



YAMI TURNS NOSTALGIC

Actor Yami Gautam turned nostalgic while shooting for her film *Bhoot Police* at Jaisalmer

LEISURE P2



₹7.2K CR SOUGHT FOR RLYS

The state urged Centre to allocate ₹7,200 cr in coming Budget for development of railway infrastructure

DOWNTOWN P3



NAVALNY HELD IN RUSSIA

Russian oppn leader Alexei Navalny's arrest as he arrived in Moscow draws criticism from Western nations

INTERNATIONAL P10

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Of course, I too am shocked. More people felt offended by my web series than its total number of viewers!

SHORT TAKES

Lt Gen CP Mohanty next Army Vice Chief

Bhubaneswar: Lieutenant General Chandri Prasad Mohanty, currently serving as the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Command, is likely to be elevated as the new Vice Chief of Army Staff, sources said. If reports are to be believed, Mohanty is set to become the 42nd Vice Chief of Indian Army and he will be the first Odia officer to be selected for the post, which is next in rank to the Chief of Army Staff in the Indian Army. The Odia Army officer is a native of Jayabada village in Jagatsingpur.

Mamata to contest from Nandigram

Nandigram: Mamata Banerjee Monday declared she will contest the upcoming assembly election from Nandigram, as she took her battle for West Bengal to the home turf of political heavyweight Suwendu Adhikari, who recently quit the TMC and joined the BJP. That Banerjee chose Nandigram to make the big announcement reflects the TMC supremo's determination to take the BJP, which has launched a spirited campaign to unseat her after a decade-long stint in power, head on. Addressing a rally here, Banerjee said she is not worried about those joining rival parties as they were hardly around when the TMC was formed.

Total to acquire 20% stake in AGEL

Ahmedabad: Deepening its strategic alliance in India's sustainable energy space, French energy major Total proposes to acquire 20 per cent minority interest in Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL). The deal will be completed with Total acquiring shares held by the Adani Promoter Group in AGEL. The transaction marks the deepening partnership between the Adani Group and Total; in the transition and green energy fields in India.

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	48564.27	↓ 470.40
NIFTY	14281.30	↓ 152.40
DOLLAR	73.24	↑ ₹0.12
EURO	88.41	↑ ₹0.08
GOLD	₹48,794	↑ ₹92
SILVER	₹65,142	↑ ₹378

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	28.7°C	28.0°C
MIN	16.0°C	13.8°C
Humidity	82%	81%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Fog or mist in the morning

Cops to decide on tractor rally: SC

IT IS A 'LAW & ORDER' MATTER AND DELHI POLICE IS THE FIRST AUTHORITY TO DECIDE WHO SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO ENTER THE NATIONAL CAPITAL

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 18: The Supreme Court told the Centre Monday that the proposed tractor rally on the Republic Day by farmers protesting against the new farm laws is a "law and order" matter and Delhi Police is the first authority to decide who should be allowed to enter the national capital. A bench headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde, while hearing the Centre's application seeking an injunction against the proposed tractor march or any other kind of protest which seeks to disrupt the gathering and celebrations on January 26, said that police have all the authority to deal with the matter. "Does the Supreme Court say as to what are the powers of police and how they will exercise them? We are not going to tell you what to do," said the bench, also comprising Justices LN Rao and Vineet Saran. The apex court told Attorney General KK Venugopal that it will take up the matter for hearing Wednesday, January 20. "The question of entering into Delhi is a law and order matter and will be determined by the police," the bench



said, adding, "Mr Attorney General, we are adjourning the matter and you have all the authority to deal with this matter." The Centre, in an application filed through Delhi Police, has said that any proposed march or protest which seeks to disrupt and disturb the Republic Day celebrations will cause an "embarrassment to the nation". During the hearing conducted through video-conferencing, the bench said who should be allowed to enter

representing one of the farmers' bodies, told the bench about the affidavit filed by them requesting the top court to remove the remaining three members of the court-appointed committee to resolve the issue of farm laws and select people who can do the job "on the basis of mutual harmony". "We will hear everyone on that day (next date of hearing)," the bench said, adding, "We will hear you in the same combination of bench". On January 12, the top court had stayed the implementation of the contentious new farm laws till further orders and constituted the four-member committee to make recommendations to resolve the impasse over them between the Centre and farmers' unions protesting at Delhi borders. Later, Mann had recused himself from the court-appointed committee. The top court had on January 12 said it would hear the pleas against the farm laws after eight weeks when the committee would give its suggestions to resolve the impasse after talking to the protesters and the government. Thousands of farmers, mainly from Punjab, Haryana and western UP, are protesting at border points of Delhi.

Petrol, diesel prices up after 3-day pause

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 18: Petrol and diesel prices rose again by 25 paise per litre each Monday after oil marketing companies decided to break their three days pause on price revision in wake enlarging under recovery on sale of the two petroleum products. The increase in pump price of petrol and diesel came on a day when global oil prices have a glimpse of softening with crude falling below \$55 a barrel after almost a week of hovering above that range.

PRICES IN BHUB	
Petrol	₹85.60/LTR (+₹0.25)
Diesel	₹81.84/LTR (+₹0.27)

With Monday's increase, petrol is being sold at ₹84.95 a litre in Delhi from previous day price of ₹84.70 a litre. Similarly, diesel prices also increased to ₹75.13 a litre, up from previous day's level of ₹74.88 a litre. Across the country as well pump price of petrol and diesel increased but the quantum of the rise varied from state to state depending on level of taxation on the two petroleum products. Auto fuel price rise was on hold for last three days after petrol and diesel prices had increased on two successive days last week on Wednesday and Thursday taking gasoline to new record high levels in Delhi and several other places in the country. It had risen on two days in the week prior to last week as well. OMCs ran out of patience Wednesday as global crude prices have risen sharply lately taking benchmark Brent crude price to over \$57 a barrel now and rising.



An Icelandic horse, left, and a Shetland pony play at a stud farm in Wehrheim near Frankfurt, Germany, Monday

Centre declines to lift surplus rice, says BJD

THE RULING BIJU JANATA DAL GIVES A SEVEN-DAY ULTIMATUM TO THE CENTRE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 18: In another instance of alleged negligence by the Centre towards farmers, the central government has denied to lift surplus parboiled rice from Odisha during the current crop year. Raising this issue, the ruling BJD Monday slammed the Centre, saying the BJD government has always worked for the interests and development of farmers and the farming community. However, the policies and practices of the BJD-

led Union government are becoming a major problem for the farmers of Odisha. Recently, the Centre sent a letter stating that they would limit the lifting of parboiled rice to the extent of 50 per cent of the original estimates and would not accept any surplus parboiled rice during rabi season of 2020-21, said BJD leader Rohit Pujari. This anti-farmer decision of the Centre will severely affect the farmers of Odisha, he said. Senior BJD legislator Shehangini Chhuria said a total of 71 lakh MT

of paddy was procured in 2019-20. It turned to be 48 lakh MT of rice. Of which, 24 lakh MT was consumed by Odisha while 17 lakh MT was procured by Food Corporation of India (FCI) and 7 lakh MT was used under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), she said. In 2020-21, 35.49 lakh MT of paddy has been procured so far while another 30 lakh MT would be procured totaling 65 lakh MT of paddy for the current kharif season. In rabi, about 17 lakh MT would be pro-



cured. It means a total of 82 lakh MT of paddy procurement will be done for 2020-21, Churia said. Out of this, about 55 lakh MT rice would be obtained and almost all of it would be parboiled rice.

While 24 lakh MT would be consumed in Odisha, about 10 lakh MT (as per the recent letter from Centre) would be procured by FCI, she said. The BJD leader claimed that the remaining 21 lakh MT rice worth ₹7350 crore would not be lifted by the Centre. This would adversely affect Odisha, especially its farmers. "We demand that the Centre withdraws this anti-farmer policy of restricting lifting/evacuation of rice from Odisha and lift the total surplus rice of 31 lakh MT from the state," demanded Churia.

FIR filed against makers of Amazon Prime web series 'Tandav'

AGENCIES

Lucknow, Jan 18: An FIR has been lodged against Ali Abbas Jafar and Gaurav Solanki, the director and writer of the web series 'Tandav' respectively for allegedly depicting Hindu gods in a bad light 'which could lead to religious flare-ups'. The FIR was lodged at the Hazratganj police station late Sunday night by senior sub-inspector Amarnath Yadav, also named Amazon Prime's India head of original content Aparna Purohit, producer Himanshu Krishna Mehra and another unnamed person. "A police team from Hazratganj will leave for Mumbai to investi-



gate and interrogate those named in the FIR on Monday," said Deputy Commissioner of Police, central zone, Somen Barma. Those named in the FIR have been booked for promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth,

makes destruction, damage, or defilement of a place of worship or an object held sacred; forgery for purpose of harming reputation, statements conducing to public mischief, with intent to threaten the unity, integrity, security or sovereignty of India, or to strike terror in the people or any section of the people. The FIR says that there are angry outbursts on social media against the content of the web series which was released on January 16 and people are posting its clippings. "After watching the series, it was found that in the 17th minute of Episode 1, characters playing Hindu gods and goddesses have been shown in an uncharitable way and using

I&B MIN NOTICE TO AMAZON PRIME

NEW DELHI: The Information and Broadcasting Ministry has issued notice to Amazon Prime, seeking its response to the complaints against its web series 'Tandav' starring Saif Ali Khan. Ministry sources that notice has been issued to the platform as it had released the series, and came as the ministry took serious notice of complaints against 'Tandav'. The web series had faced charges of inflaming religious passions and some police complaints have also been filed. According to the complaints, Hindu deities have been denigrated in it. According to the sources, a proper response to all the allegations has been sought from Amazon Prime, failing which action would be taken against it.

undignified language, which can trigger religious sentiments," the complainant said. "Similarly, in the 22nd minute of the same episode, efforts have been made to ignite caste clashes. The person holding a dignified post like that of prime minister has been shown in a very derogatory manner throughout the web series," the FIR further stated. The web series has tried to destroy the social fabric of the country and create tension, Yadav has said in his FIR.

Start Strong. Grow Stronger.

1800 266 266 1 (tollfree)

OVER 32K GET SHOTS ON DAY-2

State to get 3,34,500 doses of Covishield vaccine today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 18: After day's gap, Covid-19 vaccination resumed in state Monday and over 32,000 healthcare workers got shots across the state. The vaccination drive was carried out at 380 sessions and 32,526 healthcare worker beneficiaries were vaccinated which worked out to be 2 per cent more than the total number of listed beneficiaries for the day. Anticipating that some people may not turn up at the vaccination centres, the government invited more people and accordingly it surpassed the target, said an official. On the first day, 161 sessions were conducted in which 13,980 health care workers were vaccinated.



A health worker receives a jab at SCBMCH in Cuttack

All the districts were told to prepare their micro-plan for continuation of the programme from Monday. It was planned to have five sessions in the medical colleges and big private hospitals, one to two sessions in District Headquarter Hospitals (DHHs), sub-divisional hospitals and community health centres (CHCs). The government has asked all districts to complete the registration process by January 25.

2 DIE 'AFTER JABS'

Bangalore/Moradabad: Two people died in two separate cases allegedly after they were administered Covid-19 jabs. In the first case, two days after he received a Covid-19 injection, a 43-year-old Group D worker in Ballari district of Karnataka died of a heart attack Monday evening. "Nagaraju, 43, of the health department passed away due to a heart attack Monday. In the second case, a 46-year-old health worker died in Moradabad, a day after the job with the autopsy attributing the death to "cardio-pulmonary disease," officials said.

2 guards fall ill after Covaxin shots

SUNDARGARH: Two security personnel posted at Sundargarh district headquarters hospital fell ill after receiving COVID-19 vaccine shots. The affected guards were identified as Dubaraj Rana and Manas Karali. The duo complained of uneasiness a day after receiving the injections. They have been admitted to the hospital. Dubaraj said, he received the shot January 16 when vaccination was launched. "After receiving the Covaxin shot, I attended to my duties. I suddenly felt feverish. I also felt numbness in my left hand." Manas also got fever and had a similar tale to tell.

leisure



COVID EFFECT: UK SHOOT OF GOLDFISH POSTPONED

The UK shoot of the Neena Gupta and Kalki Koechlin-starrer international project, *Goldfish*, has been postponed owing to the emerging new Covid strain in that country. The film, also starring Rajit Kapur, was scheduled to go on floors this month in London.

HAVE NEVER DONE BOTOX OR SURGERY: JLO

Singer-actress Jennifer Lopez has shut down trolls who have claimed that she has had botox treatment. She also said that she has never gone under the knife.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Romance will keep you occupied today. Monetary success will lead to peace and the other way round. You must be careful about expenses and buy only that stuff which you really need.

TAURUS
This day you could be in for some unexpected and unpleasant shocks, warns Ganesh. There is a strong likelihood of getting insulted or humiliated. You must therefore be alert and on your toes. You could that way, manage to avert situations that may threaten your standing and reputation.

GEMINI
It is the time to indulge in luxury and entertainment. You will pay more attention to household matters and tend to your children's needs. You will be concerned about your diet and other health matters in the evening, however, these worries are only of a temporary nature, says Ganesh.

CANCER
You will be ready to understand the meaning of life. You will get new responsibilities in your job or business, which means a promotion and pay hike. You may take an instinctive decision, which you may regret later.

LEO
Your expenses will increase today owing to your carefree attitude. You need to curb down on your spending. The later half of the day will see you deal with minor issues related to the work-place. If you ignore these issues now, they will crop up into major problems later on.

VIRGO
Ganesh predicts that you will achieve the targets that you set out to achieve today. The heavy pressure of work will not affect you in any way. Ganesh says the secret of your success is being patient. You are bang on target.

LIBRA
Ganesh says you will try to impress other people with your appearance and personality. Under current circumstances there are chances of you falling in love with a new person who will become your beloved. The time spent with this person will be unforgettable says Ganesh, as love is in the air. Make the most of the day.

SCORPIO
Experience is the best teacher and today you should be thankful to your teacher as it is going to handle many new projects. You may even guide your peers and juniors in their work and enhance their imagination power.

SAGITTARIUS
You are on a creative high today. You may be painting or sketching during the first half of the day. You may even find time to go through your past possessions and treasure. And during the later half of the day, you may be busy in giving your cosy corner and home a new look, a makeover.

CAPRICORN
You will be in chirpy mood today, want to do anything and everything. Business opportunities will grab your eye balls, and you want to go ahead with those ideas. Ganesh predicts you will succeed in these ventures as luck is by your side.

AQUARIUS
You work while you work and play while you play. This approach certainly contributes a lot to your success, says Ganesh. You stay focused on your goal and make each step boldly, but wisely.

PISCES
Your competitors will find it tough to maintain their footing against your onslaught today. You need not worry about their activities for you will come out with flying colors at the end of it all. You are not by nature ill-tempered, but you will have to encounter situations where you will be opposed needlessly and that could rouse your wrath.

Yami turns nostalgic on set

Jaisalmer: Actress Yami Gautam Monday turned nostalgic while shooting for her forthcoming film *Bhoot Police* in the city. Jaisalmer holds a special place in her heart because this is where she began shooting for a television show 11 years ago.

Yami shared a photo of herself from the sets of her upcoming film on Instagram account and wrote: "This is where 11 years

back I started my journey as an actor, in the stunning Jaisalmer! The memories of shooting my introduction scene are still fresh, which marked my brief stint in television! Life has come about a full circle it feels! I stand here at the same spot with my heart brimmed with nostalgia & gratitude #Bhootpolice."

Jaisalmer happens to be the location of the final schedule of

the horror comedy *Bhoot Police*. Earlier, the unit filmed portions across locations in Himachal Pradesh, besides Mumbai. Directed by Pavan Kirpalani, the horror comedy also stars Saif Ali Khan, Jacqueline Fernandez, Arjun Kapoor and Jaaved Jaferi.

IAN S



Juhi takes a jibe at social networking sites

Mumbai: Actress Juhi Chawla Monday took a jibe at social networking platforms WhatsApp and Facebook at a time when millions of users are abandoning WhatsApp and opting for other chatting platforms to ensure their privacy is maintained.

