



KIARA'S JOURNEY

Actor Kiara Advani feels that no particular role was a game changer in her career as all her works were vital

LEISURE P2



US PRESENCE SHRINKS

The US military has met its goal of reducing the number of troops in Afghanistan to about 2,500 by Friday

INTERNATIONAL P10



NETTING HISTORY

Thangarasu Natarajan becomes the 1st Indian cricketer to make int'l debuts across all 3 formats during the same tour

SPORTS P12

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



SHORT TAKES

Naveen tops CM popularity chart

Bhubaneswar: CM Naveen Patnaik is the most popular chief minister in the country followed closely by Arvind Kejriwal in Delhi and Jagan Reddy in Andhra Pradesh, as per a poll conducted by ABP News along with C-Voter. On the other end of spectrum, Uttarakhand CM Trivendra Singh Rawat is arguably the least popular CM in India followed closely by Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar and Punjab CM Capt Amarinder Singh with lowest satisfaction ratings in their respective states.

Prez donates ₹5L for Ram Temple

New Delhi: President Ram Nath Kovind Friday donated ₹5 lakh and one hundred towards the grand Ram Temple at Ayodhya as the Trust set up to oversee the construction launched a nationwide donation drive. Leaders of various political and quasi-political outfits joined the bandwagon, flagging off regional drives that will continue till February 27. On behalf of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, its co-president Govind Dev Giri Maharaj, Friday met President Kovind.

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	49034.67 ↓ 549.49
NIFTY	14433.70 ↓ 161.90
DOLLAR	73.35 ↑ ₹0.00
EURO	88.57 ↓ ₹0.25
GOLD	₹48,919 ↓ ₹302
SILVER	₹64,700 ↓ ₹1983

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP	30.6°C	29.5°C
MIN	19.0°C	17.0°C
Humidity	91%	89%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Fog or mist in the morning	

APPREHENSIONS EASED

INDIA IS INVESTED HEAVILY IN THE INDO-PACIFIC, THE TRILATERAL AND THE QUAD — AN INVESTMENT THAT HAS ONLY INTENSIFIED IN THE PAST COUPLE OF YEARS

KURT CAMPBELL'S APPOINTMENT AS INDO-PACIFIC COORDINATOR WOULD EASE APPREHENSIONS THAT THE NEW US ADMIN MAY BE SOFTER ON CHINA



9th round of talks fails '120%'

No progress towards ending stalemate between Centre and farm unions; next round of talks January 19

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 15: The ninth round of discussion between farmers demanding repeal of the three agriculture laws and the centre — held days after the Supreme Court stayed their enactment “until further orders” — ended today with no progress towards ending the stalemate. “It was a 120 per cent failure. We suggested that the government remove the changes made to the Essential Commodities Act instead of scrapping it altogether. But the Agriculture Minister has not said anything on this,” farmer leader Dr Darshanpal said.

Farmer leader Joginder Singh Ugrahan told reporters after the meeting that the unions urged the government to repeal the three laws, but the Centre was unwilling to do so. “We decided to meet



Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Narendra Singh Tomar and other dignitaries during the ninth round of talks with farmer leaders over the new farm laws at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi

again January 19 at 12 pm,” he said. Ugrahan said the union leaders also raised the issue of NIA raids on transporters in Punjab who are supporting farmers’ protests and were providing logistic support for the agitation.

At the meeting that lasted for nearly five hours, including a lunch break, farmers unions said they are committed to continuing holding direct talks to resolve the over-one-month-long deadlock over three agri laws, even as a committee has been formed by the Supreme Court to resolve the deadlock.

In his opening remarks, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar urged farmer leaders to be flexible in their approach as has been done by the gov-

ernment. Besides Tomar, Railways, Commerce and Food Minister Piyush Goyal and Minister of State for Commerce Som Parkash were part of the government side talking with representatives of around 40 farmer unions at the Vigyan Bhawan here.

“Both the government and farmer unions have reaffirmed their commitment to continue with the direct dialogue process,” All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee member Kavita Kuruganti, who is part of the meeting, said.

“In his opening remarks, Tomar ji said you keep saying that the government is adamant and making it an issue of ego, even though we have accepted several demands. Don’t you think you should be flexible and not stick to one single demand of repealing the laws,” said Baljit Singh Bali of Punjab Kisan Morcha. Farmer leader Darshan Pal said there was a good discussion on all three laws. “There is a possibility of some resolution. We are positive,” he added.

IT WAS A 120 PER CENT FAILURE. WE SUGGESTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT REMOVE THE CHANGES MADE TO THE ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES ACT. BUT THE AGRICULTURE MINISTER HAS NOT SAID ANYTHING ON THIS

DARSHANPAL | FARMER LEADER

China conspired to change LAC, says Army Chief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 15: Army Chief Gen MM Naravane Friday said no one should make any mistake of testing India’s patience even as he asserted that a befitting response was given to the “conspiracy” of unilaterally changing the status quo along the northern frontier.

Gen Naravane at the same time said India is committed to resolve the over eight-month-long military standoff with China through talks.

In his address at the Army Day parade in Delhi Cantonment, Gen Naravane said the sacrifice of the “Galwan heroes” in eastern Ladakh in June last year will not go waste and that the Indian



Army will not allow any harm to the country’s sovereignty and security.

“We are committed to resolve disputes through talks and political efforts but no one should make any mistake of testing our patience,” he said in the presence of the country’s top military brass including Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat, Navy Chief Admiral Karambir Singh and IAF Chief Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria.

DRONES OF DESTRUCTION



Army soldiers display drone attack during the 73rd Army Day parade at the Parade Ground in New Delhi, Friday

Pari: HC denies govt claims on probe

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Jan 15: The Nayagarh minor’s murder case took an unusual twist Friday with the Orissa High Court denying the state government’s claim that it has sought the appointment of a sitting High Court judge to monitor the SIT probe.

In reply to a query on court-monitored inquiry into the case by RTI activist Hemant Panda, the Orissa High Court has clarified that the state government hasn’t wrote any letter seeking a court-monitored investigation.

Various reports earlier suggested that senior IPS officer and special secretary, Home, Santosh Bala had

written to the Registrar General of the High Court November 28 informing that the state government has proposed the SIT to be monitored by the High Court.

While briefing journalists here Friday, Panda said he had sought information through RTI from the High Court regarding the state government’s letter for court-monitored SIT probe into Pari death case and follow-up action.

As per the Additional Deputy Registrar of the court B Das, “No letter of request has been received from the state government as on date regarding the appointment of the Honourable sitting Judge of this court to monitor the SIT probe



In reply to a RTI query, the Orissa HC clarifies that the state government hasn't sought a court-monitored investigation

into the murder of the minor girl, namely Pari of Nayagarh district. Since no such letter is received, the

question of action does not arise.”

It may be mentioned here that a five-year-old girl named Pari from Jadupur village in Nayagarh district went missing June 14 and her body was found June 23. The case attracted state-wide attention November 24 when the parents of the deceased girl attempted immolation in front of the Orissa Legislative Assembly while the winter session was underway.

Three days later, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had ordered a SIT probe into the case. The state government formed a five-member special investigation team (SIT) with senior IPS officer and then-IG of police Arun Bothra being the head.

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Stage all set for vax drive today



BMC Commissioner Prem Chandra Chaudhary and other medical officials review arrangements at a vaccination centre

OP PHOTO

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: The state government’s machinery is all set to administer Covid-19 vaccine shots to all eligible beneficiaries from Saturday.

Health officials Friday said, 161 vaccination centres have been set up to administer the prophylactic against the pandemic. While all the hospitals in Bhubaneswar will administer the indigenously developed Covaxin, all other areas of the state will see administration of Covishield from Serum Institute of India. The state health department Friday announced that new guidelines for administration of the vaccine have been issued to the state.

“From tomorrow, we are going to start our vaccination drive. The launch will be done in 161 centres. We are all set to undertake the mass administration of vaccination. The waiting room, vaccination room and observation rooms are ready,” said Bijay Panigrahi, director, State Health and Family Welfare Department. He said that there would be a team of five members at each centre comprising a doctor, pharmacist and health worker who will be given the vaccine. “Pregnant and lactating women would not be administered the vaccines. Also, those hospitalised and seriously ill should not be given the vaccine. Minors would also be barred from the vaccination drive,” Panigrahi said.

9K health workers to get doses in City

With the statewide vaccination drive kicking off Saturday, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation stated that about 9,000 health workers will be inoculated at six centres in the capital city. BMC Commissioner Prem Chandra Chaudhary said that the COVID-19 vaccine will be given at six sites.

CBI arrests wife of Rose Valley group chairman

AGENCIES

Kolkata, Jan 15: The Central Bureau of Investigation Friday arrested Subhra Kundu, wife of the jailed owner of Rose Valley Group chairman Gautam Kundu, from Kolkata in connection with the probe into the multi-crore chit fund scam, sources in the agency said.

Sleuths of Economic Offences Wing of the CBI apprehended Subhra Kundu and will take her to Bhubaneswar after obtaining transit remand from a court in Kolkata, they said. The case was registered in the Odisha capital. She was wanted by the CBI and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with the case.



The Rose Valley group allegedly cheated thousands of depositors, promising abnormally high returns on investments in its illegal schemes. The amount of money garnered by the group through such schemes could be more than ₹12,000 crore. Rose Valley had also made substantial investments in hotels and resorts across the country, they said. Subhra Kundu was running a jewellery chain, Adrja, which has been sealed since the investigation started. The ED, which is looking into the money laundering aspect of the scam, issued a look-out notice against her in November 2019.

Biden’s picks: Pro India, tough on China

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

New Delhi, Jan 15: In 2009, India and US began their first official-level dialogue on China and the Asia-Pacific. The Indian side was represented by Gautam Bambawale, then joint secretary in MEA and the US by the assistant secretary, Kurt Campbell.

Over the next couple of years, Campbell and Bambawale explored the growing convergences in their respective foreign and security policies for this region. “That dialogue, the first of its kind between the US and India, set the stage for the 2015 Vision Statement between India and US,” said

Bambawale. The Japan-India-US trilateral grouping began under their watch, which later became a summit-level exercise.

Kurt Campbell is due to be named the Indo-Pacific coordinator by US president-elect Joe Biden, and in that role, is likely to oversee the Biden administration’s approach to China and building up the Indo-Pacific policy. While Campbell may have started the ball rolling in the first Obama administration, the second Obama administration did not give that measure of importance to the “pivot” or “rebalance”.

For instance, the US gave China a pass over the PCA verdict on the South China Sea in 2016. Campbell’s successor in the State Department, Danny Russel, stopped the East Asia dialogue with India as well. The pandemic in 2020 only in-

tensified the open opposition between the US and China. In its dying days, the Trump administration this week lifted the curbs on diplomatic contact with Taiwan, something that may have been fraying, but had been maintained as the proverbial fig leaf. This week, the Trump White House also declassified its Indo-Pacific strategy as well as the notes of the former deputy national security adviser, Matt Pottinger.

However, it seems fairly clear that Biden’s Indo-Pacific strategy will not be very different from Trump’s. As Campbell and Doshi say in an essay in Foreign Affairs this week, “A strategy for the Indo-Pacific today would benefit from incorporating three lessons from this episode of European history: the need for a balance of power; the need for an order that the region’s

states recognize as legitimate; and the need for an allied and partner coalition to address China’s challenge to both.”

Campbell will find many familiar faces in New Delhi, as will the new CIA chief, William Burns. In addition, the possible appointment of Ely Ratner possibly in the Pentagon as rumoured, and Rush Doshi in the National Security Council to head China policy, would be a sign of reassurance in New Delhi.

For many looking in at the Biden administration, Campbell may also balance John Kerry who, as Biden’s special envoy on climate change, could be tempted to make concessions to China, as many Indian analysts have feared, particularly as climate change is sought to be part of the new National Security Council.

leisure



ZAC EFRON FEELS AUSTRALIA IS HIS 'HOME'

Hollywood heartthrob Zac Efron reportedly feels Australia is his home, and sources say he has no plans to return to Los Angeles after putting his home up for sale last month.

SELENA GOMEZ BEGINS 2021 WITH NEW SPANISH SINGLE

Singer Selena Gomez has unveiled her Spanish single titled *De Una Vez*. She says this is the beginning of something she has wanted to explore for long.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
For no reason whatsoever, you may clam up today. Of course, you will give credit to others wherever they've contributed. But you need to be more generous than that, says Ganesh, and share the secrets of your success with your compatriots.

TAURUS
It is about time that you stopped running from your problems and stand up and face them, suggests Ganesh. Your loved ones will bask in your material generosity today. You will be magnanimous with the wallet to impress members of the opposite sex.

GEMINI
It is better for you to swim with the current in all of today's dealings, suggests Ganesh. This will help you effortlessly deal with even the most morbid state of affairs. No need to be a hero, today. Pleasure is the key word for you. Your performance will be satisfying at work, and more than satisfying back home.

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

LEO
Seems today is just one of those days when things simply refuse to go your way. It happens to the best of us, says Ganesh, and there isn't much one can do about it except slog it out and find that hidden reserve of moral support.

VIRGO
The time today is ripe to venture into a new business. Projects that have been put-off will finally be completed. Looking into the week ahead, you are most likely to give yourself an energy zap. Parties will be all fun and entertainment. Your kids will bring home joy and pride and this will brighten the mood even more, says Ganesh.

LIBRA
The clock ticks on, but chances are it can hardly beat you in the race, thanks to your prompt and sincere efforts. Today, you shall be a paragon of excellence. However, Ganesh waves the red flag of caution: it always pays to be safe rather than sorry. Keep your eyes open and pay attention to the fine print before signing any contract or paper. You'd be surprised once you see the entire picture.

SCORPIO
It is likely that you shall learn an important lesson in life today. Remember that spite and envy beget enemies. Ganesh advises you to display some errors so as to make you seem more human and approachable.

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

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

AQUARIUS
It's a day you may want to spend with yourself. But it may still not bring the desired peace and tranquility. An unpleasant situation may force you to deal with reality, says Ganesh.

PISCES
While you will need loads of moral support to keep your spirits up, you are also likely to be blessed with the company of a person who is equipped to provide just that. Positive results will come your way as long as you do not give up.

Jacqueline can make 'filter coffee'

Mumbai: Bollywood actress Jacqueline Fernandez counts making filter coffee among her many talents, going by her social media post Friday.

Jacqueline posted two pictures on her Instagram stories. The first features a woman preparing some coffee in a hotel for the actress.

The second image features Jacqueline pouring the hot beverage in a traditional glass.

On the image, she wrote: "I make filter coffee now too!!"
Talking

about her work, Jacqueline has several films lined up. She has shot for her horror comedy *Bhoot Police* and has commenced shooting for *Bachchan Pandey*, co-starring Akshay Kumar and Kriti Sanon. She will reunite with superstar Salman Khan for *Kick 2*. The two had starred in the 2014 action heist film *Kick*. Jacqueline will also share screen space with Ranveer Singh in Rohit Shetty's *Cirkus*. Jacqueline recently shared a video of herself enjoying the bike ride, and wrote: "That's it. I am changing my mode of transport to bike." IANS



My journey has been special: Kiara

Mumbai: Actress Kiara Advani made her Bollywood debut in 2014 with *Fugly*, which was a no-show at the box office. However, she was later seen in hits such as *M.S. Dhoni: The Untold Story*, *Lust Stories*, *Kabir Singh* and *Good Neewaz*. The actress cannot name a particular role as gamechanger in her career, but credits all her work for the success she enjoys today.

"For me I think every film (matter) — right from my first film because that is what gave me my first step into the film industry. People also say *Kabir Singh* and *Lust Stories* (but) every film has been a turning point in my life. I would want every film to be like that, even my future films. So, I can't think of just one film. I think my entire journey has been special," said Kiara.

The actress, whose latest release is *Indoo Ki Jawaani*, has a string of releases coming up. She will be seen in the Sidharth Malhotra-starrer *Shershaah*, *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2* with Kartik Aaryan and the star-studded *Jug Jug Jeeyo*. IANS



Adnan Sami shuts up troll on Lata Mangeshkar

Mumbai: Bollywood celebrities stood up in support of legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar after Adnan Sami reacted to a troll who raised a question on the quality of her voice.

"*Bandar Kya Jaane Adrak Ka Swaad...*" It's better to stay silent and appear stupid than to open your mouth & remove all doubt!!" Adnan Sami tweeted.

The singer's tweet came in response to a troll who wrote: "Indians have been brainwashed into thinking that Lata Mangeshkar has a good voice."

A few others of the Bollywood fraternity have also reacted to the troll and defending the Bharat Ratna singer.

"One of the reasons I believe in Saraswati and divine is because of Lata Mangeshkar. One of the reasons I believe in devil is because of her haters," tweeted filmmaker Vivek Agnihotri. "I pray to God that in next



life Lata Mangeshkar haters are born as humans like us who can understand beauty and understand what is truly divine," he wrote in another tweet.

"In her hey day, which lasted a long time, Lata Mangeshkar had an unmistakably mellifluous voice. Listen to just

Lag Ja Gale to know that. Maybe you refer to the late 80's & 90's when, with age, her singing got screechy. I guess, in India, fans don't let you stop when you should," expressed screenwriter and film editor Apurva Asrani. "Twitter is the best medium for misers who mock respected

Randeep on playing a real-life super cop



Actor Randeep Hooda finds portraying a super cop exciting as well as challenging. Randeep is gearing up to shoot for his debut web-series *Inspector Avinash*, a cop thriller based on real events in the life of police officer Avinash Mishra. He started shooting for the series Friday.

"Portraying a super cop like Avinash Mishra is exciting and challenging at the same time. I'm thrilled to start the year with this series and looking forward to present a thorough entertainer to the audience with this one," Randeep said.

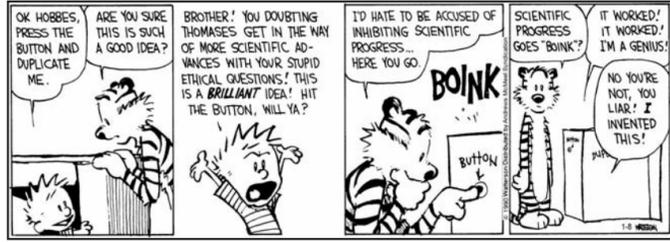
Directed by Neeraj Pathak, the show is set in Uttar Pradesh. The actor's police avatar will see him in action in a dramatic retelling of the life of the famed cop dealing with criminal activities in the state.

