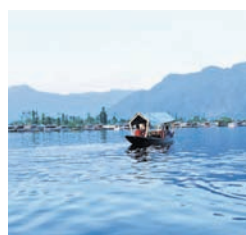




## SILVER LINING

Actor Kriti Kharbanda says, year 2020 has taught her to love harder and live in moments

LEISURE P2



## KASHMIR SEEKS \$4BN

J&K plans to attract investments worth \$4bn in the next 2-3 years and would provide security to businesses there

TWO STATES P7



## LAKHVI HELD IN PAK

26/11 attack mastermind and LeT operations commander Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi was arrested in Pakistan

INTERNATIONAL P10

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IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Why is the govt offering it for free? Elections are still 4 years away!

## After long wait, OSCBC operational

**BHUBANESWAR:** Nearly after 27 years, Odisha State Commission for Backward Classes (OSCBC) started functioning in the state. Commission chairperson Justice (retired) Raghunath Biswal and other members Navaneeta Rath, Mitali Chinara and Prasanna Kumar Patra took over their charges Saturday. Justice Biswal said a database of Other Backward Classes (OBC) in the state will be prepared soon. Deserving castes will be included in the list while those to be found developed socially and economically will be excluded from the OBC list, he said. "We will implement the reservation on the recommendations of Mandal Commission," Biswal said, adding the panel will submit its report to the state after a socio-economic caste survey.

P4

# Physical classes for Std X, XII from Jan 8

Matric exam to be held between May 3 and May 15, while Plus II theory paper exams will begin May 15 and continue till June 11

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 2:** After around nine months, schools in the state will reopen for Class X and Plus II students from January 8, School and Mass Education department said in a press statement here Saturday.

All private and government-run schools along with hostels have remained closed in the state since March 17 in the wake of pandemic situation arising out of Covid-19.

The students will be taught for 100 days including Saturdays and Sundays. Classes will be held for Class X students from January 8 to April 26, and Class XII students will attend their classes from January 8 to April 28.

Board of Secondary Education (BSE) will conduct the High School Certificate (HSC) examinations from May 3 to May 15. The Council of Higher Secondary Education (CHSE) will conduct the 12th Class examinations between May 15 and June 11.

The practical exams of Class X students will be held in between April 27 and May 2, while Class XII



FILE PHOTO

## WRITTEN CONSENT

■ PARENTS TO SUBMIT WRITTEN CONSENT FOR SENDING THEIR CHILDREN TO SCHOOLS

■ IF THE CHILD ISN'T FEELING WELL, THEN S/HE WON'T BE ASKED MANDATORILY TO ATTEND CLASSES PHYSICALLY

students will appear for practical tests from April 29 to May 14, the statement said.

"This decision has been taken by the government keeping in the larger interest of the students of Class X & XII so that the students

of our state can timely appear for all competitive tests," it said.

The guidelines issued by the Health and Family Welfare department and the Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) will be followed strictly at the schools. The department has released a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the reopening of the schools.

It said only the schools outside containment zones shall be allowed to reopen and students, teachers and employees living in containment zones will not be allowed to attend the school. Online learning will continue to be the preferred mode of teaching and encouraged.

## 'Free vax' for 3 cr healthcare and frontline workers

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Jan 2:** India tested its COVID-19 vaccine delivery system with a nationwide trial Saturday as it prepares to roll out an inoculation program to stem the coronavirus pandemic.

Meanwhile, Union health minister Harsh Vardhan said that in the first phase of vaccination, free vaccine shall be provided across the nation to most prioritised beneficiaries that include one crore healthcare and two crore frontline workers.

Harsh Vardhan reviewed the preparedness for the vaccination drive at a government hospital in New Delhi Saturday and urged the public not to pay heed to anti-vaccine rumors. "We will not compromise on any protocol before approving a vaccine," he told reporters.

Pooja Moriya, a health worker in the capital who will be one of the first to be inoculated, said hospital staff has had several meetings about the vaccine and how it works. "Our seniors have told us to not be scared at all," Moriya said.

P8



People walk past a poster placed outside a government hospital during a COVID-19 vaccine delivery system trial in Hyderabad, Saturday

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## VAX DRY RUN AT 31 PLACES

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 2:** The dry run for immunisation activity started at 31 places across the state as part of the nationwide exercise, said an official Saturday.

The vaccination sites have been identified in all district headquarter hospitals and Capital Hospital in Bhubaneswar.

"Odisha is the only state where we are conducting dry run at 31 places. The dry run is conducted to ensure smooth vaccination after the rollout of a vaccine," said additional chief secretary (Health) Pradipta Mohapatra. The massive exercise comes a day after Subject Expert Committee (SEC) of the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) recommended the approval of Oxford-AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine candidate manufactured by Serum Institute of India.



Dry run for Covid vaccine underway at Capital Hospital in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

ommended the approval of Oxford-AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine candidate manufactured by Serum Institute of India.

"The Oxford Covid-19 vaccine Covishield manufactured by SII was given clearance by the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) yesterday. Keeping this in view, we expect the vaccine will arrive in the state any day this month," he added. **MORE P3**

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## FORTUNE FORECAST

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### ARIES

It is a sunny, sparkling day, and the stars spell success. If you're feeling creative, simply pick up a paintbrush or try a new recipe. However, care and caution should be the buzzwords if you are driving alone, suggest Ganesha.

### TAURUS

Your romantic relationship will be working on an overdrive today, says Ganesha. You will discover answers to the finer aspects of your love life. Overall, you will have a refreshingly creative outlook all through the day.

### GEMINI

Today, you are likely to remain transparent in all your dealings, forecasts Ganesha. You can be optimistic about your chances of success if you choose to propose to that special someone. The day will bring more pleasure than pain.

### CANCER

You will spend your day reflecting on your past and thinking what went wrong, predicts Ganesha. But keep in mind that your mistakes won't lead to the end of the world, unless you are a nuclear scientist. So get your act together, and stop brooding over your mistakes.

### LEO

You will not be in the mood to take up significant tasks today. You will want to throw your responsibilities to the wind and pursue leisurely activities. However you will still need to tackle some pressing issues.

### VIRGO

You will be bubbling with ideas today. You may face a dilemma between your obligations and present duties, which could prove to be very perplexing. New contacts turn out to be very useful. Ganesha says blood is thicker than water, and family and friends will cement their relationship with you.

### LIBRA

Ganesha says you will learn a lot from your past experiences for a shining future. You will be slightly possessive about some costly item that you own. There will be small concerns during the day about different matters, which will give you mental stress. On the whole the day will pass by nicely.

### SCORPIO

No matter how rich and successful you become, it is very important to stay grounded. Never let your success go to your head, advises Ganesha. Rudeness and overconfidence may take away everything from you and may leave you empty handed.

### SAGITTARIUS

You become your own judge today. Through introspection, you try to find you the various causes that lead to troubles in your life. Though it may take time, eventually you achieve what you want and try to find reasonable solutions for the same.

### CAPRICORN

Mounting pressure of work and responsibilities during the day may drain your energy, but not your enthusiasm, feels Ganesha. The second half of the day will be tiring, as you will be fighting a tough battle with your competitors. You'll come out triumphant from the fight as you perform smartly and get your acts right.

### AQUARIUS

Today, you will iron out any trouble with ease. But you may choose to play martyr and shoulder a bit of blame. That's quite a lot to do for others, even if it is done out of compassion.

### PISCES

Needless rigidity only serves to imprison you within outmoded walls of faulty reasoning. Inculcating some flexibility will give you some much-needed wriggle room to manoeuvre things your way for good, says Ganesha.



## FISHER LIKES HER LIFE TO BE AN OPEN BOOK

Hollywood star Isla Fisher says she likes her life to be an open book, and not pin hopes on anything. "I don't know if that's healthy or not. I've just been like that since I was a kid," Fisher said.

## EMINEM DIDN'T HAVE MONEY TO BUY TAPES

Rapper Eminem used to collect tapes but shared that as a kid he did not have enough money to buy every tape he ever wanted. "It took me about three years to get what I got right now, because I didn't have money to buy them," said the rapper.



# 2020 taught me to love harder: Kriti

**Mumbai:** While most people would agree that 2020 was one of the worst years of their lives, actress Kriti Kharbanda Saturday declared she wants to remember the year fondly while moving into a new decade with 2021.

"Looking forward to the next decade. With hope, with happiness, with positivity, with love. To the year that went by, to happy realisations, to self discovery, to fighting your demons, to it all. I will look back at 2020 and remember it fondly, for it taught me to love harder and stay strong, to living in the moment and not leave anything to tomorrow. #2021 I'm ready for you #happynewyear," the actress wrote on Instagram.

Kriti recently battled malaria and has since then resumed work. The actress informed in a recent social media post that she suffers from weakness, mood swings and other side effects despite being cured of malaria.



## SRK to return to big screen this year

**Mumbai:** Top star Shah Rukh Khan announced in a video message Saturday that he will be back on the big screen in 2021, and wished fans a belated happy new year.

Shah Rukh, however, did not divulge details about his comeback project in the message, posted on Instagram and Twitter.

"Hi everybody, it is that time of the year again where the old year is on its way out and the New Year is waiting at the entrance. Actually it has entered because I am late in conveying my wishes to all of you," he said in the three-minute video.

"I am sure 2020 has been the worst of years for everybody. But I have a way of looking at bad days, difficult times, and awful years. I believe when one is at the lowest, at the most bottom-est of their life, the good thing is there is only one way to move - upwards, higher to better places.

"So, 2020 whatever it has been is in the past now. 2021 is going to be bigger, better, brighter and more beautiful," he added.

IAN S

# Actor Babushaan shines in Signature's 2021 calendar



**BHUBANESWAR:** Signature 24 Productions, a well known event management company and production house, Saturday launched its annual calendar here featuring top Odia film actor Babushaan Mohanty. The theme for this year is 'The Generation of Tomorrow'.

Company's founder director Joyeeta Roy said, "Babushaan loves kids and the calendar's theme is something which all can relate to. Every child is special in his own way and deserves our love, support and care to prosper in life. The actor can be seen conveying similar messages on each page of the annual almanac."

All kids are unique in their own way, no matter which family they come from. They belong to the generation of tomorrow, which is why she and her associates thought of presenting a calendar on this subject, added Roy.

Babushaan, along with her star parents - Aparajita and Uttam Mohanty, launched the calendar digitally on Facebook.

"I had a great time shooting the calendar. These kids are the real stars of this project and I feel honoured to be featured in it," said the *Sister Sridevi* actor.

Kaustav Saikia, an acclaimed photographer, did the photo shoot at various locales of this city.

The lens man was all praise for the actor.

"This was my second project with Babushaan. Needless to say, he is a great talent but he has also earned my respect by his soothing demeanour," said Saikia.

The kids featured in the calendar are inmates of the shelter homes run by Odisha Patita Udhari Samiti, an NGO, production house sources said.

PNN

# Pak to acquire Dilip Kumar, Raj Kapoor's ancestral houses

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Peshawar:** Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) government Saturday approved the release of Rs 2.35 crore to purchase the ancestral houses of legendary Bollywood actors Dilip Kumar and Raj Kapoor located in the heart of this city and declared as the national heritages.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mehmud Khan formally approved the proposal, allowing the authorities concerned to purchase the ancestral havelis at a rate determined by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Communication and Works Department (C&W) a



few weeks back. Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar Muhammad Ali Asghar, following a report of the Communication and Works Department, has fixed

the price of Dilip Kumar's four marla (101 square metre) house for Rs 80.56 lakh while that of Raj Kapoor's six marla house (151.75 square metre) for Rs 1.50 crore.

After procurement, both the houses will be converted into a museum by the KP archaeology department.

The archaeology department had sent a formal request to the provincial government for releasing over Rs 2 crore for purchasing both the historic buildings, where the two greats of the Indian cinema were born and

raised in their early days before the Partition.

Raj Kapoor's ancestral home, known as Kapoor Haveli, is situated in the fabled Qissa Khwani Bazar. It was built between 1918 and 1922 by the legendary actor's grandfather Dewan Basheswarnath Kapoor.

Raj Kapoor and his uncle Trilok Kapoor were born in the building. It has been declared national heritage by the provincial government. Veteran actor Dilip Kumar's over 100-year-old ancestral house is also located in the same locality.

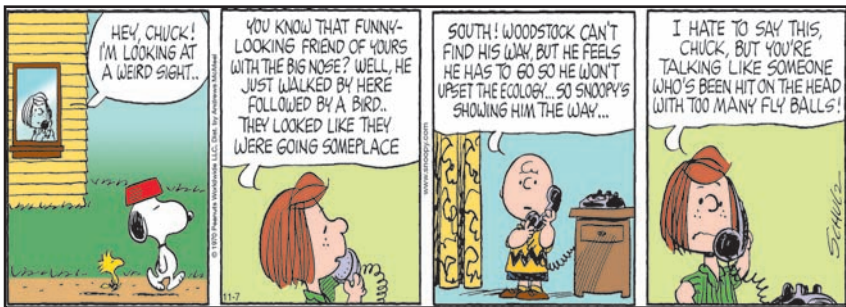
The house is in shambles and was declared as national heritage



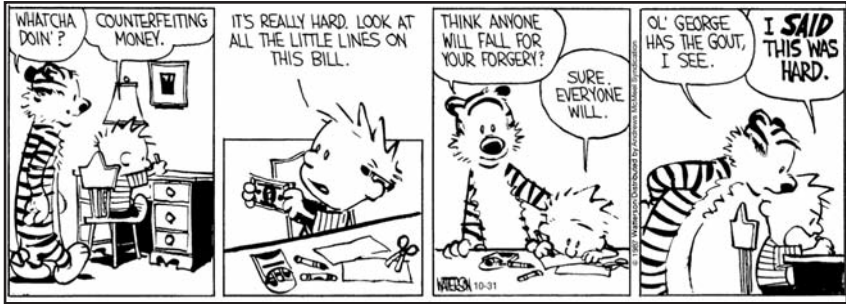
in 2014 by the then Nawaz Sharif government.

The owners of the two buildings made several attempts in the past to demolish them for constructing commercial plazas in view of their prime location but all such moves were stopped as the archaeology department wanted to preserve them, keeping in view their historic importance.

## PEANUTS



## CALVIN AND HOBBS

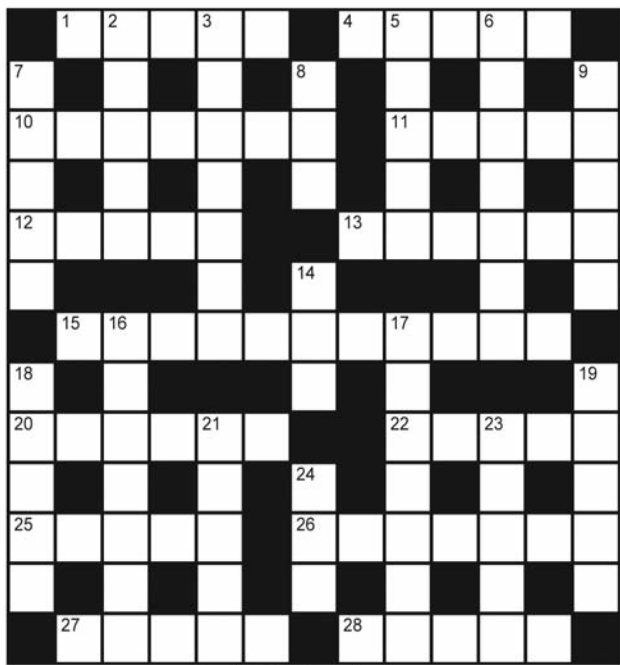


## BREVITY



## FUN post

## CROSSWORD



### Across

- 1 Public relations concern
- 4 Aesop's forte
- 10 Come apart
- 11 Bullion unit
- 12 Keyboard key
- 13 Wall paintings
- 15 Narrow escapes (5,6)
- 20 Prevaricator
- 22 Alcove

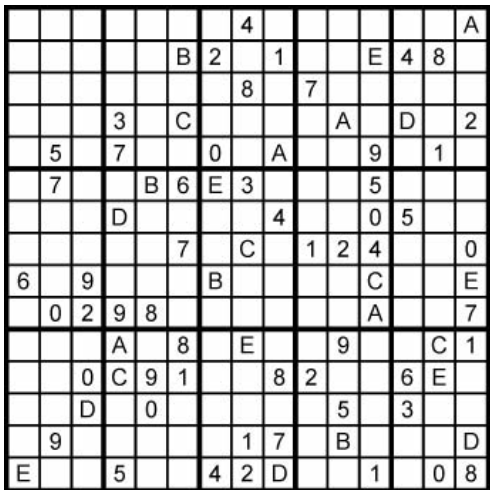
- 25 Banana oil, e.g.
- 26 Hot pepper
- 27 Put to the test
- 28 Proclamation

### Down

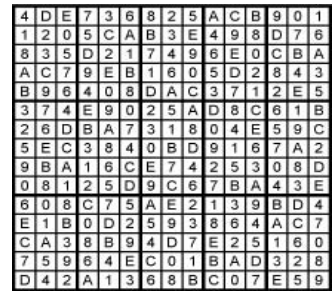
- 2 Reason for a raise
- 3 Rules
- 5 Gallic goodbye
- 6 Suitcases
- 7 Stubborn sorts
- 8 Pesky insect
- 9 Secret supply
- 14 Venomous snake
- 16 Seafood entree
- 17 Ticked off
- 18 Frequently
- 19 Small three-masted vessel
- 21 Chill-inducing
- 23 Disparager
- 24 Slick

## SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, each row, column and box must contain the numbers 0 to 9 and the letters A to E.



## SOLUTIONS

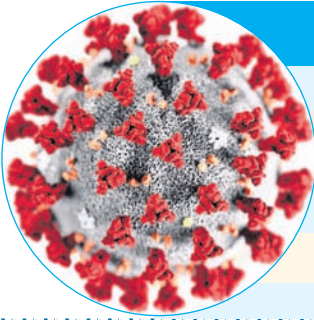


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



### PAINTER AT WORK

An artisan draws graffiti on the wall of Cuttack City Hospital as part of a beautification drive, Saturday



### COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	8,45,61,001	5,97,93,947	18,38,378
India	1,03,05,788	99,06,387	1,49,218
Odisha	3,30,117	3,25,965	1,880

# State conducts Covid shot dry run

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 2:** The state government Saturday conducted a dry run of Covid-19 vaccine across the state which saw participation of a number of selected health workers who were administered the dummy vaccine under strict protocols.

The Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department officials stated that the rehearsal for vaccination programme was aimed at keeping ready the system for mass administration of the vaccine.