Taking a dig at the above mentioned social networking platforms, Juhi shared a note on Twitter that reads: "When anything is free, your freedom is the price."

"Desmond Tutu once said, 'When the missionaries came to Africa they had the Bible and we had the land. They said, 'let us pray.' We close our eyes. When we opened

them, we had the Bible and they had the land. 'Likewise, when social networking came, they had the WhatsApp and Facebook and we had the freedom. They said it's free. We close our eyes. When we opened them, we had WhatsApp and Facebook and they had our freedom."

"When anything is free, your freedom is the price." "Would you agree?" the actress wrote along with the note. The actress' jibe comes at a time when the privacy policy of WhatsApp is being questioned following incidents of chat leak and netizens across the nation are left with no other option but to switch to alternative messaging apps.



'Mission Frontline a tribute to grit of jawans'

Mumbai: Actor Rana Daggubati says working on the documentary *Mission Frontline*, has given him a perspective on what goes into guarding our frontiers. The upcoming documentary highlights the life of jawans of the Border Security Force.

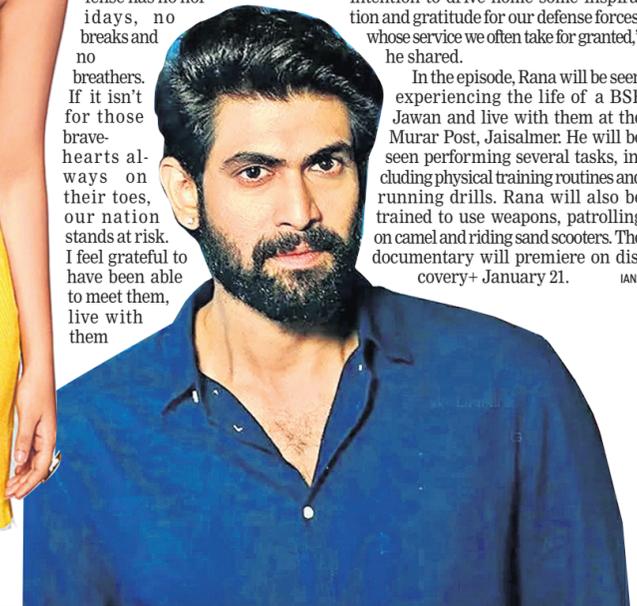
"India's Border Security Force — or the country's first line of defense has no holidays, no breaks and no breathers. If it isn't for those brave-hearts always on their toes, our nation stands at risk. I feel grateful to have been able to meet them, live with them

and train with them," Rana said. "As a civilian and countryman, this experience gave me perspective on what goes into guarding our frontiers, 24/7. These Jawans are our lifeline, our guarantee to sovereignty, and they're the true heroes," the actor added.

"Going by what I experienced in Jaisalmer, *Mission Frontline* is a tribute to those Jawans' grit and spirit, with the intention to drive home some inspiration and gratitude for our defense forces, whose service we often take for granted," he shared.

In the episode, Rana will be seen experiencing the life of a BSF Jawan and live with them at the Murar Post, Jaisalmer. He will be seen performing several tasks, including physical training routines and running drills. Rana will also be trained to use weapons, patrolling on camel and riding sand scooters. The documentary will premiere on discovery+ January 21.

IAN S



SPORTS DRAMAS LINED UP FOR 2021

Mumbai: The Ranveer Singh-starrer *83*, based on India's first-ever cricket World Cup victory in 1983, is being billed as one of the biggest releases of this year, as Bollywood business tries to carefully return to normalcy.

Kabir Khan's *83* is not the only Bollywood film lined up based on a cricket theme. There is *Shabaash Mithu*, starring Taapsee Pannu as Mithali Raj, captain of the Indian women's team, besides the Shahid Kapoor-starrer *Jersey*.

What is notable is films based on non-cricket sports, which are gradually being attempted in Bollywood, continue to rise in numbers this year, too. Over the next months, Bollywood stars will engage in football, badminton, athletics, boxing, snooker and chess, too, as Hindi films tackle subjects around these sports, to cater to varying tastes. Here's a

look at Bollywood's sports roster in the months ahead:

MAIDAAN

The anticipated period sports drama starring Ajay Devgn is inspired by the true story of Indian football coach Syed Abdul Rahim. He was the coach and manager of the Indian national team from 1950 till his death in 1963. Major portions of the film have been shot across Lucknow, Kolkata and Mumbai. Shoot is expected to wrap up by April 2021 and *Maidaan* is slated to hit theatres October 15. The film directed by Amit Ravindernath Sharma also features Priyamani, Gajraj Rao and Rudranil Ghosh.

RASHMI ROCKET

Taapsee Pannu will be seen in a never-before avatar of a runner in this sports drama. The actress recently finished shooting for



the Jharkhand schedule of the film which narrates the journey of an athlete. Taapsee, who has just commenced shooting for the final schedule, has shared on social media how she had to undergo rigorous athletic training for the role which even led to pain and inflammation in her muscles.

JHUND

Amitabh Bachchan will essay a role based on Slum Soccer founder Vijay Barse in this upcoming sports drama. The film narrates the story of a professor who encourages street children to build a football team, in order to help them find a purpose in life. The film is directed by Sairat maker Nagraj Manjule.

SAINA

Parineeti Chopra reprises Badminton star Saina Nehwal in the biopic helmed by Amol Gupte. Manav Kaul essays the role of Nehwal's coach Pullela Gopichand in the sports drama, which also features Paresh Rawal. The film had originally cast Shradha Kapoor as Saina, before Parineeti took over as the champion shuttler.

TOOFAN

Farhan Akhtar collaborates with director Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra for a new sports drama after the 2013 hit film *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag*, which showed him as Indian sprinter Milkha Singh. In *Toofan*, Farhan will be seen in the avatar of a boxer and has bulked up for the role. Paresh Rawal, Mrunal Thakur and Isha Talwar are also a part of the cast.

TOOLSIDAS JUNIOR

Sanjay Dutt features in this just-announced film which will showcase the journey of a snooker champion. Written and directed by Mridul, *Toolsidas Junior* stars child actor Varun Buddhadev and Rajiv Kapoor alongside Dutt. The poster of the film describes it as an exciting and inspiring sports drama and also heightens curiosity of the viewers with the tagline: *Bachcha hai, phaad dega*.

VISWANATHAN ANAND BIOPIC

Aanand L. Rai's yet-untitled film was announced just a month ago, and will narrate the journey of Indian chess grandmaster Viswanathan Anand. Speculative reports suggest that Tamil star Dhanush might play the chess grandmaster in his biopic, but no official announcement has been made on the same as yet.

IAN S

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

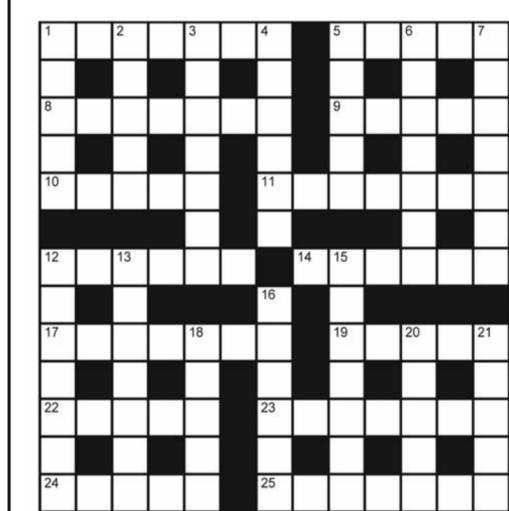


BREVITY



FUN post

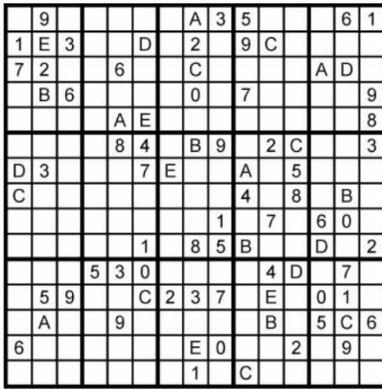
CROSSWORD



- Copyright ©2021 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 1 Pruning
 - 5 Book parts
 - 8 Leading figure of fauvism
 - 9 Ring-tailed animal
 - 10 Honor
 - 11 Nervous strain
 - 12 Hunting expedition
 - 14 Deviate
 - 17 Big cat
 - 19 Fr. holy men
 - 22 Jordan's capital
 - 23 Shakespeare character
 - 24 Some wedding guests
 - 25 Square-rigger part
 - 4 City district
 - 5 Edible nut
 - 6 Ice mass
 - 7 Field of study
 - 12 Dried seedless grape
 - 13 Deep-sea diver
 - 15 Newscast segment
 - 16 Stupidity
 - 18 Queen lace
 - 20 Model material
 - 21 Tempest
- Down**
- 1 Punctuation mark
 - 2 Aquarium fish
 - 3 One in the know

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



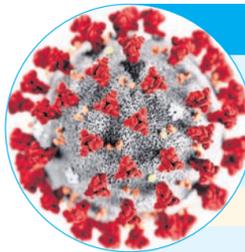
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



R-DAY PREP

Security personnel conduct a recce of the Gandhi Marg in Bhubaneswar ahead of the Republic Day celebrations, Monday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	9,56,23,389	6,83,23,790	20,42,644
India	1,05,71,773	1,02,11,342	1,52,419
Odisha	3,33,444	3,29,801	1,901

Labour leader Lalit Nayak passes away

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 18: Renowned social activist and labour leader Lalit Nayak passed away Monday while he was undergoing treatment at AIIMS Bhubaneswar.

Nayak had been suffering from bone cancer for the last six months and was undergoing treatment.

He breathed his last 5:30 am Monday.

He was also infected with COVID-19 earlier and had recovered, reports said.

Nayak was associated with around 50 social organisations. He was the president of several unions including Western Odisha Shramik Sangha, Electric Employees Association and Auto-Rickshaw Association in Bolangir district.

Nayak who was a resident of Bolangir district had played a major role in blood donation campaigns in the district.

Meanwhile, a pal of gloom has descended in Bolangir district following Nayak's death. His mortal remains will be brought to Bolangir for the last rites.

₹7.2K cr Rlys allocation sought

STATE FINANCE MINISTER NIRANJAN PUJARI ALSO DEMANDS ₹5,650 CRORE FOR TELECOM SECTOR BESIDES SUFFICIENT FUNDS FOR DRINKING WATER & NATIONAL HIGHWAYS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 18: The state government Monday urged the Centre to allocate ₹7,200 crore in the forthcoming Budget for the year 2021-22 for development of railway infrastructure in the state.

State Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari made the announcement during the pre-budget consultation meeting of Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman held through videoconferencing mode.

Pujari urged Sitharaman to make provision of at least ₹7,200 crore for railway infrastructure for on-going projects, sanctioning of a new line, station modernisation, establishment of rail-based industries and multi-modal logistics parks among others.

The state government also demanded ₹5650 crore for telecom sector in the Union budget.

Provision of sufficient funds for development and maintenance of national highways (NHs) and piped drinking water projects should be made in the budget, he said.



Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari participates in the pre-budget consultation meeting through videoconferencing

Pujari further urged the Centre to consult the state governments before taking any major policy decisions that affects sub-national finances. He suggested allowing states to operate the Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) directly instead of opening a separate scheme-based bank account.

The Centre should give advance indication on Central assistance for CSS and release of funds as per commitment, Pujari said during

the meeting. The Minister also demanded sharing pattern in CSS for Odisha at par with north eastern and Himalayan states.

He requested to amend sub-section (3) of Section 8 of Central Sales Tax Act, 1956 to prohibit misuse of 'C' Forms by the manufacturers, mining contractors and works contractors for interstate purchase of High Speed Diesel (HSD) paying CST @2 per cent.

The state further demanded

STATE'S WISH LIST

Pujari asked the union FM Nirmala Sitharaman to consider revising the state's sharing pattern in CSS

He requested to amend sub-section (3) of Section 8 of Central Sales Tax Act, 1956 to prohibit misuse of 'C' Forms by manufacturers

The state further demanded amendment in tariff policy to terminate very old PPAs like amendment to Electricity Act, 2003

amendment in tariff policy to terminate very old PPAs, amendment to Electricity Act, 2003 to allow all hydro projects under RPO obligation and enable distribution companies/states' bulk power procurers to participate in tenders floated by Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) for procurement of bundled power for reduction in power purchase cost of discoms.

The Union Finance Minister was urged to gradually eliminate Cess and surcharge on the customs duty and direct taxes.

'Officials avoiding RTI queries'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 18: RTI activists in the state have accused officials of hiding behind Covid-19 pandemic to avoid disseminating information under the RTI Act.

Many RTI queries as well as first appeals under the act have been pending at the offices of the Public Information officers in various departments of the state government.

In one such incident, an RTI activist, Prakash Chandra Das has been waiting for answers from the Department of Women and Child Development for more than six months.

He reportedly sought the details regarding the district-wise number of divorcee women receiving monthly pension from the department. However, he did not receive any correspondence from officials of the department within the specified time limit.

Subsequently, he submitted an appeal before the first appellate authority of the department. In October, he received a reply from the authorities who informed Das that he would be called after the



Pandemic an excuse

Many RTI queries as well as first appeals have been pending with Public Information officers in various departments

In one such incident, an RTI activist Prakash Chandra Das has been waiting for answers from the WCD department for more than six months

COVID-19 situation improves. However, Das is yet to receive a call from the department despite the lapse of three months.

Das alleged that the officers have been taking the pandemic as a plea to delay giving information. He said that if schools and colleges have started functioning then why are government offices are reluctant to start day-to-day work.

CP flags off awareness drive



Police Commissioner Sudhanshu Sarangi speaks at an event organised by the traffic wing of the Commissionerate Police in Bhubaneswar to celebrate the 32nd National Road Safety Month, Monday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 18: The traffic unit of Commissionerate Police Monday organised various programmes to create public awareness in the twin cities on the occasion of the commencement of National

Road Safety Month between January 18 and February 17, 2020.

The Commissioner of Police, Sudhanshu Sarangi flagged off various awareness drives including the all-women bike rallies in Cuttack and Bhubaneswar.

Speaking on the occasion,

Sarangi said, "We used to observe Road Safety Week every year. However, the central government and all the state governments realised that despite stringent traffic and hefty fine amounts, people are not willingly obeying the rules. So, efforts will be made to reach the maximum number of people to bring awareness in the month-long drive."

Sarangi also stated that it is impossible to implement any law strictly to secure the safety of people without adequate public awareness in a democratic country. The police will focus on bike riders who outnumber others in the number of road fatalities in the country.

"We will have a specific theme everyday and various social and voluntary organisations have been allotted a day and particular theme to organise various awareness programmes with the help of police officials on the scheduled day.



Women traffic police personnel take out a scooter rally in Bhubaneswar, Monday, to create awareness on road safety norms

BIKASH NAYAK

Cams to ensure commuters' safety Punjab firm dupes people of ₹75L

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 18: The State Transport department will adopt a hi-tech mechanism to penalise violators as part of its strategy to minimise loss of human lives in road accidents in the state.

As per the plans, the department will soon install intelligent camera (CCTV) systems on the entire stretch of the National Highway No-16 from Rameswar in Khorda district to Panikohili in Jajpur district.

According to Odisha Transport Commissioner Sanjeeb Panda, the new system will play a crucial role in putting a check on incidents of rash driving on the national highway and intercepting vehicles with



fake registration numbers.

"It is an ambitious project and we have got response from 32 bidders in the tender process. The work for the installation of intelligent camera systems will be taken up soon," the Transport Commissioner said. "We will identify the vehicles

It is an ambitious project and we have got response from 32 bidders in the tender process. The work for the installation of intelligent camera systems will be taken up soon

SANJEEB PANDA | ODISHA TRANSPORT COMMISSIONER

moving at a high speed beyond the speed limit issued by the Transport Department. As we have the information about the plying of transport vehicles with fake registration numbers, we will identify these vehicles with the help of the CCTV cameras and take appropriate action," added Panda.