The cop thriller is presented by Jio Studios and Gold Mountain Pictures. IANS

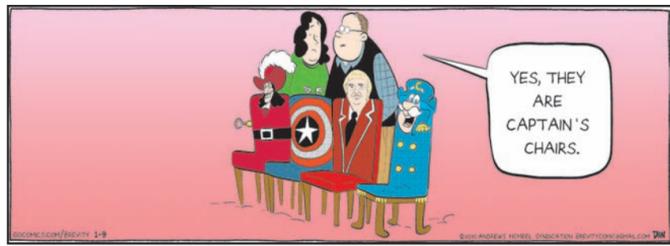
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

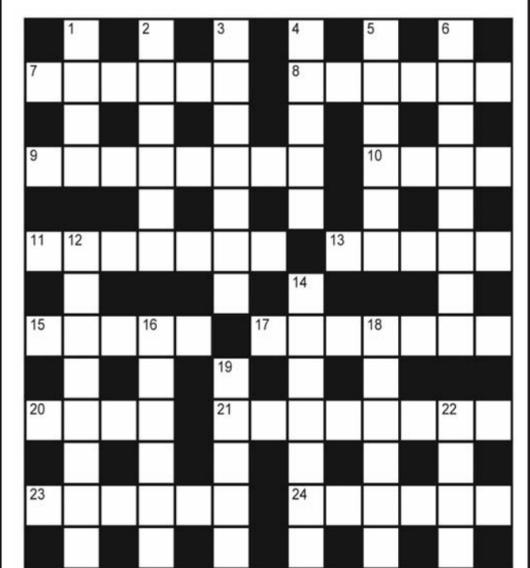


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Wife, for one
 - 8 Bird of prey
 - 9 Gasify
 - 10 Neat
 - 11 Diary
 - 13 Greek monster with nine heads
 - 15 On the up and up
 - 17 Come before
 - 20 Air force heroes
 - 21 Funnymen
 - 23 Ego
 - 24 Cuba, e.g.
 - 4 Let go
 - 5 Indifference
 - 6 Abutted
 - 12 Cloudy
 - 14 Sprite
 - 16 Bug
 - 18 Pamper
 - 19 Flu symptoms
 - 22 Family member
- Down**
- 1 Samoan capital
 - 2 Hearsay
 - 3 Large seabird

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

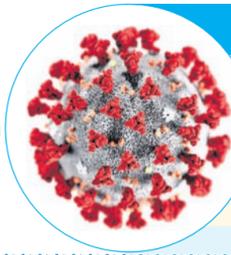


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	9,36,88,066	6,69,69,777	20,05,773
India	1,04,95,816	1,01,28,457	1,51,564
Odisha	3,32,949	3,29,088	1,898

AWARENESS IS THE KEY

Agriculture Minister Arun Kumar Sahoo and other dignitaries launch a 'Krushi Rath' in Bhubaneswar, Friday, to create awareness on various schemes and advanced technology for farmers



KIDNEY RACKET

Cops take Nanda on 2-day remand

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: The Commissionerate Police Friday took Himanshu Bhushan Nanda, who has been accused of cheating several persons by promising them kidneys for transplantations, on a two-day remand. Commissionerate Police hope to arrest other persons involved in racket on the basis of the clues elicited during the interrogation of Nanda.



Nanda, a resident of Kendrapara district, was earlier arrested by the Nayapalli police Wednesday on the basis of a complaint lodged by Pratap Chandra Mishra, one of the victims.

Mishra had allegedly given Nanda more than Rs 5 lakh as first installment of the total deal amount of Rs 10 lakh to arrange a kidney donor in 2019.

Subsequently, the commissionerate police also came across another similar complaint against Nanda lodged at Laxmisagar Police station by one Diptimayee Sahoo of Angul. Nanda had allegedly taken Rs 3.19 lakh from Sahoo to arrange a kidney donor for her ailing mother undergoing treatment at a private hospital in the city.

Thursday, Ashok Kumar Nayak, a resident of Rangamatia in Mancheswar police limits, accused Nanda of cheating him in the same manner. Nanda had taken around Rs 18 lakh from Nayak assuring him to arrange a kidney donor too.

ODISHA POLICE TO WEED OUT INEPT INSPECTORS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: The state police department plans to axe senior police Inspectors with a lack-luster performance during the last five years. Earlier, the state government had issued a circular instructing all the departments to set up a screening committee to weed out non-performing officials and while reward those who have performed well.

The step aims at enhancing efficiency and accountability among the officers by giving premature retirement to inefficient ones.

Following the instructions, the state police department has recently prepared a list of 228 Inspector-rank officers who have completed 30 years in service or attained or will attend 50-55 years of age between October 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021. The fate of these officers now depends upon their performance during the last five years ending December 31, 2020.

In a letter issued to various establishments, including Odisha Human Rights Commission, Vigilance, Commissionerate police, the AIG (Police Personnel) has asked the heads of the establishments to send the nomination rolls and service book details of the concerned officers. The authorities have also been asked to send details regarding the punishments and rewards received by the officers named in the list during the last five years or even prior to that.

The nomination rolls of officers who were transferred during the last three years are to be sent by the heads of the establishments of



The state government had issued a circular instructing all the departments to set up a screening committee to weed out non-performing officials

The step aims at enhancing efficiency and accountability among the officers by giving premature retirement to inefficient ones

The heads of the respective establishments have been asked to send the list of departmental proceedings, corruption & criminal charges, if any, pending against 228 inspectors

their last posting.

The heads of the respective establishments have been asked to send lists of departmental proceedings, corruption and criminal charges pending against 228 officers in Inspector-rank of police.

The Personnel Section of the police department has also sought confidential reports against the officers for screening at the review committee meeting taking place periodically.

The review committee will go through all the records sent by the respective heads of the departments during their next meeting. The department may show the door to officers who will be found involved in various criminal or corruption cases and having a poor track record. Such officers may be given premature retirement by the government.

GRACEFUL MOVES



Artists Niladri Mohanty and Shatabdi Mallick perform an Odissi duet on the second day of the Mukteshwar Dance Festival in Bhubaneswar, Friday

OSSC increases seed production

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: Amidst lockdown and shutdown restriction imposed due to Covid-19 pandemic, state-run Odisha State Seeds Corporation Ltd (OSSC) has achieved a new high in production and sale of seeds during the 2020.

The corporation has produced 3,95,032 quintals of paddy and 25,034 quintals of non-paddy seeds during the year through its own production programme 'Mo Bihan Yojana', sources said Friday.

The corporation has produced 25 new varieties of paddy seeds, four varieties of ragi, 14 varieties of pulses and 16 varieties of oil seeds during 2020.

Similarly, the OSSC sold 4,07,444 quintals of paddy and 57,243 quintals of non-paddy seeds during 2020, which was the highest quantity of seeds sold by the corporation after implementation of DBT since 2016. It has installed eight seed processing plants in Sonepur, Bolangir, Baragarh, Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Rangeillunda, Babanpur and Sheragada, the source said.

Action against corrupt co-op officials put on hold

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: On many occasions, the state government receives complaints of financial irregularities and illegal practices against cooperative organisations. In a bid to check such anomalies, the Registrar of Cooperative Societies (RCS) had issued an order in September 2019 to initiate strong action against irate employees of such cooperative organisations.

However, now the order has been put on hold - the reason best known to the concerned authorities.

In its letter No 21446, dated 30.09.2019, the Registrar of Cooperative Societies had asked all divisional deputy registrars of cooperative societies and circle assistant registrars of cooperative societies to take disciplinary actions against the secretary and other employees of the Primary Agriculture Cooperative Societies (PACS), Large-sized Adivasi Multipurpose Cooperative Society (LAMPPCS), Farmers' Service Cooperative Societies (FSCS) and concerned banks.

"The Committee of Management of PACS, LAMPPCS and FSCS have the right to take disciplinary actions against their secretaries and other employees."

However, before imposing any major penalty such as removal/dismissal from service by the management prior approval of Registrar Cooperative Societies, Odisha, has to be taken. The Registrar Cooperative Societies, Odisha, can accept or reject the recommendation of the Committee of Management on merit after examining the recommendations," the then RCS Bibhuti Bhusan

Pattnaik had said in the earlier order.

Pattnaik had also warned that he can suspend the irate employee and also take criminal action against such persons simultaneously.

However, taking a 'U' turn, the present RCS, in a letter issued Friday, said, "The circular No 21446 dated 30.09.2019 issued from this office regarding disciplinary actions against the secretary and other employees of the PACS/LAMPPCS/FSCS is hereby kept in abeyance, until further orders."

BMC seizes 60 kg stale, unhygienic food from eateries

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: In a massive drive against sale of adulterated foods, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Friday seized about 60 kg of stale food from different street food outlets and slapped fines worth Rs 16,000 on the owners.

A special squad of the civic body led by South-East Zone Deputy Commissioner, Anshuman Rath conducted surprise raids at seven street food outlets near Master Canteen Square. The street food vendors including Green Chilly, Khata Mitha, Tiffin Stall at Ram Mandir, Hotel Sai Krupa, Hotel Maa Tarini, Kuk Doo Koo Restaurant and few Gupchup stalls near Railway Station flouting norms and selling inferior quality street food.

"During raids it was found that these vendors were selling stale and unhygienically-prepared chicken and rice-based food items to people. We destroyed more than 60 kg of food. With many people preferring street food to satiate their taste buds, it's important to focus on hygiene and quality of food to stay healthy and fit. Our drive against street food vendors will continue and, at the same time, we urge people to avoid uncovered and unhygienic food," said Rath.

Rath further added that the roadside vendors, restaurants were warned and were asked to ensure

Hotels raided in Puri



Puri: Food safety officials Friday raided at least 12 hotels and restaurants near the beach here and destroyed around 15 kilograms of stale foodstuffs. The team led by district health officer Ashok Sith and district food safety officer Rajeshwari Pati also collected Rs 11,000 penalties from the eateries on charges of violation of food safety norms, sources said.

that every food item they serve is hygienically prepared. Moreover, the civic body has also deployed special squads to keep an eye on the use of colour in the food items. The civic body also served notice to the roadside eateries who failed to comply with the norms and maintain the quality of street food as per the Food Safety and Standards Act. "We have collected a fine of about Rs 16,000 on these vendors. In a bid to earn easy profits the street vendors are selling inferior quality product which is highly unacceptable. Clean and safe drinking water should be used for cooking purpose, surroundings of kitchen and food courts should be neat and clean. Besides, food items and edible oils should be used fresh," Rath added.

Congress protests against petrol price rise, agri laws

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: The Odisha unit of the Congress party Friday staged a protest against the rise in fuel prices and demanding the repeal of the three "anti-farmer" agri laws.

The party leaders met Governor Ganeshi Lal and submitted a memorandum on these two issues. Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) President Niranjana Pattnaik told the media later that the Union government has burdened the people of the country by raising the price of fuel at regular intervals.

The OPCC president told the media that the Centre has burdened the people by raising the price of fuels at regular intervals

"The price of crude oil has dropped from \$110 per barrel to \$50 per barrel. Despite this, the Modi government has collected an additional Rs 19 lakh crore through



Congress activists scuffle with police during their agitation near the Governor's House, Friday

excise duty from petrol and diesel alone. All this has an adverse impact on the farmers as also the common people," the Congress memorandum to the Governor said.

The memorandum sought the intervention of the Governor in rolling back the fuel prices as well as repealing the three controversial farm laws. The party said that the Union government, due to its adamant nature, has added to the woes of the farmers.

"The Modi government appears to have adopted a policy of tiring out the protesting farmers without accepting any of their demands, including immediate repeal of the three black laws. Nine rounds of discussions with governments have yielded little in terms of alleviating the farmers' plights," the memorandum said.

The party criticised the Union government for raising the prices of petrol and diesel at a time when the farmers are protesting.

Naveen urges youths to create global brands

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: Chief Minister Naveen Pattnaik Friday urged the young generation of the state to take the plunge into business and create global brands and wealth.

Speaking at this year's edition of 'Brands of Odisha: Pride of India' event, Naveen said, "I wish more and more people, especially young people, from our state come forward to take the opportunities in various sectors. The younger generation is bubbling with ideas. They must take the plunge into business and industry, create global brands, and generate wealth for themselves and the nation."

Branding and promotion are essential components of business and industry. The ultimate aim is to bring prosperity, serve people and create a niche for a company, its product or services. Any branding programme that has a solution to address people's needs, will definitely succeed, he said.

Citing example of the Oyo of Ritesh Agarwal, a young man of Odisha, the Chief Minister said, "He actually found an easy solution for millions of tourists in the hospitality sector. And he does not own hotels himself. My point is - 'to create a



real good brand, one has to truly endeavour to understand people's needs, and find easy solutions for them. Money will flow in, brand will be built."

Pattnaik said his government is committed and working to improve the business climate in the state. The industry friendly policies, quick clearances and grounding of projects have helped the government to make Odisha one of the most attractive investment destinations in India, he said.

The state has received an investment of over Rs 1.25 lakh crore since February 2020 despite the wrath of the pandemic. He congratulated the Brands of Odisha who received awards and said they are the true flag bearers of entrepreneurship in the state.

3.25 CR VOTERS IN STATE: EC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: Revising the existing electoral roll, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has published a final photo electoral roll Friday. According to the new electoral roll, there are 3,25,48,744 voters in the state. Out of which 1,66,23,614 are males, 1,59,22,075 females and 3,055 electorates belong to the third gender category.

The gender ratio of electorates is 958 with a slight increase from the draft electoral roll wherein it was

955. A total of 7,71,123 electorates, including 2,86,843 new voters, have been added to the electoral roll, while names of 6,01,476 voters have been deleted from the list.

Similarly, 3,47,823 corrections have been made in the electorates' data and 13,581 transpositions have been given effect in the final electoral roll.

The special summary revision-2021 started November 16, 2020 and filing of claims and objections for the eligible electorates was open for a month.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: Cold wave conditions have returned to the state throwing normal lives out of gear in several parts of Odisha.

The Regional Meteorological Centre in Bhubaneswar said that night temperature will fall by two to three degrees at many places of the state in the next few days.

"The minimum temperature is very likely to be below normal by 3-4 degree Celsius during next 3-4 days in the interior districts Odisha. It will gradually rise by 2-3 degree Celsius after 4 days," said the Met Centre in its evening bulletin.

The Met Centre has also issued yellow warning for cold wave in Sundargarh and Jharsuguda districts Friday and Saturday. In view of the cold wave alert

issued by the Met, the Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) issued advisory for the municipal commissioners and Collectors of all districts in the state. The SRC observed that there is increased likelihood of cold related ailments among people which may aggravate due to prolonged exposure to cold. Livestock may also be affected due to prolonged exposure to cold.

People in the districts under Yellow warning and also in other areas where there will be intense cold have been advised to stay indoors during the night and avoid exposure to cold, the SRC stated. Movement during night especially by two-wheelers or in open cars must be avoided, the SRC added.

The SRC also advised people to take necessary safety measures while using electrical and gas heat-



THE MET CENTRE HAS ALSO ISSUED YELLOW WARNING FOR COLD WAVE IN SUNDARGARH AND JHARSUGUDA DISTRICTS FRIDAY AND SATURDAY

THE SRC ADVISED AVOIDING MOVEMENT DURING NIGHT ESPECIALLY BY TWO-WHEELERS OR IN OPEN CARS

ing devices to beat the cold.

Collectors have been directed to make arrangements for opening of school buildings, community buildings and other available buildings for use as shelter during night by homeless and needy people.

"A report indicating the number of such buildings used as night shelters and number of people sheltered therein be sent to the office of SRC on daily basis till the cold wave situation is over," read the SRC advisory.

The SRC has also asked the officials to undertake necessary public awareness campaign on do's and don'ts to protect the people and livestock from cold wave both in rural and urban areas.

Similarly, fog-shallow to moderate is expected to occur at one or two places in 13 districts including, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jagpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Mayurbhanj, Khordha, Nayagarh, Puri, Kandhamal, Koraput and Rayagada, predicted the Met Centre.

On January 17, shallow to moderate fog is very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Puri, Khordha, Nayagarh, Ganjam, Gajapati, Kandhamal, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Rayagada, Koraput and Malkangiri.

State's Covid toll nears 1,900

ODISHA REPORTS 186 MORE CORONAVIRUS CASES, TAKING THE TALLY TO 3,32,949

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: State's Covid-19 caseload mounted to 3,32,949 Friday as 186 more people tested positive for the virus, while two fresh fatalities pushed the death toll in Odisha to 1,898, a senior Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department official said.

Of the new cases, 108 were reported from quarantine centres and 78 detected during contact tracing. Sundargarh district recorded the highest number of fresh cases at 35, followed by Sambalpur (20) and Angul (18).

Four districts — Bhadrak, Dhenkanal, Kandhamal and Malkangiri — did not register any new case since Thursday.

Taking to Twitter, the H&FW department said, "Regret to inform the demise of two Covid positive patients while under treatment in hospitals (sic)."

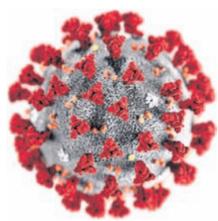
The two fatalities were reported from Khurda and Sundargarh.

Odisha now has 2,166 active cases, while 3,28,832 people have recovered from the disease so far, said the H&FW department official.

Khurda district, of which state capital Bhubaneswar is a part, accounted for 333 Covid-19 deaths followed by Ganjam (248), Sundargarh (170), Cuttack (140) and Puri (117), the official pointed out.

As many as 53 Covid-19 patients have died in the state due to comorbidities, the official said.

The state has conducted over 73.19 lakh sample tests for Covid-19, including 27,540 Thursday, and the positivity rate now stands at 4.55 per cent. Meanwhile, India's Covid-19 case-



IN NUMBERS

Sundargarh recorded the highest number of fresh cases at 35, followed by Sambalpur (20) and Angul (18)

The two fatalities were reported from Khurda and Sundargarh

Khurda accounted for 333 Covid-19 deaths followed by Ganjam (248), Sundargarh (170), Cuttack (140) and Puri (117)

The state has conducted over 73.19 lakh sample tests for Covid-19, including 27,540 Thursday

load rose to 1,05,27,683 with 15,590 people testing positive for the infection in a day, while the recoveries have surged to 1,01,62,738, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated Friday.

The country's deaths increased to 1,51,918, with 191 new fatalities, the data updated at 8am showed.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 1,01,62,738, pushing the national Covid-19 recovery rate to 96.53 per cent, while the Covid-19 case fatality rate stands at 1.44 per cent. The Covid-19 active caseload remained below 3 lakh.

Who will be debarred from nCoV inoculation



As per the Centre's guidelines for the vaccination drive starting January 16, people aged below 18 years, pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers will not be permitted to take the vaccine shots.

Reiterating the guidelines, Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department director and Odisha vaccine in-charge Bijay Panigrahi said that pregnant women, those not sure of their pregnancy and lactating mothers will not be given the vaccine. Besides, those unwell and hospitalised for any other ailment will be debarred from taking the vaccine shot.

Moreover, those who have been administered with any other vaccine in the last 14 days will not be given the vaccine.

People who have had allergic reaction to the previous dose of the vaccine will also not be given the next jab. Vaccination of people with active symptoms of the coronavirus will be deferred for four to eight weeks, the official added.

As per the information provided by the Ministry of Health, the adverse events following immunisation (AEFIs) include headache, fatigue, fever, body ache, nausea, and vomiting, sweating, cold coughs, among others.

It is pertinent to mention here, the immunisation drive will be conducted at 160 session sites covering all 30 districts in the state and 100 health workers will be vaccinated at each session site on the first day.