“We conducted dry run of the vaccination programme at 31 points which included Capital Hospital in Bhubaneswar and 30 District Headquarters Hospitals (DHHs). At each point, a total of 25 health workers including Anganwadi workers were selected for the dry run,” Pradipta Kumar Mohapatra, Additional Chief Secretary, H&FW department said. “The dry run will help us implement the mass administration of the vaccine in the state,” he said.

During the dry run, the participants visited the vaccination centres, got their data entered into the online system. After marking their presence there, they were sent for identity validation and later the dummy vaccine was administered on them. Then, they were kept under obser-



Dry run of Covid vaccine underway in Cuttack and Puri, Saturday



OP PHOTOS

### FOR FOOL-PROOF DRIVE

The dry run will help the authorities in smooth implementation of the inoculation drive

A total of 25 health workers including Anganwadi workers were selected for the dry run at each point

The participants were kept under observation for a while to see whether any instant reaction is happening after getting the shots or not

vation for a while to see whether any instant reaction is happening or not. Mohapatra said that the Covid vaccine might be ready for use by the end of this month. “It is likely that the vaccine may come by the end of the month, so we need to get ready for the same and the dry run was a

system to examine our system and also try the system once before really implementing it. Now, as soon as the vaccines come into use, we will start administering it to the health workers under Phase I.”

Later, the government will start giving Covid jabs to the people who

are above the age of 60 years and after that people below 60 years having co-morbidities will be given the shot. The department said that the dry run was also aimed at getting the health workers acquainted with the vaccination drive.

“The system is completely online. This gave us feedback on how to go for it on the ground. Information related to vaccine management, booth management and others are all given in the portal. The online system adaption was one prime learning today that we got from the dry run,” CBK Mohanty, Director of Medical Education and Training (DMET) said.

### EARLY BIRDS...



Fishermen trying their luck in River Mahanadi near Jobra barrage in Cuttack early Saturday morning

OP PHOTO

## Parental consent must for attending classes

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 2:** The state government Saturday issued guidelines for reopening of schools for Class X and XII students.

As per the guidelines, students can attend schools/institutions only and only with the written consent of parents. “Attendance must not be enforced and must depend entirely on parental consent,” it said.

A maximum of 20-25 students (depending upon classroom size) will be allowed to sit in a classroom to

ensure safe distancing. All students can be asked to come on a daily basis to schools with adequate number of classrooms.

Schools with 100 per cent access to potable drinking water and adequate functional toilets for all students will be allowed to reopen.

Only schools outside the containment zones will be allowed to reopen. Further, students, teachers and employees residing in containment zones will not be allowed to attend the school. Online/distance learning will continue to be the preferred mode of teaching and

will be encouraged. Where schools are conducting online classes, and some students prefer to attend online classes rather than physically attend school they may be permitted to do so.

The schools must have to make arrangements for adequate soap (solid/liquid) and running water in all washrooms and toilets, hand sanitizers and other facilities for teachers, students, and staffers in each classroom.

A separate isolation room has to be marked in the school and kept ready.

### Keonjhar electrocution victims finally get aid

**Bhubaneswar:** The state government has finally given compensation to the families of three minor girls who sustained severe injuries due to electrocution in Keonjhar in 2017. The NHRC issued the order while hearing a petition filed by rights activist Dillip Kumar Das, who had sought financial aid for the families holding the NESCO and the state Energy department responsible for the incident. Notably, the injured three girls came in contact with an 11-KV live wire while plucking berries as the branch on which the girls were standing broke and touched the live wire. The victims sustained severe injuries after they fell off the tree and got electrocuted. The commission directed the Chief Secretary to pay Rs 1 lakh to one of the victim girls - Sombari Munda - who fractured her left foot and Rs 50,000 each to other two victims.

WEATHER			
	BHUB	CTK	
MAX	29.0°C	28.8°C	
MIN	14.0°C	12.0°C	
Humidity	73%	80%	Fog/mist in the morning
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	

## Poaching threat to migratory birds in Chilika

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Khurda, Jan 2:** Rampant poaching of migratory birds at villages near Chilika lake has emerged as a big challenge for the Forest department.

Hundreds of migratory birds are being killed by the poachers for meat purpose everyday right under the nose of Forest department officials, sources said.

Forest department officials recently arrested a poacher from Tangi range and seized four dead birds from him. The poacher was identified as Jagan Pradhan, 24, of Ujjala Gopinathpur. He was reportedly catching birds by laying traps at Balipatpur, sources said.

During winter, lakhs of birds from far-flung places like Siberia, Caspian Sea, Lake Baikal, Central and Southeast Asia, Ladakh and Himalayas usually flock to the brackish water lake for its congenial environment.

According to sources in the Forest department, at least 8 lakh migratory birds of around 100 species have congregated at Nalabana bird sanctuary inside Chilika and nearby places like Badagottha, Satapada, Mangalajodi, Bhusandpur and Nairi.

The bird species include north-ern pintail, gadwall, shelduck and



### IN GRAVE PERIL

Hundreds of migratory birds are being killed by the poachers for meat purpose everyday right under the nose of Forest department officials

FOREST DEPT OFFICIALS RECENTLY ARRESTED A POACHER FROM TANGI RANGE AND SEIZED FOUR DEAD BIRDS FROM HIM

black-tailed godwit. The Forest department has planned to conduct a bird census at Chilika January 5, sources added.

“Poachers are killing migratory birds at Brahmagiri,

Poachers are killing migratory birds at Brahmagiri, Krushnaprasad, Tangi, Mangalajodi and Bhusandpur areas near Chilika either by using poison or by traps

Krushnaprasad, Tangi, Mangalajodi and Bhusandpur areas near Chilika either by using poison or by traps. Hundreds of birds were killed for meat purpose ahead of the New Year's Day. The poachers are sup-

PNN/ AGENCIES

## Vig booked 381 persons in 2020

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 2:** The state Vigilance department has registered 245 criminal cases against 381 persons including 53 Class I officers, 37 Class II officers and 76 private persons during 2020, official sources said.

During the year, the Vigilance department lodged as many as 245 disproportionate assets (DA) cases of which 93 have been instituted against 93 public servants and 45 private persons.

The total disproportionate assets in all the 93 cases stand at Rs 123.91 crore. In 36 cases, the value of disproportionate assets is more than Rs 1 crore and in 4 cases the value is over Rs 4 crore.

“At least 24 DA cases have been registered against Class I officers and 19 against Class II officers,” the official said.

The case involving highest ever DA amount in a case in Vigilance organization is Rs 9.35 crore which has been registered against Indian Forest Service (IFS) officer Abhay Kant Pathak.

To unearth disproportionate assets in this case, searches/verifications were conducted by 150 officers and staff of Odisha Vigilance across four states for two consecutive days. This was the biggest search operation conducted by state Vigilance so far, he said.

This apart, the Vigilance sleuths this year intercepted eight gov-



The anti-corruption wing has disposed of 161 cases after investigation in 2020

### CRACKDOWN ON GRAFT

Vigilance dept lodged 245 DA cases of which 93 have been instituted against 93 public servants and 45 private persons

The total disproportionate assets in all the 93 cases stand at Rs 123.91 crore

15 public servants have been dismissed from the government service following their conviction

ernment officers (4 Class I & 4 Class II) while carrying unaccounted for cash of Rs 26,95,440.

The anti-corruption officials also conducted 103 trap cases against 113 public servants and two private persons including nine Class I officers, 16 Class II officers, 80 Class III employees, four Class IV employees, four other public servants and two private persons for demand and acceptance of bribe amounting to Rs 16.62 lakh.

The anti-corruption wing also registered as many as 49 misappropriation cases relating to embezzlement of public money against 128 persons, including 99 public servants and 29 private persons, involving misappropriation of public funds amounting to about Rs 15.83 crore.

Misappropriation cases have been registered against 20 Class I

officers, 2 Class II officers, 60 Class III employees, 1 Class IV employee, 16 other public servants and 29 private persons.

During 2020, as many as 221 enquiries have been initiated against 36 Class I officers, 33 Class II officers, 149 Class III employees, 7 Class IV employees, 10 other public servants and 12 private persons on their alleged involvement in various acts of corruption/malpractices.

The anti-corruption wing has also disposed of 161 cases after investigation in 2020, of which, charge-sheets have been filed in 153 cases against 204 persons including 27 Class I officers, 20 Class II officers, 120 Class III employees, 6 Class IV employees, 3 other public servants and 28 private persons.

The percentage of charge-sheet comes to 95 per cent of the cases disposed of after investigation, the official said.

growth rate of 16.72 per cent against collection of Rs 600.60 crore during December 2019.

CT & GST Organization has been focusing on increasing the tax base of GST with constant survey and registration. As many as 35,461 new entities have been brought under the GST fold in the current financial year (till December).

Besides, enforcement activities have been stepped up in order to increase the compliance amongst taxpayers and unearth fraudulent activities. Based on intensive data analysis and internal intelligence, the state enforcement wing has busted many rackets involved in raising bogus invoices and arrested 17 persons for their involvement in availing and passing of bogus ITC to the tune of Rs 970 crore so far, he added.



### THE GROSS GST COLLECTION DURING DECEMBER 2020 WAS RS 2860.20 CRORE AS AGAINST RS 2383.29 CRORE IN DECEMBER 2019

up of most sectors in the economy as well as with increase in government expenditure in infrastructure projects and increase in public consumption, the official said.

The revenue from non-GST sources (petrol and liquor) of Rs 701.00 crore is also the highest collection during the current financial year for a month registering a

## BMC launches e-module to end official rigmarole

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 2:** The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has launched e-office module for itself and other city-development authorities with a view to reducing paperwork and facilitating efficient inter-department communication.

Aiming to avoid official rigmarole, the module launched via a vis Bhubaneswar One app will now ensure that the files within departments such as Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA), BSCL (Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited), and within BMC itself move efficiently with reduced time.

“Most of the orders and circulars, barring those kept as records, could now be issued by scanning it. Copies of the scanned documents will then be sent to the officials and departments concerned through the

e-module. The documents that were earlier kept in files will now be uploaded on servers and the officials will have access to it 24x7,” said a senior BMC official.

The initiative will also see reduction or over dependency on paperwork. “There had always been the risk of loss or destruction of important information in the office owing to fire, termites and others. However, with the e-module the bulk paperwork could be avoided and data could be saved online,” the official added.

Earlier, the civic authority had decided to fully transform ‘Bhubaneswar One’ into a proper grievance redressal platform. As opposed to BMC’s grievance cell running from its office premises, the e-cell was introduced after the Covid-induced lockdowns and social distancing norms discouraged people to visit the office premises for resolution of their issues.



# Panel for backward classes starts functioning

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 2:** After 27 years, the Odisha State Commission for Backward Classes (OSCBC) Saturday started functioning in the state. Commission chairperson Justice (retired) Raghunath Biswal and other members Navaneeta Rath, Mitali Chinara and Prasanna Kumar Patra have taken over the charge Saturday.

Justice Biswal said a database of the Other Backward Classes (OBC) in the state will be prepared soon. Deserving castes will be included in the list while those found socially and economically developed will be excluded from the OBC list, he said.

“We will implement the reservation on the recommendations of the Mandal Commission,” Biswal said, adding the panel will submit its report to the state government after conducting a socio-economic caste survey.

The Commission will also hear other problems concerning interest and welfare of the backward classes. By functioning of the commission, a long pending demand of the backward classes of the state has been fulfilled.



Justice (retired) Raghunath Biswal

## FACT FILE

The Commission will also hear other problems concerning interest and welfare of the backward classes.

In January last year, the State Cabinet had passed a resolution to move the Centre for a caste-based enumeration alongside the General Census 2021.

In his reaction, BJD MP Bhartruhari Mahtab said while states like Tamil Nadu get benefits of reservations up to 65 or 67 per cent, others including Odisha are depriving people of this

This is for the second time, the Commission was constituted in accordance with the provisions contained in the Odisha State Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993. The first commission was constituted in 1993. However, after the completion of the tenure, the panel was never put back in place.

In January last year, the State Cabinet had passed a resolution to move the Centre for a caste-based enumeration alongside the General

Census 2021. But, the Centre has turned down the proposal of Odisha.

In February 2020, the State Assembly passed the State Commission for Backward Classes (Amendment) Bill, 2020 and a separate resolution, paving the way for conducting surveys of the social and economic condition of people belonging to backward classes.

In 2008, it enacted the Odisha Reservation of Posts and Services

for (Socially and Educationally Backward Classes) Act seeking 27 per cent reservation in posts and services in the state in case of direct recruitment for the SEBC subject to exclusion of the creamy layer. However, it was quashed by the State Administrative Tribunal (SAT) and later by the Orissa High Court in 2017.

OBC people get 27 per cent reservation in education and jobs. But, Odisha youths have been deprived of the benefits for over 30 years due to lack of political willpower, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan who has written several letters to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik in this regard.

In his reaction, BJD MP Bhartruhari Mahtab said while states like Tamil Nadu get benefits of reservations up to 65 or 67 per cent, others including Odisha are depriving people of this. There are some anomalies in the country, he said.

Though other backward castes account for over 50 per cent of the state's population, caste has never been a factor in Odisha politics unlike in northern states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh or southern states like Karnataka.



Traffic personnel checking bikers on a Bhubaneswar road Saturday as helmet for pillion riders becomes mandatory from New Year

OP PHOTO

## BJP raises concern over rising number of missing kids

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 2:** The state leadership of the BJP Saturday expressed concerns on the rising number of missing children from the state and raised their reservations against the investigation of the Special Investigative Team (SIT) in the Nayagarh minor murder case.

BJP leader Lekhashri Samantsinghar Saturday held a press conference and attacked the government and the SIT team on the issue of the infamous murder case.

“In Odisha, over last two years a total of 5,500 kids went missing while a total of 27,000 were reported to be missing over last five years.

The government which claims that citizens are like their own family how can it remain calm during the new years with their missing kids still astonishes me,” she said.

She said the SIT chief which tackled the alleged Nayagarh minor murder case told a narrative and saved the BJD minister whose name was raised somewhere in the case.

## CM inaugurates 18 projects of Boudh dist



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 2:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Saturday inaugurated through videoconferencing 18 infrastructure projects to be developed in Boudh district with a total cost of Rs 44.60 crore. On the occasion of 27th foundation day of Boudh district, Naveen inaugurated the projects including development of roads, three diary projects and parks. He also inaugurated a museum at the 100-year old court building of the district.

The Chief Minister said the art and cultural heritage of Boudh district can be preserved so that it is known to rest of the world through the new museum built at the iconic heritage building. It will also help in development of tourism in the district, he said.

Stating that the fruits of development should reach one and all, Naveen said all should work for protecting the rights of women and poor people. He sought cooperation from all residents for the development of the district.

## COW DUNG CAN KILL COVID: PATASANI

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 2:** Former Lok Sabha MP from Bhubaneswar Prasanna Patasani Saturday said traditional Odia practices can potentially kill COVID 19 virus but regretted that such practices are slowly getting diluted.

He said, “In rural areas, women folks blow the fire they set under their stocks to cook food. This ensures exercise of the throat. The COVID 19 virus stays on the throat for three days. If such practice is done, the virus will die in the throat.”

He also added, “We are now slowly missing out on that culture. Moreover, if we cook and eat on earthen utensils, COVID will not infect people. Odia community is one of the communities which have practiced this especially in sacred ceremonies. Using cow dung with water can also check entry of the virus. These were all parts of our culture.”



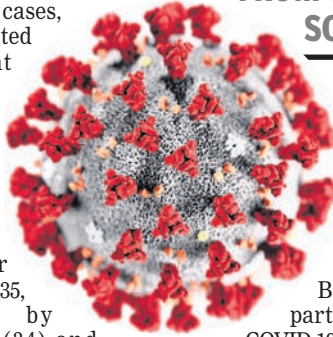
**Bhubaneswar, Jan 2:** The state's COVID-19 tally mounted to 3,30,117 Saturday as 251 more people tested positive for the infection, while four fresh fatalities pushed the toll to 1,880, a health department official said.

Of the fresh cases, 148 were reported from different quarantine centres and 103 detected during contact tracing. Sambalpur recorded the highest number of new cases at 35, followed by Sundargarh (34) and Angul (31).

Eight districts - Dhenkanal, Gajapati, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Rayagada and Keonjhar - did not report any new case since Friday. Taking to Twitter, the Health and Family Welfare department said, “Regret to inform the demise of four COVID positive patients while they were under treatment in hospitals.”

Two fresh fatalities were

## ODISHA CURRENTLY HAS 2,451 ACTIVE CASES, WHILE 3,25,733 PATIENTS HAVE RECOVERED FROM THE DISEASE SO FAR



recorded in Khurda and one each in Bolangir and Cuttack. Khurda district, of which the state capital

Bhubaneswar is a part, accounted for 326 COVID-19 deaths, followed by Ganjam (246), Sundargarh (166), Cuttack (140) and Puri (117).

Fifty-three coronavirus patients have died due to comorbidities, he said. Odisha currently has 2,451 active cases, while 3,25,733 patients have recovered from the disease so far.

The state has conducted over 70 lakh sample tests for COVID-19, including 24,736 Friday, and the positivity rate now stands at 4.72.

## EX-WARD MEMBER BEATEN TO DEATH IN DHENKANAL

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Dhenkanal, Jan 2:** A former ward member of Surapatapur village under Bhuvan police limits in Dhenkanal district was beaten to death by fellow villagers Saturday after a quarrel erupted between the children of both sides. The deceased has been identified as Bijaya Guru.

According to the deceased's brother-in-law Suresh Kumar Dehury, there was a small argument between Guru's family and another villager's family over a minor

issue involving children. Later, the issue took a violent turn with both the sides taking the matter to the local police station seeking action.

Some persons believed to be involved in the earlier issue attacked Guru Saturday morning. On being informed, a team from the outpost reached the spot and with the help of Guru's wife, they rushed him to a nearby government hospital where he breathed his last while undergoing treatment. Registering a case, the police have launched an investigation.

## PIL in High Court on ATMA formation

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack Sadar, Jan 2:** A public interest litigation (PIL) has been filed in Orissa High Court alleging irregularities by district agriculture authorities in nomination of members for formation of Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA) under this block in Cuttack district, a report said.

The PIL has been filed by BJP leaders Piyush Ranjan Parida, pres-

ident of 42-mouza BJP mandal, Arabind Mohanty and Ratikant Pattnaik in the high court.

The BJP leaders alleged that the district agriculture authorities allegedly overlooked the government guidelines and nominated members to ATMA last year as per their whims. The petitioners have made the deputy director (agriculture), Cuttack, district agriculture officer and assistant agriculture officer, Cuttack Sadar block party to the case.