Panda further said that the estimated cost of installing the CCTV cameras along the national highway will be around ₹15 crore and that the Commerce and Transport Department will finalise a tender in the near future.

Meanwhile, to enhance security of women and children while traveling in buses and other public transport vehicles, the state government has decided to put online vehicle movement tracking system in place so that it can reach to the vehicle in case of emergency.

"The online tracking system will ensure safety of passengers. We will implement it soon," State Transport and Commerce Minister Padmanabha Behera had said.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 18: A sham Multilevel (Networking) marketing (MLM) firm from Punjab has allegedly duped many investors in state of more than ₹75 lakhs promising to rich returns.

Four victims including a former CRPF Jawan have lodged complaints in this regard with the Khandagiri Police, the Economic Offences Wing of the Crime Branch and the Khurda District Consumer Distress Redressal Forum here. A team of Khandagiri police have recently left for Chandigarh to probe the allegations against the networking company.

According to their complaint, the local agents of the Chandigarh-

Four victims including a former CRPF Jawan lodged complaints with the Police

based firm reportedly used to visit various parts of the state to lure different persons to invest in various schemes of the company promising return twice the amount invested by them within 40 months.

One of the victims from Ranpur was contacted by a BSF official who was allegedly heading the company activities in the state in 2018. The depositors were asked to attend a meeting at a prominent hotel in the city February 28, 2018.

Subsequently, the MD of the com-

pany asked the victims to be a member of the networking company by depositing ₹2500 initially. The MD informed the victims that they will invest their deposits in real estate and share market sector and will return to them with lucrative interest amount. They were also promised to be given organic products of the company which they can sell in the market too.

The accused MD and CMD of the company also lured the victims to invest several lakhs under various other pretexts like foreign trip. The complainants had allegedly given ₹5 lakhs to the company for foreign tours. The victim from Ranpur has invested ₹20 lakhs while the ex-CRPF Jawan has reportedly deposited around ₹25 Lakhs.

ATTACK ON OPCC CHIEF Cong, BJD blame BJP workers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 18: The Congress Monday accused the BJP of attacking Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee president Niranjan Patnaik's car, a charge which was denied by the saffron party.

While the OPCC president alleged that a person who was arrested Monday in connection with the attack was the Keonjhar district secretary of BJs Yuva Morcha, local MLA and BJP chief whip in the assembly Mohan Majhi claimed that the man was not a member of the saffron party.

In a series of tweets, Patnaik said, "I was shocked to know that the miscreants were members of BJs Youth Wing. This is a clear case of political vendetta and despicable of BJP Congress is raising relevant issues in the state and speaking out against the policies of BJP, which is desperately trying to get a foothold in Odisha. Congress

is the biggest hurdle for them".

BJP state president Samir Mohanty condemned the attack.

The incident took place near Kashiipur Sunday night when Patnaik was travelling to his native place in Keonjhar, police said.

Though Patnaik escaped unhurt, the Congress leader's personal security personnel and drivers were allegedly assaulted by a group of four to five persons.

Meanwhile, Keonjhar SP Mitrabhanu Mahapatra said, four other accused have been identified and efforts were on to apprehend them. An FIR was lodged with the Keonjhar Town police Sunday and the name of the arrested man was mentioned in the complaint, he said.

A Congress delegation led by Jaydev Jena met Director General of Police Abhay and demanded action against the culprits. The ruling BJD also condemned the attack and demanded immediate arrest of the people involved in the attack.

MAGICAL NOTES REACH FOR THE STARS

THE FESTIVAL IS CONCEPTUALISED IN SUCH A WAY SO AS TO BE AN EXOTIC PLATFORM FOR CLASSICAL INDIAN MUSIC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 18: Set amidst the premises of the magnificent Rajarani temple, the three-day annual music festival kicked off amid huge fanfare here Monday.

The musical soiree features artistes from across the country and widely sought after by the connoisseurs of classical music.

The festival is conceptualised in such a way so as to be a platform for classical Indian music, be it the sonorous instruments unique to India or the mellifluous genres of vocals in Hindustani, Carnatic, Sufi or Odisha's home grown Odissi music, the Rajarani Music Festival encourages and gives our musical heritage the license to mesmerise the audience.

The evening's first programme was Bidushi Sudha Raghuraman, a great Carnatic singer who by her mellifluous and sonorous voice re-



Bidushi Sudha Raghuraman performs at Rajarani Music Festival

cited Sidhivinayak Bandana followed by the two songs set to Rag Hansadhwani and Tala Aditala and Ragshree set to Aditala and lastly Sivapanchakhyara.

The delineation of Rag giving full vent to the imagination based on

the musical notes with an eclectic and compressive description by Sudha Raghuraman regaled the audience. The evening's second artiste was Tabla player (instrumental) by maestro Bickram Ghosh's Rhythmscape (Indian

Fusion Band). He presented Siva Tandaba, Little Krishna followed by different Indian classical fusion which was played through Tabla, Hand Sonic, Body Drum and other percussions. The art connoisseurs were cap-

tivated by the superb presentation of the evening's musical programme and were present till the end.

The dignitaries who graced the inaugural function were Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi, Minister, Tourism and Odia Language, Literature & Culture, Odisha; R. Balakrishnan, Chief Advisor to Chief Minister, Odisha; Vishal Kumar Dev, Principal Secretary, Tourism; Shreemayee Mishra, Chairperson, OTDC Ltd. and Sachin Ramachandra Jadhav, Director, Tourism.

The programme was anchored by Sangita Gosain and Anuja Tarini Mishra. Officers/ Staffs from Tourism Department, OTDC and Sangita Nataka Academy were coordinating during the festival.

The festival falls back to the age old tradition of music being the cornerstone of spirituality and has helped Bhubaneswar emerge as a top classical music destination in the country.

Fake med certificate racket still on

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 18: The state crime branch is yet to succeed in taking down the fake OCMR website despite the lapse of more than six months since the lodging of the complaint by OCMR authorities in July, 2020.

Orissa POST published an exclusive report on the racket in its July 28, 2020 edition.

The registrar of OCMR, Kamala Kanta Das, wrote a letter to the Additional Director General of Police, Crime Branch, and sought action against the people behind the racket. The cyber cell at the Crime Branch in Cuttack had registered a case and started a probe in this regard.

OCMR is the official body to issue statutory permissions such as registration certificates, NOC and

NO REMEDY YET

Notably, the issue came to fore after an aggrieved applicant sent a complaint to the OCMR requesting it to make necessary rectifications in the website

HE WAS, HOWEVER, INFORMED BY THE OCMR THAT THE WEBSITE, [HTTPS://WWW.OCMR.ORG.IN/](https://www.ocmr.org.in/) WAS A FAKE ONE AND OCMR HAS NOT YET DEVELOPED FACILITIES FOR ONLINE REGISTRATION



The website is still functioning as the state Crime Branch is yet to take any step in this regard



OCMR IS THE OFFICIAL BODY TO ISSUE STATUTORY PERMISSIONS SUCH AS REGISTRATION CERTIFICATES, NOCS AND OTHER TESTIMONIALS NECESSARY FOR PRACTICING DOCTORS

other testimonials necessary for practicing doctors. It also frames rules and keeps a watch on any mischief in connection with medical practice in the state.

Notably, the issue came to fore

after an aggrieved applicant sent a complaint to the OCMR requesting it to make necessary rectifications in the website. He was, however, informed by the OCMR that the website, <https://www.ocmr.org.in/>

was a fake one and OCMR has not yet developed facilities for online registration.

The OCMR had also received a letter from the deputy registrar of Uttarakhand Medical Council alleging the presence of the fake website. The deputy registrar also sent a copy of the fake MBBS registration certificate issued by the bogus council. He also sought action from his counterpart in Odisha to bust the racket. The website is still functioning as the crime branch has yet to take any steps in this regard.

Meanwhile, OCMR sources revealed that the crime branch has managed to freeze the account of the fraudsters. It has also working to take down the fake website too. A case has been registered against the accused persons involved in the racket in court. The crime branch is yet to arrest the fraudsters involved in the racket.

FARM LAWS DECRIED



Activists of AIDWA take out a rally from Satyanagar to the Raj Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Monday, seeking rollback of the new farm laws and Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2020

PRAGATI ADJUDGED 'FACE OF THE YEAR' IN MODEL CONTEST

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 18: Pragati Priyadarshini was selected as the 'Face of the Year 2021' in a calendar model competition organised by 'Abika' to encourage handloom and weavers in Odisha. Actor Varsha Priyadarshini honored the winner with a banner at the grand finale ceremony held here recently.

Meanwhile, 12 people were honored as 'Face of the Mantle'. They are Ananya Das, Arpita Satapathy, Bidisha Priyadarshini, Debjyoti Biswal, Debashis Das, Firdoshi Tabasum, Sasmita Panda, Smaranika Hota, Smrutika Ranjan Swain, Sri Sri Das, Suvendu Lenka and Sujit Kumar Das. The top 24 contestants were awarded certificates.

Actor Barsha Priyadarshini, vocalist Sushmita Das, educator Panchami Manu Ukil and Sambalpur weaver Laxminarayan Meher, who were the final judges, were present as guests at the event to support the modernisation of handlooms. A documentary was presented on behalf of Wisdom-Tree Global School, which was awarded for using Odisha Handloom as a school uniform.

Abika director Abinash Sahoo informed that a photo shoot of the successful contestants will be done soon.

ECOR staff vaccinated

Bhubaneswar: As a part of the world's largest vaccination campaign launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, all the Railway health workers including doctors, paramedical staff and other medical staff were vaccinated with Covaxin at Railway Hospital in Bhubaneswar. A total of 234 health workers in East Coast Railway Central Hospital at Mancheswar were vaccinated. This is a 2-dose vaccine, which will be administered within a gap of 28 days. Each dose is of 0.5 ml. Acutely unwell and intensive care unit patients and pregnant and lactating women will not be administered with the vaccination now.

Speaker unveils Asumari Swapna in Capital city



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 18: A book titled 'Asumari Swapna' was released at the Speaker's room at Sachivalaya here Monday.

In the unveiling ceremony, Speaker Surya Narayan Patro said, "The book is based on contemporary topics and is of great writing. Asumari Swapna is a collection of thesis in which social activist Ghasiram Panda's 36 thesis are published."

These write-ups were earlier published in various newspapers. Published by Aakar Subarnapur, the work is based on the writer's personal experience.

Topics like school shutdown, policies of budget for education, school enrolment, sexual harassment in the school and administrator's responsibilities, child marriage, children and cybercrime and marriage age were covered in the book.

Former chairman of OSPCR Kasturi Mohapatra, chairperson of state women's commission Minati Behera, chairperson of Odisha state commission for protection of child rights Sandhyabati Pradhan, associate director of Action Aid Debabrata Patra and secretary of the legislative assembly Dasaratha Satpathy were present at the event.

Odisha logs 134 new Covid cases

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 18: Odisha's COVID-19 caseload Monday rose to 3,33,444 as 134 more people tested positive for the infection, while one new fatality took the state's coronavirus death toll to 1,901, a health department official said.

The new cases were detected in 21 of the state's 30 districts, 79 of them reported from different quarantine centres while the remaining 55 are local contact cases.

Sundergarh district recorded the highest of 25 new cases fol-

lowed by Sambalpur (19) and Puri (16). Eighteen districts reported new positive cases in single digit, while nine other districts - Bhubaneswar, Deogarh, Kandhamal, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nayagarh, Nabarangpur and Rayagada, did not register any case since Sunday.

The lone fatality reported in the last 24 hours was in Bargarh district, pushing the coronavirus death toll to 1901, he said. This apart, as many as 53 other COVID-19 positive patients have also died due to comorbidities in the state.

BIRD FLU TO HIT JAN CHICKEN SALES

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 18: The avian flu outbreak could pare poultry sales in the state and country by a third this month, but if the history is any indication, the industry will bounce back in quick time with profitability intact for the full fiscal, a rating agency said Monday.

The outcome is based on an analysis of 87 Crisil rated poultry companies, which comprise 30 per cent of the industry's revenue.

Avian flu has been confirmed in as many as 10 states since the first incident was reported in Kerala in the first half of December 2020. Such outbreaks have been witnessed year after year due to carrier migratory wild birds crossing into the country. However, the outbreaks in organised poultry farms have been rare.

The flu has chopped around 30 per



Demand falls

The flu has chopped around 30 per cent off broiler chicken volume, bringing down daily chicken demand in the country from 100 lakh kg in December 2020 to an estimated 70 lakh kg in January 2021.

Additionally, wholesale prices of broiler chicken have crashed 20-30 per cent from Rs 105-Rs 110 per kg in December to Rs 80 per kg.

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Additionally, wholesale prices of broiler chicken have crashed 20-30 per cent from Rs 105-Rs 110 per kg in December to Rs 80 per kg.

Esplanade back with a bang

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 18: The ongoing pandemic has adversely affected people's lives as well as commercial business across the globe. However, with time, many business establishments have bounced back from the pandemic-induced lockdown and one such example is Esplanade One.

Having reopened in December, the mall welcomed back customers by strictly adhering to Covid-19 guidelines. The biggest craze of the mall Cinepolis is back with movies.

Interacting with Orissa POST, Centre head Partha Pratim Nayak said, "We have always looked after our clients and currently the mall is 1 functioning at 100% capacity. There are a lot of good offers and gifts on various purchases at the mall. We are making the mall 100 percent safe by following all Covid norms."



A movie buff Jyotirmayee Sengupta said, "I am so happy that private screening of movies is back and guess what, around 50 people can be accommodated for the screening. Isn't that great! I am planning to book such a screening soon."

maintaining social distancing near KFC, Keventers and all other food stalls inside the mall.

70-year-old Anushuma Pati, who visited the mall, said, "It was suffocating to stay at home. Moreover, the clean and safe environment of the mall raises courage for elderly people like me. From thermal screening to sanitisation to 24*7 cleaning, Esplanade is completely safe for every visitor."

Strengthening state's artisans

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 18: The Handloom, Textiles & Handicrafts Department is all set to organise 15th Toshali National Crafts Mela at Janata Maidan, Bhubaneswar from January 21 to February 4.

Padmini Dian, Minister HT&H, made the announcement along with various arrangements for the fair here Monday.

Dian said, "Artisans, weavers and sculptors from all over the country will participate in this crafts fair and will exhibit their traditional and contemporary handicraft and handloom products. The vision of the fair is to offer an open forum to artists, artisans and connoisseurs to strengthen their economic position derived by creating market for their products."

It also aims to preserve and nurture the traditional art forms, handicrafts and handlooms of India and create awareness and educate the people on the skills and creative



intricacies involved in making the products.

This year, the chief objective of organising the event is to provide marketing scope to the artisans/weavers of the state as well as the country who faced severe difficulties for marketing of their products due to the pandemic. The fair will be organised within the parameters of COVID-19 guidelines

specified by the state government.

This year, the fair will accommodate 250 Handicraft & Handloom stalls out of which 80 weavers/artisans from different states of the country will be sponsored by DC (Handlooms) / DC (Handicrafts), GOI. Similarly 110 artisans and 60 weavers of the state will be sponsored by DH & CI, Odisha and Directorate of Textiles and Handlooms, Odisha respectively.

Sufficient number of security personnel will be engaged in different blocks to maintain social distancing and ensure using masks and sanitizer.

Proper care will be taken for sanitization of the mela ground at regular interval. Use of mask and social distancing are being made mandatory for exhibitors/visitors and officials inside the mela ground. All the COVID-19 measures will be included in publicity items like hoardings/standees etc for awareness of the visitors.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khurda, Jan 18: Illegal quarrying of laterite stone and murrum from cashew forests at Nalipada Arjunpur panchayat under Khurda block has caused resentment among many villagers.

The aggrieved villagers Monday submitted a memorandum to Khurda district Collector Sanat Kumar Mohanty and sought immediate steps to check illegal quarrying at cashew forests.

According to the villagers, Sharadhapur and Haladipada villages of Nalipada Arjunpur panchayat have around 250 acres of cashew forests. The Odisha State Cashew Development Corporation had leased out the cashew forests to some private parties for collection of cashew nuts.