5 vaccination centres in Khurda

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khurda, Jan 15: Collector Sanat Kumar Mohanty Friday reviewed the arrangements for vaccinating frontline health workers against the novel coronavirus.

The district administration has made all arrangement to vaccinate the health workers at five centres in Khurda, excluding the areas coming under the jurisdiction of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), sources said.

"The administration has set up five vaccination centres at the district headquarters hospital, Balugaon, Bolgarh, Jatni and Mendhashala. The vaccination

According to Khurda Collector, the health workers in the district would be administered Covaxin vaccine

drive would be launched Saturday," said an official of the district administration.

The Collector, meanwhile, revealed that the health workers in Khurda district would be administered Covaxin vaccine. "A total of 7,718 health workers and other frontline warriors against Covid-19 have registered themselves for vaccination. We have received 6,150

doses of Covaxin in 615 vials in the first phase," Mohanty said.

The Collector further revealed that the vaccine would be administered to the health workers between 9 am and 5 pm. The administration would send SMSs to the health workers who have been identified for vaccination in the first phase, he said.

"The health workers would have to produce their Aadhaar cards at the vaccination centres. They would be kept under observation for 30 minutes after receiving the vaccine. One would be administered the second dose of the vaccine after 28 days of receiving the first dose," Mohanty added.

TAKING TO STREETS



Members of Odisha Junior Teacher Aspirants' Association stage a sit-in near PMG Square in Bhubaneswar, Friday, to press for fulfilment of their four-point charter of demands

ECoR inaugurates multiple sports facilities in Capital



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: General Manager, East Coast Railway (ECoR), Vidya Bhushan, inaugurated a series of sports facilities at the Railway Indoor Stadium here along with a Cricket Academy at Railway Cricket Stadium Friday in presence of ECoR officials and sports personnel.

Vidya Bhushan inaugurated the two storied gymnasium, facilities for Table Tennis, Handball, Basketball and Kabaddi at Railway Indoor Stadium and clay court for lawn tennis in the adjacent to indoor stadium. Later, he also inaugurated the cricket academy at the Railway Cricket Stadium at Bhubaneswar.

In order to promote sports, ECoR

ECoR GM Vidya Bhushan inaugurated the 2 storied gymnasium, facilities for Table Tennis, Handball, Basketball and Kabaddi at Railway Indoor Stadium in Bhubaneswar

built the Railway Indoor Sports complex of the East Coast Railway Sports Association (ECoRSA) and now it is being upgraded with new facilities. Currently, the sports complex boasts of facilities for badminton, table tennis, volley ball, table tennis, basket ball, handball, kabaddi, carom and chess. In addition, it has lawn tennis, yoga and gymnasium.

SEMINAR EMPHASISES ON LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: A seminar on '21st Century Life Skills Education' in the context of NEP-2021 was organised by the Institute of Human Excellence in collaboration with ODM Educational Group at ODM Public school premises here Friday. On the occasion seven books on 21st century life skills education written by the founder, IHE and chairman, ODM Educational Group, Satyabrata Minaketan, were also released.

Speaking on the occasion, Satyabrata Minaketan elaborately discussed the integral ingredients of life skills education and how they are significant for education and successful human life.

He said that the Covid-19 pandemic has brought with it a major challenge for the teachers in connecting with the students and imparting education to them. "But it is true that with crisis comes innovation. So, in a situation like this, technology came to our aid and solved many problems," he said, adding, "The schools in Bhubaneswar recognised the use of technology as the best resource not only to educate their students, but



also to help students in developing certain skills that will help them grow and succeed in the competitive world."

Before this pandemic, technology was often seen as a distraction for a student, but a lot has changed now and technology is now considered as the best mode of delivering knowledge, Minaketan explained. He added that it is very important to keep a child engaged in productive activities to ensure their physical and mental growth. "Character development is cru-

cial for impressionable minds. We strongly believe in the holistic development of our pupils, he said, adding, "Our teachers emphasize on character development of the students since they know the true significance of character building".

The seminar was attended by several principals, vice-principals and teachers of leading schools of Odisha. Many more across India attended it via video-conferencing mode. Biswajit Saha, Director (Skill and Training), CBSE, New Delhi inaugurated the event.

Fake tobacco-making unit busted in Cuttack, 1 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Jan 15: The Commissionerate Police Friday claimed to have busted a fake tobacco manufacturing unit at Sasol village under Sadar police limits in the Millennium City here with the arrest of its owner and seizure of huge quantity of adulterated tobacco.

Cuttack DCP took to the Twitter to inform that they have seized adulterated tobacco and related products worth over Rs 22 lakh from the unit under Sadar police limits and arrested the unit's owner Sana Dalai.

Acting on a tipoff, a team from Sadar police, led by inspector in-charge (IIC) Sudhansu Bhusan Jena, raided the unit operating in Sasol village. Sawdust and other cancer-causing harmful chemicals

were being used to prepare and pack the tobacco. Besides adulterated tobacco, packets carrying fake logos of top brands were seized from the unit, said a senior police official who was a part of the raiding team.

"A case (35/2021) has been registered with the Sadar police in this regard. We're investigating the source of raw materials for making the fake tobacco," the DCP tweeted, asking the people to stay away from adulterated food items.

Earlier, the Commissionerate Police had November 23 raided another fake tobacco manufacturing unit at Jagatpur Industrial Estate in the Silver City and seized adulterated tobacco products worth lakhs of rupees. Raw materials, labels used in the manufacturing of the fake gutkha products were also seized from the unit.



BGU launches new MBA programme

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: Birla Global University has launched a new specialisation in the MBA programme at the Birla School of Management.

The course was launched by Prof. (Dr.) PP Mathur, Vice Chancellor, Birla Global University, in the presence of Prof. (Dr.) BK Das, Registrar, Birla Global University, Prof. (Dr.) Parameswar Nayak, Dean Birla School of Management and Prof. (Dr.) Samson Moharana, Dean, Birla School of Commerce and faculty members. The programme offers skills in artificial intelligence (AI), business data analytics, block chain, cyber security, robotic process automation and cloud computing apart from other management and banking related papers.

FOUNDATION DAY



Students and teachers of BJEM School in Bhubaneswar, Friday, perform on the institution premises as part of the 48th foundation day celebrations of the school

Film fest on 'Covid pandemic and disabilities' opens in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: Aaina, an Odisha-based voluntary organisation, Friday inaugurated the 8th edition of 'We Care Film Festival' on the theme "Covid pandemic and disability".

The inaugural ceremony was attended by Jitendra Kumar Biswal, cine actor and a motivational counselor/activist, who is chairing the festival committee.

Actor-producer Subhansu Nayak, Subas Das, director and producer of Odia films, and Ghasiram Panda, executive committee member, Aaina, also attended the programme.

Addressing the gathering on the

occasion, Biswal said, "Films are one of the most effective mediums to send out a message or create awareness among people on any issue. And Aaina, through We Care Film Fest in partnership with Brotherhood, has been trying to use this medium to sensitize people on issues of disability since 2011."

Biswal went on to elaborate, "The last one year has been a trying period for everyone throughout the world due to the Covid pandemic. The section of the society which has suffered the most is persons with disabilities. With the theme 'Covid Pandemic and Disability', Aaina this year aims to bring to the fore the hardship and challenges faced by people with disabilities due to

Covid-19".

We Care Film Festival 2021 invites entries for documentary films (1 min & 5 mins) on the theme. Interested participants can log onto www.aaina.org.in for information on the submission of films. The last date for receiving entry for the contest is 15th March, 2021.

Ghasiram Panda said, "We Care film festival is a platform for solidarity and convergence for the cause of people with disability. The festival's main motto is to create awareness among the people on the issues faced by people with disability - the myths, the stereotypes, the misconceptions about them through the powerful platform of films and documentaries."

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Mega drinking water project for coastal blocks in Ganjam

PROJECT ESTIMATED AT ₹250.36 CORE GETS ADMINISTRATIVE NOD

JALA JIBAN MISSION

It was stated that 18 panchayats under Chhatrapur block and 24 panchayats under Rangelunda block have problem in the drinking water sector. "The administrative approval has been granted to the mega drinking water project under Jala Jiban Mission. The project was estimated at ₹250.36 crore. All households in the villages which have long been facing potable water problem will be provided with piped water," the letter said

It was stated that the mega drinking water project entails using the water of Rusikulya river near Gangapur under Chhatrapur block. An intake well will be set up near the river. The water to be lifted from the river will be treated at a treatment plant before being supplied to households

crore for the mega drinking water project. The RWSS department in Ganjam has received a letter in this regard. It was stated that 18 panchayats under Chhatrapur block and 24 panchayats under Rangelunda block have problem in the drinking water sector. "The administrative approval has been granted to the mega drinking water project under Jala Jiban Mission. The project was estimated at ₹250.36 crore. All households in the villages which have long been facing potable water problem will be provided with piped water," the letter said.

It was stated that the mega drinking water project entails using the water of Rusikulya river near Gangapur under Chhatrapur block. An intake well will be set up near the river. The water to be lifted from the river will be treated at a treatment plant before being supplied to households.

Meanwhile, the administration has been told to take steps for land acquisition and clearance from the forest department. Notably, people of Aryapalli, Podapadar and Chikalkhandi panchayats find it difficult to get safe water. The state government has set a target to provide piped water to all villages by 20224.

and the drinking water supply department has sanctioned ₹250.36

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur, Jan 15: As Chhatrapur and Rangelunda blocks in Ganjam districts are near the coastline, people in most parts have to face in availing safe and fresh water. The groundwater in these areas is saline in nature and unfit for drinking. Bore wells and deep bores well have turned out to be failures for such reason.

The government has taken note of the basic problem. Under Jala Jiban Mission, it is going to set up a mega drinking water project aimed at providing water to all households in these two blocks through pipes.

Meanwhile, the panchayati raj

BOATING FACILITY AT DEBJHARAN SOON

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Jan 15: Ecotourism at Debjharan under Jujumara block of Sambalpur district will get a further boost, as the forest department is going to put in place boating facilities soon.

A boat platform was built at the Debjharan dam a couple of days ago. Officials of the forest department said boats will be here within a week.

The boating facility for tourists will be put in place in this month. Six members of the Vana Surakhya Samiti working for nearby villages like Taljharan and Gailguda were trained in boating on the Puri coast.

Two years ago, Debjharan was declared as an ecotourism spot. Watch towers, foot tracks, toilets, bore wells, cooking platforms and other facilities have been put in place. The scenic place is attracting tourists in large number every year

With the new facility, more tourists are expected to make foot-falls to this scenic spot in large number.

Locals say, ecotourism will play instrumental in boosting economy in the peripheral villages.

Papad seller slapped with ₹13L GST fine

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Jan 15: In another instance of GST fraud in Rourkela, a woman living in Balughat Nua Basti was slapped with a GST fine of ₹13 lakh Friday.

The woman has been identified as Jhunu Pradhan, who ekes out her living by selling papad. She was accused of evading ₹13.38 lakh in GST.

It was found that a shell company named as Tirnetar Traders

was opened in Jhunu's name. The company was indulged in transactions worth over ₹70 lakh. GST authorities have intensified their probe into the fraud.

Notably, a tea seller, an auto rickshaw driver and a mudhi seller were accused of GST fraud in Rourkela as well.

It was alleged that some rackets are active in the Steel City which are doing transactions of lakhs of rupees through shell companies in the name of innocent people.

WRAPPED IN FOG



With dense fog enveloping Angul town, a woman sanitation worker crossing a road with a garbage cart, Friday

OP PHOTO

Youth held for taking girl's pic in shop's trial room

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Jan 15: A youth was arrested here Thursday for secretly taking pictures of a girl while she was trying out some garments in the trial room of a shop here. The incident has triggered a commotion in this town.

Sources said the young woman had gone to the V-Mart showroom here. After selecting a dress, she went into the trial room. A youth identified as Md Atif and a resident of Old Town area here immediately went into the men's trial room. It was alleged that Atif took pictures of the girl while she was changing through a hole in the plywood partition that separated the men's and women's trial rooms.

However, the woman sensed something amiss and located the hole through which Atif was allegedly taking pictures. She rushed out of the trial room screaming for help. Later, Atif was caught by the staff and handed over to police.

Special traffic control unit for Keonjhar mining areas

POST NEWS NETWORK

Barbil, Jan 15: Traffic snarls are routine in various major routes in the mining-hit areas of Keonjhar district allegedly owing to mineral-laden trucks. It has been a major issue for people affected by traffic woes in most pockets.

In the past, people had staged protests over traffic jams after years of being stuck in traffic snarls on way to their destinations. The government has long been trying to sort out the issue, but was ineffective for years.

Now, it has come out with a concrete solution to this problem. A special traffic unit was set up to control traffic in major mineral-bearing areas in Keonjhar.

IG (western range) Kabita Jalan inaugurated the special traffic unit and an integrated control room Friday at Barbil. The vehicles meant to control traffic and remove road



blocks were flagged off.

"Heavy vehicles will no longer create jams on roads. There will be an Integrated Traffic Control Room and the unit will always be on alert. People and vehicles will reach their destinations at their desired times," Jalan said.

SP Mitrabhanu Mohapatra and other police officials were present at the inaugural ceremony.

The special traffic unit will function for areas like Barbil, Joda, Bamebari, Rugudi, Bolani and some

parts of Champur police limits. It was stated that the state police has taken such a step taking note of the persistent plight of people and students in buses, and patients in ambulances getting stuck in traffic jams for hours. This unit will also provide necessary help to people during road accidents.

This unit is equipped with 20 constables, six havildars and seven officers, apart from six vans and 10 bikes. It will work round the clock in removing traffic congestion.

Cops recover severed head of 'Gaon Sathi'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sundargarh, Jan 15: After recoveries of a severed arm and a limbless torso Thursday, the police Friday recovered the severed head of a 'Gaon Sathi' from near Bhabanipur cold storage under Sadar police limits in Sundargarh district.

The deceased has been identified as Ramesh Sethi, a 'Gaon Sathi' of Kirei gram panchayat in Sundargarh district. The ghastly murder of Ramesh has become the talk of the town.

According to sources, Ramesh's brother Bhismadeb had alleged that his brother had been missing since Wednesday afternoon. On his way back home from panchayat office at about 3 pm, he had met a youth before disappearing.

Bhismadeb had received a call from Ramesh at around 7 pm, informing him that he would return late in the night. But he never returned. Sensing something wrong, he had tried to contact him over phone but it was found to be switched off.

The family had lodged a miss-



ing report at the police station Thursday morning. Later in the evening, some local people noticed a dog holding a severed arm in its mouth moving behind a hotel near the toll gate by-pass under the Sadar

police limits. They immediately informed the police.

Ramesh's elder brother Bhismadeb had identified the severed arm as that of his missing brother's. Then the police had launched an investigation with the help of a scientific team. About four hours later, the police had recovered a torso from a pond.

Other body parts were also recovered from a pond in presence of Sundargarh SP Sagarika Nath Friday as searched operation was resumed Friday morning. His kin and locals suspect foul play.

OSRTC bus yet to ply for Berhampur-Chandahandi

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jhariaigan, Jan 15: A direct government bus between Berhampur and Chandahandi in Nabarangpur district has still been a dream for people in both the regions. As a result, people have been routinely suffering from commuting problems on this route.

It has been a long demand of people in the regions. Owing to apathy of the Odisha State Road Transport Corporation (OSRTC), the long awaited service has not been executed, a report said.

According to the report, in 2008, the OSRTC had granted route permission for its buses to operate be-



tween the two places. But the road and the transport department has not been able to run this service in the large interest of the public.

In 2017, with efforts of the then road and transport minister and the present MP Ramesh Chandra Majhi, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had launched an AC bus

service from Berhampur to Chandahandi. But the service was limited to Umerkote. As a result people have to pick up another bus from Umerkote to Chandahandi. They faced a lot of difficulties in commuting at Umerkote.

After repeated demands of the people, the bus service was extended to Chandahandi for a few days. It was halted on the ground that there were fewer passengers, Maoist threat and bad road condition. Meanwhile, three years have passed since the bus service was launched, but people of Chandahandi are deprived of its service. They have expressed their displeasure over it.

It was learnt that a large number of people from Ganjam live in Jhariaigan and Chandahandi blocks. They have been facing commuting problem on a daily basis without a direct bus service. Most of the people and students of Jhariaigan and Chandahandi blocks depend on Berhampur for educational and healthcare needs. Passengers booking tickets on an OSRTC bus to go to Chandahandi are dropped at Umerkote, but they pay fare for Chandahandi. A new road has been laid from Umerkote to Chandahandi at a cost of ₹70 crore. Despite this good road infrastructure, the OSRTC bus service has not been ensured to Chandahandi, locals lamented.

Brown sugar seized, 2 peddlers held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak, Jan 15: Amid reported proliferation of drug smuggling in various parts of Bhadrak, police arrested two drug peddlers and seized 22 gm of brown sugar from them Friday in Puruna Bazar area of Bhadrak.

Reports said, police got an inkling of the drug peddling near RMC Market and raided the area. They arrested a person with 22 gm of brown sugar.

Later, they arrested another person involved in the drug peddling. The two were produced in court Friday, said ASP Jatun Panda.

Road safety to be observed for a month this year

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, Jan 15: Odisha ranks 12th among the states and Union territories in road accident deaths as the Centre has decided to observe National Road Safety Month instead of National Road Safety Week in view of the burgeoning number of deaths due to road mishaps in the country every year.

The matter came to the fore after the Union ministry of transport and highways issued a notification directing to observe road safety month from January 18 to February 17, 2021 instead of National Road Safety Week. Accordingly, during this period, various nation-wide activities have been planned throughout the country in association with the state governments/UT administrations, OEMs and other stakeholders.

The month-long event will see awards being given away to best performance in road safety to a state as well as swacchta award, road safety activities by NHIDCL (National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited), HOAI (Highway Operator Association of India), NHAI among others.

Reports said 1.50 lakh people die every year in the road mishaps for which the Centre has decided to observe the National Road Safety Week for a month instead of a week. According to report by the state Crime Branch and CID, Odisha ranks 12th in road mishap deaths in the country which have become a cause of concern for all. The state commerce and transport department is laying stress on it and has started making preparations for the success of the road safety month.



The departmental joint secretary Kishore Chandra Das has convened a preparatory meeting January 15 in this regard.

According to available reports, 3931 persons died in 2014 and 5,333 persons in 2019 in road mishaps which is a 36 per cent increase during these five years. As a result, the position of Odisha rose to 12th position from earlier 16th position

in the whole country. This has become a cause of concern as a Supreme Court-appointed committee has directed a 50 per cent reduction road mishap deaths. The state Crime Branch and CID in their reports have said 684 deaths occurred in September and October, 2019 while 871 deaths occurred during the same period in 2020. The Jajpur district witnessed 28 and 35

deaths during the same period in both the years.

Poor performance in 35 transport offices and 34 police districts is blamed for the increasing deaths.