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 2:** Director General of Police Abhay Saturday expressed satisfaction over the success of the commissionerate police in the twin city. While addressing a gathering at the 13th police raising day celebrations at the Police Bhavan here.

Abhay said, “It is a great pride for all of us as the (commissionerate) system has evolved and matured. It is delivering much better results than we had initially expected. A large number of police officers have contributed to improving of the system, process, and structure, and that is how we have reached the state where there are demands from other parts of the state to start the police commissionerate system there.”

He praised the officials for their performance in enforcing various Covid-19 guidelines during the lockdown. He also urged the police to treat victims of crime with empathy and compassion, to remain accountable to law for every action, follow the feedback under 5T to review the behavior pattern. He claimed that the state police is resolved to improve its capacity to deal with the rising number of cyber crimes in the state.

The Commissioner of Police, Sudhanshu Sarangi, stated that the



citizens of the twin city had appreciated the hard work done by the commissionerate police during the pandemic. He said the image of the police will remain the same in future too.

He revealed that as many as 1,561 officials of the twin city police were infected with corona virus in line of duty. The commissionerate police lost seven personnel due to Covid-19. As many as 18,000 street vendors have been shifted during the lockdown period to make smooth availability of essentials.

As many as 3,20,000 food packets have been distributed with

the help of other organizations. The Red Cross unit of the commissionerate police organized 109 blood donation camps and collected 4,943 units of blood packets to avoid scarcity of blood at the blood banks in the city. 87 units of plasma were provided by the twin city police.

Similarly, around 4,000 laborers from outside the state have been provided with food, shelter and other amenities during the lockdown period. The commissionerate police published and distributed around 25,000 booklets among senior citizens to spread Covid-19

related awareness. The twin city police extended its helping hand to elderly citizens who were advised to stay inside keeping in view their vulnerability to Covid-19 by providing medicines, household items, even during midnight.

The police have seized more than 3 kg of brown sugar along with a huge quantity of ganja in 2020. The twin city police with the help of STF crime branch managed to bring the drug menace under control. 160 persons were arrested under the ‘No to Extortion’ drive started in October. As many as 16 persons were detained under NSA. The com-

## FULFILLING ASPIRATIONS

THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE, SUDHANSHU SARANGI, STATED THAT THE CITIZENS OF THE TWIN CITY HAD APPRECIATED THE HARD WORK DONE BY THE COMMISSIONERATE POLICE DURING THE PANDEMIC	SIMILARLY, AROUND 4,000 LABORERS FROM OUTSIDE THE STATE HAVE BEEN PROVIDED WITH FOOD, SHELTER AND OTHER AMENITIES DURING THE LOCKDOWN PERIOD
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POLICE HAVE SEIZED MORE THAN 3 KG OF BROWN SUGAR ALONG WITH A HUGE QUANTITY OF GANJA IN 2020

missionerate police booked 446 people under CrPC 110. As many as 29 persons have been sent out (tadipar) and 21 cases registered and 25 arrested for food adulteration in Cuttack.

There is a proposal to set up a cyber police station in the commissionerate police. A five-year plan to modernize commissionerate police has been sent to the state government as well. Out of which, around Rs 5 crores have been received by the police to set up a unified control room. He said that the CCTV cameras will be installed in Cuttack soon.

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# Ganjam still battles for TB elimination

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, Jan 2:** Even as the government spends crores of rupees for eradication of tuberculosis, the killer disease has not yet been curbed in Ganajm. Prevalence of the diseases is evident from the fact that in the last two months, 656 people were diagnosed with TB in the district, a report said.

Due to Covid, detection of TB has been stopped, but after the infection of the pandemic subsided, a two-month long campaign was carried out from November 1 to December 31.

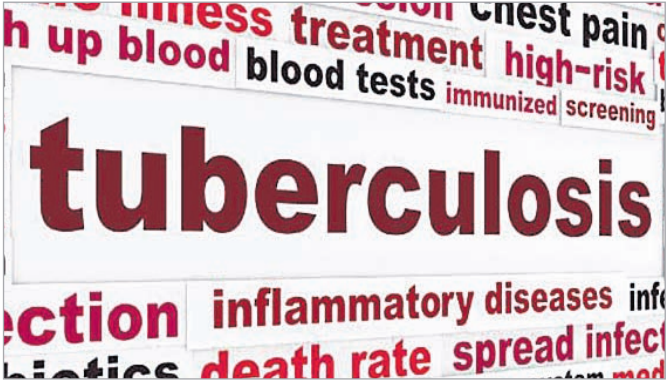
ASHAs, Anganwadi workers, ANMs and health workers carried out a door-to-door survey to detect TB cases. As many as 450 teams had been formed for the purpose.

During the Covid, many TB patients failed to get treatment at hospitals.

The teams had collected cough samples of suspected cases with symptoms like fever in the evening, weight and appetite loss and coughing for more than two weeks.

In the 22 blocks and Berhampur Municipal Corporation, the teams had collected 27,103 samples. All these samples had been sent to 51 testing centres including primary health centres, community health centres, and other government hospitals.

Test reports of 657 people con-



**A two-month long survey was carried out from Nov 1 to Dec 31 with help of ASHAs, Anganwadi workers, ANMs and health workers. As many as 450 teams detected 656 cases of tuberculosis**

firmed TB. District coordinator of the tuberculosis department Bideshi Mohanty said the people after being diagnosed with TB are immediately provided with necessary medicines. Besides, Rs 500 is being given to each of them every month to maintain their nutritional balance.

On the other hand, the central government has drawn up a national strategic plan (NSP) to eliminate TB between 2017 and 2025. It has made a framework to guide the activities of all stakeholders including the national and state governments, development partners, civil society organizations, international agencies, research institutions, private sector, and many others whose work is relevant to TB elimination in the country.

The NSP lays stress on taking bold and innovative steps to carry forward TB elimination. During the period 2017 to 2025, the NSP aims at directing the attention of all stakeholders on the most important interventions or activities that the RNTCP believes will bring about significant changes in the incidence, prevalence and mortality of TB.

## Illicit affair: Youth kills woman, then kills self

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Patrapur, Jan 2:** In a shocking incident, a youth killed a woman before killing himself over a love affair at Puhundi village under Jarada police limits in Ganjam Saturday.

The deceased woman was identified as Laxmi Gouda (35) while the deceased youth was identified as Amar Pati (28) of Nuagaon area.

According to police, Laxmi is married, but she had developed an affair with the youth a few days ago.

As the matter became public,

Laxmi and her husband had bitter quarrels.

In the wee hours, the woman had gone to Bagi river to bathe, but she did not return home.

Later, some villagers found Laxmi's body in a pool of blood under a mango tree. Police seized the body and started an investigation with sniffer dogs. Police registered a case.

Later, police found the body of the youth near Ichhapur railway track. Police said, the youth had killed the woman before killing himself on the rail track.



## Kendu leaf warehouse lies unused

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kesinga, Jan 2:** A central warehouse for stocking kendu leaves was completed two years ago at Kesinga town of Kalahandi, but it has remained unused for the excise department. The facility now resembles a haunted house, a report said.

According to the report, there are 62 kendu leaf stocking points under Kensinga range. Kendu leaves after being made bundles are supposed to be stocked at this central warehouse.

This two-storied building and warehouse was built in 2018. Doors and windows have not been fixed as yet. No step is being taken to hand over the facility to the ranger. It was alleged that irregularities were committed in the warehouse and its building.



On the other hand, kendu leaves have to be stocked in the open at many places. It was learnt that a former ranger after misappropriating lakhs of rupees has been suspended, leading to a problem in handover of the building.

Besides, several other ancillary

# Today's start-ups are future MNCs: PM

MODI SAID THIS AFTER LAYING FOUNDATION STONE FOR PERMANENT CAMPUS OF IIM-SAMBALPUR

AGENCIES

**Sambalpur, Jan 2:** The Indian start-ups of today are the multinational corporations of tomorrow that can go a long way in achieving the goal of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Saturday.

The last few decades saw multinational corporations from abroad do business and prosper in India but this decade will belong to Indian MNCs, he said through video conferencing, after laying the foundation stone for the permanent campus of IIM-Sambalpur.

"Today's start-ups can become tomorrow's MNCs as India seeks to make its start-up ecosystem inclusive to ensure speedy development," he said. Noting that start-ups mostly come up in Tier-II and Tier-III cities in the country, Modi said, they need professional managers, and the youth require to be prepared for the massive opportunities that lie ahead.

"In this new decade, we all are accountable to give a new image to brand India globally," he said, asking young managers to align their career goals to the aspirations of the country.

The country had 13 IIMs in 2014 and 20 now, and this talent pool can expand the scope and boost



the mission of creating a self-reliant India, he said.

"Innovation, integrity and inclusion have emerged as the key mantras in the field of management which are important for 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' mission. The goal of a self-reliant India will also be achieved with the help of collaborative, innovative and transformative concepts in management," Modi said.

"Technology management is as important as human management," he said, adding the country has been able to build substantial capacity over the last decade which was evident in the handling of the COVID-19 crisis.

Modi said the new campus of IIM Sambalpur will give Odisha a

new identity in the world of management education with proper recognition of the state's great culture and resources.

Management experts, who are coming out with new experiences in fresh areas, will play a big role in taking India to new heights, Modi said, underlining that despite the COVID-19 crisis the country has given more unicorns this year than the previous years.

A unicorn is a term used in the venture capital industry to describe a privately held start-up company with a value of over USD 1 billion.

Speaking about the role students could play in making the "local rise to the global" level, he asked them to work on ideas to improve tourism in the light of

the immense potential for it in Sambalpur and also promote its textile, tribal art and craft.

The IIM students can work as a bridge between the "local and global" as part of the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' mission. "You have to show your management skills with the mantra of innovation, integrity and inclusiveness," Modi said.

Referring to the new management challenges in the light of new technologies like additive printing, changing production techniques, logistics, and supply chain management, he said, these technologies coupled with digital connectivity, and work from anywhere concept have turned the world into a global village. India has undertaken rapid reforms in recent months and tried not only to keep pace with the changes, he said.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said his government is committed towards policy provisions to elevate the state as the most preferred educational hub of the country. Thanking the central government for setting up a number of national institutes in the state, Patnaik said Odisha is emerging as a leading research centre of India. "I am sure with the support of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, more and more central institutes will come up in Odisha and accelerate the growth trajectory of the state," he added.

## STIR FOR RIGHTS



Staff nurses of MKCG Medical College and Hospital, Berhampur, stage protests over multiple demands P PHOTO

## 2 killed in Salipur over political rivalry

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nischintakoili, Jan 2:** A former block chairperson and his associate were allegedly murdered by miscreants over past enmity in Salepur area of Cutack district Saturday evening. The deceased were identified as Kulamani Baral (62) and Dibyasingh Baral (70). Kulamani was a former Mahanga block chairman. He had recently joined BJP after leaving the Congress.

According to reports, Kulamani along with his associate was returning home on Shukanai embankment road on a vehicle. A group of people attacked Kulamani and his associate injuring the two critically in the darkness.

Locals rescued the two and took them in an ambulance to Mahanga hospital where doctors declared them brought dead.

Preliminary investigation pointed out that the murders were the fallout of a political rivalry.

## Kalinganagar massacre completes 15 years



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kalinganagar, Jan 2:** Fifteen years have passed since 13 innocent tribals were massacred by police at Kalinganagar in Jajpur district while opposing displacement. Bistapan Birodhi Janamanch and Bistapita Paribar Unnayan Parishad jointly observed an annual commemoration of the gory incident at Ambagadia Saturday.

Police fired at agitating tribals January 2, 2006 resulting in death of 13 tribals. In retaliatory attack from tribals, a police havildar named Gopa Mohant was killed. Four tribals were paralysed.

Every year, tribals and the kith and kin of the deceased tribals observe January 2 as Saheed Divas. Tribals from outside Odisha even come to the place.

## Youth attempts self-immolation in front of PS over failed affair

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Angul, Jan 2:** A young man Saturday attempted to end his life in front of Pallahara police station in Angul district after his lover's marriage was fixed somewhere else.

The policemen present at the police station at that time rescued him and immediately rushed him to a nearby government hospital.

Sources said, Biswanath Naik from Iswarnagar village under Pallahara police limits was allegedly in a love affair with a girl from the same village. But the girl's family had been disapproving of their relationship.

Recently they fixed her marriage with someone else. After coming to know this, the youth



set himself on fire.

Another theory regarding Biswanath's self-immolation bid is also doing rounds here. It is also being discussed that the family members of the girl tactfully collected his hair and nails and have been blackmailing him with some obscene videos of him and his lover. Fearing being trapped in their net, he set himself on fire in front of the police station.

A detailed probe is underway.

# Survey work for 6-laning of NH-53 begins

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Chandikhole, Jan 2:** The National Highway-53 connecting Chandikhole with port city Paradip will soon be turned into a six-lane highway from the existing four lanes for which the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) has started the survey work on the route, a report said.

Reports said the National Highway-53 connecting Chandikhole with Paradip is one of the busiest highways in the state. The stretch of the highway between Chandikhole and Paradip is of 77 km and often witnesses long traffic snarls due to regular movement of a large numbers of mineral-laden vehicles to port. As many as 10,000 trucks and heavy vehicles carrying iron ores, manganese, chromites, and coals from the mines of Keonjhar, Sundargarh and Jajpur districts travel on this route.

As a result, the NHAI has de-



cided to turn the existing four lane highway into a six lane highway to accommodate more cargo and passenger vehicles on this route. A plan outlay of Rs 1,200 crore has been sanctioned for the project. The matter came to the fore after the NHAI authorities started survey works for turning the existing four-lane highway into a six-lane highway.

Reports said the Centre is keen to turn it into an eight-lane highway from the existing four lanes. If reports are to be believed the NH-53 will become the first eight-lane highway in the state.

Sources said the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had laid the foundation stone for the highway in 1962. Later, works for the highway started and it was opened for traf-

fic in 1968. The highway was then known as the Express Highway and later named as National Highway 5 (A).

Years passed, the National Highway underwent a name change and became National Highway-53. The 77-km long highway passes on five big rivers for which new bridges will be built on the Mahanadi, the Luna, the Gobari, the Birupa and the Genguti rivers.

When contacted, chief general manager of NHAI Rama Prasad Panda said the survey work is now going on for six laning of the highway and the tender process will start from the month of June this year. However, the Centre has wants to start survey works for eight laning after it was decided to upgrade the Paradip port into a world class port. Necessary survey work for eight laning of the highway will be undertaken if the need arises, he added.

**There are 62 kendu leaf stocking points under Kensinga range. Kendu leaves are to be stocked at this central warehouse**

works like electricity wiring and drinking water have not been completed. As for the unused facility, Kensinga ranger Asutosh Nanda said a former ranger was suspended 11 months ago, but he has not handed over the facility to the incumbent.

## Andhra traders make hay in Bhadrak dist

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhadrak, Jan 2:** Though paddy procurement at mandis has started in Bhadrak district, farmers in some parts of the district are suffering due to weight reduction during procurement. On the other hand, some farmers are unable to sell their paddy as mandis have not opened in some areas. They are selling paddy to Andhra traders, who have been camping in different areas.

### PADDY DISTRESS SALE



Farmers alleged that delay in paddy procurement has forced them to sell paddy at throwaway prices as administrative officials and rice millers don't work in coordination.

97 primary agriculture cooperative societies (PACs) have been assigned to procure paddy since December 20.

It was learnt that 69, 652 farmers have registered their names online for procurement. But scores of farmers have been unable to make registration while more than half of these mandis have not opened as yet.

It was alleged that cooperative societies identified by the RMC have not started procurement. The farmers in these areas sell paddy to Andhra traders

At many places, farmers alleged that weightage of paddy is being reduced as officials cite that the paddy

in most cases fails to meet the FAQ standard.

Middlemen and traders from Andhra Pradesh have cashed in on this situation. To meet immediate exigencies, farmers are desperate to dispose of paddy to traders for Rs 12,00 to Rs 15,00 per quintal, incurring a loss of Rs 500 to 300 per quintal.

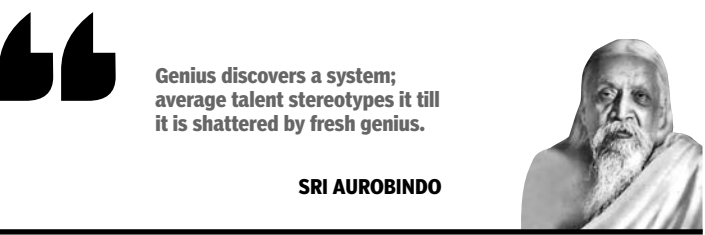
Such scenario is routinely found in Agarpada, Bant, Aradi and Barpada panchayats. On main roads, truckloads of paddy are seen plying

The government has fixed Rs 1868 as MSP for Grade A paddy while FAQ paddy has been fixed at Rs 1888.

Farmer leader Satya Nayak said that farmers are deprived of getting right price of their paddy while the government should pay attention to this problem.

As for distress sale of paddy, RMC secretary Bikash Das said that all necessary machines have been provided to all mandis to check FAQ of the paddy. Farmers are paid as per paddy quality

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA  
No. O-809  
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER  
RURAL WORKS DIVISION, DEOGARH  
E-mail ID: eerw\_deogarh@yahoo.co.in  
E-Procurement Notice  
BID IDENTIFICATION No. EEDGH-Online-02/2020-21  
1. Name of Work : Road and Building works (14 Nos.)  
2. Estimated Cost : Rs.0.87 lakhs to 44.21 lakhs  
3. Mode of Submission of Tender : Tender shall be submitted online in www.tenders.ori.nic.in  
4. Availability of tender for online bidding : 04.01.2021, 11.00 A.M. to 11.01.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.  
5. Date and time of opening of tender : 13.01.2021, 11.00 A.M.  
6. Other details can be seen from the website www.tenders.ori.nic.in.  
7. Corrigendum/Addendum if any shall only be published in the above website.  
Sd./- Satyabrata Mohanty  
Executive Engineer, R.W. Division, Deogarh  
OIPR-25087/11/0002/2021



FRAGILE STATE

One of the many globally measured indicators that India has fallen in since 2014 is the Fragile States Index. Previously called the Failed States Index, it records security (of all types) and economic development. It categorises States are being one of 11 categories. The countries most likely to sustain their success are the Nordic nations of Finland, Norway, Denmark, Finland and Iceland along with others like Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

India is not in this category or the next one or the one after that, which are sustainable or even stable. It is in a category fifth from the bottom, which is classified as 'Elevated Warning'. Our fellow category members are those like Colombia, Brazil, Israel, Algeria, Russia and Senegal. There are 30 nations in this category but only four of the 30 have declined since last year: Brazil, Colombia, Bolivia and India. In the detailed chapter on India, the index tells us why it is they think our future is more likely to be shared with these nations rather than with the prosperous and democratic western countries that we want to be with.