However, some influential people have been quarrying laterite stone and murrum from the cashew forests illegally for last several days. These people have engaged several trucks



Seeking action

According to villagers, some influential people have been quarrying laterite stone and murrum from the cashew forests illegally

They urged the district administration to launch a probe into the illegal stone quarrying and initiate action against the mafia

been destroyed by illegal stone quarrying. Some employees of the cashew development corporation have links with the stone mafia. The stone mafia are threatening the villagers to keep their mouth shut on the issue," said the memorandum.

The villagers have urged the district administration to launch a probe into the illegal stone quarrying and initiate action against the mafia. "We would be forced to take to the street if the administration does not take immediate steps to check the illegal quarrying at cashew forests," said the villagers.

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech-Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupanjali Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri-Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookieman-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

Bhadra dam awaits renovation project

IT HAS BEEN 70 YEARS SINCE THE DAM WAS COMMISSIONED AND TILL DATE IT HASN'T BEEN RENOVATED

POST NEWS NETWORK

Junagarh, Jan 18: Bhadra dam in Junagarh block of Kalahandi district, which holds much significance for the agriculture sector in terms of its irrigation potential, is now struggling for survival. 70 years after its commissioning, it has not been renovated till date, a report said.

According to the report, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated many projects and laid foundation stones for many projects in Kalahandi district January 14. Some of them are meant for irrigation.

At the same time, Bhadra dam has been left in neglect while it has been losing its capacity to deliver its much needed service for irrigation over the years. Locals alleged that the government is not taking any steps for its renovation.

Over the years, it has become shallow due to siltation. It is alleged that there is a 15-ft thick layer of siltation inside the dam. Its water-retaining capacity has sharply gone down, hampering irrigation. Farmers who used to get irrigational facility have expressed deep resentment.

Some of them alleged that apathy of the administration has been a hurdle for its renovation.

According to the report, in 1952, Bhadrak minor irrigation project was handed over to the Minor Irrigation department. In 2001, the Minor Irrigation department fur-



Over the years, the dam has become shallow due to siltation

It is alleged that there is a 15-ft thick layer of silt inside the dam

Its water-retaining capacity has sharply gone down, hampering irrigation activities

ther handed it over to the Indravati project.

The project is spread over 300 acres of land in Ranpur, Eknaguda, Kalegaon, Jamchuan, Dabriguda, Golamunda and Sorasamal of three panchayats.

It used to irrigate about 1,200 to 1,800 hectares of land. Farmlands in Ranpur, Baxitaspalli, Kupagaon, Krushnapur, Malgunda, Meriabandhali, Junagarh,

Sanadumerbahal, Kaleigaon, Kulihari and Charbhata areas were being irrigated.

Farmers alleged that the depth of the dam has reduced by 10 to 15 ft due to years of siltation. As a result, it has been unable to irrigate land as targeted.

Last year, the dam authorities had sent a DPR for renovation of the project to Bhubaneswar Dam safety authority.

Farmers' outfits accused the state government of neglecting the dam and as well as neglecting the agriculture in the region.

It has triggered resentment among farmers, who have been demanding quick step for its renovation. As dam area offers scenic view, the place can be developed into a tourist spot, locals said. They also demanded that the place be considered as a tourist spot.

Elderly couple swindled out of ₹2.65L in Bhawanipatna

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatna, Jan 18: An elderly couple in this town was allegedly defrauded of ₹2.65 lakh after an unidentified caller, claiming to be a customer care executive of a private telecom firm robbed them of the money from their bank account. The caller asked them to follow certain procedures for cash prizes worth ₹20,000 and gifts on the occasion of New Year.

The victim was identified as Gangadhar Subudhi, a retired person of Sharma Colony in this town. The matter came to fore after he lodged a complaint at the Town police station and the Cyber Cell at the SP office in this town, Monday.

Reports said that, the fraudster, claiming to be a customer care executive of a telecom firm, called up Gangadhar and asked him if he was facing any problem with the services of the firm and asked for his personal details to resolve his problem.

Later, the caller said that he had won a mobile phone as gift and a cash prize of ₹20,000 for the New Year. Subudhi followed his instructions when he was surprised that the caller on the other side managed to withdraw ₹20,000 for five times through payment app Google Pay a total of ₹1 lakh from his bank account without asking for the OTP.

Later, he also withdrew another ₹45,000 from his account and ₹1.20 lakh from the account of his wife. The couple lost a total of ₹2.65 lakh in the fraud.



The victim couple

FARMERS TO ORGANISE MEGA PROTEST JAN 23

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Jan 18: Members of Paschim Odisha Krushak Sangathan, an outfit of farmers in this part of the state will stage a mega protest in Bargarh January 23 in support of the farmers' protest in Delhi.

The farmers meet will be held on the day coinciding with the birth anniversaries of two great freedom fighters Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and Veer Surendra Sai, of the state.

Farmers in Punjab and Haryana have been staging a protest demanding repeal of the three farm laws approved by the Parliament in September.

The government however, has rejected the demand. Nine rounds of talks so far have failed to break the deadlock.

This was stated here by the outfit's convener Ashok Pradhan at a press meet organised here, Monday. Pradhan said that the three farm laws will not only affect the farmers but also the consumers as private firms will decide the prices of agricultural produce. He cited

The three farm laws won't only affect the farmers but also the consumers as private firms will decide the prices of agricultural produce

ASHOK PRADHAN | CONVENER, PASCHIM ODISHA KRUSHAK SANGATHAN



Members of Paschim Odisha Krushak Sangathan hold a press meet

the sharp increase in prices of petrol and diesel which is burning a hole in the pocket of the consumers.

Another farmer leader Saroj Mohanty said that the Union government is trying to mislead people by making contradictory statements in the media.

He dared the government to frame strong laws for the minimum support price of the farmers. He questioned the presence of a government and private marketing systems in the country when the Centre has been repeatedly telling about the presence of only one market system in the country.

He alleged that the Centre has brought the farm laws through an ordinance during the period of Covid pandemic but suspended the Winter Session of the Parliament on the pretext of the same pandemic only for fear of opposition to the laws. Moreover, a committee has been formed to review the farm laws taking cover of the apex court while one member has recused himself from the panel.

The other members of the panel have earlier spoken in support of the three farm laws for which the agitating farmers do not have any faith on them. The committee has also come under criticism from people and farmers alike in the country.

Among others, district president Murari Purohit, vice-president Hari Shankar Purohit, Umesh Mishra, Byomokesh Thakur, Debendra Mohapatra, Siba Prasad Pradhan, Tikeswar Mishra, Subhash Biswal and Suresh Tripathy attended the meet.

Festive cheer, relaxed Covid norms bring smiles

FOR PANDEMIC-HIT BRASS BAND AND TENT HOUSE OWNERS, HAPPIER TIMES ARE JUST ROUND THE CORNER

POST NEWS NETWORK

Banarpal, Jan 18: Drummers, brass band party owners and DJ sound system owners in Banarpal area in Angul district are cock-a-hoop after the government lifted the restrictions clamped on using drums in processions.

There had been restrictions on taking out any kind of processions since the outbreak of COVID-19. As there were no processions, the drummers and DJ sound system owners were left no job.

Recently, the restrictions on processions have been lifted. With the Saraswati Puja and marriage season are ahead, these people are looking forward to getting orders.

There are around over 25 DJ, Brass Band and Drum parties in areas like Nalco, Kandsar, Kurudulu, Turang, Kulad, Girang, Gotmara, Banarpal, Budhaprank, Banda, Nuahata,



Gadasantri, Talamul, Mahidharpur and Phulupada under Banarpal block.

These parties get orders not only from Banarpal but also from differ-

ent areas in Angul and Dhenkanal districts. A single order earns them something between Rs25, 000 and 30, 000. So they would earn in lakhs during the puja and marriage season.

Since a party comprises around 20 to 30 members, hundreds of families would earn their livelihood from this. These families' financial conditions became pathetic following the outbreak of COVID-19 and the subsequent shutdowns and lockdowns. Some DJ owners had taken loans from banks and invested in their business before the outbreak. They suffered a huge loss.

Now they are a happy lot. "I have availed loans from the bank to start a DJ sound system business. During the pre-COVID-19 days, there were days when I had more than one call. The pandemic dealt us a severe blow, spoiling almost a year, causing us a huge loss. As the restrictions have been lifted, we are looking forward to better days. I have so far received five calls in just last eight days," said Rashmiranjan Sahu, a sound system owner.

Ishwar Behera, manager of Girang Music System, shared the same opinion as Rashmiranjan did.

The tent house owners and flower decorators are also equally exalted.

"Due to COVID-19 outbreak, all types of family functions were banned. We the tent house owners were jobless. Now it seems the situation will change for better," observed Dushmant Sahu, tent house owner, a resident of Kanyabeda.

A seemingly happy flower decorator, Abhijit Majhi said, "Flowers are required during any kind of function, be it family or social or political one. But the pandemic has shattered our financial condition. However, the situation seems to be improving with the lifting of restrictions. I have already had an order to decorate a wedding car."

The pandemic dealt us a severe blow, spoiling almost a year, causing us a huge loss. As the restrictions have been lifted, we are looking forward to better days. I have so far received five calls in just last eight days

RASHMIRANJAN SAHU | SOUND SYSTEM OWNER

Due to Covid, all types of family functions were banned. We, the tent house owners, were jobless. Now, it seems the situation will change for better

DUSHMANT SAHU | TENT HOUSE OWNER

19-year-old boy kills self after losing in online game

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh, Jan 18: Increasing online mobile phone game addiction has been proving lethal, the latest victim being a 19-year-old youth who died by suicide after losing in an online mobile phone game.

The deceased has been identified as Manoranjan Sarangi, a resident of Patharapunjji village under Ranpur block in Nayagarh district. He breathed his last Sunday while undergoing treatment.

According to a source, Manoranjan had been an online mobile phone game addict. He used to devote most of his leisure time to playing 'Free Fire' game

on his mobile phone. He had been upset for some days for having lost to other players.

Unable to cope with the situation, he took the extreme step January 15. He went to a nearby forested area and consumed pesticide. Reaching home, he narrated everything before his family members, informing them about his feeling chest pain and stomachache.

He was immediately rushed to Ranpur government hospital and then shifted to a Bhubaneswar-based private hospital for better treatment. But, he could not be saved. He succumbed while undergoing treatment.



No. O-903 e-mail: rwdmohana@gmail.com
GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION, MOHANA
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement
Identification No. Online Tender 03/MOHANA/2020-21

- Name of the Work : Road work
- Total No. Work : 03 (Three) Nos.
- Estimated Cost : Varies from Rs. 71.46 lakhs to Rs. 82.47 lakhs
- Class of Contractor : As per annexure
- Period of Completion : As per annexure
- Other Details:-

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	No. of Works	Availability of Tender online for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification	Date & Time of opening of tender	
			From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid
Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Mohana	Online Tender 03/MOHANA/2020-21	03 (Three) Nos. of road work	25.01.2021 from 10.00 AM	03.02.2021 upto 5.00 PM	01.02.2021 upto 5.00 PM	05.02.2021 at 11.30 AM	10.02.2021 at 11.30 AM

Further details can be seen from the Website www.tendersodisha.gov.in
 OIPR-25148/11/0003/2021 Sd./- Executive Engineer, R.W. Division, Mohana

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
AUL EMBANKMENT DIVISION, AUL
 Dist.- Kendrapara, Odisha-754219
 Tel./Fax: 0672-241530
 Mail Id: aulembankment@gmail.com
'e' Procurement Notice No. AED-09 of 2020-21

No. A-475- 1. Name of the work: 01 No. of flood control works. 2. Tender cost: Rs. 58.63 lakhs. 3. Bid document cost: Rs. 10,000.00. 4. Bid security: Rs. 58,700.00. 5. Class of contractor: B&A Class. 6. Period of completion: 45 days. 7. Other details are as follows:

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender online for bidding		Date of opening of technical bid
		From	To	
Executive Engineer, Aul Embankment Division, Aul	AUL 01 of 2020-21 (01 No. of work)	19.01.2021 10.00 A.M.	30.01.2021 5.00 P.M.	01.02.2021 11.00 A.M.

8. e-mail Id: aulembankment@gmail.com
 9. If required, lottery may be held on Dt. 10.02.2021 at 11.00 A.M.
 Further detail conditions can be seen from the Govt. website www.tendersodisha.gov.in
 Sd./- Executive Engineer, Aul Embankment Division, Aul
 OIPR-32004/11/0007/2021

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION-II, MALKANGIRI
 E-mail-ruralworksdivisioniimalkangiri@yahoo.in
INVITATION FOR BIDS | NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING
Bid Identification No.: RWDEE MKG II ONLINE 03/2020-21

No. O-907- The Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division-II, Malkangiri on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites from bidders of eligible class registered with the State Government and bidders of equivalent Grade / Class registered with Central Government / MES / Railways according to the norm of "e" Procurement system in online mode for the works detailed in the table below on turnkey basis.

1	2	3	4	5
Name of the work	Road Works			
No. of Works	01 No			
Estimated Cost	Rs. 12.82 lakhs			
Tender Paper Cost	Rs. 9,000/-			
Class of Contractor		Estimated cost up to ₹20.00 lakhs	Estimated cost more than ₹20.00 lakhs & within ₹300.00 lakhs	Estimated cost more than ₹300.00 lakhs & within ₹600.00 lakhs
		'D' & 'C'	'C' & 'B'	'B' & 'A'

6. Period of Completion : 03 (Three) calendar months
 7. Critical Dates

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender Online for Bidding From To	Last Date of seeking Tender Clarification	Date of opening of Technical Bid
Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division-II, Malkangiri	RWDEE MKG II ONLINE 03/2020-21	21.01.2021 at 11.00AM up to 05.00PM	28.01.2021 up to 05.00PM	29.01.2021 at 11.00AM

Further details can be seen in the bidding documents, which is available in the procurement portal <https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>. Subsequent corrigendum if required shall be appeared in the website. Authority reserves the right to reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.
 OIPR-25079/11/0007/2021 Sd./- Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division-II, Malkangiri

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE BIRAMITRAPUR MUNICIPALITY, BIRAMITRAPUR
"e" Procurement Notice
Tender ID: 2021_ORULB_65579
Tender Call Notice No.: 162/BM/2020-21 Date: 18.01.2021

- Name of work: Civil Construction works as mentioned in DTCN.
- No. of works: 04 Nos. of work.
- Bid value: Rs. 4.38 lakhs to Rs. 17.76 lakhs.
- Period of completion: As per DTCN.
- Date and time of availability, received of the bid documents in the portal: From 10.00 A.M. dated 19.01.2021 to dated 28.01.2021 upto 5.00 P.M. only.
- Bids received online shall be opened on dated: 29.01.2021 at 11.30 A.M.
- Name & address of the officer inviting bid: Executive Officer, Biramitrapur Municipality.

For further details can be seen from the procurement portal: <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>.
 Sd./- Executive Officer
 Biramitrapur Municipality

AFFIDAVIT
 By virtue of affidavit sworn before The Notary, Cuttack on dated 15.01.2021, I Sushila Agarwal, W/o: Laxman Agarwal, Residence at Mahatab Road, PO-Buxi Bazar, Cuttack has changed my name from Sushila Devi Agarwal to Sushila Agarwal according my Aadhar & PAN Card. Henceforth I shall be known as Sushila Agarwal for all purpose.
 Sushila Agarwal

EAST COAST RAILWAY
HIRING OF VEHICLE
 Tender Notice No. ELS-ANGL-OT-20-21-07
NAME OF WORK : HIRING OF MULTI UTILITY LIGHT ROAD VEHICLE WITH DRIVER & FUEL FOR ATTENTION OF BREAK DOWNS AND EMERGENT DUTIES, DERAILMENTS, ACCIDENTS AND FOR OTHER OFFICIAL USE OF DIVISIONAL ELECTRICAL ENGINEER / TRS / ANGUL FOR A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS.
 Advertised Value (₹): 12,76,614.87, EMD (₹): 25,500/-, Cost of Tender Document (₹): 2,360/-, Period of Completion: 36 Months.
 Bidding Start Date : 25.01.2021, Date and time of closing of tender : 1500 hrs of 08.02.2021.
 Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.
 Complete details including e-tender documents are available at <http://www.ireps.gov.in>.
 Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRS) PR-496/L/26-21 Angul

FOCUS ECONOMY

POST-PANDEMIC BUDGET



It is the first time in 40 years that a Budget is being presented after a recession, i.e. when the national income has contracted

investment. This is not as radical as it sounds, and indeed has been suggested by several committees. By privatising the holding company, the government can save some budgetary outgo. And by letting each public sector bank, which would become a subsidiary of the apex company run by their respective boards, it will also improve the governance in those banks.