Delay in construction and expansion of National Highways, narrow roads, encroachments, rash driving, violation of traffic norms, lack of restrictions in movement of heavy vehicles, bad road conditions are also to be blamed for the increasing road mishaps. Illegal parking, speed driving, helmet less driving, use of mobile phones during driving, drunk driving, use of mobile phones during driving are other factors for road accidents.

Sachhidananda Panda, RTO, confirmed the development stating that he is yet to receive a proper communiqué in this regard.

1st Corrigendum to Tender Call Notice No. SEMC/MDHKD-02/2021
Bid Identification No. - SEMC/MDHKD-02(A)/2021
No. A-465:- The following additional document to the existing fifteen (15) Nos. under section :-2 vide clause No.1 (Preparation of tender documents) is required for the qualification criteria for credit facility considering Combined Bid Evaluation is as follows:-
 "Bank Certificate for availability of Credit Facility of not less than twenty percent (20%) of the amount put to tender and furnish the credential from any scheduled commercial banks within state of Odisha as prescribed in FORM N".
 Encl. - FORM N
Sd./- Superintending Engineer,
Mechanical Circle (Med.I.P.), Hirakud
 OIPR-32403/11/0005/2021

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. O-893
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,
RURAL WORKS DIVISION, PHULBANI
 Phone: 06842-253708, E-mail: rw_phulbani@yahoo.co.in
No. 74/RWDP Dated the 12.01.2021
Government of Odisha e-Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. Online Tender/01/EERWD PHULBANI/2020-21
 1. Name of the Work : Road Works (5 Nos.)
 2. Estimated Cost : Rs.44.30 lakhs to Rs.6.53 lakhs
 3. Period of Completion : 1 (One) Calendar Month
 4. Date & time of availability of Bid documents in the portal : From 20.01.2021 to 27.01.2021
 5. Last date/time for receipt of Bids in the Portal : 27.01.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.
 6. Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid : Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Phulbani
 Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal website <https://tenders.ori.nic.in/nicgep/app>.
Executive Engineer
Rural Works Division, Phulbani
 OIPR-25077/11/0001/2021

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, R.W.S.S. DIVISION, SONEPUR
 Telephone No. 06654-220259, E-mail: dwsn_snpr@nic.in
Govt. of Odisha, e-Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. 07/2020-21
 No. O-900: The Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Sonepur on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites Percentage bid through e-Procurement in Single Cover System for the Water Supply works as Detailed below. The bid should be submitted online in the Website www.tendersodisha.gov.in in separately for different works.
 1. Nature of Work : Const. of 20000 ltr. capacity RCC OHT with 10 mtr. Staggering for CHC Ullunda
 2. No. of Tenders : 01 No.
 3. Tender Paper Cost : Rs.6000/-
 4. Value of Work : Rs.10.83 lakhs
 5. Class of Contractor : 'C' & 'B' Class
 6. Date & time of availability of bid documents in portal : 11.00 hours of Dt.20.01.21 to Dt.31.01.21 upto 17 hours
 7. Date & time of seeking tender clarification : 29.01.21 upto 5.00 P.M.
 8. Date & time of Opening of Tender : 01.02.21 at 11.00 A.M. in the O/o. E.E. RWS&S Division, Sonepur
 9. Time of Completion : 180 days
 10. The bidders have to participate in online bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website <https://www.tenderorissa.gov.in>.
 11. Corrigendum if any shall only be published in the above website.
 12. Tender along with cost of paper and EMD is to be received through e-procurement portal.
Sd./- Executive Engineer
RWS Division, Sonepur
 OIPR-25037/11/0008/2021



A smile acts upon the difficulties as the sun upon the clouds - it disperses them.

THE MOTHER

The war of letters

Perhaps service rules stopped them from airing their views but after retirement bureaucrats are not bound anymore and can voice their thoughts freely. This has led to the formation of pro- and anti-government groups among retired babus who jump into the fray at the behest of their conscience (or political leaning).

In the most recent instance, the "love jihad" law legislated by the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh has triggered a "letter war" between former bureaucrats, those who criticize the law and those who have rallied behind the state government. The ranks of the ex-babus have been joined by retired army officers, members of the judiciary and others.

Earlier, a group of 104 retired bureaucrats wrote to Yogi Adityanath, expressing "deep disapproval" and concern at the use of "love jihad" law. Noted signatories included retired bureaucrats like former NSA Shiv Shankar Menon, former chief of R&AW AS Dulat, former Chief Information Commissioner Wajahat Habibullah, former principal secretary in PMO, TKA Nair and former Union health secretary K Sujatha Rao among other notables.

Now, a Forum of Concerned Citizens, comprising of over 250 retired officers has written to the Chief Minister endorsing the 'Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance 2020' and the motive behind it. In their letter, the group of former babus and ex-army officers said that the legislation rightly provides that the marriages done for sole purpose of unlawful conversion can be declared null and void by family courts. They termed the letter by anti-love jihad babus a 'politically motivated pressure-group' and said that they don't represent thousands of civil servants who believe in New India emerging as the greatest democracy of the world.

One may be tempted to believe that this is an instance of political battles being fought by proxy!



BABUDOM BYTES
Dilip Cherian

CADRE MERGER

More than a year after the Centre abrogated Jammu & Kashmir's special status under Article 370 and bifurcated the state into union territories, the J&K cadre of IAS, IPS and IFoS has been merged with the Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram and Union Territory (AGMUT) cadre. This allows officers posted in these states and UTs to work in J&K and vice versa.

Necessary modifications may be made in the corresponding cadre allocation rules by the Centre. The notification issued by the government states that officers allocated to AGMUT cadre shall function following the rules framed by the Centre. Observers see in the move a message of total integration of J&K with the Centre. It also solves the Centre's problem of the reluctance of J&K cadre officers to serve in Ladakh, as it now creates a larger pool of UT cadre officers. Ladakh, they say, suffers a paucity of officers. Due to its harsh climate officers are reluctant to serve there. But with the Chinese threat looming, the Centre wishes to focus on Ladakh's development. So, clearly, it is as much a political move as an administrative one.

MAMATA'S BIG PROMOTION PUSH

Political or administrative compulsion? West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has promoted 31 IAS officers as secretaries and additional secretaries in one big push to bolster the state government's administration ahead of the Assembly elections.

With the BJP making a determined effort to breach her stronghold, the TMC leader is taking steps to strengthen the administrative machinery which has come under fire from various quarters. Among the 19 officers promoted as secretaries are additional secretaries Smita Pandey, Vijay Bharti, Shubhanjan Das, Samir Kumar Bhattacharya, CC Guha, Rajat Bose, Kaushik Halder, NC Sarar and TK Rudra. The new additional secretaries include V Lalithalakshmi, Sourav Pahari, Mukta Arya, Devi Prasad Karanam, Shakeel Ahmed, Uttam Patra, Santanu Saha, Nirmalya Ghosh, Anindya Narayan Biswas and Dipankar Chowdhury. But this is early in the poll campaigning and chances of further changes in the state administration cannot be ruled out as the CM seeks to stave off the BJP's onslaught to dislodge her party from power. Watch this space for updates.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect.

WISDOM CORNER

- The world breaks everyone, and afterward, some are strong at the broken places. **ERNEST HEMINGWAY**
- The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance. **ALAN WATTS**
- If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion. **DALAI LAMA**

WORDSWORTH

Wormwood

Alcohol awareness campaigners were horrified to learn a British company's plans to import and sell absinthe, the original version made with wormwood. There can hardly be an alcoholic drink with a worse reputation, even after nearly a century of prohibition in many countries. Two things made absinthe such a terror. It was about twice the strength of any other spirit (more than two-thirds alcohol). And the wormwood in it not only provided part of its green colour and a characteristic bitter taste, but also thujone, an hallucinogen that is a relative of the active ingredients in cannabis. No wonder it drove people mad and it was banned in many countries early this century. But the story of wormwood goes back much further than the absinthe manufactory set up by Henri-Louis Pernod in 1797. As a name for a native European species it originates in an Old Germanic language, and it came into Old English as weremod or wermod. Its derivation is far from certain, but it may have been formed as a combination of wer, "man" (as in werewolf) and mut, "courage" (from which we get our mood). So it could be that its mood-altering properties were known from an early time. The name changed in medieval times, being thought by folk etymology to be a combination of worm and wood (the plant is rather a woody shrub), because it had been known since the time of the ancient Greeks to be an effective worming agent. Its other benefits were lauded by John Pechey in 1694: "It strengthens the Stomach and Liver, excites Appetite, opens Obstructions, and cures Diseases that are occasion'd by them; as, the Jaundice, Dropsie, and the like." That may sound like a snake-oil advertisement, but the plant was genuinely useful and was a regular part of the European herb garden. Pechey said it also keeps away clothes moths. It was known to have the same effect on fleas, so much so as to be celebrated in verse: Where chamber is swept, and wormwood is strowne, No flea for his life dare abide to be knowne. We know of the plant also from the Bible and Shakespeare, often as gall and wormwood, implying something acutely mortifying or vexing. The word has long been employed figuratively for something bitter or unpleasant to experience, reflecting its best known characteristic, its taste. It was commonly used to flavour both ale and wine, a practice that went back at least to Roman times, and in some rural areas it was used to flavour and preserve ale for many years after hops had been introduced to more prosperous places. Today we actually have two names for drinks derived from the same word in the English language, because the German name, which by then had become Wermut, was taken into French and used as the name for another drink that was at one time flavoured with wormwood, vermouth. (The name absinthe is from the French word for the plant, derived from its former Latin name, absinthium.)

SOCIAL CAPITAL & PROSPERITY

FOCUS SOCIETY



Just like physical capital (infrastructure) and financial capital (GDP), social capital also has an important role in what makes a community or country prosperous in a broad sense

Two years ago I moved into the household of my current hosts - an Italian and Chinese husband-wife couple in Hong Kong. I found them using AirBNB - a service that allows people to host complete strangers as paying guests in their homes. They have since become very close friends and great benefactors. Trusting one another in general is an important factor for societies to function smoothly and be prosperous. In the USA, the UK and India there is a visible decline in social trust in recent decades, whereas in countries like Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands seem to be heading in the opposite direction. Many leading economists such as professor of Economics at Cornell University Kaushik Basu believe that the downturn in Indian economy has more to do with social disharmony caused by divisive politics than disastrous policy decisions such as demonetisation and a flawed GST implementation. Essentially social capital consists of trust among close knit units such as family and friends and social harmony among diverse ethnic, religious or racial groups.



Dhanada K Mishra

TRUSTING ONE ANOTHER IN GENERAL IS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR FOR SOCIETIES TO FUNCTION SMOOTHLY AND BE PROSPEROUS

David Halpern, head of the UK's Behavioral Insights Team, says social trust is like the proverbial 'dark matter' when it comes to economics or well being. Its effect is important but it gets little attention. It has a stronger impact on future national economic growth rate than even skill level in population. Social trust can have a bigger impact on individual health than even 'quitting smoking' for example. Therefore, it is important to be able to measure the level of social trust and that's what social scientists have been doing for decades by asking questions like "Do you trust others, especially strangers?" and variation of the same. There is a big difference among countries when asked "What percentage of people can be trusted?" While in countries like Brazil, it could be in the range of 10-20 per cent, in Scandinavian countries such as Norway and Sweden or the Netherlands it may be in the higher range of 60-70 per cent. Countries like the US and the UK would fall somewhere in between.

Norway and Sweden or the Netherlands it may be in the higher range of 60-70 per cent. Countries like the US and the UK would fall somewhere in between.

Just like physical capital (infrastructure) and financial capital (GDP), social capital also has an important role in what makes a community or country prosperous in a broad sense. Research shows that people with a larger network of friends, family members, and colleagues tend to do better financially and even in terms of their health. This applies both at the individual and community level. Prof Robert Putnam, a public policy expert at Harvard University and author of a landmark book 'Bowling Alone' (2000), established that presence of a healthy civic network or civil society organisations made people trust each other more and made governments function better. At the same time, in societies with high levels of social capital, children do better in school, crime rates are lower and economic growth rate is higher. Interestingly, in the USA, a correlation was found between falling levels of social trust with a decline in membership figures in civic groups like parent-teacher associations, Rotary clubs, Scout troops and even bowling leagues.

In a society or community with low levels of mutual trust, people have to constantly look over their shoulders, have more lawsuits, try to avoid paying taxes or recycle. Small business owners tend to employ their relatives to work for them rather than strangers even if they are much better at the job.

There are two types of social capitals - 'bonding social capital' refers to your closeness to your friends, your family and those you interact with often. This is important for health outcomes and sense of personal security. 'Bridging social capital' on the other hand is trust between strangers, particularly among diverse groups, say whites and non-whites, Hindus and Muslims or higher castes and lower castes or the well off and the poor. This is really important for a healthy business environment leading to general well being and prosperity of the society at large.

It's universally agreed that more ethnically and racially diverse communities do much better in terms of innovation and creativity and lead to a more vibrant social environment. In India, our diversity has always been considered a great strength. Diverse teams always do better than less diverse ones in business, sports or any other group endeavour. The world

is becoming increasingly diverse with global travel and migration. Unfortunately, increase in diversity also seems to correlate with decrease in social capital. The increasing social tensions in India over inter-caste marriages or relationships across religious divides are results of such decline of trust or bridging social capital.

It is well established that the decline in social trust can be addressed in a number of ways. For example, university education that allows young people to meet and know their peers from different backgrounds helps build social trust. People connecting with one another across lines of race or economics or gender or age is helpful in increasing social capital. Some examples are sports teams, the military, college, social service like NSS/NCC, travelling, etc. Addressing rising inequality is important as illustrated by the Netherlands, which has made a conscious effort to build a more equitable society and thereby increase its social capital successfully.

Before the age of cell phones and social media, television was considered the biggest enemy of civic engagement as it made people literally couch potatoes. With the ubiquitous cell phones it was thought that people will connect with each other more and hence it will mitigate some of the negative effects of TV. Same was expected of social media. However, both seem to have caused a negative impact on social capital by all counts. This was most dramatically illustrated by the recent mob attack on the US Capitol. Let's hope we will not allow such divisive tendencies to develop in India and Odisha by being watchful of our power hungry politicians and their machinations.

The author is a professor at KMMB College of Engineering under Biju Patnaik University of Technology currently working in Hong Kong. He can be reached at dhanadam@gmail.com

SPECTRUM GENDER

Fight for women's rights beyond #MeToo

For most people, the #MeToo movement has become synonymous with campaigns against sexual harassment. The movement - which went viral in October 2017 - undoubtedly mobilised women and spurred positive change. But its prominence in media coverage and political discussions of sexual harassment has also been problematic, overshadowing activism for women's rights in other parts of the world that predates the emergence of #MeToo.



Mariz Tadros

THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT FOCUSING ON THE #METOO MOVEMENT HAS IN SOME WAYS IMPEDED THE WORLDWIDE STRUGGLE FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS, PARTICULARLY IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

In many countries, social movements had already been taking on sexual harassment and abuse for decades. Many of them, including campaigns like #MeshBasita in Lebanon, HarassMap in Egypt, and the "Shefarers" in the Philippines, emerged long before the rise of #MeToo, or were overshadowed by it. A new publication by the Institute of Development Studies brings together reports on women's rights activism in countries including Benin, Burkina Faso, Egypt, India, Lebanon, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Uganda. The authors cover a wide spectrum of experiences, from well-defined and visible collective action to activism that happens behind the scenes in order to safeguard women's lives.

There is evidence that focusing on the #MeToo movement has in some

ways impeded the worldwide struggle for women's rights, particularly in the Global South. Some activists report that #MeToo has exacerbated existing prejudices with ultra nationalists and religious extremists vilifying the movement as a malign Western import. They claim either that local women are not interested in such causes, or that sexual harassment has been fabricated by the West to destroy family values.

Consider Lebanon. In August 2017, reports Menaal Munshey, when #MeshBasita ("It's not OK") was launched on Lebanese social media, the government, private businesses, and NGOs engaged with the campaign. Then #MeToo happened. Subsequently, organisers experienced a backlash, including reactions like, "Why are you guys talking about it?" and, "This is an American thing, a European thing."

Laws against sexual harassment do exist in many of these places. But much of the legislation is dysfunctional, with women still not getting the accountability and justice they deserve. In Pakistan, for example, every workplace is now required to establish sexual-harassment inquiry procedures, including a committee to hear complaints. But research among female Pakistani politicians reveals that despite the legislation and the existence

of Pakistan's own #MeToo movement, #MainBhi, these requirements have yet to be implemented in their own workplaces. And the struggle for women's rights is not confined to physical spaces. In the past few years, online abuse has increased rapidly. This can take many forms, including "revenge porn" (sharing real or photoshopped nude or intimate images of women without their permission, for blackmail or shaming purposes). People worldwide now own smartphones and can capture, alter, and put these types of images online in minutes.

Shame and embarrassment frequently stop women and girls from reporting crimes against them, even when they are protected by existing laws. Women in all countries share these feelings, but the situation is particularly severe for women marginalised by extreme inequality and subject to norms and values that hold them responsible for anything that can tarnish their reputation. Many never speak up, terrified of being blamed by others and ostracised by their families.

Clearly, #MeToo doesn't begin to capture the story of how women and men in diverse contexts mobilise against sexual harassment. Yes, collective action against sexual harassment did coalesce around the #MeToo campaign, and in some

places it has undoubtedly energised existing movements. But if it hadn't happened in the West, earlier campaigns in other countries - whether Egypt, India, or South Africa - might have been the spark that inspired solidarity.

It is important to recognise diverse global movements and campaigns for women's rights and to see them as sources of knowledge and inspiration. Learning from the hard-won successes of women's rights activists worldwide can aid us in understanding and overcoming the obstacles women and men everywhere face in their struggle to address sexual harassment.

It would of course be counter-productive to pit voices and perspectives from the Global South against those from the West. Instead, the goal should be to amplify voices, experiences, and insights from around the world to create learning opportunities and, ultimately, to establish the conditions for greater cooperation. Sexual harassment and abuse problems are universal problems. Only through global solidarity can we hope to overcome them.