It says because of this government's "poorly thought out and implemented reforms, India's economic growth has slowed, declining to its lowest nominal level since 1978. Modi's response – an embrace of protectionism, higher government investment, bank lending targets, and direct export assistance – has been unable to reverse this trend." On the side of security it records the problems India has had with its own citizens starting from the National Register of Citizens (about which we still have no certainty on whether it is going to be implemented nationwide), the turmoil in Kashmir and the attack on free speech.

A failed state is one where the government is not in control. This is a simplistic explanation. In control of what? In control of rule of law, the economy, security, stability and development. India's history as a formal democracy and its generally benign image around the world has hidden our fragility elsewhere. An India going after its own citizens aggressively has alarmed other nations. The world also links India's failing on the economic front as being linked to the Hindutva agenda because it is tearing apart the social fabric and thus harming what it sees as the security of Indians. The index only predicts where things are and indicates to us where we are headed but it does not say what is needed to correct course. But common sense tells us that the first thing we should be doing is stopping what we are doing under Modi because it is taking us in the wrong direction. Both economically and socially we have regressed and have done so in visible fashion. It bears repeating that this government's own data shows that Indians were earning and eating less in 2018 than they were in 2012. And this was before we began 36 months of decline in growth. What the situation is currently in the economy only the gods know.

But are we stopping and reversing the direction that we are being taken in? Of course not. We are headed towards disaster ever more quickly. We do not have the internal structures for self-correction. It is difficult to see how we will be able to get out of the hole that we have dug ourselves into and are digging deeper into.

What we think and feel about India is one thing. What the rest of the world sees us doing is another. They are predicting a future for us that will frighten Indians if they were to be told that this is where we are headed. But despite the fact that it has delivered a recession, on the back of three years of economic decline, with record unemployment and severe social stress, this is not the narrative we are being fed by our government.

A couple of decades or so ago, Indian analysts (including myself) took great joy in the fact that the index was predicting that Pakistan was fast becoming a failed state. We had not anticipated then that India would be put on the same trajectory and so soon.



Aakar Patel

India's history as a formal democracy and its generally benign image around the world has hidden our fragility elsewhere. An India going after its own citizens aggressively has alarmed other nations

WISDOM CORNER

- The true sign of intelligence is not knowledge but imagination. **ALBERT EINSTEIN**
- Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is probably the reason why so few engage in it. **HENRY FORD**
- Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go. **TS ELIOT**

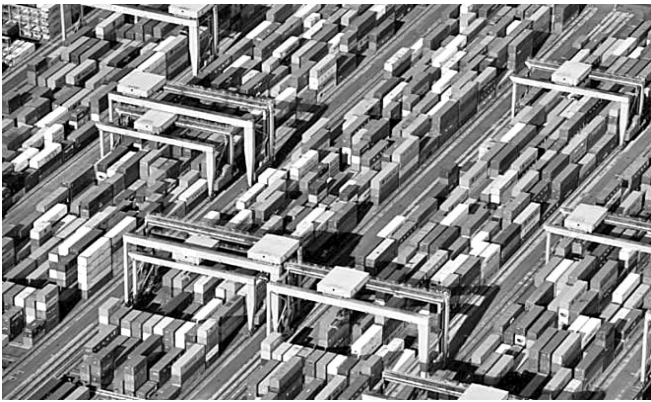
WORDSWORTH

Widow's peak

Widow's peak is a well-known English term for a V-shaped protrusion of hair at the forehead. There has been a widespread superstition – found in Britain, Ireland and North America, and it was probably at one time a common belief throughout the English-speaking world – that a woman with this shape of forehead hair is destined to outlive her husband. Some writers argue the superstition actually refers to another hair feature, the widow's lock. GF Northall recorded in his Warwickshire Word-book in 1895 that it was "a small lock or fringe growing apart from the hair above the forehead;" he added, "Credulous persons believe that a girl so distinguished will become a widow soon after marriage." Another version of the belief was recorded in Notes and Queries on 7 May 1853, which reproduced the report of a jury, dated 4 July 1692, on the physical examination of several women who were accused of witchcraft in Ipswich, Suffolk: Upon searching the body of Widow Hoer, nothing appeared on her unnatural, only her body very much scratched, and on her head a strange lock of hair, very long, and differing in color from the rest on her head, and matted or tangled together, which she said was a widow's lock, and said, if it were cut off she should die. A book with the title Current Superstitions, published in 1896, recorded that in Labrador it was believed that if a girl's lock were cut before marriage, she would be a widow. Many writers have traced the widow's peak superstition to old conventions about the clothing appropriate to a mourning widow, the traditional widow's weeds. (Weed was a millennium ago a standard word for an item of clothing; only in the sixteenth century did it become restricted to mourning clothes, and in particular to those of a widow.) It is said that part of the widow's costume at the time was a hood (perhaps a version of the bycock, worn by both men and women) with a pointed crest at the front that resembled the widow's peak. We have to presume that, through a kind of sympathetic magic, a woman who had that shape at the front of her hair was believed to be destined to wear widow's weeds. The term widow's lock is recorded from about 1540 but widow's peak only arrives in the eighteenth century, in an entry in Nathan Bailey's Universal Etymological English Dictionary of 1721. He equates it with the bandore, a form of head-dress that was even then quite out of fashion; a book of 1712 said that it was part of the costume of "our grandmothers." This suggests people may indeed have imagined a link between hair shape and headwear. Though it's explicitly female, these days men are at least as often described as having widow's peaks (widower's peak is known but is rare), as the receding hairline of a balding man often leaves a central protruding peak. The term frequently turns up in books about genetics, because the hair shape is a classic example of a dominant inherited trait.

CHALLENGE OF THE DECADE

FOCUS INDIAN ECONOMY



We will necessarily have to provide 'protection' rather than 'encouragement' and 'assistance' to our small businesses to enable them to stand competition from large companies in order to provide jobs to our youths



Bharat Jhunjhunwala

THE CHALLENGE FOR THE NEXT DECADE IS TO FIND A PATHWAY BETWEEN THE EFFICIENCY OF THE JOB-EATING LARGE BUSINESSES; AND THE INEFFICIENCY OF THE JOB-CREATING SMALL BUSINESSES

Global consultancy firm Price Waterhouse Coopers has said that India has the potential to become the world's No 2 economy in 2050 after China if it adopts the required structural reforms. The question is which structural reforms? The 'structural' reforms of demonetisation and GST, though touted as path-breaking etcetera, have led to a secular decline in our GDP growth rates. Remember that international agencies like these had supported these steps of the government. So, let us think through the challenges lest we lose the No 2 slot.

The challenge of the decade is how to manage new technologies. A driverless metro train was inaugurated in the country recently. Good. But Matthew D Johnson, Professor at St. Stephen's University, Canada has forecast that robots will displace 50 per cent of jobs by 2035. The situation will be much worse by 2050 when India has the potential to become No 2 in the world. The total employment in the organised sector has been declining in the country over the last many years while large numbers of youths are entering the labour market. Robots are making pizzas and serving to customers in human-less shops in the United States today. Wherefrom will the crores of our small shop owners and youths make a living then? A restaurant in Kerala recently introduced robotic waiters. So, jobs are vanishing. On the other hand, the small industries that are in the forefront of job creation are under pressure from big companies that manufacture through global value chains. A large pharmaceutical manufacturer in India may be importing raw materials from China, containers from Brazil, electronic equipment from Germany and logistics software from India. They roam the world looking for the lowest prices for raw materials and highest prices for their finished goods. They also get 'economies of scale.' The cost of production is less when undertaken on a large scale. A small pharmaceutical company cannot possibly compete with these large companies because it has to buy

raw materials locally even if they are expensive; and sell the finished goods locally even if the price is less. The small entrepreneur may be a graduate who is the purchase manager, production manager, human resource manager, accountant, finance manager and marketing manager of his small unit. How can she/he possibly compete with a number of engineers and PhDs employed by big companies for each of these functions?

If our small industries come under pressure, if the job-creation suffers then the youths entering into the job market will engage in counter-productive criminal activities instead of productive activities. This is the logical result of adopting efficient production by hi-tech global value chain driven big companies. Thus, global consultancy firm Arthur D. Little and Bank of America have said that local production should be encouraged and small industries should be provided assistance. I do not think the 'encouragement' and 'assistance' will be effective given the huge and ever-increasing gap in the technologies and global value chains developing between small and large companies. 'Encouragement' and 'assistance' means that the big and

small will continue to compete in the market. This will not work in the coming decade just as it has not worked in the last three decades of liberalisation. I recall a report commissioned by the Manmohan Singh government that suggested that clusters of small industries must be established to enable them reduce their cost of production by making community water pollution treatment plants, for example. That did not work. We will necessarily have to provide 'protection' rather than 'encouragement' and 'assistance' to our small businesses to enable them to stand competition from large companies in order to provide jobs to our youths.

The protection provided to domestic and small industries may lead to them making sub-standard or expensive products. They will be able to sell their shoddy products in the domestic markets because good quality products made by large and foreign companies would be subject to high taxes and get priced out of the market. An example of this was the production of the shoddy Ambassador cars in India for three decades till Sanjay Gandhi entered in collaboration with Maruti in the eighties.

One possible way out is to promote robotic and large-scale pro-

duction only for exports. That will enable our industrialists to adopt frontline technologies and also obtain the benefits of cheap labour available in our country—but only for the exports. The country will get advanced technologies and jobs will be created in the export sector; while the domestic market will provide space to the small companies and they will create jobs. But let us not fool ourselves. The 'inefficient' production undertaken by the small manufacturers in India will lead to high cost of production. The garment that could be produced by a large company at Rs 200 will be produced by the small manufacturer at Rs 250. This will impose an 'unnecessary' cost on the Indian consumer. This cost should be seen as an 'employment tax.' When the consumer pays more for the garment, there will be more jobs, there will be less unemployment and less need for the government to collect taxes from her/him for providing social safety net to the unemployed. The choice before the Finance Minister is this: Will we ask Indian consumers to buy expensive domestic goods with jobs; or cheap foreign goods without jobs?

The demographic dividend being touted as India's strength is slowly but inexorably moving towards becoming a demographic disaster. Demonetisation, GST and Covid-19 pandemic have dealt three heavy blows to our people. Those who have lost their jobs are eking out a living by selling vegetables. According to one district-level official of the BJP from UP, the daily earning of vegetable sellers has declined from Rs 2,000-a-day to Rs 500 today as there are 20 vegetable vendors where there were only two previously. This decline in people's income will certainly explode—even if it takes a few years for that to happen.

The challenge for the next decade is to find a pathway between the efficiency of the job-eating large businesses; and the inefficiency of the job-creating small businesses.

The writer is a former Professor of Economics at IIM Bangalore. Views are personal.

SPECTRUM ECONOMIC SECURITY

A national strategy for financial education



Bhaskar Nath Biswal

COVID-19 HAS EXPOSED OUR FINANCIAL WEAKNESSES WHICH NECESSITATED SOME SORT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY AT THE INDIVIDUAL AS WELL AS ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL

The growing need for financial education for families to take prudent and rational investment decisions and to ensure their economic security has been widely recognised. The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed our financial weaknesses which necessitated some sort of economic security at the individual as well as organisational level. Sudden changes in the income flows shattered the lifestyles of many. Life went as it is for those who made better financial decisions for themselves and their families, increasing their economic security and wellbeing. Thus, being financially literate is not only important for the household, but also for communities and societies. (Hogarth, Jeanne M., 2006).

The Max New York-NCAER survey (NCAER, 2008) pointed out that majority of Indian households are good savers but they do not undertake financial planning and are financially at risk. Advocacy of insurance and risk issues is an important matter as it (i) heightens individual awareness and responsibility towards potential risks; (ii) enhances understanding of insurance mechanisms that can cover these risks; and (iii) enables

the development of consumers' knowledge and capacity in order to make informed decisions as regards insurance matters (OECD, 2006). There is every need to educate people about the benefits of life insurance for both financial protection and wellbeing as well as for long-term wealth creation.

The apex financial institutions of the country like RBI, IRDAI, SEBI and PFRDA introduced many programmes for enhancing financial literacy during the last decade which made an impact on financial awareness and decision making of the common man. The first National Strategy for Financial Education (NSFE) (2013-2018) was successfully implemented with an aim to provide financial education to the masses. The progress was reviewed keeping in view the various developments that have taken place like the Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY). The National Centre for Financial Education prepared the second National Strategy for Financial Education (NSFE) (2020-2025) with a vision of making a financially empowered India.

The objectives of the second NSFE is to inculcate financial literacy concepts among various sec-

tions of population, encouraging savings behaviour, use of safe and secure digital financial services, availing credit from formal sources, management of risk at various life stages, proper planning for old age, participation in financial markets, awareness about grievance redressal and chalking out methods for evaluation of progress of financial education.

To achieve the strategic objectives laid down, NSFE recommends a '5 C' approach for achieving financial education through development of relevant content including curriculum in schools and colleges, developing capacity among the intermediaries involved in providing financial services for a better code of conduct, leveraging on the positive effect of community-led model for sustainable financial literacy through appropriate communication strategy like social media, and lastly, enhancing collaboration among various stakeholders working in the area of financial education.

The strategic objectives are to be achieved through three dimensions - life stage of target audience, geography with focus on vulnerable groups and sector specific focus. The first dimension includes

the stages of an individual like children, young adults, adults in workforce and senior citizens with special focus on women. The second dimension covers rural and urban people with special focus on urban poor and migrants, aspirational districts, northeastern states, hilly states, Andaman and Nicobar islands and Lakshadweep with focus on vulnerable social groups, migrants and persons with disabilities. Agriculture, manufacturing (skilled/unskilled labourers/artisans under MSME sector, members of SHGs), and self-employed/ unorganised sector are to be covered in the third dimension.

At the end of three years a mid-term evaluation shall be undertaken (2022-2023) and a comprehensive national survey at the end of the strategy implementation period shall be undertaken in 2025. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic there may be delay in the implementation of the strategy and we have to wait for some more time to reap the benefits of financial education.

The writer is Head, Department of Commerce, Nowrangpur College. Views are personal.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Correcting imbalance

Sir, It is a fact that students from Odisha are not performing well and even failing completely to put any commanding impact on centralised exams like NEET and JEE for medical and engineering courses. These centralised competitive exams require special skill sets which are imparted mainly through coaching centres. Due to such centres being limited to mostly urban pockets and the high economic cost of access to such facilities, thousands of meritorious students from government schools are at a disadvantage and therefore, fare lower than their potential in the entrance exams. This is unfair competition for the vast majority of children in Odisha. In order to correct this imbalance and provide confidence to meritorious students of government schools, to help them fulfill their dreams to become doctors and engineers, the state government has decided to provide reservation to eligible government school and college students of Odisha in medical and engineering colleges. This will be applicable from the next academic year. To finalise the modalities of implementation of the above in-principle decision, a high powered committee headed by a retired high court judge, will be constituted with eminent persons including educationists as members. The committee will be mandated to submit the report within three months so that the recommendations can be implemented. The state government has done an excellent work because this step will encourage parents to send their children to government-run schools.

Hitesh Kumar Parida, PANIKOILI

Sigh of relief

Sir, This is in reference to the news item '1 step closer to vax' published in Orissa Post, January 2. The government-appointed Subject Expert Committee's conditional recommendation of Serum Institute's Covishield for emergency use authorisation is a definitive moment for India. With the approvals fast-tracked, executing the vaccine rollout is the next critical task at hand. Union health minister Harsh Vardhan likened the dry run to Lok Sabha election preparations, which are just as elaborate. Even as vaccination is akin to going on the offensive to tame the novel coronavirus, it doesn't mean that individuals can eschew safety precautions and start celebrating. Unless society reaches high seroprevalence of antibodies that induce herd immunity, masking and other physical distancing precautions must continue. Nevertheless, after months of feeling besieged this is a sigh of relief.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

# Killing of jeweller with domicile right throws up new security challenge

Having lived and worked in Kashmir for 40 years, Satpal Nischal had obtained a domicile certificate recently



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Srinagar, Jan 2:** The murder of 70-year-old Punjab born jeweller, Satpal Nischal by motorcycle-borne terrorists in J&K's Srinagar city has thrown up a new challenge for the security forces.

The incident took place Thursday. Having lived and worked in Kashmir for 40 years, Satpal Nischal had obtained a domicile certificate last year and purchased a house in the high security Indira Nagar area of Srinagar city in addition to a shop in the Sarai Bala area, where the terrorists shot him dead.

Under the new laws that followed the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A, any citizen of India, who fulfils the mandated requirements, can obtain a domicile certificate and thereby own property in J&K.

Nischal had used these provisions of the law to own property in Kashmir.

Ironically, the jeweller's desire to spend the rest of his life in Kashmir finally became the reason for his murder.

The Resistance Front (TRF), a terror outfit, owned responsibility for the murder asserting that the new domicile law is 'unacceptable and any outsider who tries to own property here would meet the same fate'.

The TRF is believed to be an amalgam of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) and Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) outfits. A lesser known terror outfit calling itself the United Liberation Front of J&K has praised TRF and warned 'outsiders' not to purchase property in J&K unless they are

## Attack on concept of 'One India, One Nation': BJP

**Jammu:** The J&K BJP Saturday condemned the killing of a Hindu goldsmith in Srinagar days after he got his domicile certificate, terming it an assault on the 'One India One Nation' concept and a result of 'some parties raising the bogey of "demographic change" after the withdrawal the erstwhile state's special status. J&K BJP Spokesperson Brig (R) Anil Gupta also said apart from gross human rights violation of the minorities in

Kashmir, the dastardly act of the terror outfit The Resistance Front (TRF) is a challenge to the idea of India symbolised by Sarva Dharma Sama Bhava, the tenet of secularism in India. In a press release issued here, Brig (R) Gupta said, "In India, we embrace all religions but it is a matter of concern and shame that the leaders of self-proclaimed secular parties in Kashmir have once again failed to condemn Pakistan and its proxy TRF."

prepared to meet the jeweller's fate.

A major objective of the abrogation of J&K's special status has been the total integration of the state with the rest of the country.

Lawful equality with respect to purchase of property cannot be allowed to be sabotaged by murder and mayhem of innocent citizens by the terrorists.

There are hundreds of citizens belonging to outside J&K who have been living here for many decades. Such people have the legal right after the abrogation of Article 35A to buy and own property here.