Apart from the two obvious big commitments on infrastructure and banking, there is a plethora of asks, from various sectors, such as healthcare, startups, renewable energy, education and skilling, rural employment guarantee and so on. In particular,

after the experience of the pandemic, surely India's healthcare spending by the public sector must at least double to around 6 trillion rupees. If the vaccination is going to be provided free to all, as was promised before the Bihar elections, then that would mean an aggregate burden of at least 2 trillion rupees. Covering 500 million people with vaccines in about 18 months will be a

herculean task. But not only will this be a huge confidence booster for businesses and consumers, it will also prove to be a de facto fiscal stimulus.

Beyond these big initiatives, there are committed expenditures such as interest payments on past debt (about 6 trillion rupees), food and fertilizer subsidies (3 trillion rupees), military spending including the OROP pension cost (6 trillion rupees). That leaves very little room for game-changing ideas or radical departures from the past. Perhaps this will be seen on the revenue side. May be floating a Covid bond or a sovereign dollar bond to raise

resources? Or a gold amnesty scheme to unlock part of the huge horde in the country? We will find out soon enough!

The writer is an economist and Senior Fellow, Takshashila Institution. Views are personal.

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The annual Union Budget will be presented in less than two weeks. It is a constitutional requirement, since not even a single rupee can be spent from the exchequer without the Parliament's permission. The discussion and debate around the Budget

proposals might be heated, but given the majority of the ruling party, the passage of the budget proposals is a given. The Upper House of Parliament does not have any effective veto over the passage of the finance bill. Most of the Budget-related measures and initiatives are probably frozen by now. Even then it is worth speculating what they might be.

The Budget is being presented under fairly unusual circumstances. It is the first time in 40 years that a Budget is being presented after a recession, i.e. when the national income has contracted. The expectation is that in real terms, GDP for the fiscal year 2020-21 fell by around 8 per cent, and in nominal terms by around 4 per cent. In normal times of positive GDP growth budgeting is done mostly as an extrapolation of the

previous year. That is not to say, that completely new, and radical measures cannot be contemplated. But most projections and proposals on an aggregate basis are increments over the previous year. Thus, if nominal GDP grows by around 12 per cent, then tax growth is budgeted at say 18 to 20 per cent and so on. For next year's budget such increments to base line are not likely nor are they appropriate. If anything, the finance minister is likely to pay little attention to the size of the fiscal deficit. Growth

stimulus and employment generation are the highest priorities. Which means that the aggregate budget size could be as high as rupees 36 trillion or about 20 per cent higher than last year's budget size. In turn the size of the deficit, which is also the size of aggregate borrowings, could be as high as 12 trillion rupees, or about 6 per cent of the GDP.

Two areas where the Central government needs to put more resources in the coming fiscal year are infrastructure and banking. Just a few months before last year's lockdown, the finance minister had unveiled the national infrastructure pipeline, a collection of over 7,000 projects aggregating 111 trillion rupees of spending over a period of five years. Of course, bulk of the spending will be from the private sector, both domestic and foreign. It will be a combination of equity and debt financing. That translates to roughly 22 trillion rupees to be spent every year. Surely at least 10 to 15 per cent of that should come via government sources, whether financed through sovereign infrastructure bonds or as directly provided seed money. Thus, the budget should make a provision of no less than 2 to 3 trillion rupees toward infrastructure.

The second area is that of banking. The recent financial stability report published by the Reserve Bank of India gives a very sobering picture of bank capital requirement. During the lockdown phase the regulator has shown much forbearance. We have had a moratorium and a standstill on the recognition of failed loan repayments. So quite

counter-intuitively, the non-performing asset ratio of banks has improved in the September ending quarter. But the day of reckoning is not far. When the moratorium period is over, and this issue is currently stuck in the Supreme Court, then the NPA ratio might jump. Additionally, as indicated by the KV Kamath committee report, there are 26 sectors undergoing stress, and those loans, cumulatively worth 48 trillion rupees need restructuring, so that they are not classified as non-performing loans. As indicated by the RBI report, if the bad loan ratio rises to 12 per cent, it would call for at least a 2 trillion-rupee injection by the Central government into public sector banks. This capital injection is necessary to support loan and credit growth to the rest of the economy. If the economy has to grow at 7 or 8 per cent, then bank credit must grow at 15 to 20 per cent, which means there has to be adequate banking capital to support such loan growth.

The Union Budget has to provide for this banking capital. Of course, it can also be raised by privatisation. All the distributed bank ownership can be consolidated in a holding super-company, which can invite up to 75 per cent private



Ajit Ranade

AFTER THE EXPERIENCE OF THE PANDEMIC, SURELY INDIA'S HEALTHCARE SPENDING BY THE PUBLIC SECTOR MUST AT LEAST DOUBLE TO AROUND 6 TRILLION RUPEES

35 Turns To 335

In order to see, you have to stop being in the middle of the picture.

SRI AUROBINDO



Nepal Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali's three-day trip to India ending January 16 was an opportunity for New Delhi to repair the fractured relations between the two countries and make amends for the bungling by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the past few years that increasingly pushed Nepal to the Chinese embrace. The visit was timed significantly when Nepal is plunged in a political turmoil with the dissolution of the parliament by Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli followed by China's hectic activities to interfere with Nepal's internal affairs triggering a backlash from the Nepalese people. However, judging by the utterances of Gyawali and the response from Delhi, the trip seems like it could not produce the results Nepal was expecting. This must be music to Chinese ears.

Nepal wants India to revisit what it believes an unfair 1950 Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship to incorporate 'changes and new realities' of bilateral ties. The contentious boundary issues, in the perception of Kathmandu, can be resolved through 'facts, evidence and historical documents.' Gyawali did acknowledge Nepal's controversial map showing Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura regions as its own has caused "a few misunderstandings." China has been exploiting these misunderstandings to the hilt to bring Nepal within its orbit and advance its geopolitical-economic agenda. The least the MEA could have done was to massage Nepal's ego by arranging a meeting between the foreign minister and the Prime Minister. This was what the Nepalese delegation, led by Gyawali, was keenly expecting because when Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla had visited the Himalayan nation November last, Oli had met him.

Nepal wants India to treat it as an equal partner. "To mirror the aspirations of the people, we have to address a few outstanding issues as well. Nepal has put on the table the revision of the 1950 friendship treaty so as to reflect the new realities," Gyawali told the media in Delhi. He iterated that this was one of the main points highlighted in the report prepared by the Eminent Persons' Group (EPG) on Nepal-India relations formed in 2016 under a joint mandate by the Prime Ministers of India and Nepal. The EPG finalised its report and submitted it to the respective PMs in 2018. But, no progress has been made since then.

However, the current border tensions and India's reluctance to consider the EPG's proposals indicate the relations between the two countries may be heading for even rougher waters. For, India will only press further its claims over Nepal's borders in view of the escalation of conflict with China, while China could pull the strings from behind and possibly throw its weight behind the inclusion of Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura in Nepal's map. China's design on Nepal is to use the country as a buffer to protect its possession of Tibet and also push its ambitious and multi-national One Belt One Road initiative that will run across Nepal as well.

Nepal has been trying hard to strike a balance of power between India, China, and other nations, including the US. But, India's closer cooperation with the US through signing of several military treaties, leaves Nepal with no other option but to fall back on China. In Nepal's scheme of things China, armed with resources and capital, far outweighs India, but it is wary of China's aggressive muscle-flexing in the region. Nepal is caught in a bind as any independent policy it pursues is being interpreted by India as China-fed.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi began well after assuming power in 2014, being the first foreign leader to address Nepal's Constituent Assembly-cum-Parliament. He then promised to settle the boundary issues, including Kalapani and Susta, 'once and for all.' But, trouble started in 2015 when Modi and then Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj expressed their deep resentment for the new Constitution which the Nepali government released that year under Oli's first tenure as PM. The Constitution did not cover the demands of people from the Terai region - inhabited by Madhesi and Tharus.

China, meanwhile, had started making inroads in Nepal. During Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Nepal in October 2019, on his way back from India, Beijing made Kathmandu its strategic partner. This was a recognition that China had bestowed only on India under the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship.

Since then, India has been rapidly losing grip over Nepal. Had India dealt with the issue on time, the area under negotiation would have been 35 sq km, instead of 335 sq km that Nepal has included now as part of its territory.

WISDOM CORNER

- Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth. **MUHAMMAD ALI**
- Love and work are the cornerstones of our humanness. **SIGMUND FREUD**
- You drown not by falling into a river, but by staying submerged in it. **PAULO COELHO**

WORDSWORTH

Yaffle

Yaffle is a local or dialect English name for the green woodpecker. Readers familiar with the cult BBC children's television series Bagpuss will know of Professor Yaffle, who is indeed a woodpecker. On the rare occasions one sees rather than hears a green woodpecker - with its green back, yellow rump and a crimson head that flashes in the sunlight as it turns its long bill - it seems too exotic to be a native British bird. Mostly, the signal that one is nearby is its characteristic laughing call, which provoked this odd name for the bird. Other names for it, now rare, include rain bird (because its cry was said to bring wet weather), hickwall, wickwall, woodwall, and yucelle, though these have turned up in so many forms in various British dialects, such as eccle or icckwall, that their links are sometimes hard to detect. While we're sure yaffle is imitative (the word could at one time also refer to the yelp of a dog), the other names are much harder to pin down; the Oxford English Dictionary hazards a guess that they, too, might be imitative, but they're so old that they have been transformed out of recognition. It has a number of other senses, derived from various English dialect words. It can be a description of somebody who is eating greedily, which is known in this sense in Royal Navy slang. And in the Newfoundland dialect it refers to a handful. This is from another English dialect word, spelled yafful in the English Dialect Dictionary.

LOL

A reward

Once there was a millionaire, who collected live alligators. He kept them in the pool in the back of his mansion. The millionaire also had a beautiful daughter who was single. One day he decides to throw a huge party, and during the party he announces, "My dear guests...I have a proposition to every man here. I will give one million dollars or my daughter to the man who can swim across this pool full of alligators and emerge alive!" As soon as he finished his last word, there was the sound of a large splash! There was one guy in



the pool swimming with all he could and screaming out of fear. The crowd cheered him on as he kept stroking as though he was running for his life. Finally, he made it to the other side with only a torn shirt and some minor injuries. The millionaire was impressed. He said, "My boy that was incredible! Fantastic! I didn't think it could be done! Well I must keep my end of the bargain. Do you want my daughter or the one million dollars?" The guy says, "Listen, I don't want your money, nor do I want your daughter! I want the person who pushed me in that water!"

SPECTRUM CULTURE

The legend of Sunanda Patnaik

One of my life's greatest satisfactions is the rare privilege I had to know a legend from close quarters. Her name was Vidushi Sunanda Patnaik. She passed away on this day a year ago, but her mystery, aura and genius are yet to be fully discovered and appreciated especially in her land of birth - Odisha.



Dhanada K Mishra

HER MYSTERY, AURA AND GENIUS ARE YET TO BE FULLY DISCOVERED AND APPRECIATED ESPECIALLY IN HER LAND OF BIRTH

Born on 7 November, 1934 to one of Odisha's greatest poets - Sabuja Kabi Baikunthanath Patnaik, she wanted to learn classical music having heard the voice of Pandit Vinayak Rao Pattavardhan of Gwalior gharana on radio. Her initial interest was frowned upon by elders in the family as singing was taboo! In spite of stiff resistance, the strong willed Sunanda insisted on carrying on with her pursuit. Her early training with Kundala Adi Narayana led her to sing on the All India Radio at the tender age of 14. The then Governor of Odisha Asaf Ali heard her on the radio and invited her to perform in front of the visiting President of India Dr Rajendra Prasad. He was so impressed that a scholarship was arranged for her to go to Pune and learn from her original inspiration, Pandit Pattavardhan himself. Having completed her Masters in Music in 1956 in Pune, she performed at the All India Sadarang Sangeet Sammelan in Kolkata in



September 1957. She shared her experience of that first concert in Kolkata when I first met her in 2011. She was scheduled to perform in between two major performances by two of the greatest instrumentalists of the time who were at their peak. As the first concert got over, most of the audience took a break thinking the debut performance of an unknown new girl from Odisha can be given a miss! As she started singing the auditorium was almost empty. Suddenly, the clouds burst and rains started pouring in forcing most of the people to come back inside. It was such a miraculous turn of events because by the time she completed her recital, people were on their feet cheering for her and asking for more. In fact, she went on to give a second unscheduled con-

cert and had the record of having performed every year since at this prestigious event. No wonder she chose to settle down in Kolkata instead of Odisha where her talent and passion were less appreciated!

This first encounter with her was unforgettable! Nobody gave me any chance of success in convincing her to perform in Odisha. When I called her after reaching Kolkata, she was almost furious and wanted to have nothing to do with me, SPIC MACAY or performance. However, somehow I was persistent, pleaded with her and managed to get her to allow me to meet her. While she had agreed to a very short meeting of a few minutes, we had a long chat that evening. Not only she agreed to come for our programme but eventually would come back a few more occasions.

Her concert for the SPIC MACAY convention was scheduled for the last day during the over-night series. She was to perform at around 3 AM in the morning and the audience was packed with more than 1,500 people. It felt as if all of Cuttack had showed up to make amends for the years of negligence! She had shared with me that almost two decades earlier, when she had performed last in Odisha it was also at Ravenshaw University. She had faced some very unsavoury behaviour from ignorant members

in the audience at that time. When she finished her recital on this occasion and expressed her satisfaction at the standing ovation from a large, knowledgeable and appreciative audience, it was the best possible reward I could have ever hoped for my efforts. It was the veritable return of the prodigal daughter!

The only time Odisha did something for her was when another legendary son of our state former Chief Minister Biju Patnaik had personally requested her to come to Odisha and had allotted a land in Puri for a music school. Unfortunately, her effort of building an institution never fructified as she faced a barrage of obstacles. One can only hope that the slew of promises that were made last year in her memory would be kept by the government and others. She will continue to live in the hearts of music lovers for all time to come and inspire future generations of aspiring musicians.

The author is a professor at KMBB College of Engineering under Biju Patnaik University of Technology currently working in Hong Kong. He has been a volunteer of SPIC MACAY since college days and can be reached by email at dhanadam@gmail.com.

The rise of Indian-Americans

Sir, This refers to the news item "Biden ropes in 20 Indian-Americans in his admin," published in Orissa Post on January 18. US President-elect Joe Biden has appointed 20 Indian-Americans, with 17 of them in White House positions while 13 out of the 20 happen to be women. Leading the charge is of course Vice-President-elect Kamala Harris. From finance and management to health, law to press relations, foreign policy to national security, those who trace their roots to India have found space in Team Biden. This is indeed a reflection of how well the Indian-Americans (who constitute about 1 per cent of the US population) have done well in their homeland. This also reflects their talent and acumen, and more importantly none of these appointments have raised any eyebrows. But even as India takes justifiable pride in the achievements of these individuals, it is important to remember that all those who are in the new administration are American citizens. Their first loyalty is to the US constitution and US national interests as defined by the President who has appointed them. Yes, their presence will enhance the understanding of India in the administration and is symbolic of close ties. But these individuals have their own varied social and political influences and world-views. India would do well to cultivate them, as it would cultivate any US official at high levels, but respect their identity beyond their Indian roots.