The writer is Professor of Politics and Development at the Institute of Development Studies. @PROJECT SYNDICATE

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Impeached twice

Sir, Apropos the news report, "Trump first Prez to be impeached twice," Orissa POST, January 15, apart from making history for getting impeached twice, Donald Trump has also made history for many wrongdoings as the President of USA. Any accounting of how polarised his country will remain after he exits office begins with his outsized contribution to various societal delusions. To take just a couple of two big examples, beginning February last year Trump has unbendingly stuck to the line that Covid will simply go away, but it took tens of thousands of American lives. And, beginning November he continuously claimed election victory. Such wild falsehoods put him in a league of his own, especially when he believes them too. What happened in the US Capitol on January 6 was horrifyingly an insurrection incited by the President himself. Either through a Senate impeachment during his presidency or criminal prosecution afterwards, he must be held to account. N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Internet boost

Sir, The state government has set a target to connect all blocks and gram panchayats with broadband internet by May-end. This is a good attempt because internet connectivity is a basic requirement for maintaining high growth rate in the rural sector. It was found that students were facing troubles attending online classes due to poor network connectivity. As per the plan, all government offices, schools, medical facilities, banks, common service centres, telemedicine centres and agriculture kiosks will be connected with broadband internet. Kamal Lochan Dash, JAJPUR

Reopen Anganwadis

Sir, Recently the Supreme Court has directed States and Union Territories to take a decision to recommence Anganwadi centres situated outside containment zones on or before January 31. The court mentioned that the Union Ministry for Women and Child Development had by its guidance note November 11, 2020 "permitted all the States and Union Territories to open Anganwadi Centres" and that it was now "the responsibility of the States/Union Territories to take a decision for opening" them. Anganwadis provide important services like pre-schooling, vaccination, medicines, nutritional meals, and have also conducted various awareness programs to ensure the physical and mental well being of pregnant women and children. The Centre and States should reopen Anganwadis by following all safety protocols. Amit Singh Kushwaha, SATNA (MP)

Have no fear, say those who would be first to get the jab

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal/Indore, Jan 15: Haridev Yadav and Asha Pawar, who would be among the first to receive COVID-19 vaccine in Madhya Pradesh, are confident that it is the right thing to do.

The inoculation drive will start at 10.30 am at 150 centres across the state Saturday along with the rest of the country, Madhya Pradesh Health Minister Dr Prabhuram Choudhary said.

Healthcare workers will be the first to get the jab at every centre, he said.

Santosh Shukla, additional director, vaccination, said the first vaccine shot will be administered at the state-run J P Hospital in Bhopal.

Yadav, who works as a security guard at the hospital, has been told that he would be the first recipient.

"I am elated that I will become the first person to be vaccinated in the state. I volunteered for the vaccination. My wife initially had reservations but now she agrees that vaccine should be taken," he said.

"I have not taken a single day's leave since the outbreak of coronavirus," he said.



navirus," he said.

To a question, Yadav said, "Why should we have fear about the vaccination when the prime minister himself is launching the campaign?"

In Indore, Pawar (55), who works as 'Aaya' in the district hospital, said she agreed immediately when asked if she would be ready to receive the jab. "I and my family members are totally confident about the vaccine," said Pawar, who lives with

her son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren.

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan discussed preparations for the inoculation drive with Choudhary and the MP Medical Education Minister Vishwas Sarang Friday and expressed satisfaction, said a government spokesperson.

Choudhary said all those who are to receive the jab Saturday will get necessary text message by Friday evening. Both Covishield and Covaxin - the two vaccines cleared by the government for the inoculation drive - are totally safe, he assured. As many as 4.17 lakh healthcare workers will be administered vaccine in the first phase in Madhya Pradesh.

The state has received 5,06,500 doses of Covishield vaccine so far.

I am elated that I will become the first person to be vaccinated in the state. I volunteered for the vaccination. My wife initially had reservations but now she agrees that vaccine should be taken

HARIDEV YADAV

Raj tourism sector in doldrums

ONE OF THE LEADING TOURIST STATES OF INDIA, RAJASTHAN DOESN'T HAVE A TOURISM MINISTER FOR THE LAST SEVEN MONTHS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, Jan 15: Call it an irony or bad luck for Rajasthan that despite earning huge revenues as a leading tourist state of India, it is operating without a tourism minister for the last seven months. The bureaucrats are also being shunted at regular intervals, leaving this significant sector in a fix.

The tourism industry in Rajasthan, before the COVID crisis, was attracting tourists from across the world, earning foreign exchange and boosting the revenues of the state. However, amid the pandemic, the industry has come to a standstill as there has been no push from the government to revive the industry, rather it has been embroiled in political controversies making it headless amid the tough times.

Tourism minister Vishvendra Singh was divested of his portfolio in July soon after then deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot staged a rebellion against Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot demanding a change of leadership.

Since then, the tourism ministry is operating sans a minister and even during the COVID crisis the industry received no significant help from the state government, say industry leaders.

Eventually, the unemployment rate in the state has surged to 28.2



per cent as per CMIE figures released January 12, which is three times higher than the country's average unemployment rate of 8.3 per cent. In August, this figure stood at 17.5 per cent.

Speaking on this, Randhir Vikram Singh, president of the Indian Heritage Hotels Association said, "A total of 22 per cent of the workforce in Rajasthan is supported by tourism while 30 per cent of the state's GDP comes from tourism. Since March 21, there has been a complete wipeout of tourism, and despite this, the government did not come out with anything significant. Hence, this unemployment rate. The promises made to us were great but nothing was done."

Another hotelier, Prithvi Singh said, "Rajasthan depends on tourism, exports and handicrafts.

Because of the pandemic, all three segments are shut as of now. The need of the hour is aggressive marketing of tourism as it creates jobs for millions of people in the state directly and indirectly."

Sharing details of the challenges faced by the industry, Randhir Vikram Singh said that those hotels not running since months are still receiving whopping electricity bills. "The hotel industry can't be termed as an 'industry' for it is not given facilities as are being given under the industry status. Further, while the Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation hotels are exempted from paying licence fee for bars, the private hoteliers are being asked to pay the same. Why this biased attitude?" He said that "there have been wide-scale lay-offs and salary cuts across the industry."

Rajasthan depends on tourism, exports and handicrafts. Because of the pandemic, all three segments are shut as of now. The need of the hour is aggressive marketing of tourism as it creates jobs for millions of people in the state directly and indirectly

PRITHVI SINGH | HOTELIER

Speaking of the tough competition between the states, he said, "Every state is competing when it comes to tourism. Look at Kerala, Uttarakhand, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. In fact, neighbouring MP gives whopping subsidies for a movie shoot. Why can't Rajasthan give it too. If we get movie shoots done here, diverse sectors can benefit from it. We have lakes, palaces, jungles and much more but why are film producers running to MP. It's because they are getting benefits which the Rajasthan government has failed to provide them," he added. "Tourism, till date, has earned revenue for the state, but for the first time it is bleeding and hence we want the government's attention. We can't sit on the roads and protest unlike others but can simply ask for attention to ensure this industry is not ignored."

10 months on, Kota coaching business raring to reopen

The city's coaching business has an annual turnover of ₹3,000 crore and employs at least 5 lakh people

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kota (Raj), Jan 15: The coaching industry here is set to restart January 18 after the Rajasthan government's nod to reopen schools and other educational institutes, closed for almost 10 months due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Home to at least 10 big coaching giants and 50 other institutes, the city has around 25,000 paying guest (PG) facilities and 3,000 hostels to cater to nearly 1.50 lakh students from across the country every year.

The institutes coach students preparing for competitive admission examinations of medical and engineering colleges.

The coaching business in Kota has an annual turnover of ₹3,000 crore and employs at least 5 lakh people, according to those in the industry.

The Kota district administration has formed 11 teams, including health and police officials, to ensure compliance of the standard operating procedure (SOP) for COVID at the coaching institutes.

They are fully prepared for the resumption of classes in coaching institutes and schools with proper compliance of the coronavirus protocol from January 18 and have constituted 11 teams to oversee it, Kota Collector Ujjawal Rathore told PTI Friday. He said the teams will visit every coaching institute to ensure the compliance of the guidelines.

According to the SOP, the number of students in a teaching session has been restricted to 50 per cent of total strength. Students will be checked for body temperature before being allowed to attend a class. Classrooms will have to be sanitised after every teaching session and wearing of masks will have to be ensured.

Only one student will be allowed to stay in a hostel room and a separate isolation place will be reserved for suspected coronavirus patients in every hostel and paying guest (PG) facility.

Allen Career Institute director Naveen Maheshwari said they have created a 31-bed hospital for students where all primary health care services are available.

An ultraviolet (UV) lighting system has been installed for sanitisation of classrooms, Maheshwari said. He said UV lights equipped



with sensors have been fixed in the classrooms.

The UV lights automatically switch on for sanitisation as soon as students leave the class.

Meanwhile, a cleanliness drive is underway at hostels with caretakers and managers being explained about the government guideline, said an office-bearer of a body representing hostels.

Saheel Dogra, a Class 12 student who came to Kota from Mumbai, said he was happy to be here as it was difficult to concentrate on studies during the online classes.

"Back in Kota, I have resumed my flow of studies and have learnt to schedule every task," said Aditi Sharma, who hails from Punjab's Amritsar and wants to be a scientist. Expressing gratitude to the government for allowing reopening of coaching institutes, Ayush Goyal of Reliable Institute said they are committed to follow the government guidelines. They are gearing up for the reopening of classes and have ensured the compliance of the guidelines, said Nitin Vijay, director of Motion Education.

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Sale, consumption of organic products rise during pandemic

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, Jan 15: There has been a substantial growth in both sale and consumption of organic products during the pandemic in Rajasthan, according to a survey.

CUTS International surveyed over 4,000 sellers as well as consumers of organic food products in 10 districts of Rajasthan including Kota and Jhalawar to ascertain the factors that drove the consumers to buy organic food products. As per the survey, there has been a remarkable surge in the sales of organic products in the country over last 10 months, which has encouraged several organic retailers to come up overnight.



"This change has occurred because of the changing eating habits of consumers, who are turning to organic foods in order to enhance immunity against COVID-19," it said. As many as 91 per cent sellers said there was a growth in their sales during the last 10 months of pandemic, out of which 69 per cent confirmed a substantial growth in the overall income.

Of the total surveyed consumers, 89 per cent confirmed to switching over to organic consumption mode. The survey noted the growth in sales was despite the fact that cost of organic products is higher than non-organic products.

Scindia faction ignored in BJP's executive committee

EXPERIENCE SHOWS THAT WHILE THE BJP CAN SHARE POWER WITH PARTY CHANGERS, IT ALWAYS SHUNS THEM IN THE ORGANISATION

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhopal, Jan 15: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has finally constituted the state executive committee in Madhya Pradesh. The committee has a regional balance in the portfolios of the office bearers but the so called 'Scindia faction' has found little space in it.

Former Union Minister and Rajya Sabha member Jyotiraditya Scindia had joined the BJP leaving the Congress just before the Assembly elections, delivering a big jolt to the Congress.

More than 10 months have passed since Vishnu Dutt Sharma took charge as the BJP state president and people were curiously waiting for the re-formation of the executive committee. The BJP made a comeback in Madhya Pradesh in March 2020. Since then the restructuring process was on halt due to the Assembly by-polls. A total of five state General Secretaries were appointed before the by-elections and the reorganisation of the committee was expected after the results.

A total of 12 Vice Presidents have been appointed under Sharma along with 12 state secretaries. A Treasurer, Deputy Treasurer, Office Secretary and Media in-charge have also been appointed.

Overall, every possible effort has been made to give space to those close to various BJP leaders in the state with four representatives each



from Gwalior-Chambal, Vindhya region, Central, Bundelkhand and Mahakaushal. These apart, eight people from Malwa-Nimar have been given major responsibilities.

The front is dominated by the central region. From here have come presidents of the Mahila Morcha, Kisan Morcha, Scheduled Caste Morcha and Backward Class Morcha. The Yuva Morcha chief has been named from Mahakaushal, Scheduled Tribe Morcha president from Nimar and Minority Morcha president from Chambal.

At the same time, if one considers the supporters of the veteran leaders of the state, then one thing becomes clear: This executive is dominated by those close to Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan. Along with this, supporters of Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and National General Secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya

have been given place, besides the choice of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh has also been taken care of.

Moreover, this new executive committee is full of young faces. But only one person close to Scindia has found space in the committee.

Sources said that the BJP always ignores people who change parties. This is the reason that the 'Scindia faction' failed to get much traction. The Cabinet has a good number of Scindia supporters and they will also be taken care of in the Corporation boards.

Political analyst Arvind Mishra believes that the BJP makes its team only with "pure" people as reflected in the executive committee. Pro-Scindia people have not been given importance. Experience shows that while the BJP can share power with party changers, it always shuns them in the organisation.



DAWN & DEVOTION

A man offers prayers as migratory birds fly over Narmada river, amid dense fog during a cold winter morning, in Jabalpur, Friday. PTI PHOTO

Lack of case diary extends Munawar Faruqui's bail hearing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Indore, Jan 15: The hearing on the bail petition of comedian Munawar Faruqui, arrested after a BJP leader's son alleged that he had made objectionable comments on Hindu gods and goddesses during a stand-up act, in Madhya Pradesh High Court was extended Friday in the absence of a case diary.

A single bench of the HC of Justice Rohit Arya has summoned the case diary and has fixed the next date of hearing tentatively January 25.

Faruqui's lawyer Anshuman Shrivastava told PTI that Tukoganj police station officials were unable to produce the case diary for the hearing.

Since his arrest after the comedy show in question January 1 in Indore's 56 Dukan area, Faruqui's bail plea has been rejected by the



chief judicial magistrate and the sessions court, after which he approached the HC.

Eklavya Singh Gaud (36), son of local BJP MLA Malini Laxman Singh Gaud, had filed a police complaint claiming he had been to Faruqui's show and that it contained 'indecent' comments on

Hindu gods and goddesses as well as Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Faruqui has been booked under IPC sections 295A (outraging religious feelings), 269 (unlawful or negligent act likely to spread the infection of any disease dangerous to life) among others.



If the government is afraid of fulfilling the demands of the farmers on the central farm laws, there is no use of continuing the dialogue
RAKESH TIKAIT | FARMER LEADER

MODERATE FOG IN DELHI

A cloud cover over the national capital on Friday led to the minimum temperature rising to 6.7 degrees Celsius, a notch above normal, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said



of the day quote

Amit Shah is coming tomorrow (Saturday), along with him I will go to Bhadravati and we will come back (to Bengaluru) and day-after-tomorrow we will be heading to Belagavi



B S YEDYURUPPA | KARNATAKA CM

Vedas are a treasure of principles of good governance and the concept of public welfare state can be conceived by adopting these principles



ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER

I feel proud and content that in such unfavourable conditions (COVID-19), Maharashtra has not stopped and will never stop



UDDHAV THACKERAY | MAHA CM

'Pak trying to infiltrate 300-400 terrorists into JK'

Pakistan is using drones and tunnels to smuggle arms and ammunition into the country. "At LoC, our forces are keeping an eye on Pakistan's activities. The counter-infiltration grid has been strengthened making it nearly impossible for Pakistan to push terrorists into Indian territory," said the Indian Army Chief

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 15: Around 300 to 400 Pakistan-based terrorists are waiting in launchpads across the Line of Control to infiltrate into the Indian side, said Indian Army Chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane on Friday, adding that forces at forward locations are keeping an eye on their activities.

The Army Chief also said that the forces deployed at Line of Control are giving a befitting reply to Pakistan's Ceasefire violations.

"There has been a around 44 per cent increase in ceasefire violations by Pakistan at the LoC," said General Naravane, speaking during the Army Day celebrations on January 15 in Delhi.

Till December 28 this year, Pakistan carried out 4,700 incidents of ceasefire violations at Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir. Ceasefire violations have jumped to 4,700, the highest in the last 17 years.

In 2019, there were 3,168 ceasefire violations. Interestingly, out of the 3,168 ceasefire violations, 1,551 have taken place since August. The security establishment noticed that it was after the government abrogated Article 370 in August last year that there was a



steady rise in ceasefire violations. In 2018, Pakistan carried out 1629 incidents of ceasefire violations.

Pakistan is using drones and tunnels to smuggle arms and ammunition into the country. "At LoC, our forces are keeping an eye on Pakistan's activities. The counter-infiltration grid has been strengthened making it nearly impossible for Pakistan to push terrorists into Indian territory," said the Indian Army Chief.

He also pointed out that the strengthening of the counter-infiltration grid has led to decrease in terror activities in Jammu and

the Kashmir Valley. Last year, around 200 terrorists were killed in counter-terror operations, Indian Army Chief said.

Talking about the situation in North East states, Gen Naravane said that around 600 extremists surrendered in the last one year and huge cache of arms and ammunition were recovered. "We have got huge success in counter-terror operations working along with the Myanmar army," the Indian Army chief said. He also said that the force, along with Assam Rifles and state governments is able to successfully implement the government's Act East Policy.

EC steps in to protect 'honest' election officials

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 15: Taking note of some incidents of "victimisation" of state chief electoral officers and other election officials in the post-election period on flimsy grounds, the Election Commission has directed all states to seek its prior approval before initiating any disciplinary action against such officers during their tenure, as also up to one year after completion of their stint with the poll panel.

In a letter addressed to the cabinet secretary and chief secretaries of all states and union territories Thursday, the EC said it has noted some incidents of "victimisation" of CEOs and additional, joint, deputy and assistant CEOs in the post-election period. "Many a times they are targeted for political vendetta by charging them with disciplinary cases on flimsy grounds for their earlier tenures in the state government after the completion of their tenure. An environment of fear is created to convey that the upright, steadfast and sincere officers can be taken to task at any time, on the flimsiest of the grounds," the Commission noted.

It said in such a scenario, these officers are not only "demotivated but also their morale is greatly reduced, which severely affect their efforts to ensure free and fair elections". "Left to go on unfettered, it causes a situation where officials are reluctant to join as CEOs and those who are inducted face the uncertainty of fair treatment in post-election phase," it observed.

Rahul leads Cong protest in support of agitating farmers



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 15: Rahul Gandhi led the Congress's protest in the national capital in support of agitating farmers on Friday and said the opposition party will not relent till the three new farm laws are repealed.

He was accompanied by AICC general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Delhi Congress leaders at the protest outside the lieutenant governor's residence here as part of the party's countrywide agitation.

Addressing the gathering, Gandhi said the Congress will not step back till the government repeals the three new farm laws.

"These laws are not to help farmers, but to finish them. These laws are aimed at helping corporates like Ambani and Adani instead. That is why we are standing in support of the farmers," he said.

"The BJP government will have to take these black laws back. Till the time these laws are repealed, the

Congress party will not relent," Gandhi told the protesting Congressmen. "The Narendra Modi government tried to take away the land of farmers earlier, when it brought the Land Acquisition Act, and the Congress had stopped it at that time. Now, the BJP and its two-three friends are once again attacking the farmers and have brought these farm laws," he said. Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra later joined Congress MPs and leaders from Punjab at Jantar Mantar, where they have been sitting on a "dharna" against the farm laws for 41 days. "Prime Minister Modi does not respect farmers and wants to tire out those protesting against the Centre's agriculture laws," Gandhi said at Jantar Mantar. The Congress took out protest marches at all state capitals in the country and gheraoed Raj Bhawans on Friday. It also protested against the rising fuel prices. The opposition party observed the day as "Kisan Adhikar Diwas".

SHORT TAKES

MCD employees continue stir

New Delhi: Even after the Delhi government announced to provide Rs 938 crores to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi to pay pending salaries of its employees, MCD employees sitting on indefinite strike for the last one week were yet to call off their protest. Instead, MCD employees on Friday staged a protest against the Delhi government at the Civic Centre to again demand their pending dues.