After the murder of this Amritsar-born jeweller, who lived in Kashmir for over 40 years, security forces are faced with a grim challenge.

What was constitutionally ab-

rogated cannot be allowed to be reclaimed through the barrel of the gun. Year 2021 will be the litmus test for not only the security forces, but also for those who claim to be fighting a legal battle to reclaim J&K's special status.

Protection of people who have been serving Kashmiris for decades cannot only be left to the security forces. A right lawfully transferred to such people must be protected at all costs as long as it remains legal.

Satpal Nischal's murder is also a grim reminder of the fact that all is not well at the ground level in Kashmir.

Peace and tranquillity remained a far cry in 2020. Will it become a reality in 2021? J&K's time to permanent peace starts now.

# J&K seeks \$4 bn in investments

J&K IS ONE OF INDIA'S LEAST INDUSTRIALISED REGIONS, WITH PER CAPITA INCOME OF ₹62,145 IN 2016-2017, LOWER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE OF ₹82,229 BUT HIGHER THAN SEVERAL OTHER STATES

REUTERS

**New Delhi, Jan 2:** The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir plans to attract investments worth up to \$4 billion in the next two three years and would provide security to businesses setting up shop in the insurgency-hit region, its chief said Saturday.

Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) was India's only Muslim-majority state until August 2019, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi carved out a Buddhist-dominated enclave and designated both as federally-administered territories.

Tens of thousands of security forces guard the region where India has been fighting an armed-insurgency for decades, especially in the disputed Kashmir valley that is also claimed by Pakistan.

J&K Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said his administration was identifying 6,000 acres (2,400 hectares) of land for businesses and that they would make companies feel secure.

"We have an annual budget of 1 trillion rupees (\$13.68 billion) for



the region and a good amount of that is being used for providing security for businesses," Sinha said a group of journalists in New Delhi.

The government was also working on organising an investment summit there after a delay due to the coronavirus pandemic, he said.

"We are in touch with all big

business houses," he said.

J&K is one of India's least industrialised regions, with per capita income of ₹62,145 in 2016/2017, lower than the national average of ₹82,229 but higher than several other states.

The government enforced the changes in the region through a harsh crackdown, deploying thousands of additional troops, imposing a communication blackout and detaining scores of people.

# Covid vaccine dry run to continue in Assam till actual dose arrives

Along with Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Punjab, dry run for COVID-19 vaccine in Assam began December 28 in Nalbari and Sonitpur districts



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Guwahati, Jan 2:** In order to prepare the medical staff and infrastructure, the dry run for the COVID-19 vaccine will continue regularly across Assam till actual vaccination takes place, a senior official said Saturday.

Talking to PTI, National Health Mission (NHM) Mission Director Lakshmanan S said the Health Department does not want to leave any stone unturned to find out any lacuna in the system before administering the vaccine to the people of the state. "Today, we are having the dry run at Gauhati Medical College and Hospital, Sonapur Civil Hospital and Khanapara State Dispensary. This is going to be a continuous process and we will be having dry runs till the actual vaccine comes to us," he added.

The senior official said the NHM and the state Health Department

in the ongoing exercise of dry runs across the state will attempt to cover as much health centres and hospitals as possible in coming days. "Our objective is to prepare our staff, upgrade the state machinery and improve the vaccine delivery infrastructure. We don't want the people to have any issue when the actual vaccine will be administered. These dry runs will help find the shortcomings and plug those," Lakshmanan said.

Along with Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Punjab, dry run for COVID-19 vaccine in Assam began December 28 in Nalbari and Sonitpur districts.

The dry runs at five health centres in each of these two districts continued on the next day also and all senior officials monitored the exercise personally. As part of the exercise, the list of beneficiaries of the vaccination was uploaded and a mock exercise for the vaccine was conducted in all the centres.

# Cong announces farm loan waiver in poll-bound Assam

The party's other sops are microfinance loans for women, implementation of minimum income guarantee scheme 'Nyay', free electricity up to 120 units for the poor and middle class and ensure at least one job for each family

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Guwahati, Jan 2:** The Congress has sounded the poll bugle in Assam by announcing waiver of farm debts and microfinance loans for women, implementation of minimum income guarantee scheme 'Nyay', free electricity up to 120 units for the poor and middle class and ensure at least one job for each family.

The sops for Assam where assembly election is due in March-April this year were announced by state Congress president Ripun Bora at an interaction with media persons here.

The condition of farmers in the state is deplorable as the cost of production is very high and, without getting the Minimum Support Price (MSP), they are forced to go for distress sale.

If the Congress comes to power in the state, it will waive the farmers' debt like "it has been done by the party's governments in Rajasthan, Chattisgarh, Punjab and also in Madhya Pradesh earlier under Kamal Nath", Bora said.

People in villages, particularly women, take loans from microfinance organisations and face immense harassment, he said.

A Bill has been unanimously passed in the just concluded assembly session to protect economically vulnerable people, particularly women, from micro finance insti-



tutions and money lenders.

"We do not have any issue with it (the Bill), but women empowerment is a priority for the party and when we come to power, all types of micro-finance loans for women will be waived", he said.

Bora said that the Congress will also implement the minimum income guarantee scheme 'Nyuntam Aay Yojana' (Nyay) which was included in the party's manifesto in the last Lok Sabha polls. Nobel laureate economist Abhijit Banerjee helped the party conceptualise the scheme which was implemented by the Congress government in Chattisgarh, he said.

The BJP's prime agenda is to emotionally exploit people and assume power by dividing people like the British did. Our sole objective is not to capture power but ensure welfare of all people

RIPUN BORA | STATE CONGRESS PRESIDENT

The Congress during its earlier term in power had introduced the Rajiv Gandhi Gramya Bidyutikaran Scheme whereby 30 units of free power were given to 13.55 lakh families which the present BJP government is continuing.

"Power supply is a major issue in the state and its price has increased though the income of people has not. If the Congress comes to power, it will provide relief to maximum people with 120 units of free electricity to nearly 60 lakh poor and middle class families," Bora said.

Unemployment is a major problem in the state and though the BJP had promised 25 lakh jobs to the youth, this has turned out to be an "election jumla" as nearly one lakh posts are now lying vacant, he claimed. The Congress will adopt the policy of 'One Family, One Job' and though there will be a proper recruitment policy according to merit, "we will ensure that we can provide jobs," the state Congress president said.

# Stone-pelting incidents in J&K dropped by 87.13 pc in 2020

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jammu, Jan 2:** There was a 87.13 per cent dip in incidents of stone-pelting last year as compared to 2019 in Jammu and Kashmir, according to Director General of Police Dilbag Singh.

In 2019, there were 1,999 incidents of stone-pelting, of which 1,193 took place after the Centre announced abrogation of the special status of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir that year in August.

"There have been 255 stone-pelting incidents in 2020 as compared to the incidents in 2019 and the year (2020), witnessed a 87.31 per cent decline," the director general of police said.

The Centre August 5, 2019, revoked Article 370, which gave special status to the erstwhile state, and divided it into union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

In 2018 and 2017, 1,458, and 1,412 incidents of stone-pelting were reported. When compared to 2016, the dip in such incidents in 2020 was

90 per cent, according to officials.

In 2016, 2,653 stone-pelting cases were reported as the killing of Burhan Wani, a commander of the terrorist organisation Hizbul Mujahideen, had triggered violent protests across Kashmir.

In 2015, as many as 730 incidents of stone-pelting took place in Jammu and Kashmir.

After decline in militancy in the mid-2000s, stones became a popular choice of weapon during protests. This trend has been there since the 2008 Amarnath-land row agitation in Jammu and Kashmir.

A top commander of the Indian Army had then termed stone-pelting as "agitational terrorism" for targeting security forces and police who in-turn could not use the gun on stone-pelters.

The worst incidents of stone-pelting took place in 2010, 2016 and 2019.

"Law and order situation is well under control. Our resolve for 2021 is strengthening and consolidating peace and normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir," DGP Dilbag Singh said.



**JUMBO RIDE**  
A mahout on an Asiatic elephant, carrying feed, returns to camp, at Kaziranga National Park in Golaghat district of Assam, Saturday.  
PTI PHOTO

# 64K tourists visited Kaziranga since Oct 21

THE PARK, WHICH IS A UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE, USUALLY REMAINS CLOSED BETWEEN JUNE AND SEPTEMBER BECAUSE OF THE ANNUAL FLOODS AND REOPENS IN NOVEMBER

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Guwahati, Jan 2:** More than 64,000 tourists have visited the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, famed for the one-horned Indian rhinoceros, since it reopened October 21, an official said.

The park, which is a UNESCO World Heritage site, usually remains closed between June and September because of the annual floods and reopens in November. The park's Field Director P Sivakumar said that 64,100 tourists visited since October 21, 2020 while the revenue collected during the 70-day period was ₹127.32 lakh.

In 2018-19, over 47,10,971 domestic tourists and 25,739 foreign tourists had visited the state.



The park authorities could successfully restrict rhino poaching with only two rhinos poached in the year 2020, he said on Friday. Sivakumar said that 66 cases, including 17 rhino-related cases, have been booked during the year while 95 people have been arrested in 38 rhino and other wildlife crime related cases.

In September last, the Assam gov-

ernment had approved the seventh, eighth and ninth additions to the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve.

In November, according to a directive of Gauhati High Court, the civil administration of Bokakhat Sub-division under Golaghat district handed over the third and fifth additions to the Eastern Assam Wildlife Division of Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve. The area of the third addition is 69.76 hectares and that of the fifth addition is 115.36 hectares.

Sivakumar said that as a part of the water conservation in 2020, five additional wetlands - Chirakhowa, Potahi, Deosur, Haldibari and Banderdubi - were created which are huge and serve as habitats.

of the day quote

Will quit politics if I fail to prove the corruption charges against Tamil Nadu Municipal Administration Minister SP Velumani

**MK STALIN** | DMK PRESIDENT

Covid-19 vaccine will be available in the state close to Hindu festival 'Makar Sankranti' which will be celebrated January 14

**YOGI ADITYANATH** | UTTAR PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER

These jumbo committees (formed by AICC for Tamil Nadu Assembly elections) serve no purpose. 32 VP, 57 GS, 104 Secretaries. None will have any authority which means no accountability

**KARTI CHIDAMBARAM** | CONGRESS MP

SHORT TAKES

Maoist, wife beaten to death

**Medinagar:** A Maoist and his wife were beaten to death allegedly by his fellow village folks in Jharkhand's Palamu district Saturday after he shot dead a man over a land dispute, police said. Thirty-six-year-old Pragas Singh, a member of the banned CPI (Maoist) outfit, had come to his house in Kundalipur village in Manatu police station area on leave from his squad, Superintendent of Police Sanjeev Kumar said. He shot 40-year-old Vinod Singh deadover an old land dispute, following which villagers beat the Maoist and his wife Premni Devi (30) to death with sticks, he said.

4 dead as truck hits scooty

**Auraiya (UP):** Four members of a family riding a scooty lost their lives here Saturday after being hit by a speeding truck coming from the opposite direction, police said. Raj Gautam (23), a resident of Ajitmal, was returning to Bhikhampur along with his sister Priti (20), nephew Vijay (10) and a 12-year-old niece on the scooty when it was hit by the truck near a national highway overbridge in Chiruhali, they said.

Waqf member booked for rape

**Mumbai:** Mahim Police in Mumbai has registered a rape case against a member of the Waqf board. The accused has been identified as Dr Mudassir Lambe who is a member of the Waqf board and also a trustee of the Peer Makhdom Sahab Charitable trust. As per the complaint filed by the victim, Mudassir Lambe raped her January 28 last year after administering heran injection which made her semiconscious. Mudassir Lambe then raped the woman in his clinic. When the woman when questioned Mudassir Lambe about the incident, he promised to marry her but denied it later.

NCB nabs two Zambians

**New Delhi:** The NCB has arrested two Zambian nationals and seized over five kg of "fine quality" heroin over the last week as it said new routes for smuggling the drug into India are being exploited by traffickers. In the first case, Zambian man Mulapi Joshua was nabbed by the sleuths of the federal anti-narcotics agency from the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) airport here December 25 with 4.6 kg of heroin.



I am not going to get vaccinated for now. How can I trust BJP's vaccine? When our government will be formed, everyone will get free vaccine. We cannot take the BJP's vaccine

**AKHILESH YADAV** | SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF

DZUKO WILDFIRE AT MANIPUR BORDER RAGING

The wildfire in the Dzukou Valley ranges between Nagaland and Manipur, which started December 29 on the Nagaland side and shifted to Manipur, is feared to have destroyed much of the forest



Farmers threaten 'Kisan parade' on R-Day

Hardening their position ahead of the next round of talks with the government, protesting farmer unions Saturday said they will take out a tractor parade towards Delhi January 26

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 2:** Hardening their position ahead of the next round of talks with the government, protesting farmer unions Saturday said they will take out a tractor parade towards Delhi January 26, when the country will celebrate Republic Day if their demands are not met.

Addressing a press conference, the union leaders said time has come for "decisive" action as their demands have not been addressed by the government yet.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson will be the chief guest at the Republic Day parade at Rajpath January 26.

Farmer leader Darshan Pal Singh said their proposed parade will be called "Kisan Parade" and it will be held after the Republic Day parade.

The next round of talks between the government and the protesting farmer unions is scheduled to be held January 4. On Friday, the unions had announced that they would have to take firm steps if the meeting fails to resolve the deadlock.



Political activist Yogendra Yadav and farmer leaders during a press conference at Press Club in New Delhi, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

After the press conference, farmer leader Abhimanyu Kohar told the media that farm unions are hopeful for the January 4 meeting, but they cannot trust the government going by their experience with them.

Thousands of farmers, mostly from Punjab and Haryana, have been camping at three Delhi border points - Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur for more than a month, demanding repeal of the three farm laws, a legal guarantee for minimum support price for their crops and two others.

"We intend to be peaceful and we told the government during the talks that it has only two options - either repeal the three laws or use force to evict us (from Delhi border points). The time has come for decisive action here, and we have chosen January 26 as the Republic Day represents the supremacy of the people," union leaders told reporters.

Pal said if their demands are not met, thousands of farmers will have no option but to march

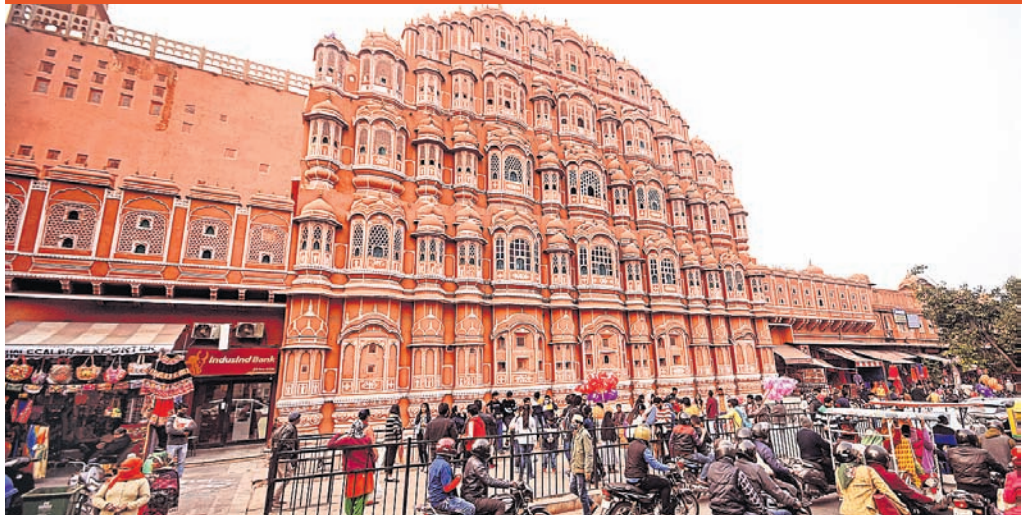
towards Delhi with their tractors, trolleys and national flags January 26. Asked about the route and timing for their 'Kisan Parade', Pal said unions will announce it later.

The farmer leader said their plan for the proposed tractor-march on Kundli-Manesar-Palwal (KMP) highway on January 6 will remain unchanged, which he said is "rehearsal" parade of their "January 26 tractor parade".

Swaraj India leader Yogendra Yadav said it is a "plain lie" that the government had accepted 50 per cent of the farmers' demands. "We have got nothing on paper yet," he said. "We were peaceful, are peaceful and will be peaceful, but will stay at Delhi borders until new farm laws are repealed," another farmer leader said.

Farmers' leaders made it clear that in the last round of talks, the government agreed to two minor demands of the farmers' movement - even these are yet to be secured in writing or legal form - the major demands of the protesting farmers remain unresolved.

VACATIONERS



Tourists visit the historic Hawa Mahal amid coronavirus pandemic in Jaipur, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

Centre to raise legal age of smoking to 21 years

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Jan 2:** The Centre has prepared a Bill to raise the age for allowing sale of cigarettes and tobacco products to 21 years from the current 18 years.

The government has drafted the Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Amendment Act, 2020.

The provision for raising the age limit to 21 years is part of the new bill being piloted by the Union Health Ministry. The bill seeks to amend further the Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003.

Under the amendments proposed in the bill, "No person shall sell, offer for sale, or permit sale of, cigarette or any other tobacco product - (a) to or by any person who is under twenty-one years of age, and in an

area within a radius of one hundred meters of any educational institution."

Section 7 is being amended to say, "Provided that the trade and commerce in cigarette or any other tobacco product shall be in sealed, intact and original packaging." It also adds a provision, "No person shall, directly or indirectly, produce, supply or distribute cigarettes or any other tobacco products unless every package of cigarettes or any other tobacco products produced, supplied or distributed by him is having minimum quantity as may be prescribed."

Contravention of this Section 7 will lead to imprisonment of two years or fine going up to ₹1 lakh and second conviction leading to prison for 5 years or fine going up to ₹5 lakh. The Bill also has a provision for coming down on manufacture and sale of illicit cigarettes and tobacco products. Sale of illicit products will lead to punishment of imprisonment of 1 year and a fine of ₹50,000 and a second conviction of imprisonment of 2 years and ₹1 lakh.

No bar on granting bail to triple talaq accused: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 2:** The Supreme Court has said there is no bar on granting anticipatory bail for an offence committed under the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act 2019, which makes the practice of instant divorce through "triple talaq" among Muslims a punishable offence, provided the court hears the complainant woman before granting pre-arrest bail.

The apex court noted that under the provisions of the Act, a Muslim husband who pronounces "triple talaq" upon his wife can be sentenced to a jail term that may extend to three years. The top court said the prohibition in the 2019 law is evidently one "which operates in relation to a Muslim husband alone".

