting in South Africa.

However at Newlands, there will be more pace and bounce on the track and the Indian team that has been perennially struggling would want to avoid the ignominy of a 0-3 loss.

For skipper Rahul, the whole tour, save his match-winning hundred in the first Test, has been a nightmare. Although he is being seen as a long-term future leader, there hasn't been any spark whatsoever in his leadership that would make anyone sit up and feel that he is the one cut out for the job.

There hasn't been any tactical improvisations in the two games so far which would inspire confidence in his leadership abilities.

Add to that, his own style of batting at the top of the order is outdated in modern ODIs and his inability to rotate the strike for the better part is also creating pressure on the later batters, who aren't as adept at maneuvering the strike.

It is a foregone conclusion that once Rohit Sharma is back in action, Rahul will lose his spot at the top of the order with Shikhar Dhawan scoring runs and at a better clip compared to his younger partner.

Virat Kohli may have scored 51 in the first game but what is visible is his lack of energy on the field having been sacked from ODI captaincy.

He is doing his routines without getting too involved. While it is fair that he wants Rahul to grow into the job somewhere the infectious energy that he brings into the field and which normally rubs off on other younger players has been missing in the two games. Rahul would do well to imbibe some of it from his former captain.

Bagan test awaits topsy-turvy Odisha

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Margao, Jan 22: ATK Mohun Bagan will be eager to relaunch their top-of-the-table surge when they take on volatile Odisha FC in a rescheduled Indian Super League game here Sunday.

ATK Mohun Bagan were last in action January 5, playing out a 2-2 draw against Hyderabad FC. The Mariners saw their next three games get postponed including the one against Odisha, meaning they have only played nine matches so far pocketing 15 points.

A win Sunday would take them to the top-four with two games in hand. ATKMB bolstered their backline with the addition of Sandesh Jhingam, who returned to the fold from Croatian side HNK Šibenik.

The green and maroons will miss the services of playmaker



Odisha FC players in action during their practice session ahead of their match against ATK Mohun Bagan

Hugo Boumous who is suspended for the tie. Boumous has been a crucial cog in ATKMB's attack. In nine ISL matches this season, he

has scored five goals and provided three assists for the club. He is currently the joint highest goal scorer for the club.

Sindhu to face Malvika in Syed Modi meet final

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Jan 22: Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu reached the women's singles final of the Syed Modi International badminton tournament after her fifth seeded Russian opponent Evgeniya Kosetskaya retired hurt midway into their semifinal here Saturday.

Sindhu, the top seed, easily pocketed the first game 21-11 before Kosetskaya conceded the second women's singles semifinal match. Former World Champion Sindhu will face compatriot Malvika Bansod in the summit clash Sunday. Malvika defeated another Indian, Anupama Upadhyaya, 19-21 21-19 21-7 in a tough three-game contest.

It was expected to be an easy outing for Sindhu going by form, world ranking as well as head-to-head record. Ranked seventh in the BWF rankings, Sindhu had defeated world number 28 Kosetskaya twice before Saturday's tie, and the Indian ace once again came out on top to extend her dominant record against the Russian.

India eves face lowly Japan



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Muscat, Jan 22: Their campaign off to a resounding start, defending champions India will look to carry on the momentum when they take on a lower-ranked Japan in their second Pool A match at the Women's Asia Cup hockey tournament here Sunday.

A win against Japan, which is very well expected going by form

and world rankings, will ensure a semifinal spot for World No.9 India.

The Indians started their Asia Cup campaign campaign with a 9-0 drubbing of Malaysia and will look to continue in the same vein in the remainder of the tournament, from which four World Cup spots are at stake.

The team that missed out on an Olympic medal by a whisker, started slowly against Malaysia Friday

but grew in confidence as the match progressed and pumped in four and five goals in both the halves to toy with the opponent's defence.

Against Malaysia, experienced striker Vandana Katariya, Navneet Kaur and Shamila Devi scored a brace each through field strikes besides Lalremsiami and Monika with Deep Grace Ekka converting a penalty corner for India.

The Indian forward-line did exceptionally well against Malaysia, but what remains a matter of concern is that defence has hardly been tested in the first match.

Even though Japan is ranked 14th in the world, India's chief coach Janneke Schopman is very well aware of the challenge her side is going to face against the reigning Asian Games champions Sunday.

Just like India, Japan too started their campaign on a positive note, spanking Singapore 6-0 on Friday. India, however, hold an edge over Japan in recent outings having beaten them 2-1 in a "Test event" in 2019.

The Indians also defeated Japan by 2-1 margin in the final of the Tokyo Olympic test event in August 2019. India will play their last pool game against Singapore Monday.

ASIAN GAMES MEDALLIST BHOWMICK PASSES AWAY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Jan 22: Legendary former India footballer and celebrated coach Subhas Bhowmick died after prolonged illness in the wee hours of Saturday, according to family sources.

The former India mid-fielder, who was part of the 1970 Asian Games bronze medal-winning member, was suffering from kidney and diabetes related ailments for a long time and breathed his last around 3.30 am, said a family source. He was 72.

"He had to undergo dialysis regularly for about three and half months. He also underwent bypass surgery about 23 years ago. Recently, he was admitted to a private hospital in Ekbalpur with a chest infection," he said.

After hanging up his boots, Bhowmick quickly switched to coaching making his debut on the field as the coach of Mohun Bagan before joining East Bengal where he became most successful guiding red and gold to the ASEAN Cup title in 2003.

Bhowmick also coached East Bengal to successive National league titles and replicated the success with Churchill Brothers as its technical director as he was known as the 'Jose Mourinho' of Kolkata Maidan.

A muscular right winger, he shook the opponent's defence with his powerful dribbling skills as he ruled the Maidan for almost a decade after making his debut at the tender age of 19 years from the Rajasthan Club.

After playing one season for East Bengal, Bhowmick joined the rival club Mohun Bagan where he played there for three years and returned to the red-and-gold brigade.

For India, he was part of the Asian Games-bronze medal winning squad in 1970 as he also represented the country in the next edition in 1974. He also scored a hat-trick against the Philippines in the Merdeka Cup in 1971.

His career was also marred with controversy as he was arrested after being found guilty in bribery case and was jailed back in 2005.