Shripad Naik recovering well

Panaji: Union AYUSH Minister Shripad Naik is recovering well and his vital parameters are normal, Goa Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) said Friday evening. Naik, injured seriously in a car accident, has been admitted at the state-run GMCH near here since Monday. Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Naik over phone. Vice President Venkaiah Naidu, who is on Goa visit, also met Naik.

I-T Dept conducts searches in Kolkata

New Delhi: The Income Tax Department carried out search and survey operations January 13 on persons and entities engaged in the business of hotels, real estate, automobiles, financing and wholesale trade in fruits etc. at Kolkata. The cases were developed on the basis of available data in the departmental database.

CA held by CGST officials

New Delhi: In the ongoing campaign against fake and bogus invoices and the resultant avilment of inadmissible ITC, officers of the Central Goods and Service Tax (CGST) Commissionerate, Delhi (East) have detected a case of issue of fake bills of about Rs 79.5 crore. The syndicate was being operated by Nitin Jain, a CA, by floating three firms i.e. M/s Anshika Metals, M/s N.J Trading Co. and M/s A.J Enterprises using the identity of his family members, with the intent of passing of inadmissible ITC, a finance ministry release on the issue said.

Man killed

Shahjahanpur (UP): A man was killed over a land dispute in Gunah Khamariya village in Banda area here on Friday, police said. Ratiram (40) was shot dead by one Rajnish with his licensed revolver, Superintendent of Police, S Anand said.

Bulls, men compete at TN's 'Jallikattu'



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Madurai, Jan 15: Bulls and men tried to get the better of each other during the bull taming sport 'Jallikattu', a key event of the Pongal harvest festival celebrations, that was held here on Friday at the sprawling Palamedu sporting arena.

A test of grit was on full display with the animals fiercely trying to get past the waiting men while the tamers attempted to hang on to their humps to emerge victorious. The animals were let out one after the other from 'Vadivasal', a narrow entrance to the sporting arena after announcements on the bull, like who owned it and so on.

As tens of hundreds of spectators cheered from the gallery, about 700 bulls and 600 plus men took part in the sport which stretched to eight rounds amid tight security and a number of people, which includes participants, sustained injuries.

Organisers repeatedly directed enthusiastic tamers through the public address system to ensure that only one of them took on the bull and advised them on 'don'ts' like avoiding touching the horns of the animals.

The bull owners were given prizes after their animals outmanoeuvred the men waiting to outwit them and the participants were rewarded when they managed to cling to the hump of the bulls for a while. Over 100 bulls and men were declared winners and the prizes given away include a range of things including bicycles, gold coins, utensils and chairs. The event management committee announced here that the first prize, a car, went to a local youth who dominated 18 bulls. The first prize for the 'best bull' went to a local association which got a cow and a calf as prize. The second and third prizes for best tamers went to men who controlled 17 and 10 bulls respectively.

Domestic air travellers drop by 50% in 2020: DGCA

THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC CONTINUES TO BE FELT ON THE INDIAN AVIATION SECTOR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 15: A total of 6.3 crore domestic passengers travelled by air last year, 56.29 per cent lower than 2019, Indian aviation regulator DGCA said Friday.

The impact of the coronavirus pandemic continues to be felt on the Indian aviation sector as the regulator said that only 73.27 lakh people travelled by air domestically in December last year, which was 43.72 per cent lower than in the corresponding period of 2019.

While IndiGo carried 3.25 crore passengers last year, a 51.7 per cent share of the total domestic market, SpiceJet flew 93.9 lakh



passengers, which is 14.9 per cent share of the market, according to data shared by the DGCA.

Air India, GoAir, AirAsia India and Vistara carried 69.32 lakh,

54.38 lakh, 43.87 lakh and 39.39 lakh passengers, respectively, in 2020, the data showed. The occupancy rate or load factor of six major Indian airlines was be-

tween 65.1 per cent and 78 per cent in December 2020, it stated.

"The passenger load factor in the month of December 2020 has shown declining trend compared to the previous month primarily due to the end of tourist season," the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said.

The occupancy rate at SpiceJet was 78 per cent last month, highest among the six major Indian carriers. India resumed domestic passenger flights May 25 after a gap of two months due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Indian airlines are allowed to operate a maximum of 80 per cent of their pre-COVID-19 domestic flights.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, Jan 15: A heated exchange was witnessed here Friday between Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and journalists when they nettled him over a high-profile murder case that rocked the state capital earlier this week. Kumar was talking

Nitish loses cool on being asked about crime

to reporters after dedicating to the public the first phase of 'Atal Path', a Rs 379.57 crore elevated multiple lane road project that promises to drastically reduce traffic congestion in a major part of the city.

As the Chief Minister began to speak about the improvement in infrastructure since he assumed power a decade and a half ago, he was interrupted by journalists who insisted that law and order has deteriorated, citing the example of a young official of a private airlines having been gunned down outside his residence in the city Tuesday evening. "Please do not mix up the issues of development and crime," Kumar

requested and then snapped, when reporters persisted, saying "your projection will demoralise the state police which is doing its job. I had myself summoned the DGP and gave necessary directions".

Responding to their contention that the police was not able to prevent crime, he retorted "does a murderer seek permission before he commits the offence? Do you have any necessary inputs to share? If so, please go ahead". "Bihar has one of the lowest crime rates across the country. Please have a look at other states before painting a grim picture. And do you remember how bad things were when for a decade and

a half the state was ruled by pati-patni (husband and wife an allusion to Lalu Prasad and Rabri Devi)," a visibly irritated chief minister said. Some of the senior journalists said they were all too willing to share their inputs with the police but felt hamstrung as the DGP did not pick up the phone and the person receiving calls simply noted down details of the caller with the promise that the officer will call back which never happened.

The Chief Minister then telephoned the DGP S K Singhal himself and directed him to spruce up the mechanism for communication with journalists.

IS terrorists using secured messaging platform

EARLIER, THE NIA HAS TAKEN THE HELP OF THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (FBI) TO CRACK THE MESSAGES OF THE TERRORISTS IN CONNECTION WITH ITS PROBE INTO THE FEBRUARY 2019 PULAWAMA TERROR ATTACK CASE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 15: Amid the debate over privacy concerns, several people are switching to Telegram and Signal from WhatsApp, but the terrorists in India and abroad are using a much more advanced secure messaging platform to communicate with their counterparts across the globe without being traced and without leaving any digital footprint, a National Investigation Agency (NIA) probe has revealed.

The NIA during its probe into the Islamic State Iraq and Syria

Khorasan Province (ISIS-KP) case has found that arrested accused Jahanzaib Sami Wani and his wife Hina Bashir Beigh and Bengaluru-based doctor Abdur Rahman aka 'Dr Brave' were using Threema, a secure messaging platform.

Wani and Beigh were arrested in March 2020, while Rahman in August. In a statement January 12, an NIA spokesperson had said: "Till recently Rahman was in regular communication with ISIS terrorists located abroad as well as in India, including Sami on 'Threema', a secure messaging platform." The revelations were made



Tuesday when the anti-terror-probe agency filed a chargesheet against

Rahman, who had returned from Syria in December 2013 and was

misusing his medical knowledge to develop laser-guided missile system for the banned terror group.

According to NIA officials related to probe, who wished to remain anonymous, said that Rahman was using his knowledge of ophthalmic lasers for developing a project on laser-guided system through which the trajectory of an unguided missile can be changed with laser technology for the benefit of ISIS.

The official said that the "basic components" for such system are pulse transmitters and receivers, which are same or almost similar in flight circuits or ophthalmology

nanosecond lasers and could be used to guide missiles or rockets or payloads towards intended targets..

The NIA ISKP case is based on the one registered by Delhi Police's Special Cell in March 2020 after the arrest of Wani and his wife from Okhla Vihar in Jamia Nagar area here for alleged links with the terror group. The NIA had taken over the probe March 20, 2020.

However, this is not the first time that the NIA has come across the secure messaging platform used by the IS terrorists as well as Hizbul Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Toiba and Al Qaeda terrorists.

of the day quote

I have never compromised with principles for the sake of getting power. All BSP workers must unitedly start preparing for these elections



MAYAWATI | BHUJAN SAMAJ PARTY CHIEF

Nobody is bigger than the law, not even a minister. The law will not discriminate against anyone in Maharashtra



ANIL DESHMUKH | MAHA HOME MINISTER

What kind of a decision is this of the BJP that poor farmers be finished and a handful of people are benefitted



AKHLESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Eknath Khadse questioned by ED

Mumbai: NCP leader Eknath Khadse was questioned for more than six hours by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) at its office here Friday in connection with a 2016 land deal. Khadse, who left the ED office around 5.30 pm, told mediapersons that he was cooperating fully with the probe. "They asked questions and I tried to give answers. Whatever documents or information they need, I will provide them, and will appear before them again whenever they ask," he said.

Total 114 test +ve for UK nCoV strain

New Delhi: The number of people who have tested positive for the new UK variant of SARS-CoV-2 in the country has climbed to 114, the Union Health Ministry said Friday. The ministry said the situation is under careful watch and regular advice is being provided to states. "The total number of persons found infected with the new UK variant genome is 114," the ministry said.

Man stabbed to death

Aurangabad: Less than 24 hours after a man was stabbed to death in Maharashtra's Aurangabad city, police have arrested one person and detained two minors for the crime, an official said Friday. Sameer Khan was stabbed on Thursday night in Piya Market in Aurangpura, under City Chowk police station limits, when he had gone to a liquor store and got embroiled in an argument with three people, he said.

Kerala FM presents Budget

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala Finance Minister TM Thomas Isaac Friday presented the state's Budget of the Pinarayi Vijayan-led LDF government in the Assembly, promising to generate eight lakh employment opportunities in the state. Addressing the Assembly, Isaac said that it was a "people-centric and welfare-oriented Budget" and that schemes proposed in it would help support the underprivileged and downtrodden people amid the pandemic.

Maoist surrenders

Ranchi: A Maoist guerrilla carrying ₹15 lakh reward on his head surrendered to the police in Chatra district in Jharkhand Friday, officials said. Police said Maoist Muneshwar alias Mukesh Ganju surrendered before Chatra Superintendent of Police Rishabh Jha and CRPF Commandant Pawan Basan.



The talks are being held only to delay. PM Modi thinks he has the power and will tire the farmers out, but he is mistaken

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

WILD BUFFALO SHOT DEAD

A wild buffalo was shot dead by security personnel after it killed two people and injured two others in Biswanath district in northern Assam bordering Arunachal Pradesh, officials said Friday



India all set for world's largest vaccination drive

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 15: Almost a year after reporting the first case of deadly coronavirus, which has claimed over 1.5 lakh lives in India till now, the country is set to witness a historic moment Saturday with the commencement of the eagerly-awaited vaccination drive against the dreaded disease.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will virtually launch the world's largest vaccination programme at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday and almost three lakh beneficiaries, belonging to the priority groups, will be administered the silver bullet at over 3,006 vaccination sites across the country. Around 100 beneficiaries will be vaccinated at each session site.

The vaccine will be first offered to the healthcare workers, front-line workers and those above 50 years of age, followed by the below 50 population with comorbidities, and finally to the remaining population based on disease epidemiology and vaccine availability.

The vaccination drive has been planned in a phased manner, identifying the priority groups. Healthcare workers, both in government and private sectors, including Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) workers, will receive the vaccine in the first phase.



Two vaccines - Oxford Covid vaccine Covishield manufactured by the Serum Institute of India, and indigenously developed Covaxin by the Bharat Biotech - will be administered to priority groups. Till now, the Central government has procured 1.1 crore Covishield and 55 lakh Covaxin vaccines at a cost of ₹200 and ₹206 per dose, respectively.

Earlier Friday, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said that India's exercise to vaccinate its population against Covid-19 will be the largest immunisation drive in the world. The minister reiterated that both the indigenously manufactured vaccines have proven to be safe.

The Covid-19 Vaccine Intelligence Network (Co-WIN) system, a digital platform, will be used to track

the enlisted beneficiaries on a real-time basis. Prime Minister Modi will launch the app Saturday. The platform enables national and state administrators to view and sort the data of the beneficiaries as per their gender, age and comorbidity. They can also view the metadata of vaccination and the Adverse Event Following Immunisation (AEFI) reported from the constituent districts.

At the vaccination site, only pre-registered beneficiaries will be vaccinated as per prioritisation, and there will be no provision for on-the-spot registrations. A dedicated 24x7 hotline - 1075 - has also been set up to address questions related to the vaccine roll-out and the Co-WIN app.

The entire vaccination process will be broadly similar to the election process. Each vaccination team will consist of five members, including security personnel, nurses, paramedics and a doctor. Three will be a waiting area, an inoculation room and a post-vaccination observation area. There will also be a reception desk for registration and verification of the beneficiaries.

Explaining the process of the vaccination drive, Ajeet Jain, the nodal officer of Delhi's Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital, said, "The whole process from registration of beneficiaries to observation post-vaccination will take 45 minutes. At the entry point, vaccination officer-I will verify all the documents of the beneficiaries. On being cleared, they will come to the waiting area and wait for their turn."

Notably, only those above 18 years will be vaccinated. Pregnant women or who are not sure of their pregnancy and lactating mothers should not take the vaccine. Those with a history of bleeding or coagulation disorder will be administered the vaccine with utmost caution.

Vaccination will have to be deferred for four to eight weeks after recovery of patients with active Covid symptoms, or those who have been given plasma therapy, and those who are unwell or have been hospitalised for any other reason.

India, Nepal make efforts to restore normalcy in ties

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 15: Foreign ministers of India and Nepal on Friday held a comprehensive review of all aspects of bilateral ties and explored ways to further strengthen cooperation in key areas of connectivity, trade and energy, in the first high-level engagement between the two nations after relations nosedived following a boundary row last year.

In the sixth India-Nepal Joint Commission Meeting (JCM), External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Nepalese counterpart Pradeep Kumar Gyawali discussed cooperation in a range of areas including economy and trade, border management, power, oil and gas, water resources, capacity building and tourism among others, an official statement said.

Gyawali, accompanied by Nepalese Foreign Secretary Bharat Raj Paudyal arrived here on Thursday on a three-day visit in the midst of a political turmoil in Kathmandu, triggered by Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's sudden decision to dissolve Parliament and call for fresh elections. Ties between India and Nepal came under severe strain after Nepal last year published a new political map that showed the three Indian territories - Limpiyadhura, Kalapani and Lipulekh - as part of Nepal. In the statement, the

Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) mentioned border management among several areas of cooperation that the two sides discussed in the meeting. However, it was not immediately known whether the dispute over the three areas figured in the talks.

It said the close cooperation between the two sides in combating COVID-19 pandemic in the region was noted, and Nepal congratulated India on the "remarkable success" in production of Covishield and Covaxin vaccines and requested for early provision of vaccines to Nepal. "The Joint Commission comprehensively reviewed all aspects of multifaceted cooperation between the two countries and explored ways to further strengthen the traditionally close and friendly ties," the MEA said.

During the meeting, India conveyed that it would undertake two more cultural heritage projects in Nepal, namely, the Pashupatinath Riverfront Development and the Bhandarkhal Garden Restoration in Patan Durbar, with grant assistance, the ministry said.

Both sides also exchanged views on international, regional and sub-regional cooperation. Nepal expressed support for India's permanent membership of an expanded UN Security Council to reflect the changed balance of power," it said.

CENTRA VISTA PLAN

Construction of new Parl building begins

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 15: The construction work of the new Parliament building started on Friday, over a month after Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for the project under the government's ambitious Central Vista redevelopment plan.

The new Parliament building will have a triangular shape and is expected to be completed by the 75th anniversary of India's independence in 2022. The government plans to hold the monsoon session of Parliament in 2022 in the new building. "The construction work of the Parliament building has started," an official said.

Excavation work has started at the site where a sufficient number of labourers have been engaged to ensure that the project is completed on time, the official said. PM Modi had laid the foundation stone for the new Parliament building on December 10 last year.

Earlier this week, a 14-member heritage panel gave its approval

to the new Parliament building while also giving the go-ahead to the Central Vista redevelopment project. The Supreme Court had asked the Centre to seek prior approval from the panel and other relevant authorities before starting the construction of the new building.

The construction work could not start earlier as the government had assured the Supreme Court that no construction or demolition work would commence till the apex court decided the pending pleas on the issue. The new building is being constructed by Tata Projects Ltd. The project is estimated to cost ₹971 crore.

Tata Projects Ltd. Said despite the 35-day delay in the commencement of the construction work, it is confident that it will be able to deliver the project on or before time. "Our plans of action are already in place to accelerate the schedule by augmenting resources like skilled manpower and formwork etc," said Sandeep Navlakhe, vice president and business unit head of Tata Projects Ltd.



IN SOLIDARITY



BEG (Roorkee) contingent marches during the 73rd Army Day Parade, at Army Parade Ground in New Delhi

MARTYRS' TALES TO BE DIGITISED

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Jan 15: The stories of the martyrs who have sacrificed their lives for the country's independence, will now be accessible from any corner of the world at one click.

The Yogi Adityanath government will now bring all the state events related to the freedom movement on the digital platform so that the heroic stories of the freedom fighters of the country can be read online. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has given instructions to collect the incidents of the freedom movement and the literature related to the martyrs' and make them available online.



Yogi has already given directives to organise the Chauri-Chaura centenary celebrations for a full year from February 4 onwards and also mark the occasion on the martyr memorial sites of all the districts by organizing different programmes.

Instructions have also been given to make available all the events related to the freedom move-

ment and literature of the martyrs online. There are many stories of the martyrs of the War of Independence in Uttar Pradesh which include the 1925 Kakori incident of Lucknow, 1922 Chauri-Chaura incident of Gorakhpur and the Meerut revolt of 1857.

As a mark of respect to the martyrs, the state government is now going to digitalise them and bring them online. "The Chief Minister has also given instructions to conduct researches on subjects related to the contribution of the martyrs in the freedom struggle and start scholarships in the universities," said the government spokesman.

Drone operations feature for first time at Army Day parade

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 15: Drones of the Indian Army carried out mock kamikaze attacks and first-aid delivery exercises as the service showcased its latest assets during the Army Day parade held at the Cariappa ground here Friday.

This is the first time drones featured at the parade that also had detachments of the upgraded anti-aircraft weapon system Schilka, BrahMos missile system, infantry fighting vehicle BMP-2, T-72 bridge laying tanks and multi-rocket launcher system Pinaka. Army Chief Gen MM Naravane conferred gallantry awards and unit citations

at the event, which was also attended by Air Chief Marshal RK S Bhaduria, Navy Chief Admiral Karambir Singh and Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat.

The Indian Army said it carried out a live demonstration of "drone swarming capability" using 75 indigenously designed and developed drones, which executed an array of artificial intelligence (AI) enabled simulated offensive missions and close support tasks, at the event.

"This demonstration is a recognition of the Indian Army's steady embrace of emerging and disruptive technologies to transform itself from a manpower-intensive to a technology enabled force to meet fu-



ture security challenges," it said in a statement. Around 75 drones of the Indian Army carried multiple mock operations including kamikaze

attacks, first-aid delivery and parachute payload delivery exercises at the event. The first detachment of the parade was of the upgraded anti-aircraft weapon system Schilka and it was commanded by Captain Preeti Chaudhary of the 140 AD regiment (self-propelled).