A bench headed by Justice DY Chandrachud referred to the relevant sections of the Act and also the provision of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), which relates



to directions for the grant of bail to a person apprehending arrest.

"For the above reasons, we have come to the conclusion that on a true and harmonious construction of Section 438 of the CrPC and Section 7(c) of the Act, there is no bar on granting anticipatory bail for an offence committed under the Act, provided that the competent court must hear the married Muslim woman, who has made the complaint, before granting the anticipatory bail," the bench, also comprising justices Indu Malhotra and Indira Banerjee, said.

"It would be at the discretion of the court to grant ad-interim relief to the accused during the pendency of the anticipatory bail application, having issued notice to the married Muslim woman," it added.

The top court passed the verdict while granting anticipatory bail to a woman accused of harassing her daughter-in-law, who got an FIR lodged in August last year, alleging that her spouse had pronounced "triple talaq" on her at their house. The bench was hearing an appeal filed against a Kerala High Court order, which had declined to grant anticipatory bail to the woman.

Referring to the provisions of the 2019 Act, the apex court said, "The prohibition in Sections 3 and 4 is evidently one which operates in relation to a Muslim husband alone. This is supported by the Statement of Objects and Reasons accompanying the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill 2019, when it was introduced in Parliament."

Alarm sounded over migratory birds' deaths in Himachal

OVER 1,000 MIGRATORY BIRDS WERE FOUND DEAD OVER THE PAST ONE WEEK OR SO IN PONG WETLANDS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Pong Dam (Himachal Pradesh), Jan 2:** Biologists Saturday sounded the alarm with over 1,000 migratory birds, largely the endangered bar-headed goose, a highest-altitude migrant, were found dead over the past one week or so in Pong wetlands - one of the largest in northern India in Himachal Pradesh.

Chief Conservator Wildlife (Pong wetlands) Upasna Patyal said the reason for the deaths is still a mystery as their carcasses have been sent to different laboratories to determine their cause of death, but it could take days or at least a week to get results. The number of deaths was now more than 1,000. Besides the bar-

headed goose, the other species were the shoveler, the river tern, the black-headed gull and the common teal.

Some birds - including the bar-headed goose - were seen acting strangely before their deaths, she said. "When you're seeing that birds are not able to take the flight despite healthy wings, it's really disturbing. At some distance, you find their carcasses," she said.

The bird carcasses were sent to the Indian Veterinary Research Institute in Bareilly, the Regional Disease Diagnostic Laboratory in Jalandhar and the Wildlife Institute of India in Dehradun to know their cause of death.

Sensing gravity of the situation,



Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF) scientist KS Gopi Sundar told this news agency that it's something alarming situation.

"We are getting reports of death of birds in nature across India. It's

likely to be a disease because the deaths are occurring in multiple locations involving multiple species. It is a dangerous situation and needs multi-stakeholder intervention on priority," he warned.

"It is wrong to blame temperature intolerance for the death of birds in Pong and as reported earlier in Indore (in Madhya Pradesh) and in Jhalawar (in Rajasthan). Temperature can't be an issue. The death at different locations is a matter of serious concern as India lacks rapid response to wildlife emergencies," explained Sundar, who is the IUCN Co-chair of the Stork, Ibis and Spoonbill Specialist Group.

At the Pong wetlands, preliminary findings of their post-mortem have ruled out poisoning as the cause of their death, wildlife official said.

An official report said the field staff reported the sudden death of four bar-headed geese and one common teal in Fatehpur area of Pong

December 28.

The next day, the field staff was ordered to carry out a search of the entire area of the sanctuary and 421 birds were found dead in the wildlife range of Dhameta and Guglara areas of the Nagrota range.

Forest Minister Rakesh Pathania said the Wildlife Wing has initiated a probe into the deaths of the migratory birds.

Every winter, the Pong wetlands are home to over 100,000 birds of nearly 114 species. Among them the bar-headed geese, the northern pintail, the Eurasian coot, the common teal, the Eurasian wigeon and the ruddy shelduck are notable.

## of the day quote

The immense potential available in DRDO has been a catalyst for the development of industries in the defence manufacturing sector

**G. SATHEESH REDDY** | DRDO CHIEF

I want to appeal to people to not believe in any rumours. Our prime criteria in the vaccine trial is the safety and efficacy and nothing will be compromised

**HARSH YARDHAN** | UNION HEALTH MINISTER

The writ of Nitish Kumar no longer runs in his own government. He should have thought carefully before taking oath as the Chief Minister again

**RABRI DEVI** | FORMER BIHAR CHIEF MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### 6 hurt in Pulwama grenade attack

**Srinagar:** At least six civilians were injured in a grenade attack by militants in the Tral area of Pulwama district in Jammu and Kashmir Saturday, police said. The militants lobbed a grenade towards security forces personnel at the Tral bus stand in the south Kashmir district, a police official said. He said the grenade missed the intended target and exploded in the market, resulting in injuries to at least six civilians. The injured persons were taken to a hospital, the official said.

### 3 killed as dumper collides with truck

**Etawah (UP):** Three people were killed and six more injured in a head-on collision between a truck and a sand-laden dumper on the Lucknow-Agra expressway due to reduced visibility caused by fog, police said Saturday. The dumper was on the wrong side of the road when it collided with the truck coming from Rajasthan in the Usrahur police station area Friday evening. Two of the deceased were identified as Hiralal Meena (24) and Dholu Meena (19) of Dausa, Rajasthan, and the identity of the third person is being ascertained, he said.

### Scrap dealer held for murder

**Thane:** Police have arrested a 30-year-old scrap dealer at Bhiwandi in Maharashtra's Thane district for allegedly killing a man, an official said Saturday. The victim, Krishna Kesarwani (28), was also a scrap dealer, senior inspector of Bhiwandi town police station SD Kokate said. As per the complaint lodged by his family, Kesarwani left the house December 25, but did not return home. They carried out a search for him, but in vain, he said.



If someone is a Hindu, he has to be patriotic, that will be his or her basic character and nature. At times you may have to awaken his or her patriotism but he (Hindu) can never be anti-India

**MOHAN BHAGWAT** | RSS CHIEF

### FORMER UNION MINISTER BUTA SINGH PASSES AWAY AT 86

Former Union minister, ex-MP from Rajasthan and Congress leader Buta Singh passed away Saturday at the age of 86



## R-DAY REHEARSAL



A contingent of President's Bodyguard during their rehearsal for the Republic Day Parade at Rajpath in New Delhi, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

# SOPs for UK passengers

Chief among the new rules are compulsory self-paid Covid test on arrival, home quarantine for passengers with negative result increased to 14 days, no entry of UK passengers from transit airport

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Jan 2:** A day after allowing limited resumption of air traffic from the United Kingdom, where a more virulent coronavirus strain has led to record rise in daily numbers, the Health Ministry issued guidelines for stricter surveillance and testing of passengers from the country.

Chief among the new rules are compulsory self-paid testing on arrival, 14-day home quarantine for passengers with negative test result instead of the earlier seven, "adequate arrangement for passengers awaiting results" at airport, state government help desks and "institutional quarantine facility" for those who test positive.

New rules state that patients with new strain will be kept in the isolation facility till their sample tests negative. All their contacts, including at community level, would



also be isolated in institutional quarantine centres, rules add.

As per the new rules, air traffic controller Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) will strictly ensure "eligible airlines" do not allow any passengers to travel from UK to India through a transit airport so there is "no omissions in monitoring of those passengers".

"The resumption of flights is to be done in a calibrated manner by

initially allowing flight movement to/from UK to Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Chennai only," a Health Ministry statement said.

To avoid crowding during testing, flights will also be spaced adequately. Additionally, passengers will have to declare their 14-day travel history, declare their 72-hour Covid infection status, and carry a negative RT-PCR test, the rules state.

As per an earlier order, swab samples of all those who test positive will be sent to INSACOG - a consortium of 10 labs - for genome sequencing that'll determine if the Covid-19 infection is because of the new strain or the old one. The Health Ministry's standard operating procedure announced Saturday will be valid till January 30.

The set of rules have been announced to ensure the UK coronavirus mutation does not spread in India, where daily Covid cases have slid to the lowest since July amid unprecedented infection spike in US and European nations.

After UK attributed its recent case rise to the "70 per cent more viral strain affecting younger population", India suspended all flights from the country starting December 23. The decision was revised on Friday with the centre allowing airlines to resume operations on the UK-India route from January 8.

## Army to get 12 fast patrol boats for Pangong Tso lake

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Jan 2:** Amid the military confrontation with the Chinese army, the Indian Army has ordered a dozen new high-speed boats for surveillance of the Pangong Tso lake and other large water bodies by inking a contract with M/s Goa Shipyard Limited. The indigenously made boats will be delivered by May 2021.

"Indian Army has inked a contract with M/s Goa Shipyard Limited for 12 Fast Patrol Boats for surveillance and patrolling of large water bodies, including those in high altitude areas. Delivery would commence from May 2021," the Indian Army said in a tweet.

Currently, the Indian Army has about 17 boats and with no end to the confrontation between the Indian and the Chinese troops, it is likely that more would be needed.

It is the Pangong lake that's been the sticking point with the Chinese troops occupying areas on the northern bank of the lake that had been in India's control. In response, the Indian Army had occupied heights on the southern side of the lake that had been unmanned.

The indigenously built strong boats will have better anti-ramming capabilities and an enhanced capacity to accommodate additional troops. While there was a need to have 24 fast patrol boats, only 12 were ordered initially.

"The new boats will be stronger with more capacity and are being manufactured in India," said an official privy to the developments.

The need to upgrade boats used to patrol the Pangong Tso lake was felt in the wake of the military tussle between the Indian and the Chinese troops, and the continued standoff across the Line of Actual Control.

## WOMAN KILLED BY FRIENDS DURING NEW YEAR'S PARTY

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, Jan 2:** A 19-year-old woman was allegedly killed by her two friends during a rooftop party on New Year's Eve in Mumbai. It is alleged that the woman had seen the two accused in a "compromising position", following which an argument started between them. As the argument heated up, it turned into a physical fight during which the victim was allegedly killed.

The incident took place at a party in Khar West. Police have registered a murder case and detained the two accused. Police said they are also investigating how the party was organised on the rooftop despite a ban on parties in Mumbai.



Officials said a separate FIR may also be filed for this. According to the police, the party where the incident occurred was organised on the 16th floor of Bhagwati Heights tower in Khar west. Most of the people who attended the party had consumed alcohol, police said.

The officials added that around 2 am Friday, the victim saw the accused in a "compromising position". She reportedly objected to it and heated arguments ensued.

According to police sources, the victim was pulled by her hair and brutally assaulted. She reportedly has a mark on her head, indicating that she was hit by a sharp object. Initially, people who attended the party had alleged that the accused pushed the victim from the terrace. However, police investigation has revealed that she was brutally beaten and taken to the second floor.

She was declared 'brought dead' when later taken to a hospital. The cops are now trying to find out the exact sequence of events.

Though the police have registered a murder case, no one has been arrested so far. Cops are questioning the victim's friends who were present in the party.



**New Delhi, Jan 2:** More than 850 academicians from various educational institutions across the country have signed an open letter, backing three contentious farm laws, against which thousands of farmers are protesting on borders of the national capital for over a month.

The academicians, some from the country's top universities like Delhi University, Banaras Hindu University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, etc, have said that they strongly believe in the government's assurance to farmers that their livelihood would be protected and the food would not be taken away from their plates.

In the open letter, they said that the new laws would free farm trade from all restrictions and enable farmers to do all transactions at competitive prices.

"The Union government has repeatedly assured the farmers that these three bills on farm trade wouldn't do away with Minimum Support Price (MSP), but rather free the farm trade from all illicit market restrictions, open the market beyond 'mandis' and further assists the small and marginal farmers to sell their produce at market/competitive prices," the letter signed by 866 persons said.

"... We stand in solidarity with both the government and the farmers and salute their intense efforts," the letter said.

Six rounds of talks between the government and nearly 40 protesting unions have so far failed to end

### 75-yr-old protesting farmer kills self

**NEW DELHI:** A 75-year-old man from Uttar Pradesh was found dead today at a farmers' protest site on the Delhi-Ghaziabad border. While the police probing the case, those at the site say a note written by the dead man, Kashmir Singh Ladi, has been found in which he has expressed his frustration over the stalemate in talks with the government over the new agricultural laws that the farmers want repealed. Mr Ladi's body was found inside the toilet at the site, along with his note in which he has held the central government responsible for his death, according to the Bharatiya Kisan Union. "Till when shall we sit here in the cold? This government isn't listening at all. Hence, I give up my life so that some solution emerges," Ladi's note reportedly says. It also wants his grandsons to perform his final rites at the protest site itself.

the agitation on various Delhi borders for over a month by thousands of farmers, mainly from Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh.

Some common ground was reached in the last meeting on Wednesday on two demands - decriminalisation of stubble burning and continuation of power subsidies - but no breakthrough has been reached so far on the two main demands of the protesting farmers - repeal of the three farm laws and legal guarantee of MSP procurement system.

### Modi's high approval rating a matter of pride, says BJP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 2:** Noting that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's approval rating is the highest among world leaders in a survey conducted by a US data firm, BJP president JP Nadda Saturday said this is a testimony to his able leadership and a matter of pride for all Indians.

While Nadda tweeted to laud Modi's leadership, the BJP also held a press conference wherein Union minister Prakash Javadekar said it is a "rare phenomenon" that the Prime Minister's public approval has been rising over the past six years, defying the general trend of fluctuating ratings for most leaders.



American firm Morning Consult, which regularly tracks approval ratings of world leaders, said over 75 per cent people approve of Modi while 20 per cent disapprove, putting his net approval rating at 55 per cent. This is higher than any other world leader the firm tracks.

Referring to the survey, Nadda tweeted that Modi has yet again emerged as the most popular head of government for his efficient handling of various issues and management of the Covid-19 crisis.

"PM @narendramodi ji's popularity not only rises unabated across all demographic groups & geographic regions of the country and he also gets thumbs up globally for his dedication to his country. PM Modi ranks Number 1 among all global leaders in this (these) challenging times," he said.

# Education trends to look out for in 2021

2020 BROUGHT REMOTE, VIRTUAL LEARNING TO THE HORIZON AT A PACE AND SCALE NEVER BEFORE. IS THIS TO BE CARRIED FORWARD INTO 2021?

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Jan 2:** According to UNESCO, in 2020, one billion students, two-thirds of the global student population, faced either school closures or uncertainty. The most vulnerable populations, particularly girls, remained especially at risk. 2020 brought remote, virtual learning to the horizon at a pace and scale never before. Is this to be carried forward into 2021?

As per Antonius Raghubsanie, Director of Learning Services, British Council India, the year 2020 saw people turning to online resources to pursue their love for reading in the ongoing challenges posed by the pandemic, this was fuelled by the need for safety and reduced access to physical libraries and stores. "The British Council online library content wit-



nessed a 67 per cent increase in subscription over the last year (as of November '20). We are also seeing users above the age of 18 show increased preference for audiobooks - evident through a 192 per cent increase in checkouts over 2019 for our online library members. E-resources available through online library memberships gained popularity, especially

among young readers, owing to the convenience of accessing them safely from personal devices at home. We foresee this trend continuing in 2021, as readers including families, professionals and young kids, would continue to prefer online resources for information. In view of the current situation, we anticipate both E-books and audiobooks to continue gaining

favor among learners in a digital-first world," Raghubsanie said.

"One thing that will remain in 2021 is blended pedagogy. We have seen the flexibility that the online mode has provided and there is no denying of its advantages. Entire industries have shifted to the virtual platform and the education sector will also have to continue in a blended format. Institutes must develop their digital infrastructures to match up in this post digital era. Meetings, seminars and such activities will remain online. However, in terms some experientials, campuses will have to be opened up for these activities, but a blended pedagogy is here to stay. This will also have a long-term impact, especially on valuable programmes. The institutions that adopt the new method, new mode and new model will flourish while the others may perish. The quality of educational institutions

will get enhanced and the number of students enrolled will only increase in the digital mode," said Prof. Mahadeo Jaiswal, Director of IIM Sambalpur.

"Covid-19 has taught our teachers and the education sector to use technology to seamlessly impart education to all students. This trend will continue in the coming year and more smart campuses and digital libraries will be implemented to cater to the new-age learner. This digitization of the education sector will have a long-term impact, democratizing education globally. We will also continue to see a hybrid learning model, which will pave the way for the future of education with access to both classroom teaching and online education, catering to each student's unique needs while giving them the best of both worlds," said Rahul V Karad, a Visionary and educationist.

## of the day quote

As infection rates rise across UK, particularly in London, we must make this move to protect our country and the NHS. We will continue to keep the list of local authorities under review, and reopen classrooms as soon as we possibly can

**GAVIN WILLIAMSON** | EDUCATION SECRETARY, UK



The incumbent Imran Khan-led government of Pakistan will not resign on January 31 as demanded by the 11-party PDM opposition alliance

**SHAH MAHMOOD QURESHI** | FOREIGN MINISTER, PAKISTAN



We're running out of ambulances, and our response to 911 calls is getting longer and longer

**CATHY CHIDESTER** | DIR, LOS ANGELES COUNTY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AGENCY



## SHORT TAKES

### Syria blasts US for sanctions

**Beirut:** Syria Saturday lambasted the US government for sanctions it has imposed on Damascus, following a UN special rapporteur's statement that called on Washington to remove unilateral sanctions against the war-torn country. The Syrian Foreign Ministry described US Sanctions against the country as equal to "crimes against humanity" that impact the life of normal citizens as the country looks to rebuild after 10 years of civil war.

### Attack aimed to 'eliminate' Cabinet

**Cairo:** Yemen's PM Saturday said that a missile attack on the airport in Aden was meant "to eliminate" the country's new government as it arrived in the key southern city — a daring assault which he blamed on Iran-backed rebels. Prime Minister Ma'een Abdulmalik Saeed spoke to a news agency at his office at Mashi' Palace in Aden. It was the leader's first interview with international media after he survived Wednesday's attack that killed 25 people.

### NSW under fire for slow response

**Sydney:** Australia's leading medical group says the New South Wales (NSW) state government has put the rest of the country at risk by its decision not to go "hard and early" in its response to the Covid-19 outbreak on Sydney's northern beaches, which is suspected to have also caused new cases in neighboring Victoria state.