Splendid Siraj

Sir, Kudos to Mohammad Siraj for the 5-wicket haul at the Gabba, Brisbane and becoming the highest wicket taker for India in the current series. Siraj received immense appreciation for his splendid performance in the fourth Test against the mighty Aussies from cricket fans all over India after facing crowd abuse in two consecutive days at the Test match at the SCG. He led the Indian pace attack, with only two-Test experience behind him, remarkably well in the absence of Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami, and Umesh Yadav. Before the start of the current Border-Gavaskar series Down Under, he lost his father in India. By keeping the grief of his father's demise within himself, Siraj has decided to stay with the team India even though he was permitted to attend the funeral of his father.

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

N Sadasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

V Nagendra Kumar, HYDERABAD

Amid attack on AP temples, Jagan to meet Shah today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Amaravati, Jan 18: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy will visit New Delhi Tuesday for a meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah, official sources here said.

Though the sources did not specify whether the Chief Minister has been summoned to give an explanation, the sudden visit assumes significance as it comes after the state BJP leaders lodged complaints with the Centre against the Jagan Mohan Reddy government over the recent desecration of idols in temples.

The state BJP, in fact, has alleged the state police under the leadership of Director General of Police DG Sawang had not only 'utterly failed' in protecting the temples and the idols but also "intentionally, deliberately and carelessly issuing statements defaming and damaging the reputation of the party." BJP MP GVL Narasimha Rao spoke to Amit Shah and complained about the attacks on temples and the failure of the state government in not only preventing the acts of vandalism but also in bringing the culprits to book.

In the temple chariot burning case in Anatarvedi in September last the state government did write to the Centre seeking a CBI investigation, but the Central agency is yet to take up the case.

The Chief Minister is expected to take up the issue with the Union



BJP SEEKS ANDHRA DGP'S REMOVAL

Visakhapatnam: BJP's Andhra Pradesh unit has reacted strongly to Director General of Police Gautam Sawang's statement blaming the BJP leaders for a series of attacks on temples in the state and demanded his removal. Party's state unit chief Somu Veerajulu demanded that Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy should respond immediately to remove Gautam Sawang from the DGP's post for making baseless allegations. Addressing a news conference here Sunday, the BJP leader said Reddy should respond to the remarks made by the police chief. He said it was unfortunate that instead of taking action against those involved in the attacks on temples, false cases were being booked against the BJP cadres. Somu Veerajulu said the YSR Congress government should specify what is its objective. He alleged that the government is working to hurt the religious sentiments of Hindus.

Home Minister, sources said.

The state, during its winter session of the Legislature in December last, passed a modified legislation the AP Disha (Special Courts for Specified Offences against Women and Children) Bill 2020 which requires the Presidents assent upon clearance by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs. The state Assembly's resolution seeking abolition of the AP Legislative Council is also awaiting the Centre's approval.

These issues too are expected to come up in the discussions between the two, the sources added.

As his government is keen on locating the state's Executive Capital in port city Visakhapatnam and launching the functioning by Telugu New Year's Day Ugadi in April, the Chief Minister is expected to brief Shah on the current legal imbroglio that has been holding up the move.

Andhra's Anglican schools are dying

Even as these schools shut down one after the other, there was gross inaction and negligence from successive governments of the day

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Doddanapudi (AP), Jan 18: In a distressing development for Andhra Pradesh, several Anglican schools, which did decades long yeoman service in taking free education to the most oppressed sections of the society, have shut down over the years.

Even as these schools shut down one after the other, there was gross inaction and negligence from successive governments of the day and officials who let them suffer a silent death.

Anglican schools closed down in Kalla, Doddanapudi and Yelurupadu in West Godavari district and Takkellapadu village in Krishna district, including other places whose data was not shared by the Church of South India's (CSI) Krishna-Godavari diocese.

The four defunct schools mentioned above belong to the Krishna-Godavari diocese of CSI, which are headed by the local bishop of the diocese, Cornelius. CSI and the Church of North India (CNI) are linked to the Anglican Church or the Church of England, which was brought to India by the British some centuries ago. In addition to establishing churches, CSI and CNI have also established several schools and colleges across the length and the breadth of the country, some of which went on to become the most famous and sought after educational institutions.

Some educational institutions linked to the Anglican church include St. Stephen's College in Delhi, Bishop Cotton Boys and Girls Schools (Bangalore), The Cathedral and John Connon School (Mumbai) and many others where children from the most elite families in India have obtained education and continue to do so. A large number of serving and retired bureaucrats went to St. Stephen's College, including the newly appointed Telangana High Court Chief Justice Hima Kohli.

However, in stark contrast, when these schools and colleges continue to thrive, their sister organisations or schools located in rural places and poor neighbourhoods in Andhra Pradesh, which served the most backward of communities, are dying. For instance, CSI schools in Doddanapudi, Kalla, Yelurupadu and Takkellapadu functioned inside localities where scheduled caste communities live.

"These schools did not have the means or resources to have their own buildings, so they used to make do with the church building as the school from Monday to Saturday. On Sunday, the church would function as a regular church," T. Suguna Rao, a retired teacher who worked at CSI Yelurupadu and Doddanapudi schools, told IANS.

Students of each class were made to sit apart to resemble classrooms with no partitions in one big hall, which was the church. Despite the



deprivation of basic facilities, Dalit students living near the church-cum-schools used to attend, where they picked up the life skills of reading and writing.

A decent number of students did succeed in their education and went on to bag jobs in the government as well as private companies, altering the trajectory of their life, empowered with education.

Vijayamma from Doddanapudi highlighted that the connect she had with the students cannot be found in a government school.

As a teacher in the local CSI school, Vijayamma would know all the families, parents and their children, facilitated by the regular interaction between all of them, including visits to their homes.

G. Joseph Raju, a CBCNC (Convention of Baptist Churches Northern Circars) school teacher from Akividu, complained that almost 50 per cent of the CBCNC schools have shut down.

"CBCNC used to have 240 schools in seven districts, out of which 80-100 schools have shut down. No new teacher recruitment happened since 1998," Raju said.

Currently working in the Akividu CBCNC school, Raju is set to superannuate in 2021 and one of his colleagues deputed to the Aibhimavaram school to save it from closure earlier will be forced to return. With no teacher left at Aibhimavaram, that school, according to Raju, will ultimately shut down in some months.

Andhra Pradesh school education principal secretary B. Rajsekhar did not answer calls or replied to the message sent by IANS, while his deputy, school education commissioner Vadrevu Chinna Veerabhadru, called back and asked for more information but never got back as to what measures the government took to revive these minority aided schools.

Is friction on rise between Scindia, Tomar?

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Gwalior, Jan 18: Rajya Sabha MP Jyotiraditya Scindia played a major role in the BJP coming back to power in Madhya Pradesh, but due to the increasing activity of Scindia in the Gwalior-Chambal region it is fast turning into a political storm. There are also indications that the relationship between Scindia and Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Narendra Singh Tomar has turned sour.

Jyotiraditya Scindia's recent visit to the Gwalior-Chambal region has already scripted a new political story. Morena is the parliamentary constituency of Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar where 25 people died recently due to consumption of spurious liquor in two villages. Scindia not only shared the grief of the victims' families by visiting the villages but also gave financial aid of Rs 50,000 each to the families of the affected people.

Scindia assured them that the state government will take strict action against the culprits. The former Union minister said he may not stand with the people in happier times but was with them in the time of crisis.

During Scindia's stay in Morena and Gwalior, no major leader from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was seen alongside him. However, those who recently left the Congress and joined the BJP including cabinet ministers in the current Shivraj



ALL IS NOT WELL

WHILE SCINDIA HAS HIS OWN STYLE OF FUNCTIONING, THE BJP OPERATES UNDER A SYSTEM, HAS ITS OWN ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE. IT IS NOT EASY FOR SCINDIA TO COMPLETELY GEL IN THE BJP, SAY POLITICAL ANALYSTS

AFTER THE RESULTS, THE FISSURES BETWEEN THE TWO LEADERS BECAME MORE VISIBLE

THE MORENA HOCH TRAGEDY HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO LEADERS IS NOT THE SAME AS IT USED TO BE

POLITICAL ANALYSTS BELIEVE THAT WHILE SCINDIA HAS HIS OWN STYLE OF FUNCTIONING, THE BJP OPERATES UNDER A SYSTEM, HAS ITS OWN ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND A SET OF RULES AND PROCEDURES. IT IS NOT EASY FOR SCINDIA TO COMPLETELY GEL IN THE BJP.

Singh Chouhan government such as Pradhuman Singh Tomar, Suresh Rathkheda, OPS Bhadoria, were present. People associated with the BJP and minister Bharat Singh Kushwah, who is considered close

to Tomar, stayed away. The day after Scindia's visit, Tomar also reached out to the affected families. During the visit by Tomar, no minister who is a supporter of Scindia, was seen there.

Tomar said he spoke to the Chief Minister on the day of the tragedy and is in constant touch with him.

Strict action needs to be taken against those found guilty in the incident. We all need to share the sorrow in this hour of grief. People will take lessons from this incident so that such cases are not repeated, Tomar added.

According to BJP sources, the friction between Scindia and Tomar began to increase during the recent Assembly by-elections. After the results, the fissures between the two leaders became more visible. The Morena hooch tragedy has made it clear that the relationship between the two leaders is not the same as it used to be.

On the one hand, where the friction between Scindia and Tomar is increasing, on the other hand, Chief Minister Chouhan and BJP state President Vishnu Datt Sharma openly applauded Scindia and credited him for the BJP forming the government in the state.

Political analyst Dev Shrimali believes that while Scindia has his own style of functioning, the BJP operates under a system, has its own organisational structure and a set of rules and procedures. It is not easy for Scindia to completely gel in the BJP. This is the reason that during his stay, old BJP leaders and workers were not seen, only those who left the Congress and joined the BJP were present there.

MP minister, Protem Speaker seek ban on webseries 'Tandav'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, Jan 18: Madhya Pradesh minister Vishvas Sarang and state Assembly's protem Speaker Rameshwar Sharma Monday appealed to Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar to ban Amazon Prime Video's series "Tandav" for allegedly ridiculing Hindu deities.

Talking to PTI, Sarang said it is "very unfortunate" that deities of a majority community are ridiculed like this.

"A censor board is needed for the OTT segment as it is increasingly becoming popular," he said.

"I have written a letter to the information and broadcasting (I&B) minister demanding a ban on this series. I also said there should be a law to control the OTT platforms," Sarang informed.

The minister said he has also mailed a letter to the CEO of Amazon Prime to immediately withdraw the web series.

"If they do not withdraw this web series, we will appeal to the society to boycott such OTT platforms. I request everyone to send mails in this regard to the CEO of the OTT platform," he said.

MP Assembly's protem Speaker Rameshwar Sharma also urged Javadekar to ban "Tandav" web se-



ries, and said various organisations and individuals have opposed it as it allegedly ridiculed the Hindu deities. "There should be a law in the country to stop the efforts to mock Hindu deities on such OTT platforms. Why people do not dare to mock other religions? Why are Hindu deities ridiculed every time? This web series should be banned," Sharma told PTI.

Earlier, BJP MP Manoj Kotak and party's Mumbai MLA Ram Kadam had also raised objections over the web series.

"Tandav", starring actors Saif Ali Khan, Dimple Kapadia, Sunil Grover, Tigraanshu Dholia, Dino Morea, Kumud Mishra, Mohd Zeeshan Ayyub, Gauhar Khan and Kritika Kamra, premiered on the

streaming platform Friday. Filmmaker Ali Abbas Zafar has created, directed and produced the political drama with Himanshu Kishan Mehra and it is written by Gaurav Solanki, best known for "Article 15".

Taking cognisance of complaints over the web series, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Sunday sought an explanation from the Amazon Prime Video on the issue. The government recently brought OTT platforms, such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video and Disney+ Hotstar, besides other on-line news and current affairs content, under the ambit of the I&B ministry, giving it powers to regulate policies and rules for the digital space.

A teacher who worships girl students at school

Bhaiya Lal Soni, in-charge of primary school at Loharwara in Katni district of Madhya Pradesh, worships girl students and washes their feet with 'ganga jal' every day. Only after doing this, he begins teaching and other work. He has been doing this for around 23 years without fail

INDO ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Katni (MP), Jan 18: Setting a unique example, a teacher at a school in Madhya Pradesh starts teaching only after worshipping girl students every day. He has been following this for more than 23 years.

Bhaiya Lal Soni, in-charge of primary school at Loharwara in Katni district of Madhya Pradesh, worships girl students and washes their feet with 'ganga jal' every day. Only after doing this, he begins teaching and other work. He has been doing it for around 23 years without any fail under a special campaign named "Humara Ghar, Hamara Vidyalaya". Even when schools were forced to remain closed during the coronavirus pandemic, he did not forget to do 'kanya puja' in 'mohalla classes'. "I began 'Namami Janani' campaign with a pious mind with an aim to give due respect to women and girls. We regularly



wash girls' feet with 'ganga jal' before daily prayers and perform 'pooja' as it is done during 'Navratra kanya puja'," said Soni. The Shivraj Singh Chouhan government of Madhya Pradesh

has decided that January 25, on the occasion of Good Governance Day, all government programmes will begin with the worship of girls. Praising the government's decision, Soni said, "We are run-

ning the 'Namami Janani' campaign to pay respect to women and girls, as well as, we are trying to give a message of cleanliness and eradicating untouchability." When asked that how this

idea came to his mind, Soni said, "I got the inspiration from my family. I also noticed that the women don't get the due respect in the society that they actually deserve. Hence, I started this program as an initiative to change people's mindset."

"I have decided that I would respect 'daughters' for whole life so that an atmosphere of morality would be developed and immoral acts would be stopped," he added. Sukhraj Singh, the former sarpanch of the village, said that this 'kanya puja' is being done in the school since more than two decades. "This is a good initiative towards respecting women and girls. When they perform this pooja every day before prayers, it mesmerises people. Everyone praises this effort." Soni has been felicitated for this exemplary work from district to state level. His name has also been included in the India and Asia Book of Records.

AP introduces app to monitor attendance of school students



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Amaravati, Jan 18: In a bid to ensure that students of government schools in Andhra Pradesh do not play truant, the state government Monday launched a special mobile application to monitor the regular attendance of the students in all the schools.

The app was designed to review the students' attendance, which can be accessed both by the teachers and the parents.

Officials said that 90 per cent of the information pertaining to the guardians and their wards has been furnished into the app.

The application will send an alert message to the parents about their child's attendance on a daily

basis. The same message will also be sent to the village and ward volunteer, an integral cog in the decentralisation of governance system introduced in the southern state.

"If the child is absent for more than two days, a volunteer will visit the household and ascertain the reasons," said the official.

Besides, there will also be a monthly review of students' attendance in the presence of parents committee, village or ward volunteer and education and welfare assistant.

Andhra Pradesh is laying significant emphasis on education with schemes such as Nadu - Nedu, Amma Vodi and others to invest in the future generation.

national



“We are not going to the national capital to fight. We will celebrate the R-Day in Delhi, earlier we used to celebrate it in the fields and villages. Now we are here in Delhi so we will celebrate the day here”
RAKESH TIKAIT | NATIONAL SPOKESPERSON OF BHARATIYA KISAN UNION

TWO BOGIES OF TRAIN DERAIL IN LUCKNOW

Two bogies of a train which was on its way to Jaynagar from Amritsar derailed in Lucknow Monday morning. No casualty has been reported in the incident and the 4674 Shahid Express has left for its onward journey



of the day quote

Maharashtra CM's raking up border issue with us is smacked with arrogance and audacity. His statement on Belagavi is a slap on the face of the country's federal structure
BS YEDIYURAPPA | KARNATAKA CHIEF MINISTER

Even if a person takes Crocin or Paracetamol, they may develop allergic reactions. There is nothing to worry about (the Covid vaccine). There is no side-effect which would result in death
RANDEEP GULERIA | AIIMS DIRECTOR

Burn injury is one of the biggest causes of workforce loss and this is an issue of concern for a rapidly developing economy like India...
HARSH VARDHAN | UNION HEALTH MINISTER

Govt to procure more MiG-29s, Sukhois

India is now trying to acquire 21 MiG-29 and 12 Sukhoi 30MKI fighters from Russia to upgrade its existing fleet

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 18: After signing a deal with Russia to procure S-400 missile system, India is now trying to acquire 21 MiG-29 and 12 Sukhoi 30MKI fighters from the country to upgrade its existing fleet. Sources said that the government will soon issue the RPF (request for proposal) for the 21 MiG-29 fighters to the Russian state-run defence export arm Rosoboronexport.