Marching contingents of the Jammu and Kashmir Rifles, the Mahar Regiment, the Garhwal Regiment and the Jat Regiment also participated in the parade.

Thirteen Army officers of the Northern Command, eight officers of the Eastern Command, one officer each of the Southern Command and the Central Command received unit citations from the Army chief,

while 15 Army personnel were awarded the Sena Medal.

Army Day is celebrated on January 15 every year in recognition of Field Marshal KM Cariappa's taking over as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from Sir Francis Butcher, the last British Commander in 1949. It is celebrated in the national capital, as well as in all the six Army Command Headquarters.

The Delhi Police Friday prohibited operation of "sub-conventional aerial platforms" including UAVs, paragliders and hot air balloons over the national capital from January 20 in view of Republic Day celebrations.

international



Turkey paid very serious money for the F-35 stealth jets. This is a very serious mistake that America, as an allied country, has done to us

ADELSON BURIED

Sheldon Adelson, the billionaire casino magnate who made prolific donations to right-wing politicians and causes in the US and Israel, was laid to rest in Jerusalem Friday. Adelson, a key supporter of President Trump, Israeli PM Netanyahu, died this week at the age of 87 after a long illness



of the day quote

All questions on production and production capacity should be directed to Pfizer. The Commission stands ready to support and facilitate contacts between the company and member states whenever needed



We did everything to preserve some runway shows, but the anti-Covid norms in this moment don't allow us to have guests, and therefore, the runway shows will be closed-door



When we ask our residents to stay home and follow the rules and businesses to follow the Health Officer Orders, it is to stop the loss of life from Covid-19



Russia follows US to withdraw from Open Skies Treaty

AGENCIES

Moscow, Jan 15: Russia said Friday it will withdraw from an international treaty allowing observation flights over military facilities following the US exit from the pact. Russia's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the US withdrawal from the Open Skies Treaty last year "significantly upended the balance of interests of signatory states," adding that Moscow's proposals to keep the treaty alive after the US exit have been cold-shouldered by Washington's allies. The ministry said Russia is now launching the relevant procedural moves to withdraw from the pact "due to the lack of progress in removing the obstacles for the Treaty's

functioning in the new conditions". The Russian parliament, which ratified the treaty in 2001, will now have to vote to leave it. The treaty was intended to build trust between Russia and the West by allowing the accords more than three dozen signatories to conduct reconnaissance flights over each others' territories to collect information about military forces and activities. More than 1,500 flights have been conducted under the treaty, aimed at fostering transparency about military activity and helping monitor arms control and other agreements. US President Donald Trump declared Washington's intention to pull out of the Open Skies Treaty, arguing that Russian violations



Russia's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the US withdrawal from the Open Skies Treaty in 2020 significantly upended the balance of interests of signatory states

made it untenable for the United States to remain a party. The US completed its withdrawal from the pact in November. Russia denied breaching the treaty, which came into force in

2002. The EU has urged the US to reconsider and called on Russia to stay in the pact and lift flight restrictions, notably over its westernmost Kaliningrad region, which lies between NATO allies Lithuania

and Poland. Russia has argued that the limits on flights over Kaliningrad, which hosts sizable military forces, are permissible under the treaty's terms, noting that the US has imposed more sweeping restrictions on observation flights over Alaska. As a condition for staying in the pact after the US pullout, Moscow sought guarantees from NATO allies that they wouldn't transfer the data collected during their observation flights over Russia to the US, but was unsuccessful. Leonid Slutsky, head of the foreign affairs in the lower house of the Russian parliament, said in televised remarks that Russia could review its decision to withdraw if the US decides to return to the pact.

PIA passenger aircraft 'held back' at KL over lease dispute



AGENCIES

Islamabad, Jan 15: A Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) plane with 170 passengers on board was held back in Malaysia over a lease dispute case between the cash-strapped national flag carrier and an Irish company pending in a UK court. The PIA in a statement posted on Twitter said a Boeing 777 plane was stopped by the Malaysian authorities at the Kuala Lumpur airport with 170 passengers. The national carrier has termed the decision to seize the plane as a "one-sided" court decision.

"A PIA aircraft has been held back by a local court in Malaysia taking a one-sided decision pertaining to a legal dispute between PIA and another party pending in a UK court," the statement said.

It added that the passengers were being looked after and alternate arrangements for their travel have been finalised.

"It is an unacceptable situation and PIA has engaged support from the government of Pakistan to take up this matter using diplomatic channels," it said. A PIA spokesman said that a leasing dispute was going on between the PIA and an Irish company and the latter had filed a case in the UK six months ago and the Malaysian court took an ex-parte decision on the plane.

Quake topples homes, kills 42 in Indonesia

More than 600 people were injured by the magnitude 6.2 quake, which sent people fleeing their homes in the darkness Friday

AGENCIES

Mamuju, Jan 15: A strong, shallow earthquake shook Indonesia's Sulawesi island just after midnight, toppling homes and buildings, triggering landslides and killing at least 42 people. More than 600 people were injured by the magnitude 6.2 quake, which sent people fleeing their homes in the darkness Friday. Authorities were still collecting information about the full scale of casualties and damage in the affected areas.



bodies. Another video showed a father crying, asking for help to save his children buried under their toppled house. "They are trapped inside, please help," he cried. Thousands of displaced people were evacuated to temporary shelters. The quake was centred 36 kilometres (22 miles) south of West Sulawesi province Mamuju district, at a depth of 18 kilometres (11 miles), the US Geological Survey said. The Indonesian disaster agency said the death toll climbed to 42 as rescuers in Mamuju retrieved 34 bodies trapped in the rubble of collapsed homes and buildings.

There were reports of many people trapped in the rubble of collapsed homes and buildings. In a video released by the National Disaster Mitigation Agency, a girl stuck in the wreckage of a house cried out for help and said she heard the sound of other family members also trapped. "Please help me, it hurts," the girl told rescuers, who replied that they desperately wanted to help her. The rescuers said an excavator was needed to save the girl and others trapped in collapsed buildings. Other images showed a severed bridge and damaged and flattened houses. The earthquake damaged part of a hospital and patients were moved to an emergency tent outside. Rescuers struggled to extract seven patients and staff who were trapped under tons of rubble. After several hours, an excavator came to help and the rescuers eventually retrieved four survivors and three

The agency said in a statement that eight people were killed and 637 others were injured in Mamuju's neighboring district of Majene. It said at least 300 houses and a health clinic were damaged and about 15,000 people were being housed in temporary shelters in the district. Power and phones were down in many areas. West Sulawesi Admin Secy Muhammad Idris said that the governor's office building was among those that collapsed in Mamuju.

US blacklists Xiaomi, other firms raising heat on China

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hong Kong, Jan 15: The US government has blacklisted Chinese smartphone maker Xiaomi Corp. and China's third-largest national oil company for alleged military links, heaping pressure on Beijing in President Donald Trump's last week in office. The Department of Defense added nine companies to its list of Chinese firms with military links, including Xiaomi and state-owned plane manufacturer Commercial Aircraft Corp. of China (Comac).



US investors will have to divest their stakes in Chinese companies on the military list by November this year, according to an executive order signed by Trump last November. Xiaomi did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Xiaomi Corp. overtook Apple Inc. as the world's No. 3 smartphone maker by sales in the third quarter of 2020, according to data by Gartner. Xiaomi's market share has grown as Huawei's sales have suffered after it was blacklisted by the US and its smartphones were cut off from essential services from Google.

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Separately, the Commerce Department put China National Offshore Oil Corp. on the entity

list, an economic blacklist that forbids US firms from exporting or transferring technology with the companies named unless permission has been obtained from the US government. The move comes after about 60 Chinese firms were added to the list in December, including drone maker DJI and semiconductor firm SMIC. CNOOC has been involved in offshore drilling in the disputed waters South China Sea, where Beijing has overlapping territorial claims with other countries.

"China's reckless and belligerent actions in the South China Sea and its aggressive push to acquire sensitive intellectual property and technology for its militarisation efforts are a threat to US national security", Commerce Secy said.

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'US has dropped to 2,500 troops in Afg'

AGENCIES

Washington, Jan 15: The US military has met its goal of reducing the number of troops in Afghanistan to about 2,500 by Friday, a drawdown that appears to violate a last-minute congressional prohibition. "Today, the United States is closer than ever to ending nearly two decades of war and welcoming in an Afghan-owned, Afghan-led peace process to achieve a political settlement and a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire," the acting secretary of defense, Christopher Miller, said in a written statement, adding that 2,500 troops is enough to continue countering extremist groups in Afghanistan and training Afghan government forces. "Continued fulfillment of these two complementary missions seeks to ensure that Afghanistan is never again used to harbor those who seek to bring harm to the United States of America," Miller said. President Donald Trump, who ordered the reduction in November, said Thursday that troop levels in Afghanistan had reached a 19-year low, although he did not mention a troop number. Last February his administration struck a deal with the Taliban to reduce American troop levels in phases and to go to zero by May 2021. It is unclear how the incoming Biden administration will proceed. President-elect Joe Biden, who has advocated keeping a small counterterrorism force in Afghanistan as a way to ensure that extremist groups like al-Qaida are unable to launch attacks on the United States, faces a number of questions on Afghanistan. One is how and whether to proceed with further troop cuts. Trump in his brief statement alluded to his longstanding desire to get out of Afghanistan entirely. "I will always be committed to stopping the endless wars," he said, referring to US wars that have dragged on in Afghanistan since 2001 and in Iraq for much of the period since 2003.

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Dutch govt resigns over childcare subsidies scandal

AGENCIES

The Hague, Jan 15: Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said his government had resigned Friday over a scandal in which thousands of parents were falsely accused of benefit fraud, admitting the system had gone "terribly wrong". Many parents were forced to pay back large amounts of money and ended up in financial ruin as a result. Some were also targeted for investigation because they had dual nationality. "The buck stops here," Rutte told a press conference after



a crisis meeting of his four-party coalition cabinet in The Hague. "We are of one mind: if the whole system has failed, only joint responsibility can be borne. And that leads to the conclusion that I have

just now offered the king the resignation of the entire cabinet." Rutte, who came to power in 2010 and is one of Europe's longest serving leaders, added: "The rule of law must protect its citizens from an all-powerful government, and here that's gone terribly wrong." The government's resignation comes just two months before the Netherlands was due to hold elections, and as it battles surging coronavirus cases. Rutte said the cabinet would stay on in a "caretaker" role until the polls March 17 and "do what is necessary in the interests of the country."



PAINTING IT WHITE

A vehicle drives on a snowy road in a winter landscape near Sundsvall, northern Sweden

REUTERS

Another recession looms for UK economy as lockdowns bite

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, Jan 15: The British economy looks set to fall back into recession after official figures on Friday showed that it shrank by 2.6% month-on-month in November, when much of the country was in a second coronavirus lockdown. The Office for National Statistics said that as a result of the fall, the economy is 8.5% smaller than its pre-pandemic peak. When the pandemic struck last spring, the economy contracted by up to a fifth over the first half of the year, before a summer easing of restrictions saw the economy recover a chunk of those losses. Because of the November fall,

the economy is set to contract again in the fourth quarter. With most of the UK in an even tighter lockdown at the start of 2021 following a spike in new cases that has been blamed on a new variant of the virus in London and south-east England, it looks inevitable that the economy will shrink further in the first quarter of the year. That means it will have contracted for two consecutive quarters, the technical definition of a recession. "Its clear things will get harder before they get better and today's figures highlight the scale of the challenge we face," said Britain's Treasury chief Rishi Sunak. The November decline was not as bad as some economists feared, an



indication that firms have managed to work out ways of selling their goods even when their doors are closed through online services. The services sector was hit hard in November, shrinking by 3.4% as rafts of hospitality and leisure firms were forced to shut. The sector is now 9.9% smaller than it was in February 2020, before the impact of the pan-

CRISIS LOOMS LARGE

The Office for National Statistics said that as a result of the fall, the economy is 8.5% smaller than its pre-pandemic peak. With most of the UK in an even tighter lockdown at the start of 2021, it looks inevitable that the economy will shrink further in the first quarter of the year. The hope is that the rollout of COVID vaccines; the UK is ahead of many other countries; will see a pick-up in activity later this year. "The economy took a hit from restrictions put in place to contain

the pandemic during November, with pubs and hairdressers seeing the biggest impact," said Darren Morgan, director for economic statistics. "However, many businesses adjusted to the new working conditions during the pandemic." The hope is that the rollout of coronavirus vaccines — the UK is ahead of many other countries — will see a pick-up in activity later this year. "While the economic story today is of only the second-ever double-dip recession on record, the story of the year will be a vaccine-driven bounce back in economic activity for sectors like hospitality and leisure," said James Smith, research director of the Resolution Foundation.



The gig economy is growing at a massive pace and Covid-19 has propelled that growth. More and more freelancers are moving to freelance platforms
IMRAN LADIWALA | CEO AND CO-FOUNDER, KIWI

SHAW NEW VICE-CHAIR OF USIBC

Biocon Chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw is the new vice-chair of the US-India Business Council (USIBC) board for 2021, the apex trade body said Thursday. "Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw will be one of the three vice-chairs for the US-India Business Council's BoD," said USIBC Chairman Vijay Advani said



of the day quote

I would like to encourage Indian investors to look at the BIMSTEC region, to look at our neighbours and work towards greater engagement, both through investments, mentoring and support to the larger ecosystem within the BIMSTEC region



PIYUSH GOYAL | UNION MINISTER

Since its introduction, the Skoda Superb has been a favourite for many 'value luxury' seekers in India. The refreshed version hosts some contemporary updates that further elevates its appeal and shall be appreciated by all



ZAC HOLLIS | BRAND DIRECTOR, SKODA AUTO INDIA

We will use the funds raised (Rs 2,600cr) to refinance a portion of the in-place Embassy TechVillage debt. Post this bond raise, we continue to maintain conservative leverage ratios and retain our flexibility to finance future growth



MIKE HOLLAND | CEO, EMBASSY REIT

SHORT TAKES

MUI demands 'support fund'

New Delhi: Maritime body MUI Friday demanded announcement of a support fund for seafarers in the forthcoming Budget. Maritime Union of India (MUI) is the country's oldest union of merchant navy officers. It has urged the government to allocate substantial corpus towards creation of a 'seafarers support fund' in the Union Budget scheduled to be presented in Parliament on February 1, MUI said in a statement.

Dabur forays into ghee category

New Delhi: Home-grown FMCG and Ayurvedic products maker Dabur India Friday announced its foray into the ghee category as part of its plans to expand product portfolio. The company, which has fast tracked launching of several new products after COVID-19, will launch 'Cow Ghee' exclusively on e-commerce platform Grofers, said a joint statement.

Bridgestone rolls out new tyre

Mumbai: Tyre maker Bridgestone India Friday launched a new tyre, V-Steel Mix M721, for the commercial vehicle segment with an aim to establish a strong presence in the drive axle tyre category. The latest offering is specifically for the general cargo, long haul and highway application, the company said. The new product addresses the issues of both tyre fuel mileage and cut-chip resistance, Bridgestone India said.

Honda City tops sedan segment

New Delhi: Honda Cars India Friday said its mid-sized sedan City led the segment last year with cumulative sales of 21,826 units. Staying true to its legacy of being the Japanese automaker's longest running nameplate in India, the all-new fifth generation City was launched in July 2020 and has once again exceeded benchmarks with its design, technological prowess, safety and connectivity features, the automaker said in a statement. The City's market share in December 2020 stood at 41% in the segment, it added.

STEEL SECTOR

Rising Chinese demand brings good fortune for India

STEEL PRICES HAVE ALREADY TOUCHED ALL-TIME HIGH IN THE DOMESTIC MARKET AND ARE CURRENTLY HOVERING AROUND ₹57,250 PER TONNE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 15: Strong demand and prices for steel in China should provide a cushion to regional and Indian steel prices already at lifetime high levels, Motilal Oswal Institutional Equities said in a report Friday.

"China's domestic steel prices remain strong and are at nine-year highs (led by robust overall demand and higher raw material cost locally) which we believe should provide a cushion to regional and Indian steel prices (at lifetime highs)," the brokerage said in its report on the steel sector. Steel prices have already touched all-time high in the domestic market and are currently hovering around ₹57,250 per tonne. Through

Q3, HRC (hot roller coils) and Primary rebar prices increased by ₹12,000 per tonne and ₹15,500 per tonne respectively.

On average, per-tonne HRC/Rebar prices were up by ₹6,500/Rs7,200. Higher prices have also been sup-



ported by increase in Iron ore prices, which on an average, rose by ₹1,270 per tonne in Q3, driven by strong steel production and also iron ore shortage after the auction of 19 mines in Odisha which did not match up the produc-

tion rates prior to the auction.

But one of the reason for an upturn in the steel sector is rising demand in China. The country's December 2020 trade data exhibits a normalization of the steel trade as net steel exports turned positive Y-o-Y for the first time since the onset of the pandemic. While the country's steel exports rose marginally Y-o-Y for the first time in eight months, imports (which had surged 100% due to supply disruption in China) also declined Y-o-Y for the first time in ten months.

According to the brokerage, demand for flat steel remains strong, with passenger car sales up 7% Y-o-Y. "We believe demand for long steel has however moderated, possibly weighed by weakened construction activity" the report said.

GAIL announces ₹1,046.35 crore share buyback



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 15: GAIL (India) Ltd, the nation's largest gas distribution firm, Friday announced a ₹1,046.35 crore share buyback programme as it looked to return surplus cash to shareholders, the biggest being the government of India.

In a stock exchange filing, the company said its board has approved the buyback of 6.97 crore shares at a price of ₹150 per share. The shares being bought represent 1.55 per cent of the total number of fully paid-up equity shares. The company board also declared an interim dividend of 25 per cent (Rs 2.50 per share) for financial year 2020-21.

GAIL stock was down 2.2 per cent on the BSE and was trading at ₹140.75 at 14.15 Hrs.

The government owns 51.76 per cent of GAIL and is expected to participate in the share buyback.

It stands to get ₹583.6 crore from the dividend payout and another ₹541.5 crore if it participates in the buyback by tendering a proportionate number of shares.

The buyback plan of ₹1,046.35 crore represents "2.5 per cent and 2.26 per cent of the aggregate of the fully paid-up equity share capital and free reserves of the company," GAIL said in the filing.

The plan was within the statutory limits of 10 per cent, it said. The record date for buyback of equity shares as well as payment of the interim dividend will be January 28, GAIL said.

Indian economy weak, credit growth bottoming out: Report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 15: American brokerage BofA Securities Friday said the Indian economy continues to be "weak", pointing to activity indicators tracked by it. On the positive side, the brokerage said credit demand is bottoming out and the real lending rates adjusted for wholesale price inflation are falling.