It's not that you can't get anything done in the minority or get everything done in the majority, but having the gavel, having that leadership control can be the difference in success or failure for an administration

**JIM MANLEY** | DEMOCRATIC STRATEGIST, US

### US CONG OVERRIDES PREZ TRUMP'S VETO

The US Congress has overwhelmingly overturned Donald Trump's veto of the annual \$740 billion defence policy bill, delivering a resounding bipartisan rebuke to the President in his final days in the White House



# 26/11 attack mastermind Lakhvi arrested in Pakistan

*Lakhvi was designated as a global terrorist by the UN in December 2008 for being associated with LeT and al-Qaeda*



ZAKI-UR-REHMAN LAKHVI

**Lahore, Jan 2:** Mumbai attack mastermind and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) operations commander Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi was arrested Saturday in Pakistan on terror financing charges, according to an official statement, amidst growing international pressure on Islamabad to bring to justice terrorists roaming free in the country. UN proscribed terrorist Lakhvi, who was on bail since 2015 in the Mumbai attack case, was arrested by the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) of Punjab

province. Sources in CTD said that Lakhvi was arrested from Lahore. "Following an intelligence-based operation conducted by the CTD Punjab, proscribed organisation LeT leader Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi was arrested on charges of terrorism financing," the CTD said in an official statement. It further said that Lakhvi, 61, was arrested in a case of terrorism financing registered in a police station of CTD Lahore. "Lakhvi is accused of running a dispensary, using funds collected for terrorism financing. He and others

also collected funds from this dispensary and used these funds for further terrorism financing. He also used these funds for personal expenses," the CTD said. The CTD said that in addition to belonging to proscribed organisation LeT, Lakhvi is also a UN designated individual. "His trial will be held before the Anti-Terrorism Court in Lahore," it added. Lakhvi was designated as a global terrorist by the UN in December 2008 for being associated with LeT and al-Qaeda and for "participating in the financing, planning, facilitating, preparing or perpetrating of acts by, in conjunction with, under the name of, on behalf or in support of" both the entities. Proscribed terrorists and entities are subject to an assets freeze, wherein all states are required to freeze funds and other financial assets.

## UK COVID VAX

# AstraZeneca plans 2mn doses a week: Reports



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, Jan 2:** Amidst growing pressure over sufficient supplies of Covid-19 vaccines in the UK, pharmaceutical companies have hit back at government claims that access to enough jabs was a "limiting factor", insisting there was no issue at their end. While AstraZeneca says it expects 2 million doses of the Oxford University vaccine to be ready each week in just over a fortnight, Pfizer BioNTech said the number of doses it has now sent to the UK is "in the millions". The Pfizer and Oxford/AstraZeneca jabs are the two vaccines against coronavirus that are approved for rollout in the UK. "The plan is then to build it up fairly rapidly; by the third week of January we should get to 2 million a week," an AstraZeneca source told 'The Times' newspaper. "The deliveries to the UK are on track and progressing according to our agreed schedule," a Pfizer spokesperson said. Meanwhile, there are growing questions on whether Britain could have had more supplies ready to go, similar to how India has created a massive vaccine stockpile in advance, according to 'The Daily Telegraph'. Pune-based Serum Institute of

India has a licensing tie-up for the Oxford vaccine. It has emerged that India has already managed to stockpile 50 million doses of the jabs. "The rate-limiting factor at the moment, as they say, is supply not distribution," UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson told a Downing Street briefing earlier in the week. The issues around supply are being raised as the UK is set to begin the rollout of the Oxford vaccine among the elderly and front-line workers from Monday after it received regulatory approval Wednesday. The government has ordered 100 million doses of the Oxford vaccine and scientific advisers have calculated that at least 2 million vaccinations a week could be needed, as well as a lockdown that includes school closures, to avoid the pressures on intensive care exceeding the peak of the first wave. Ministers hope that their target of vaccinating 30 million vulnerable people and health workers by Easter in early April could be met ahead of schedule. The UK's chief medical officers (CMOs) have defended the COVID-19 vaccination plan, even though a doctors' union has voiced criticism. The UK will give both parts of the Oxford and Pfizer vaccines 12 weeks apart, having initially planned to leave 21 days between the Pfizer jabs.

# 'CHINA HOPES BIDEN WILL END TRUMP'S COLD WAR'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Beijing, Jan 2:** As Joe Biden is set to assume power this month, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi Saturday hoped that the US President-elect would end the incumbent Donald Trump's "Cold War" policy towards Beijing and return to a "sensible approach" by restoring normal ties. The Trump administration launched a broadside against China on all fronts, including trade, Tibet and Taiwan besides, scathing criticism against the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) headed by President Xi Jinping. The Chinese side hopes that the next US administration will return to a sensible approach, resume dialogue with China, restore normalcy to the bilateral relations and restart cooperation, Wang, who is also a State Councillor, told the state-run Xinhua news agency in an interview. "China-US relations have come to



What has happened proves that the US' attempt to suppress China and start a new Cold War has not just seriously harmed the interests of the two, but also caused severe disruptions to the world

WANG YI | FOREIGN MINISTER, CHINA

a new crossroads, and a new window of hope is opening," he said. Biden, who defeated President Trump in the November 8 Presidential election, is scheduled to take over January 20, formally ending the Trump era which saw the US-China ties touch a new low. Wang said that in recent years, the US-China relations have run into unprecedented difficulties. Fundamentally, it all comes down to the serious misconceptions of US policymakers about China. Some see China as the so-called biggest threat and their China policy based

on this misperception is simply wrong, he said. "What has happened proves that the US' attempt to suppress China and start a new Cold War has not just seriously harmed the interests of the two peoples, but also caused severe disruptions to the world. Such a policy will find no support and is doomed to fail. "We are ready to develop with the United States a relationship based on coordination, cooperation and stability. We know that some in the US are uneasy about China's rapid development. However, the best way to keep one's lead is through constant self-improvement, not by blocking others' development," he said.

## UAE-based Indian breaks record for largest greetings card

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Dubai, Jan 2:** A Dubai-based Indian expat has broken the world record for the largest 'Pop up Greetings Card' record, the media reported Saturday. Ramkumar Sarangapani is currently the holder of the highest number of Guinness World Records in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and this is his 19th world record, reports Gulf News. Sarangapani's greetings card is 100 times bigger than the regular pop up greetings card and features a collage of Vice-President and



Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum's paintings created by celebrated Dubai-based artist Akbar Saheb over the last 25 years. With a closed surface area of 8.20 square metres, it broke the previous record of 6.729 square metres set by Hong Kong.

At 4 metres long and 2.05 metres wide, the card's outer cover is the winning bid of Expo 2020 painting created by Saheb in 2013, whereas the inside of the card and pop up is a collage of various paintings of Sheikh Mohammed made by him since 1996. The card will be exhibited at the Numishing Art Gallery, Doha centre, Al Maktoum Road, along with the Largest Electronic Greetings card, which was created on the occasion of 49th National day of UAE. The showcase will be on for 15 days from January 4 and remain until January 18

## Japanese governors demand state of emergency

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Tokyo, Jan 2:** The Japanese capital, Tokyo, and three nearby prefectures have asked the national government to declare a state of emergency to curtail the surging spread of the coronavirus pandemic. "In the name of valuing life, we made this plea together," said Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike after meeting for three hours on Saturday with the minister in charge of coronavirus measures, along with the governors of Saitama, Chiba and Kanagawa. Japan has seen a recent rise in reported cases of COVID-19, especially in urban areas. Tokyo saw a daily record of 1,337 cases on New Year's Eve.



Worries are growing about hosting the Olympics, set for July, with 11,000 Olympic athletes set to enter Japan, as well as tens of thousands of officials and media. "Corona knows no calendar," said Koike, referring to her worries about infection growing during the New Year's holidays. "Hospitals are getting packed, affecting medical care for all." The minister said both sides agreed the situation was critical, but medical experts will be consulted before action is decided.

## TEMPLE ATTACK

# Ten more arrested in northwest Pakistan

AGENCIES

**Peshawar, Jan 2:** Pakistani police have arrested 10 more people in overnight raids for their alleged involvement in the vandalism of a Hindu temple by a mob led by members of a radical Islamist party in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. With the latest arrests, the number of accused arrested in the case has risen to 55. Over 350 people have been named in the FIR after the temple in Terri village in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Karak district was vandalised and set on fire on Wednesday by a mob protesting against its expansion work.



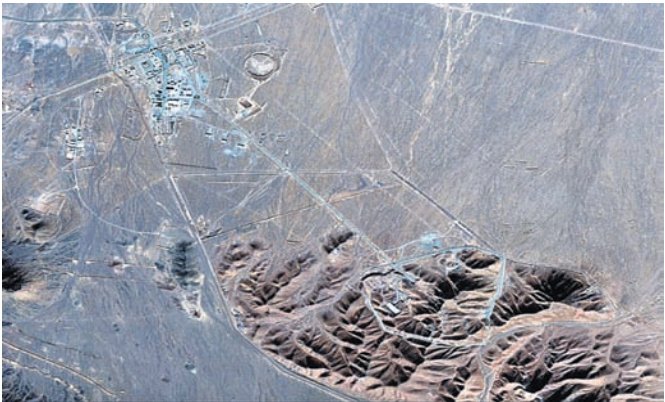
Search is underway to nab the others accused named in the FIR. The temple which also had a samadhi of a Hindu religious leader was attacked by the mob after members of the Hindu community received permission from local authorities to renovate its decades-old building.

# Iran plans 20pc uranium enrichment at the earliest

AGENCIES

**Dubai, Jan 2:** Iran said Saturday it plans to enrich uranium up to 20 pc at its underground Fordo nuclear facility "as soon as possible," pushing its program a technical step away from weapons-grade levels as it increases pressure on the West over the tattered atomic deal. The move comes amid heightened tensions between Iran and the US in the waning days of the administration of President Donald Trump, who unilaterally withdrew America from Tehran's nuclear deal in 2018. That set in motion an escalating series of incidents capped by a US drone strike that killed a top Iranian general in Baghdad a year ago, an anniversary coming Sunday that has American officials now

worried about possible retaliation by Iran. Iran's decision to begin enriching to 20 pc a decade ago nearly brought an Israeli strike targeting its nuclear facilities, tensions that only abated with the 2015 atomic deal. A resumption of 20 pc enrichment could see that brinkmanship return. Even Ali Akbar Salehi, the US-educated head of the civilian Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran, offered a military analogy to describe his agency's readiness to take the next step. "We are like soldiers and our fingers are on the triggers," Salehi told Iranian state television. "The commander should command and we shoot. We are ready for this and will produce (20% enriched uranium) as soon as possible." Iran's decision comes after its



This November 4, 2020, file satellite photo by Maxar Technologies shows Iran's Fordo nuclear site

Parliament passed a bill, later approved by a constitutional watchdog, aimed at hiking enrichment to pressure Europe into providing sanctions relief. It also serves

as pressure ahead of the inauguration of US President-elect Joe Biden, who has said he is willing to re-enter the nuclear deal. The International Atomic

Iran's decision to begin enriching to 20% a decade ago nearly brought an Israeli strike targeting its nuclear facilities, tensions that only abated with the 2015 atomic deal

A resumption of 20% enrichment could see that brinkmanship return

Energy Agency acknowledged Iran had informed its inspectors of the decision by a letter after news leaked overnight Friday. "Iran has informed the agency that in order to comply with a legal act recently passed by the country's parliament, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran intends to produce low-enriched uranium ... up to 20 percent at the Fordo Fuel Enrichment Plant,"

the IAEA said in a statement. The IAEA added Iran did not say when it planned to boost enrichment, though the agency "has inspectors present in Iran on a 24/7 basis and they have regular access to Fordo." The parliamentary bill also called on Iran to expel those inspectors, though it appears Tehran still has not decided to take that step. Salehi said Iran would need to switch out natural uranium in centrifuges at Fordo for material already enriched to four per cent to begin the process of going to 20 pc. "It should be done under IAEA supervision," Salehi added. Since the deal's collapse, Iran has resumed enrichment at Fordo, near the Shiite holy city of Qom, some 90 kilometers (55 miles) southwest of Tehran.

## of the day quote

This year, we hope better foodgrain production in the Rabi season than last year (same season)



**NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR** | AGRICULTURE MINISTER

Complaints (of the Japan's MUFG Bank in India) will be filed with the Labour Commissioners in Chennai and Delhi against the sudden dismissal of employees by the MUFG Bank



**CH VENKATACHALAM** | GENERAL SECRETARY, AIEEA

Over the past 9 months, 48 per cent of our sales and corresponding income has come from homes that cost upwards of Rs 2 crore



**KAUSHAL AGARWAL** | CHAIRMAN, GUARDIANS REAL ESTATE

## SHORT TAKES

### Bitcoin rallies above \$30,000

**New York:** Digital currency Bitcoin extended its record smashing rally Saturday, beginning the year with a surge over \$30,000 for the first time, with ever more traders and investors betting that it is on its way to becoming a mainstream payment method. The price of the world's most popular cryptocurrency traded as high as \$31,584 early Saturday, with almost all other markets closed over the first weekend in 2021.

### PFC raises borrowing limit

**New Delhi:** State-owned Power Finance Corporation (PFC) has raised its borrowing limit to Rs 1.18 lakh crore for the ongoing financial year. "The borrowing plan for FY21 has been revised from Rs 90,000 crore to Rs 1,18,000 crore to accommodate the moratorium granted to borrowers as per RBI guidelines," a statement issued by PFC Friday said. The decision was taken by the company's board on Wednesday, it said.

### 6.03cr GST e-invoices raised

**New Delhi:** As many as 6.03 crore GST e-invoices were generated in December 2020, higher than 5.89 crore in November, according to an official release. The government had made it mandatory for businesses with turnover of over Rs 500 crore to generate electronic invoice or e-invoice for B2B transactions, from October 1, 2020. The IT ministry Saturday said that GST e-invoice system, "the game changer in the GST system", has completed journey of three months and facilitated smooth transition of the tax payers to the new platform.

### BSNL to test telecom gears

**New Delhi:** State-run telecom firm BSNL will test the quality of Indian telecom equipment before letting indigenous manufacturers participate in the 4G tender to be floated by the company, according to a notice of the company. BSNL had floated a 4G tender worth Rs 9,300 crore for procurement of telecom equipment in March but was cancelled later due to multiple reasons, including allegation from Indian companies that the state-run firm project does not comply with preferential market access norms and is inclined towards foreign companies.



**The Model Standing Orders will pave the way for the industry harmony in the country as it aim to formalise the service-related matters in an amicable manner**

**SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR** | LABOUR MINISTER

# Exports fall 0.8pc in Dec, trade deficit widens to \$15.71bn

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 2:** Contracting for the third straight month, India's exports slipped marginally by 0.8 per cent in December 2020 even as the trade deficit widened to \$15.71 billion due to the rise in imports.

Exports in December 2020 stood at \$26.89 billion, as compared to \$27.11 in the same month of 2019, according to the preliminary data released by the commerce ministry Saturday.

The rate of contraction in the country's outbound shipments has improved against a decline of 8.74 per cent in November, mainly due to the increase in shipments of certain sectors such as gems and jewellery, engineering and chemicals.

After a gap of nine months, imports in December recorded a positive growth of 7.6 per cent at \$42.6 billion. In February 2020, it had registered a rise of 2.48 per cent.

"India is thus a net importer in December 2020, with a trade deficit of \$15.71 billion, as compared to a trade deficit of \$12.49 billion, widened by 25.78 per cent," the ministry said in a statement.



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The trade deficit at \$15.71 billion was highest since July 2020

istry said in a statement.

The trade deficit (the difference between imports and exports) at \$15.71 billion was highest since July 2020. The country had witnessed trade surplus in June 2020.

In April-December 2020-21, the country's merchandise exports contracted by 15.8 per cent to \$200.55 bil-

lion, as compared to \$238.27 billion in the same period last fiscal.

Imports during the nine months of the current fiscal, declined by 29.08 per cent to \$258.29 billion. It was \$364.18 billion in April-December 2019-20. In December 2020, oil imports declined by 10.37 per cent to \$9.61 billion.

## Change in Tariff Value

★ 31.12.2020



\* in any form, in respect of which the benefit of entries at serial number 356 and 358 (for Gold) and at serial number 357 and 359 (for Silver) of the Notification No. 50/2017-Customs dated 30.06.2017 is availed

Chapter/  
heading/  
sub-head  
/tariff item

Description  
of goods

Tariff value  
US \$ (Per  
Metric  
Tonne)

1511 10 00	Crude Palm Oil	★	992
1511 90 10	RBD Palm Oil	★	1018
1511 90 90	Others – Palm Oil	★	1005
1511 10 00	Crude Palmolein	★	1024
1511 90 20	RBD Palmolein	★	1027
1511 90 90	Others – Palmolein	★	1026
1507 10 00	Crude Soyabean Oil	★	1072
7404 00 22	Brass Scrap (all grades)	★	4550
1207 91 00	Poppy seeds		3623
71 or 98	Gold (per 10 gms)*	★	607
71 or 98	Silver (per kg)*	★	848

PTI GRAPHICS

Source: Ministry of Finance

## 2020 DELIVERIES

# Tesla beat estimates, but fall short of Musk's target

REUTERS

**New York, Jan 2:** Tesla Inc Saturday reported better-than-expected 2020 vehicle deliveries, driven by a steady rise in electric vehicle adoption across the world's largest economies.

The company delivered 499,550 vehicles during 2020, above Wall Street estimates of 481,261 vehicles, according to Refinitiv data, but 450 shy of CEO Elon Musk's target of half a million. Musk, however, tweeted here he was "proud of the Tesla team for achieving this major milestone."

"At the start of Tesla, I thought we had (optimistically) a 10%

chance of surviving at all," he said.

Tesla has pinned hopes on new markets such as Europe and Asia, with competition intensifying in its home turf as legacy automakers double down their investments in the booming EV space.

Its delivery push has been supported by its new Shanghai factory, the only plant currently producing vehicles outside California. The carmaker said here Model Y production in Shanghai has begun, with deliveries expected shortly.

Palo Alto, California-based Tesla said it delivered 180,570 vehicles during the fourth quarter, a quarterly record for the electric carmaker, beating estimates of 163,628 vehicles.



# SEBI imposes ₹40cr fine on RIL for 'manipulative trading'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, Jan 2:** The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has imposed a penalty of Rs 25 crore and Rs 15 crore respectively on Reliance Industries (RIL) and its Chairman Mukesh Ambani for manipulative trading.

The SEBI order observed that RIL had entered into a well-planned operation with its agents to corner the open interest in the RPL (Reliance Petroleum) futures and to earn undue profits from the sale of RPL shares in both cash and futures segments and to dump large number of RPL shares in the cash segment during the last ten minutes of trading on the settlement day

resulting in a fall in the settlement price. The case pertains to 2007.