Last week the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) had given its nod to the production of 83 indigenous Tejas jets. The CCS has given the clearance for Rs 46,898 crore for the production of Tejas fighters.

According to sources in the Defence Ministry, the government will acquire the 21 MiG-29s at a relatively low price. The IAF already has 59 such fighters. On the other hand, the 12 Sukhoi-30MKIs will add to the 272 jets, orders for which have been placed with



Last week the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) had given its nod to the production of 83 indigenous Tejas jets

The IAF already has 59 such fighters. On the other hand, the 12 Sukhoi-30MKIs will add to the 272 jets, orders for which have been placed with Rosoboronexport for \$15 billion

As the IAF has been phasing out the obsolete MiG-21s, MiG-23s and MiG-27s, the fleet is currently down having only about 30 squadrons

Rosoboronexport for \$15 billion. The government has obtained the licence to produce the bulk of these jets at Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL). The IAF has already inducted 268 of the 272 Sukhoi-30MKIs. However, nine of them have been lost in crashes over the years. While the IAF has plans to induct 83 new Tejas fighters by January 2024-December 2028, the inclusion of the new MiG-29s and Sukhoi-30MKIs aim to stem the

freefall in the number of fighters owned by it. As the IAF has been phasing out the obsolete MiG-21s, MiG-23s and MiG-27s, the fleet is currently down having only about 30 squadrons, while no less than 42 are need to deal with the threats from neighbouring Pakistan and China.

As the MiG-21 "Bisons" squadrons are also expected to be phased out by 2024, the Defence Ministry gave the nod to acquire ad-

ditional 21 MiG-29s in July 2020. The MiG-29s come with the latest avionics and electronic warfare suites and also help to upgrade the 59 existing jets with the IAF at an estimated cost of Rs 7,418 crore.

On the other hand, the government will spend around Rs 10, 730 crore for the 12 twin-seat Sukhois, which will come with advanced electronic warfare capabilities in addition to additional supplies and spares.

It's our constitutional right to take out tractor rally: Farmer unions

Protesting union leaders Monday asserted that thousands of people will participate in the proposed event, January 26



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 18: Protesting union leaders Monday said that farmers have a constitutional right to take out their tractor rally peacefully and asserted that thousands of people will participate in the proposed event January 26.

The Supreme Court said Monday that the Delhi Police is the first authority to decide the entry of protesting farmers into the national capital.

Bhartiya Kisan Union (Lakhnowal) Punjab general secretary Paramjit Singh said that farmers are not going to hold their rally on Rajpath and in other high-security areas, adding that they would only take out it on the Outer Ring Road in Delhi and that there will be no disruption in the official Republic Day parade.

"We are stuck at the Delhi borders. We have not decided to sit at these borders ourselves, we have been stopped from entering Delhi. We will take out the rally peacefully without disrupting any law and order. We will exercise our constitutional right and we will definitely enter Delhi," Singh told this news agency.

Another farmer leader Lakhbir Singh, who is vice president (Punjab) of All India Kisan Sabha, said that farmers will return to protest sites after taking out the tractor rally on the Outer Ring Road January 26.

"We will not go to any place where there might be a government gathering, and all our tractors will have a national flag and the flags of our farmer unions," Lakhbir said. Asked about their stand in case the Delhi Police does not give them permission for the tractor parade, BKU (Elkta Ugrahan) president Joginder Singh Ugrahan said that farmers have constitutional rights to hold the tractor rally peacefully.

"If the Delhi Police has some issues over law and order on Republic Day, they can sit with Sankyukt Kisan Morcha and tell about alternatives routes for the tractor rally. Thereafter, our farmers' committee will decide the same. But, it is very clear that their tractor rally will be taken out in the national capital January 26," Ugrahan said.

Thousands of farmers, mostly from Punjab and Haryana, have been camping at several Delhi borders since November 28, demanding a repeal of farm laws.

Covid-19: Lowest fatalities in 8 months

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 18: The daily coronavirus infections fell below 14,000 for the second time this month taking India's Covid-19 caseload to 1,05,71,773, while 145 new fatalities were recorded, the lowest in around eight months, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated Monday.

A total of 13,788 infections have been reported in a day. The country's death toll increased to 1,52,419 with 145 daily new fatalities, the data updated at 8 am showed. The recoveries have crossed 1.02 crore.

The daily Covid-19 infections were 12,548 January 12. The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 1,02,11,342 pushing the national Covid-19 recovery rate of 96.59 per cent, while the Covid-19 case fatality rate stands at 1.44 per cent.

NO CHILD'S PLAY



Workers of Torrent Power Limited remove kites and thread tangled up in electric power cables in Ahmedabad PTI PHOTO

Two scribes charged with sedition

The Frontier Manipur executive editor Paojel Chaoba and editor-in-chief Dhiren Sadokpam were arrested by the Manipur Police

AGENCIES

Imphal, Jan 18: Two journalists in Manipur have been charged with sedition and arrested under the stringent anti-terror law - the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) - over an article published in The Frontier Manipur, a local news portal.

The Frontier Manipur executive editor Paojel Chaoba and editor-in-chief Dhiren Sadokpam were arrested by the Manipur Police. They have been accused of serious charges like criminal conspiracy, causing alarm to induce offence against the state and supporting terror organisation.



The news website published an article, "Revolutionary Journey in a Mess", by M Joy Luwang January 8 - that criticises Manipur's "armed revolutionary groups" for straying from the "revolutionary cause".

A first information report or FIR was filed by the state police suo moto, or out of its own accord, which named the author of the articles and the two editors as ac-

cused. The Frontier Manipur executive editor Paojel Chaoba has also been accused of sedition.

"The author endorsed revolutionary ideologies and activities and expressed dismay at the deteriorating character of the armed revolutionary leaders of Manipur in the recent decade. His article clearly expressed sympathy and support to the ideologies and activities of the armed revolutionary groups and out rightly called the rule of law of the Union and State government as colonial law. The author endorsed revolutionary ideologies and activities and expressed dismay at the deteriorating character of the armed revolutionary leaders.

Kerala has lowest school dropout rate in country

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 18: Kerala has the lowest school dropout rate in the country at 0.11 per cent as compared to the national average of 4.13 per cent, state Education Minister C Raveendranath told the Assembly Monday.

While replying to a question posed by legislator K Rajan (CPI), the minister said Kerala has witnessed a rise in strength of students in public schools of the state.

"Around 6.79 lakh new students enrolled in government schools in the state. The graph of the rate of admission in the public schools is constantly rising in the state," Raveendranath said.

He said in 2019-2020, the dropout rate has gone down to 0.11 per

cent from 0.22 per cent in 2016-17. "As per the report of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, the average dropout rate in the country is 4.13 per cent. It also shows that the national average of school dropout among higher secondary students was 17.06 per cent while in Kerala it was 0.15 per cent," the minister said.

In the Upper Primary section, the minister said the dropout rate in Kerala was 0.06 per cent. He also added that in certain districts like Alappuzha, the dropout rate was as low as 0.02 per cent. Raveendranath said the state was able to achieve such milestones due to modernisation of the educational system.

"Drop-out ratio of high schools has declined from 0.33 per cent in 2016-17 to 0.15 per cent in 2019-

20. The decline is seen at all stages of school education," according to Economic Review report.

There were 2,079 Higher Secondary Schools (HSS) in 2020 in the State.

The Economic Review report, which was tabled recently in the Assembly, says there is an increase in the enrollment of students in 2019-20 to 37.17 lakh from 37.04 lakh in 2018-19.

The increase is more prominent in the enrollment in the LP section.

Compared to previous years, around 1,56,565 new students sought admission in government and government aided schools in Kerala in the academic year 2017-18. This number increased further to 1,85,971 for the year 2018-19 and was 1,63,558 for 2019-20, the Review said.

SHORT TAKES

TMC worker hacked to death

Jalpaiguri (WB): A worker of the ruling Trinamool Congress was hacked to death in West Bengal's Jalpaiguri district, the police said Monday. Four persons were detained for questioning in connection with the killing of Ranjit Adhikari. The TMC accused the BJP of being involved in the incident, while the saffron party claimed that it was the result of the infighting in the ruling party. The murder occurred months before the Assembly election in the state. Police said that Adhikari was attacked at Saptibari area of Maynaguri block when he was returning home from a party programme Sunday night.

JD(U) student leader shot dead

Patna (Bihar): Janata Dal (United) student wing leader Alok Tejaswi was allegedly shot at by criminals in Bakhtiarpur area of Patna Sunday. He has been admitted in a hospital, the police said. His condition is said to be critical. Tejaswi is the president of the youth unit of the party in Patna District Rural.

16-year-old girl found dead

Barmer (Rajasthan): A 16-year-old girl was found dead with her throat slit in Rajasthan's Barmer district Monday with police suspecting that she was raped before being murdered. According to the police, the body was recovered from a field behind her house in Suwala village in the Sheo police station area. Her throat was slit and it, prima facie, seems the girl was murdered after rape, Barmer Superintendent of Police Anand Sharma said, adding that sexual assault can be confirmed only after the post-mortem report is received.

Cybercriminals held in J'khand

Deoghar: Ten persons allegedly involved in phishing activities have been arrested in Jharkhand's Deoghar and Dumka districts, police said Monday. Twenty-eight mobile phones, 40 SIM cards, eight passbooks and a car were seized from their possession, they said. In connection with online defrauding a woman, Deoghar Police nabbed six persons from Deoghar district and four persons from Dumka district Sunday, Deoghar Superintendent of Police Ashwini Kumar Sinha said.

SUSHANT DEATH CASE COVERAGE

MEDIA TRIAL HINDERS JUSTICE: BOMBAY HC

The Bombay High Court Monday asked media houses to exercise restraint when reporting on suicide cases

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 18: The Bombay High Court Monday asked media houses to exercise restraint when reporting on suicide cases, saying "media trial leads to interference and obstruction to administration of justice" and amounts to contempt of court.

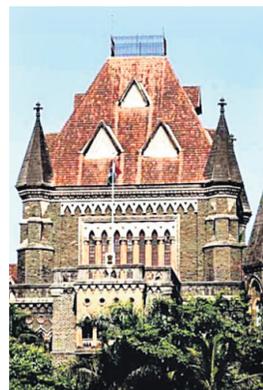
A bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice GS Kulkarni said the press must avoid discussions and debates relating to criminal investigations, and it should confine only to informative reportage that is in public interest. The bench also held that prima facie some reportage by Republic TV and Times Now in the aftermath of the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput was "contemptuous". The court said it had, however, de-

clined against initiating any action against the two TV channels under the Contempt of Courts Act.

The bench said media trials ran counter to the programme code framed under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act. It also passed a slew of guidelines for the press to follow while reporting on sensitive cases.

The HC said such reportage by any media organisation, that obstructs an ongoing investigation or administration of justice in a case, will amount to contempt of court. "Media trial leads to interference and obstruction to administration of justice and violates programme code under the Cable TV Networks (Regulation) Act," it observed.

"Any reportage has to be in accordance with the norms of jour-



nalistic standards and ethics, else media houses stand to face contempt action," it said. The directions are a part of the



verdict pronounced by the bench on a bunch of public interest litigations (PIL) seeking that the press, particularly TV news channels, be restrained

in their reportage on Rajput's death. The HC said it had tried in its verdict to answer questions on striking a balance among one's freedom of speech and expression, a fair investigation, one's right to a fair trial and to what extent, if at all, should the press and media reporting be regulated, if it interfered with or tended to obstruct the administration of justice.

It also said until there came a mechanism to regulate the electronic media, TV channels should follow the Press Council of India's guidelines on reporting on suicides, and sensitive cases.

"Media should observe restraint in discussions about an ongoing investigation so as not to prejudice the rights of the accused and witness," the high court said. "Publishing a confession alleged to have been made by an accused as if it is ad-

missible evidence without letting the public know about its inadmissibility should be avoided," it said. The HC said while reporting a suicide, "to suggest that the person was of weak character should be avoided".

It also restrained media houses from reconstructing crime scenes, interviews with potential witnesses, and leaking sensitive and confidential information.

"Investigative agencies are entitled to maintain secrecy about an ongoing investigation and they are under no obligation to divulge information," the high court said.

The court also accepted the accusation made in the pleas that the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting had "abdicated statutory functions" pertaining to regulations related to reportage on Rajput's death.



She (West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee) is an Islamic terrorist. She has worked to break the temples and insult gods and goddesses in West Bengal. She is acting at the behest of Bangladesh

ANAND SWAROOP SHUKLA | UP MINISTER

CRPF'S 'RAKSHITA' FOR INSURGENCY-HIT AREAS

From Monday onwards, 'Rakshita' - a bike ambulance developed indigenously - will save lives of injured CRPF personnel deputed in remote and inhospitable areas like the Maoist-hit states



of the day quote

Before 2014, only 225 km of the metro line became operational in 10-12 yrs. In the last six years, over 450 km of the metro network became operational, NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

The CBSE board exams are due in a few months. We hope that this exercise (to reopen schools) pays off and students gain the confident needed

Six NCP officials have threatened to shoot me. We are not afraid of such threats; Dhananjay Munde will have to resign

KIRIT SOMAIYA | MAHARASHTRA BJP LEADER

SHORT TAKES

Army officer shoots himself dead

Srinagar: An Army officer allegedly shot himself dead at a forward post in Tangdhar sector along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said Monday. The deceased has been identified as Major Fayazullah Khan, a company commander of 6 Jammu and Kashmir Rifles, they said. The officials said the reason behind the officer taking such an extreme step was not immediately known.

Man sets son ablaze for not studying

Hyderabad: Angry over his 10-year-old son for not focussing on studies, a man poured turpentine oil and set him ablaze, police said Monday. The boy suffered 60 per cent burns and is undergoing treatment in a government hospital, they said. The boy's father, a labourer, is absconding, police said, adding, the incident took place at the Kukatapally Housing Board area here Sunday night.

Eight cows mowed down by train

Etawah: Eight cows were killed and six were injured after speeding Rajdhani Express mowed them down near Tamera Ki Madaiya village on Delhi-Howrah route in Jaswantnagar area of Etawah district. The incident took place on Sunday, between Jaswantnagar and Balrai railway stations. According to the villagers, a herd of cattle was grazing near the tracks when 14 of them were mowed down by the Rajdhani Express. Eight cows died on the spot, while six suffered critical injuries.

Four killed in road mihap in Haryana

Chandigarh: Four members of a family were killed when their car collided with a private bus on the Mahendergarh-Kanina road in Haryana, police said Monday. The accident took place on Sunday near village Jhagrol in Mahendergarh, they said. The deceased hailed from Faridabad, a police official said.

Mild tremor in Palghar

Palghar: A tremor of 3.5-magnitude was recorded in Maharashtra's Palghar district, an official said Monday. There has been no report of any casualty or damage to property, he said. The tremor was felt in Palghar at 10 pm on Sunday, district disaster control chief Vivekanand Kadam said.

STRIVING TO EXCEL



Candidates take part in a run at a recruitment rally for Women Military Police at AMC Centre in Lucknow, Monday

PTI PHOTO

CBI books official, beneficiaries

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 18: Two years after taking over the case, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has filed an FIR in the Kanpur defence recruitment scam, officials said Monday.

The case has been filed against Santosh Kumar Tiwari, Deputy Controller in the Material Division of the Directorate of Quality Assurance CQA(M), who was the presiding officer of the recruitment board and beneficiaries Ravi Kant Pandey, Utkarsh Srivatsava, Arti Gupta, Pratibha Mishra and Arpit Singh and other unknown persons.

The officials in Kanpur had organised a recruitment drive for six posts of Lower Division Clerk (LDC) in the Directorate General of Quality Assurance which comes under the Union Ministry of Defence. For this purpose, advertisements were issued in 2015 and appointments were made in 2017.