It can be noted that there has been a slew of reports lately about a stronger recovery being underway after the jolt caused by the pandemic. The government expects the GDP to contract 7.7% in financial year 2021 because of the reverses.

"The bad news is that the continued drop in our BofA India Activity Indicator reinforces our view that the economy still remains weak," the brokerage said in a note.

The indicator fell by (-) 0.6% in November on top of the (-) 0.8% in October, and 4.6% drop in the September quarter; it said, adding, "this supports our call of GVA (gross value added) contractions of (-) 1 per cent in the December quarter and (-) 6.7 per cent in FY21."

On the credit growth front, it said the rise in banking system advances seems to have bottomed out



There has been a slew of reports lately about a stronger recovery being underway after the jolt caused by the pandemic

The indicator fell by (-) 0.6% in November on top of the (-) 0.8% in October, and 4.6% drop in Q2

The credit growth for financial year 2022 will come at 12%, the report said

and the system will close with a growth of 6.2% in the financial year 2021.

The credit growth for financial year 2022 will come at 12%, it said. It can be noted that credit growth had been declining for the last few years, in sync with a dip in the

overall economic growth which has been on the downward spiral since demonetisation in late 2016 as borrowers went slow on expansion.

The real lending rates adjusted for WPI will be one of the prime reasons for the faster credit growth estimate in financial year 2022, the brokerage said.

Nominal MCLR (marginal cost of funding based lending rate) is down 1.45 per cent since March 2019 and the real MCLR (adjusted for WPI) is down 1.50 per cent on RBI easing and the core WPI inflation inching up further to 3.1 per cent from 2.3 per cent in November 2020.

The RBI has cut interest rates in two moves after the emergence of the pandemic but has kept rates on hold for the last three consecutive policy reviews because of high consumer price inflation.

BIZ BUZZ

Cisco reaches deal to acquire Acacia for \$4.5bn

San Francisco: Networking giant Cisco has agreed to acquire Acacia for \$115 per share in cash, or approximately \$4.5 billion. Acacia is a component supplier and maker of high-speed optical interconnect technology for networking systems. Cisco initially offered to acquire Acacia for \$70 a share, or \$2.6 billion in July 2019. "I am delighted that Cisco and Acacia have decided to come together in this mutual deal," said Chuck Robbins, chairman and CEO, Cisco. "We look forward to welcoming Raj and the Acacia team to Cisco to offer our customers world-class coherent optical solutions to power the Internet for the future," Robbins said in a statement Thursday. Upon completion of the acquisition, CEO Raj Shanmugharaj and Acacia employees will join Cisco's optics business. Cisco and Acacia expect to complete the acquisition by the end of the first calendar quarter of 2021.



India, Japan ink pact to enhance cooperation in ICT

New Delhi: India and Japan Friday signed a pact to enhance cooperation in the field of information and communications technology (ICT) with focus on aspects like 5G, telecom security and submarine optical fibre cable. According to an official release, the memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed by Minister for Communications, Electronics and IT Ravi Shankar Prasad and Japanese Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications Takeda Ryota. It was exchanged through a video conference, the release said. "Department of Telecom, Government of India, and Ministry of Communications, Government of Japan, will enhance mutual cooperation in the field of 5G technologies, telecom security, submarine optical fibre cable system to islands of India, and spectrum management," it said. The two countries will also cooperate smart cities, high altitude platform for broadband in unconnected areas, disaster management and public safety, the release added.



'India took decisive steps to deal with pandemic'

AGENCIES

Washington, Jan 15: IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva has praised India for taking "very decisive" steps to deal with the coronavirus pandemic and its economic consequences and asked the country to do more this year to support an accelerated transformation of the economy.

The IMF Managing Director during a global media roundtable on January 14 predicted a less bad outlook for India in the upcoming World Economic Update due to the steps taken by it.

"When I called on everybody to stay tuned for January 26, that applies very much to India. You would see a picture in our update that is less bad. Why? Because the country actually has taken very decisive action, very decisive steps to deal with the pandemic and to deal with the economic consequences of it," Georgieva said.

The International Monetary Fund is scheduled to release its



World Economic Update January 26. Talking about India, she said it was a very dramatic lockdown for a country of this size of the population with people clustered so closely together.

"Then India moved to more targeted restrictions and lockdowns. What we see is that that transition, combined with policy support, seems to have worked well. Why? Because if you look at mobility indicators, we are almost where we were before COVID-19 in India, meaning that economic activities

have been revitalised quite significantly," she said.

"What the government has done on the monetary policy and the fiscal policy side is commendable. It is actually slightly above the average for emerging markets. Emerging markets on average have provided six% of the GDP. In India, this is slightly above that. Good for India is that there is still space to do more.... If you can do more, please do," Georgieva said. According to the IMF Managing Director, 2021 is the year to use that space.

Digital payments well entrenched across households: Survey

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 15: Digital payment methods are well accepted by Indian households and are not just the 'preserve' of the rich or well-educated, finds a study conducted by People Research on India's Consumer Economy (PRICE) in partnership with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).

Covering 5,314 households across 25 states with a sample designed to represent states and households across the income spectrum, the survey was aimed at understanding the awareness, adoption and use behaviour of households with respect to digital payments.

The study showed that while one

of two of India's richest 20% households use digital payments, as many as one out of four households in the poorest 40% also use it. In addition, there is a suppressed demand of people who say they desire to use it but need someone to show them how to, and a smaller group who used it earlier and discontinued.

If this 'ready' demand is enabled through effective training and education, then over half of all Indian households (54% or 151 million households) will become digital payment users - 55 million of these households will come from the poorest 40% of Indian households, 61 million will come from middle India or middle 40% income band and only 36 million will come from the richest 20%. The report also points to



the fact that that smart phone ownership is no longer a bottleneck for the adoption of digital payments with 68% of the respondents (those in charge of looking after banking and payment work for the household, typically the Chief Wage earner) owning smartphones. As expected,

smartphone usership is near universal at 90% for the richest 20% of Indian households, but as high as 57% of India's poorest households have a smartphone.

The report revealed a very high level of awareness of UPI and payment apps and that households

The study showed that while one of two of India's richest 20% households use digital payments, as many as one out of four households in the poorest 40% also use it

which are using UPI as a platform may not be completely aware about interoperability of the platform. There is a potential to create the awareness that any bank or payment app can be used to make UPI payments to any UPI user and users should know their UPI ID.

The RuPay card volumes have

also witnessed a rise not only in urban areas, but also in remote PIN codes that had hitherto remained silent. According to the study, the banking system is also very well connected digitally to respondents via Aadhaar linkages and SMS facility even at the lower income groups. The report finds 87% of the respondents are aware of the fact that they get SMS from the banks, which gives them the confidence to manage their money safely.

As per the report, the Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT) delivery system has worked exceedingly well for the respondents and got even better during lockdown as around 85 per cent of the households received DBTs on their bank accounts.



DEBUTANTS NATARAJAN, SUNDAR SHINE; AUSTRALIA REACH 274/5 COURTESY LABUSCHAGNE CENTURY ON DAY 1 OF THE SERIES DECIDER AT THE GABBA

INEXPERIENCED, STILL IMPRESSIVE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Brisbane, Jan 15: The incredible underdog fairytale of Thangarasu Natarajan got better with his twin strikes on debut headlining a commendable effort from an inexperienced Indian bowling attack, which reduced Australia to 274/5 despite a stylish hundred from Marnus Labuschagne (1) on the opening day of the final Test here.

The Indian attack, with a collective experience of three Tests and 10 balls and 11 wickets in its kitty, was pitted against a batting line-up with 59 hundreds.

After 87 overs, the two Tamil Nadu rookies Natarajan (2/63) and Washington Sundar (1/63) could hold their heads high for a lion-hearted effort on a good batting pitch in the absence of the injured Ravichandran Ashwin and Jasprit Bumrah. If tall off-spinner Washington set up a nice little trap to get rid of Steve Smith (36), Natarajan forced centurion Labuschagne and Matthew Wade (47) to miscue their pull-shots after a 113-run stand which threatened to put India in a spot.

At stumps, Tim Paine (38 batting) and Cameron Green (28 batting) had added 61 runs for the sixth wicket and the visitors would need a few quick wickets to keep the first innings total within a manageable range.

The distance between Palayampatti, a non-descript village in Tamil Nadu's Salem, to Australia's modern city Brisbane is 9035 km on a Google map.

But add the hardships of a daily wage mother trying to put food on table, being called for suspect action early in his career, not being privileged enough to get a paternity leave (his

daughter is already three months old), it's a million miles emotionally that Team India's favourite 'Nattu' has traversed.

Getting Labuschagne, who was on a rampage, with a short delivery ensured that Australia didn't finish the day with a score close to 350.

For someone, who was supposed to be a net bowler, India's Test Cap No.300, did well enough on the first day despite not exactly being a natural. He also knows that he doesn't have the express pace to trouble batsmen (his average speed is 130 plus).

Nobody would have blamed a Natarajan or a Shardul Thakur or 'leader of the attack' Mohammed Siraj (1/51), all of whom toiled manfully throughout their multiple spells in a battle of unequals.

The inexperience was palpable as Thakur (1/67) bowled a lot of full pitched deliveries which Labuschagne pounced on in the second and third sessions during his innings.

If all the injuries weren't enough, Navdeep Saini (7.5 overs) now seems to be in trouble as he has sustained a groin niggle moments after his skipper Ajinkya Rahane dropped a dolly at gully when Labuschagne was on 37.

By far, Australia's most consistent batsman in the series, Labuschagne batted in two gears during the day. In the first session, he faced 82 balls and sedately moved to 19 but in the next 113 balls, scored another 82 runs to reach his fifth hundred in 195 balls.

He trusted the bounce, hit some lovely drives and was also ready to pull anything that was short. During his partnership with Smith, the former Australian skipper was the aggressor but

Washington, a specialist batsman till 2016 and now a frontline off-spinner, with the help of his seniors - skipper Rahane and his deputy Rohit Sharma - laid a beautiful trap.

The plan worked as Smith flicked one straight into Rohit's hands just few minutes after the lunch. Having lost four of their key players (Bumrah, Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja and Hauma Vihari) due to various injuries, Rahane couldn't have lost a worst toss as Tim Paine elected to bat.

The new-look Indian bowling line-up kept it steady at the onset removing openers David Warner and Marcus Harris in the first session.

That Australia forced a half-fit Warner (1) to play was evident when he had no apparent footwork while trying to drive an angular delivery from Siraj, which was brilliantly snapped by an agile Rohit diving to his right.

It could be seen that Warner, after his groin injury, was still finding it difficult to stretch his front-foot and get to the pitch of the delivery.

Thakur, whose debut against West Indies ended in a nightmare after bowling only 10 deliveries, achieved success, bowling the 11th one in the Test arena. It was a gentle outswing, an inswing for left-handed Harris (5), who instinctively clipped it straight to debutant Sundar at square leg.

SCORECARD

AUSTRALIA 1ST INNINGS

David Warner c Rohit b Siraj 1, Marcus Harris c Sundar b Thakur 5, Marnus Labuschagne c Pant b Natarajan 108, Steve Smith c Rohit b Sundar 36, Matthew Wade c Thakur b Natarajan 45, Cameron Green batting 28, Tim Paine batting 38;

EXTRAS: (B-4, LB-4, NB-5) 13;

TOTAL: 274/5 (87 overs)

FALL: 1/4 (Warner), 2/17 (Harris), 3/87 (Smith), 4/200 (Wade), 5/213 (Labuschagne).

BOWLERS: Mohammed Siraj 19-8-51-1, T Natarajan 20-2-63-2, Shardul Thakur 18-5-67-1, Navdeep Saini 7.5-2-21-0, Washington Sundar 22-4-63-1, Rohit Sharma 0.1-0-1-0.

Post Day play reactions

WASHINGTON SUNDAR

Test opportunity: I have always felt that my skills are very good with red ball. I have bowled a lot of overs in first class cricket and first division league in Chennai as well. I was just waiting for this opportunity and last couple of months, we were here, I did get to bowl a lot of overs and improve upon my skills.

Test potential: Like any bowler, I love bowling a lot of overs. It's just so much fun to bowl a lot of overs. Give me 20, 30, 40 or 50 overs. We had some plans going for Steve Smith and (Marnus) Labuschagne and I am very glad they worked. The first wicket definitely felt good.

Smith's wicket: We did have some plans for Smith and it's a different game altogether. Last game was different, conditions were different and I had to bowl good balls over and over again. It happened (the dismissal) and it's great.

MARNUS LABUSCHAGNE

On his knock: I think, I am definitely disappointed not going on and getting a really big score, which would have put us in a better position as a team. Any Test century, it doesn't matter who it is against or against what opposition, you want to make sure you are scoring hundreds and probably for me (it was) today it was disappointing that (I) did not end up making that a really big hundred.

Praising Indian bowlers: Indian bowling attacks, they are very disciplined and doesn't matter who is bowling, they are very planned, they are very strategic and we saw that today with their bowling attack. They were disciplined early and did not give us many of those scoring opportunities in the first session.

NETTING HISTORY

BRISBANE: Pacer Thangarasu Natarajan, who came to Australia as a net bowler, Friday became the first Indian cricketer to make his international debut across all three formats during the same tour.

The 29-year-old Tamil Nadu player was one of the rookies named in the playing eleven of the injury-ravaged Indian team against Australia in the fourth and final Test which started here Friday.

He made his international debut in the third ODI against Australia December 2 in Canberra. Natarajan made an immediate impact by taking two wickets for 70 runs from his 10 overs. Natarajan then played his part in India's 2-1 series win in the subsequent three-match T20I series by taking six wickets during the series.

"Welcome to Test cricket... Thangarasu Natarajan becomes the first Indian player to make his international debut across all three formats during the same tour," the ICC tweeted.

The Tamil Nadu player, whose mother worked as a daily wage, picked up two wickets in the 20 overs he bowled on the day.

"The stuff dreams are made of. A perfect treble for @Natarajan.91. As he is presented with #TeamIndia's Test No.300. It can't get any better! Nattu is now an all-format player," tweeted the BCCI.



Washington Sundar (R) celebrates his maiden Test wicket with Rohit Sharma in Brisbane, Friday

THANGARASU NATARAJAN

SAINI TAKEN FOR SCANS AFTER GROIN PAIN

BRISBANE: The injury-plagued Indian team took another hit Friday when pacer Navdeep Saini was forced off the field during the fourth and final Test against Australia here due to groin pain and taken for scans. The 28-year-old Saini had bowled five balls of his eighth over during the second session when he had to walk off the field because of the pain. With this, his further participation in the match, which began this morning, has been thrown into serious doubt. "Navdeep Saini has complained of pain in his groin. He is currently being monitored by the BCCI medical team," read a short statement from the BCCI on the one-Test-old bowler's condition. "Navdeep Saini has now gone for scans," added a brief update that came after the initial note.

ing - both Washington and Siraj grubs," a spectator named Kate was quoted as saying by the newspaper.

"It started targeted at Siraj and it was a chant similar to the SCG one (in which fans sung to the tune of Que Sera, Sera but substituted the lyrics with Que Shiraz, Shiraz). But this time

it was Siraj. I suspect it's not a coincidence that it's Siraj being targeted post the SCG stuff."

According to the newspaper, at one point, a man in the crowd was heard yelling, "Siraj, give us a wave, give us a wave, give us a wave. Siraj, you bloody grub."

Siraj abused by Gabba crowd, called 'grub'

BRISBANE: India fast bowler Mohammed Siraj was targeted for abuse by a section of the crowd on the opening day of the fourth Test against Australia, a newspaper here reported, claiming that he was called a 'grub' by some spectators.

The reported incident happened a few days after Siraj was racially abused by spectators in Sydney on the third and fourth day of the drawn third Test. That had led to an expulsion of six people from the stands and an unreserved apology from Cricket Australia to the visiting team.

A report in the 'Sydney Morning Herald' quoted a spectator Friday as saying that a section of the crowd at the Gabba targeted Siraj. "The guys behind me have been calling - shout-

Neville saves East Bengal the blushes

AGENCIES

Goa, Jan 15: Scott Neville scored a late equaliser to earn East Bengal a point against Kerala Blasters in an Indian Super League (ISL) clash at the Tilak Maidan here, Friday.

Jordan Murray gave Kerala the lead in the 64th minute from Albino Gomes' long ball. The Australian beat Rana Gharami in pace before finding the back of the net.

But drama unfolded in the final few seconds of the match when Neville equalised with a clinical header from Bright Enobakhare's pinpoint corner to seal a point for the Kolkata club.

The first half was action-packed. Both the sides came close to scoring but couldn't convert their opportunities into goals as the match remained goalless at the break. However, the equation changed



Scott Neville (No.2) celebrates his goal

after the change of ends.

In the 47th minute, Jessel Carneiro almost scored an own goal. Bright Enobakhare took a short corner and got the ball back from Maghoma before sprinting into the box and kept a low cross. Carneiro tried to clear but it hit his other foot and almost goes in but Carneiro does well to clear the ball in the second attempt.

Murray finally broke the deadlock in the 64th after receiving a long ball from Gomes. He entered the box with Rana Gharami behind and found the back of the net to put Kerala ahead.

It was looking like Kerala would run away with full three points, but Neville broke the Kerala hearts in the dying minutes.

Enobakhare curled in a quality corner and Neville headed in the equaliser to help his side bag one point.

Bilbao stun Real; to face Barca in Super Cup final

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Malaga, Jan 15: Athletic Bilbao knocked out defending champion Real Madrid in the Spanish Super Cup with a 2-1 win, setting up a final against Barcelona.

Raul Garcia (18th & 38th minutes) scored two first-half goals to put Athletic in Sunday's final in Seville against the Catalan club, which beat Real Sociedad in a penalty shootout in the other semi-final Wednesday Karim Benzema (73rd) pulled one back for Real.

Bilbao are looking to win their third Spanish Super Cup title and first since beating Barcelona in the 2015 final. The Basque Country club also won the competition in 1984. Real Madrid were going for their 12th Spanish Super Cup trophy.

Athwal appointed new president of Odisha FC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: Indian Super League (ISL) club Odisha FC announced Thursday the appointment of Raj Athwal as the club's new president.

Raj, who has previously worked at clubs including Glasgow Rangers, Coventry City and Watford, will bring 25 years of experience of working in the higher echelons of British football to India's top flight league. He worked with some top coaches in the footballing world like Brendan Rodgers, Gordon Strachan, Sean Dyche, Ally McCoist, Gary McAllister, Peter Reid, Rob Page (current Wales manager), Nigel Clough.

"India is home to one of the biggest and fastest growing economy in the world. Although cricket is widely considered as the nation's favourite sport, it's clear for all to see



the incredible pace at which the popularity of football continues to grow in a country with a population of over a billion people," said Athwal.

As President, Raj will be responsible for the club's day to day operations and financial performance both on and off the field. "My objective is to make Odisha FC into a financially sustainable business, by returning a healthy growth in profits year on year."

Some of the world's largest companies have recently made the state of Odisha their new home, and many more are earmarked to follow suit.