It also observed that Mukesh Ambani being the Chairman & Managing Director of RIL, was responsible for its day-to-day affairs and thereby, liable for the "manipulative trading" done by RIL.

The order noted that Navi Mumbai SEZ Pvt Ltd and Mumbai SEZ Ltd have allegedly aided and abetted RIL by providing funds to one of the agents appointed by RIL, who in turn provided funds to other 11 agents for making the margin payments for the short positions in RPL November Futures.

The capital market regulator imposed penalties of Rs 20 crore and Rs 10 crore on Navi Mumbai SEZ and



Mumbai SEZ respectively.

As per SEBI, it was observed that a resolution was passed by the Board of Directors of March 29, 2007 which approved the operating

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 2:** After Jio's purported allegations that channel partners of rival telcos were inciting and provoking agitators involved in tower disruption, Airtel and Vodafone Idea have hit back terming the charges as baseless, false and outrageous.

Airtel in a letter to Department of Telecom (DoT) said Jio's allegations against it did not demonstrate any evidence that Bharti had any hand in the ongoing issues that the company is facing, and that the complaint should be dismissed "with the contempt that it deserves".

The letter by Airtel to Telecom Secretary Anshu Prakash said the company is aware of a complaint made by Reliance Jio to the department dated December 28, in reference to the disruption of RJIL (Reliance Jio) services due to farmer

## Tata Steel transfers stake in processing arms to TSDPL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, Jan 2:** Tata Steel Friday said it has Transferred its stake in two companies to TSDPL, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the firm, as part of reorganising its India footprint.

"...The company today transferred the 51 per cent stake it holds in Jamsshedpur Continuous Annealing and Processing Company Private Ltd (JCAPCPL) and 50 per cent stake it holds in Tata BlueScope Steel Private Ltd (TBSPL) to Tata Steel Downstream Products Ltd (TSDPL)," it said in a regulatory filing.



**Tata Steel acquired the entire equity of Ryerson Inc in 2009. TSDPL processed 2.6 million tonne of steel in 2019**

The step was taken to reorganise the company's India footprint into four clusters to drive scale, synergies and simplification and to create value for all stakeholders, the steelmaker said. The transfer will help consolidate its downstream steel processing services, it said.

As on March 31, 2020, the net worth of JCAPCPL was Rs 428.60 crore, while the same for TBSPL was Rs 469.97 crore.

TSDPL was created to bring steel service centre solutions for the first time to industrial customers.

It was originally set up in 1997 as Tata Ryerson Ltd., a joint venture between Tata Steel of India and Ryerson Inc. of the US.

Tata Steel acquired the entire equity of Ryerson Inc in 2009. TSDPL processed 2.6 million tonne of steel in 2019.

## TENCENT GAMES REINSTATED

Tencent's online games were removed and then reinstated on Huawei's app store in a dispute over revenue sharing by the Chinese companies. Huawei was insisting on a 50% cut of Tencent's game sales on the app store



# China warns US of retaliation over NYSE delisting cos

*Under Trump, the US has stepped up economic sanctions and travel bans against Chinese firms, government officials and Communist Party members, especially recently in Trump's last few weeks in office*



AGENCIES

**Beijing, Jan 2:** China said Saturday that it would take necessary countermeasures in response to the New York Stock Exchange's (NYSE) announcement that would delist three major Chinese telecoms, in the latest flare-up of tensions between Beijing and Washington.

The stock exchange said Thursday that China Telecom Corp. Ltd., China Mobile Ltd. And China Unicom Hong Kong Ltd. Would be delisted from the exchange, with trading of the companies to be suspended sometime between January 7 and January 11.

The move stems from an executive order President Donald Trump issued November 12 barring investment in publicly traded companies that the US government says are owned or controlled by the Chinese military.

"China opposes the Americans from abusing national security by listing Chinese companies into

the so-called 'Communist China Military Companies' list and will take the necessary countermeasures to resolutely safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies," a spokesperson for the Chinese Commerce Ministry said in a statement. The actions will also "greatly weaken all parties' confidence in the US capital market," the statement said.

The ministry did not offer details on what the measures might be. Under Trump, the US has stepped up economic sanctions and travel bans against Chinese companies, government officials and Communist Party members, especially recently in Trump's last few weeks in office. In December, the US announced plans to limit visas for members of the Chinese Communist Party and their family members to one month, instead of 10 years.

Chinese tech giant Huawei has been shut out of the US market and the US. Has lobbied other countries to follow suit, albeit with mixed results.



protests in Punjab and Haryana.

Airtel noted that a similar allegation had been levelled by Jio in a letter to the telecom regulator earlier in December to which the company had responded.

"The baseless allegation made by Jio that Airtel is behind the farmer agitation to 'sabotage' their

network and to force customers to switch to Airtel is therefore simply outrageous," Bharti Airtel's Chief Regulatory Officer Rahul Vatts said in the letter to the DoT dated December 28.

Airtel added that Jio's complaint does not bear any evidence that Airtel has any hand in the ongoing

issues that Jio is facing.

"In fact, we are amused as to how Jio can even believe that Airtel would be so omnipotent as to make customers forcibly port out of Jio. If we had this power, we would have exercised it over the last three years when Jio amassed a massive number of customers," Airtel said.

A VIL spokesperson said the company deplores the "false and baseless allegations" made in the "said letter", and unequivocally denies such irresponsible reports.

"VIL will never be part of any such activity which has impact on network installations of any operator in the country. It seems a fictional conspiracy theory to implicate and cause damage to VIL," the company said.

VIL further said it strongly condemns acts of vandalism against telecom infrastructure disrupting essential services.

ceeded the proposed sale of shares in the cash segment.

Further, the probe showed that on November 29 2007, RIL sold a total of 2.25 crore shares in the cash segment during the last 10 minutes of trading resulting in fall in the prices of RPL shares, which also lowered the settlement price of RPL November Futures in the F&O Segment.

RIL's entire outstanding position of 7.97 crores in the F&O Segment was cash settled at this depressed settlement price resulting in profits on the said short positions. The said profits were transferred by the agents to RIL as per a prior agreement, said the order dated January 1.



# ROHIT, 4 OTHERS IN ISOLATION

Indian players put in isolation after being spotted at a restaurant as Cricket Australia says investigation launched into possible breach of COVID-19 protocol

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Melbourne, Jan 2:** Five India Test players, including vice-captain Rohit Sharma, rising opener Shubman Gill and wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant, have been put in isolation and an investigation launched into a possible breach of the bio-security protocol by them, Cricket Australia said Saturday.

While BCCI brass had initially ruled out any investigation on its part, Cricket Australia's late statement said a joint probe is on and the five have been isolated from the remaining team after a fan put out a video of them eating at an indoor restaurant on Twitter. The person claimed that he had hugged Pant but later retracted.

"The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and Cricket Australia (CA) were today alerted to a video post on social media that purported to show Rohit Sharma, Rishabh Pant, Shubman Gill, Prithvi Shaw and Navdeep Saini eating at an indoor venue in Melbourne on New Year's Day," CA said in a statement.

India and Australia are engaged in a four-Test series right

now and the third match is due to start January 7 in Sydney. As per protocol, players are allowed to eat out in outdoor settings, following social distancing norms.

"The BCCI and CA are investigating the matter and seeking to determine whether the outing constitutes a breach of bio-security protocols."

The isolation protocols were put in place after consulting with medical teams. "On the advice of the Australian and Indian medical teams, the aforementioned players have been placed in isolation as a precaution.

"This will include separating the group of players from the broader Indian and Australian squads when travelling and at the training venue," CA further stated.

However, the players will be permitted to train in accordance with the protocols that have been put in place.

Asked if CA could disallow the three players (Rohit, Pant and Gill) from taking part in the next Test, a BCCI official said: "Firstly, they are allowed to train. Secondly, I don't think it will come to that as then there could be adverse implications."

## No breach of protocols: BCCI

**MELBOURNE:** The BCCI Saturday rubbished reports that it was investigating a violation of COVID-19 protocols by some Indian cricketers who ate out at a restaurant here, terming them 'a malicious spin by a section of Australian media'.

A senior Indian cricket board official told PTI that the visiting contingent is 'well aware' of the COVID-19 protocols and had not violated any of them.

"No, there has been no breach in bio-security protocols. Everyone associated with the Indian team is well aware of the protocols," the official said on conditions of anonymity.

It all started after a fan, identified as Navaldeep Singh, tweeted pictures and videos of cricketers Rohit Sharma, Rishabh Pant, Navdeep Saini and Shubman Gill having a meal at a restaurant.

The fan, who claimed that he was seated close to the players at the restaurant, later apologised for creating confusion by claiming that he had been hugged by Pant after he paid for the players' meal.

As per protocols, players are allowed to eat out provided they take necessary precautions. "We can only term it as a malicious spin by a section of Australian media and this has started after their humiliating defeat," he added.

India crushed Australia by eight wickets in the second Test in Melbourne, making an incredible comeback days after the defeat in the four-match series opener in Adelaide.

The Sydney Morning Herald, in a report that was not backed up by any statements from either BCCI, Cricket Australia or the Indian team management, reported that the restaurant visit was a breach of bio-bubble protocol.

"The Australian media at times acts as an extension of their cricket team," the BCCI official said. The bio-security bubbles have been put in place to ensure the players are not affected by the pandemic that has gripped the world for months now, with parts of Australia reporting fresh outbreaks in recent times.



# Warner 'highly doubtful' about full fitness before Sydney Test

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Melbourne, Jan 2:** Australia's No.1 opener David Warner Saturday said he is 'highly doubtful' about attaining full fitness ahead of the third Test against India though he will do everything possible to respond to a desperate selection panel and team management's call.

Warner sustained a groin tear during the second ODI against India and has been racing against time to get fit for the January 7-11 third Test after missing the first two matches where Joe Burns and Matthew Wade failed to live up to the expectations.

Asked about his fitness update, Warner put things as it is. "We have got training sessions today and tomorrow, so I can't give you any more indications where I am at. I haven't trained last couple of days but after today and tomorrow will give me a better indication of where I am. Am I going to be hundred percent? Highly doubtful," Warner said during a virtual media conference.

Cricknet Australia and the team management's desperation was felt from his next statement. "But I will be doing everything to get on that park and play. Even if that means that I am not a 100 percent, I will be doing everything that I can if the selectors give me that green light," the dashed left-hander said.

Warner said that during a few net

## Warner unsure of Natarajan's success

**MELBOURNE:** David Warner is very happy for his Sunrisers Hyderabad teammate Thangarasu Natarajan's Test call-up but he is 'not sure' if the Tamil Nadu left-arm seamer can consistently hit one length, over after over, in the traditional format.

Natarajan, after a hugely successful IPL, joined the Indian contingent as a net bowler but has subsequently risen up the ranks to make his ODI and T20I debuts. Asked if Natarajan can translate his T20 success in the Test match arena, his IPL franchise captain gave an interesting reply.

"Good question but I am not too sure. You guys would be knowing his (Natarajan) Ranji Trophy stats and how he delivers day in and day out. I know he has line and lengths to do that, but obviously, back to back overs in a Test match? I am not a hundred percent sure," Warner said during a virtual news conference Saturday. However, Warner added that just like Mohammed Siraj, who has shown his wares in red ball cricket at the first-class level, Natarajan would be able to do the same.

sessions, he didn't try to lunge forward but knows that adrenaline takes over once the game begins.

"Batting in the nets the other day, it probably helped me as I had to wait for the ball to be pitched in my area and I didn't throw my hands at it and tried playing nice

and tight. It's funny in saying that. "Look, for me, there will be some restrictions here and there. I think when you get into a game, adrenaline takes over; you sort of don't cast any doubts that you can't play those shots. But, at the moment, yeah, there are a few shots where if you are lunging then."

Another big concern will be whether he can dive or stretch on his left and right while taking catches and field at leg slip or leg gully when off-spinner Nathan Lyon is in operation.

"It's about being smart and if I feel that I can do my duty and that's like standing in the slip cordon and taking catches to my left and right. If there's a hindrance in terms of field position, that will determine, if I will play or not."

"I know I can manage running between the wickets and manage the shot making that I have. It's about having the capacity to manage catching balls to left and right of myself and even with Gaza (Lyon) bowling, in first slip and leg slip, it's about being agile enough to make sure that I am taking those chances."

"Because if I am not, I don't want to be dropping those chances and not giving my team best chance of taking them."

Another example of desperation was about his rehab programme which included taking pain killer injection shots and that, he said, wasn't a pleasant experience.



Steve Smith has been recently knocked off by Kane Williamson as best batter in the world (ICC ranking) but if you look at his numbers, he still averages over 60. Everyone is allowed to have a bit of lack of form and I saw that myself when I was in England (Ashes 2019)

DAVID WARNER

## Men's hockey camp to begin January 5

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 2:** After a three-week break, a 33-member Indian men's hockey core probable group, including skipper Manpreet Singh and goalkeeper PR Sreejesh as well as five Odisha players, will return to the national camp scheduled to begin in Bangalore from Tuesday.

The camp will take place at the Sports Authority of India (SAI) campus and the core group will undergo a mandatory quarantine period before re-starting training as per SAI and Hockey India SOPs.

**CORE PROBABLE LIST**

**Goalkeepers:** PR Sreejesh, Krishan B Pathak & Suraj Karkera;

**Defenders:** Birendra Lakra, Rupinder Pal Singh, Surender Kumar, Amit Rohidas, Kothajit Singh Khadangbam, Harmanpreet Singh, Gurinder Singh, Jarmanpreet Singh, Varun Kumar, Dipsan Tirkey & Nilam Sanjeev Xess;

**Midfielders:** Manpreet Singh, Chinglensana Singh Kangujam, Nilakanta Sharma, Sumit, Jaskaran Singh, Rajkumar Pal, Hardik Singh & Vivek Sagor Prasad;

**Forwards:** SV Sunil, Akashdeep Singh, Mandeep Singh, Lalit Upadhyay, Ramandeep Singh, Simranjeet Singh, Shamsher Singh, Gurbant Singh, Dilpreet Singh, Gursahibjit Singh & Shililand Lakra.

The Indian men's hockey team had been training from August to December 12 last year. While the Indian women's team will head to Argentina to play an eight-match series against the hosts this month, HI has been in talks with different nations to organise a tour for the men's side as well.

The Indian men's team played its last international match against Australia February 22 last year at the FIH Hockey Pro League.



Odisha FC players during their practice session ahead of their match

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Goa, January 2:** Odisha FC and SC East Bengal, the only two winless sides in the Indian Super League (ISL), will hope to kick-start the year with a victory, as they take on

each other Sunday at the Tilak Maidan Stadium, Vasco.

The match promises to be an intriguing affair with both sides languishing at the bottom of the table, having faced similar struggles this season. Both SCEB and Odisha

have struggled for consistency at both ends of the pitch. They have scored just 5 goals – joint-lowest this season while their respective defense has also been vulnerable.

SCEB have shipped 13 goals, the most by any team, this year. Odisha, meanwhile, have conceded 11, joint second-highest with Kerala Blasters, in addition to being the only side to register a clean sheet this season.

SCEB coach Robbie Fowler will have to ensure his side stay alert throughout the game, with his team guilty of conceding after the break. SCEB have conceded 10 goals in the second half, most by a team while four of Odisha's five goals have come in the second half.

"I see a lot of similarities in ourselves," said Odisha coach Baxter. "We have a very young team who need time on the field. They have a very new team who need time on the field. Their games have been close games, they have played well in periods of games, same as we have. They will be looking for that consistency, the same as we are."

# Wishes pour in for Dada's speedy recovery

Indian cricket fraternity, led by Virat Kohli and Sachin Tendulkar, Saturday wished Sourav Ganguly a speedy recovery after the BCCI president and former India captain was hospitalised following a mild cardiac arrest. The 48-year-old complained of dizziness during the morning workout and was rushed to a private hospital where doctors said his condition was 'stable and would need coronary angiogram'. He is currently admitted to the critical care unit (CCU) of the hospital.



**SACHIN TENDULKAR:** Just got to know about your ailment Sourav. Hope each passing day brings you closer to a full and speedy recovery! Get well soon.

**VIRAT KOHLI:** Praying for your speedy recovery. Get well soon @SGanguly99.

**JAY SHAH:** I wish and pray for the speedy recovery of @SGanguly99. I've spoken to his family. Dada is stable and is responding well to the treatment.

**ICC:** Former India captain and current BCCI President Sourav Ganguly suffered a mild cardiac arrest earlier today. He is now in a stable

condition. We wish him a speedy recovery!

**VIRENDER SEHWAG:** Dada, jaldi se theek hone ka. Praying for your quick and speedy recovery.

**MAMATA BANERJEE (CM, West Bengal):** Sad to hear that @SGanguly99 suffered a mild cardiac arrest and has been admitted to hospital. Wishing him a speedy and full recovery. My thoughts and prayers are with him and his family!

**JAGDEEP DHANKAR (Governor, West Bengal):** Wishing speedy recovery for Ganguly who suffered a heart attack. Gathered from CEO Woodlands Hospital that he is stable.

# Son's 100th Spurs strike steals show

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**London, Jan 2:** Son Heung-min scored his 100th Tottenham goal in a 3-0 victory over Leeds that ended a four-game winless run and sent Jose Mourinho's side up to third place in the Premier League Saturday.

Son also set up the third with a corner headed in by Toby Alderweireld five minutes into the second half. But it is the partnership with Harry Kane that Son has benefited from so much, combining now for 16 goals in as many league games this season.

Kane, who put Tottenham ahead with a penalty in the 29th minute, sent in the cross that Son ran to the near-post to meet and he clipped a shot inside the post in the 43rd minute. The South Korea forward has reached a century of goals in his sixth season at Tottenham, which won its first league game in a month.

But there was a blot on the performance with Matt Doherty sent

off after receiving a second booking in stoppage time for a late challenge on Paolo Hernandez.

Leeds, who had won three of their last four games, are 11th in the standings in their first season back in the top division after 16 years.

The Friday's matchday saw Manchester United go level on points with leader Liverpool with a 2-1 victory over Aston Villa. The win was secured by Bruno Fernandes scoring his ninth spot-kick since making his debut 11 months ago.

While United are still behind Liverpool on goal difference, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer has won one more and has the team looking well-placed to mount a challenge for a first title since 2013.

Anthony Martial headed United in front in the 40th minute at the end of a counterattack started by Paul Pogba. And it was Pogba who won the penalty – from the restart after Bertrand Traore's equaliser – that allowed Fernandes to clinch the win in the 61st minute.



NIGHT TO REMEMBER: Son Heung-min (R) celebrates his landmark goal with other scorer Harry Kane during Spurs' win over Aston Villa, Saturday