An internal inquiry committee headed by Brigadier Sudhendra Itnal had found serious irregularities in the recruitment process. Following the submission of a report in this regard, the recruitment board itself was dissolved by the competent authority and the services of the appointed LDCs were terminated November 28, 2018.

In a letter to the CBI August 10, 2018, the Department of Defence Production (DDP) mentioned "serious irregularities" of a criminal nature concerning the appointment of six LDCs in 2016 by the now-dissolved recruitment board in Uttar Pradesh's Kanpur. This letter was sent to the apex investigative



agency on the orders of Minister of State for Defence, Subhash Bhamre who acted on the advice of the Central Vigilance Commission.

The official said the agency had done a preliminary enquiry against Tiwari, Sunil Kumar, SSO-II, CQA (M) Kanpur (member) and Mohammad Alim, AE (QA), SQA (GS), Kanpur (Member) and Colonel AK Gandhi, Joint Controller, CQA (M), CQA (GS) and CQA (T&C), Kanpur in 2020.

In the preliminary enquiry, it was revealed that an advertisement for filling four posts of the LDCs in CQA (M) Kanpur was published in various newspapers.

Later on the number of posts was increased from four to six, including three for the general category, one each for the OBC, SC and Physically Handicapped (PH) category in March 2015. It was also revealed that 4,181 candidates had applied for the said post out of which 952 candidates were found eligible for the written test.

It said that June 22, 2016, a Board of Officers was constituted by C Devakinandan, Controller Kanpur to conduct the recruitment for the said posts. It said that the board comprised Tiwari, Neha Agarwal, a Scientist, Sunil Kumar and Mohammad Alim.

It further said that a written test was held June 26, 2016 in which a total of 517 candidates

DEFENCE RECRUITMENT SCAM

The officials in Kanpur had organised a recruitment drive for six posts of Lower Division Clerk (LDC) in the Directorate General of Quality Assurance which comes under the Union Ministry of Defence

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Following the submission of a report in this regard, the recruitment board itself was dissolved by the competent authority and the services of the appointed LDCs were terminated

appeared. "After completion of the written examination, the investigators had collected the answer sheets and submitted the same in the room of Tiwari in an unsealed condition which was against the rule," it alleged.

"In the enquiry it was also revealed that answer sheets were evaluated by the BOO under the supervision of Tiwari in his room and Agarwal who was an external member was not called for the same," the official said. He also said that on the basis of the evaluation of the answer sheets, 110 candidates were qualified for the typing test, out of which only 95 appeared for the same September 28, 2016.

"The PH candidates were exempted from the typing test. Total 54 candidates and two PH candidates were qualified for the same post and a final merit list was published by DGQA website on November 25, 2016. Out of six selected candidates, five candidates joined their duties whereas one candidate Vivek Chandra did not join as he was selected elsewhere," the official said.

Cong demands JPC probe into Arnab's WhatsApp chats

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 18: Congress leaders have demanded that the Centre set up a JPC inquiry into the 'Chatgate' involving Republic TV editor Arnab Goswami and former BARC head Partho Dasgupta. The Congress leaders asserted that there was enough evidence that Goswami was privy to the Balakot air strikes that were "planned" by the BJP regime purely with Lok Sabha elections in mind.

Amid intensifying drama, Congress is keen to take up the issue and hold a "big press conference" soon to corner the Modi government by demanding a serious probe.



While the Congress youth wing has already filed a complaint against Arnab Goswami, former I&B Minister and Congress MP Manish Tewari took to his Twitter handle saying, "If what sections of media is reporting is correct, then it points towards a direct linkage between Balakot air strikes and 2019 general elections. Was national security milked for electoral purposes? It needs a JPC investigation."

Goswami chats are a part of the TRP manipulation scam, which have led the political class to focus on what he ostensibly knew in advance about the air strikes.

Similarly, senior Congress leader

and a former Home Minister, P Chidambaram tagged Defence Minister Rajnath Singh while tweeting, "Did a journalist (and his friend) know about the retaliatory strike on Balakot camp three days before the actual strike? If yes, what is the guarantee that their 'source' did not share the information with others as well, including spies or informers working for Pakistan? How did a 'For Your Eyes Only' decision find its way to the government-supporting journalist?"

Meanwhile, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, in a scathing tweet, said, "The leaked chats reveal three reprehensible things requiring a serious inquiry: leaking of military secrets

The Congress leaders asserted that there was enough evidence that Goswami was privy to the Balakot air strikes that were "planned" by the BJP regime purely with Lok Sabha elections in mind

to a TV channel for its commercial purposes, a 'nationalist' gloating over the death of 40 jawans as an 'attack we have won like crazy', and fraudulent manipulation of TRPs. But if the government won't conduct such an inquiry (and we all expect it won't, given the evidence of its complicity in the betrayals revealed), who will? Is this one more thing we will have to take a PIL to the Supreme Court for?"

Another senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh added, "Since 1967, BARC has stood for Bhabha Atomic Research Centre. Thanks to Arnab Goswami, another self-styled BARC - Broadcast Audience Research Council - is in the news now."

RAJINI'S PARTY MEMBERS ARE 'FREE' TO JOIN ANY OUTFIT

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Jan 18: With three of its district secretaries and couple of other officials joined DMK Sunday, Rajini Makkal Mandram (RMM) Monday said its members are free to join any political party of their choice after submitting their resignation.

In a statement issued here, RMM leader VM Sudhakar said those who are in RMM wanting to join a political party can do after submitting their resignation.

He also said RMM members should not forget that those persons who resign and join a political party are fans of actor Rajinikanth.

On Sunday, three District Secretaries of RMM joined DMK after the actor categorically said he will not be entering active politics.



On December 29, 2020, Rajinikanth announced his decision not to get into Tamil Nadu politics, citing Covid-19 pandemic as it would risk his health condition.

His volte-face came a few days after he, earlier in December, sounded his poll bugle against the ruling AIADMK as well as the major opposition party DMK.

On January 10, fans of Rajinikanth held a peaceful demonstration here demanding their screen idol take a plunge into the Tamil Nadu politics.

No Beating Retreat at Wagah-Attari this Republic Day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 18: There will be no Beating Retreat ceremony at Wagah-Attari border this Republic Day January 26 due to the coronavirus pandemic restrictions, Border Security Force (BSF) sources said Monday.

BSF sources said the retreat ceremony for the general public has been closed in view of the coronavirus pandemic since March 7, 2020.

BSF personnel conduct the retreat ceremony at the Wagah-Attari border every year January 26. There will be no Beating Retreat ceremony this year due to the coronavirus.

Exports of SII vaccine blocked till March-April

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 18: Exports of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine by the Serum Institute of India are currently blocked until March or April, as India (along with China) look set to take the lead in driving the region's distribution efforts in the months ahead, according to Moody's Analytics.

It said that India's advancement towards inoculations is a crucial development for the region.

India has approved two vaccines approved for emergency use last week - one developed by Oxford University and AstraZeneca, the other domestically developed by Bharat Biotech and the Indian Council of Medical Research. Starting January 16, the Indian government's plan is to inoculate nearly 300 million high-priority people including health workers, the elderly, and those with higher comorbidities by August, Moody's Analytics has said.

"This is an important development. As India is the second most-impacted country in the world, after the US, the need for local immunization is paramount to contain



the significant socioeconomic costs, and the country's success in advancing on this front will eventually soften the severity of the pandemic within the region," it said.

Plus, as the largest producer of vaccines in the world, with 60 per cent of the global share, India is well-positioned to use its existing manufacturing capabilities to contribute to mass vaccine production and distribution needs for other countries in addition to meeting its domestic requirements, it added.

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31 YEARS ON, KASHMIR STILL THE HOME PANDITS LONG FOR

AROUND THREE LAKH KASHMIRI PANDITS LEFT THE VALLEY IN THE EARLY 1990s AFTER MILITANCY ERUPTED. MOST OF THEM SETTLED IN CRAMPED TRANSIT CAMPS FOR PANDITS IN JAMMU

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jammu, Jan 18: Sixty-five-year-old Pyare Lal Raina's wish is to return to Kashmir, the land where he was born and spent the best years of his life.

Raina's family is among more than 4,000 families that moved into a township for Kashmiri Pandits at Jagti, 25 kms from Jammu after the exodus of Pandits following outbreak of militancy in 1989. Life has been tough for the Rainas in Jammu. The family had to move houses and in rented accommodations several times before settling down in Jagti township eight years ago.

At Jagti they were allotted two-room sets which were meant to make their lives a little more comfortable. But the colony of Kashmiri Pandits presents a picture of neglect. The houses are dilapidated, the walls damp with water seeping from blocked pipes.

"Some apartments for Kashmiri



Pandits at Jagti are in a bad shape with water leaking," Raina said. "We don't get clean water. Nothing is being done to change our lot."

Around three lakh Kashmiri Pandits left the valley in the early 1990s after militancy erupted. Most of them settled in cramped transit camps for Pandits in Jammu.

But it is not just the accommodation issues alone that have been worrying Raina. He stopped working three years ago after his wife fell

ill. His two daughters holding masters degrees are unemployed.

"We are tired now; the government is doing nothing for us. I have lost hope, one of my daughters is an MBA and the second daughter has done MCA, but both are jobless."

Raina says he is looking for a day when the Pandits can return to Kashmir but for that the government has to be serious and come up with a road map for their return.

"The situation has not changed

much for us since we came to Jammu, there is no progress," Raina said. "We have been hearing about our return for 30 years. We are ready to go back to Kashmir but the government has done nothing about it."

A little away from Raina's house, Pintojee, another Kashmiri Pandit at the Jagti township, says the government has failed to fulfil the expectations of Pandits since they left the valley and the community members must be involved to draw up plans for their return.

"The government is not serious about the rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits," he said. "For making a concrete policy for return of Pandits, it is important to include inputs of the representatives of Kashmiri Pandits."

Kashmiri Pandits settled outside Kashmir are now hoping their problems would eventually come to an end even as the sentiment for returning to the valley remains strong.



The delayed (vaccine) shipments would be made up later. Anyway, that won't change our plan, because we are already seeking out other vaccines

LÓPEZ OBRADOR | PRESIDENT, MEXICO

STARBUCKS TEMPORARILY SHUTTERS STORES IN NYC

Starbucks closes some New York City stores "out of an abundance of caution" as cities across the US brace for protests and potential unrest ahead of President-Elect Joe Biden's inauguration



of the day quote

For the CDU, the close vote means that tensions within the party about its fundamental direction will continue. A large section of the party clearly wanted to shift in a conservative direction



GREG FUZE | ANALYST, JP MORGAN

What is important is to provide necessary medical services to people in need. We will exhaust all measures to safeguard the medical system



YOSHIIHIDE SUGA | PRIME MINISTER, JAPAN

Hopefully, we can get the leaders being very strong and clear in their advice and strong about supporting science



CHRIS MOY | VICE PRESIDENT, AMA

SHORT TAKES

Stranded PIA crew reaches Islamabad

Islamabad: Eighteen crew members of a Pakistan International Airlines flight which was seized by Malaysian authorities over the non-payment of aircraft lease dues, arrived in Islamabad Monday, a media report said. The aircraft was seized at the Kuala Lumpur Airport January 15 on the orders of a local Malaysian court. All the 172 passengers of the seized plane reached Islamabad on two flights, a news report quoted a PIA spokesman.

Israeli jets target Hamas sites

Tel Aviv: The Israeli military said Monday that its warplanes struck sites belonging to the Hamas in the Gaza Strip after two rockets were fired from the besieged Palestinian enclave. An Israeli military spokesperson said in a statement that the jets struck Hamas military targets, including a tunnels, reports Xinhua news agency. The two rockets fired earlier from the Gaza Strip fell in the sea before reaching Israel, according to the Israeli military. There were no reports of injuries on both sides.

New Covid variant detected in Nepal

Kathmandu: Nepal's Health Ministry has confirmed the detection of cases of the new coronavirus variant, which was first discovered in the UK late last year. Three people whose samples were sent to Hong Kong for testing via gene sequencing have been confirmed to have contracted the mutated variant. A 28-year-old woman and two men aged 32 and 67, were found to have been infected. The woman and the 32-year-old man have already tested negative, while the 67-year-old, although still infected, is asymptomatic.

Trapped Chinese miners send note

Beijing: Miners trapped for over a week following a blast at a mine in China's Shandong province, have sent a note to rescuers shedding light on the situation below. The note, sent Sunday, said 12 workers are still alive, including four injured, while the state of the other 10 was currently unknown, reports Xinhua news agency. "We are heavily exhausted and in urgent need of stomach medicine, painkillers, medical tape, external anti-inflammatory drugs, and three people have high blood pressure," the note read.

FBI vetting Guard troops in DC

SECURITY PERSONNEL FEAR AN INSIDER ATTACK OR OTHER THREAT FROM SERVICE MEMBERS INVOLVED IN SECURING PREZ-ELECT JOE BIDEN'S INAUGURATION

AGENCIES

Washington, Jan 18: US defence officials say they are worried about an insider attack or other threat from service members involved in securing President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration, prompting the FBI to vet all of the 25,000 National Guard troops coming into Washington for the event.

The massive undertaking reflects the extraordinary security concerns that have gripped Washington following the deadly January 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol by pro-Trump rioters. And it underscores fears that some of the very people assigned to protect the city over the next several days could present a threat to the incoming president and other VIPs in attendance.

Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy told The Associated Press Sunday that officials are conscious of the



The Statue of Freedom by Thomas Crawford, atop the dome of the US Capitol, is shown ahead of the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris

potential threat, and he warned commanders to be on the lookout

for any problems within their ranks as the inauguration approaches. So far, however, he and other leaders say they have seen no evidence of any threats, and officials said the vetting hadn't flagged any issues that they were aware of.

"We're continually going through the process, and taking second, third looks at every one of the individuals assigned to this operation," McCarthy said in an interview after he and other military leaders went through an exhaustive, three-hour security drill in preparation for Wednesday's inauguration. He said Guard members are also getting training on how to identify potential insider threats.

About 25,000 members of the National Guard are streaming into Washington from across the coun-

try—at least two and a half times the number for previous inaugurations. And while the military routinely reviews service members for extremist connections, the FBI screening is in addition to any previous monitoring.

Multiple officials said the process began as the first Guard troops began deploying to D.C. more than a week ago. And they said it is slated to be complete by Wednesday. Several officials discussed military planning on condition of anonymity.

"The question is, is that all of them? Are there others?" said McCarthy.

In a situation like this one, FBI vetting would involve running people's names through databases and watchlists maintained by the bureau to see if anything alarming comes up. That could include involvement in prior investigations or terrorism-related concerns, said David Gomez, a former FBI national security supervisor in Seattle.

Insider threats have been a persistent law enforcement priority in the years after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. But in most cases, the threats are from homegrown insurgents radicalized by al-Qaida, the IS group or similar groups. In contrast, the threats against Biden's inauguration have been fueled by supporters of President Trump.

If there's any indication that any of our soldiers or airmen is expressing things that are extremist views, it's either handed over to law enforcement or dealt with the chain of command immediately

GEN. DANIEL R. HOKANSON | CHIEF, NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU



National Guard walk near the Capitol as security is increased ahead of the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris

Israel trades Pfizer doses for medical data in vaccine blitz

AGENCIES

Jerusalem, Jan 18: After springing ahead in the race to inoculate its population against the coronavirus, Israel has struck a deal with Pfizer, promising to share vast troves of medical data with the international drug giant in exchange for the continued flow of its hard-to-get vaccine.

Proponents say the deal could allow Israel to become the first country to vaccinate most of its population, while providing valuable research that could help the rest of the world. But critics say the deal raises major ethical concerns, including possible privacy violations and a deepening of the global divide that enables wealthy countries to stockpile vaccines as poorer populations, including Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza, have

to wait longer to be inoculated.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu — who is stumping ahead of the country's March elections as Israel's vaccinator-in-chief — said earlier this month that he reached the deal with Pfizer's chief executive to speed up vaccine deliveries to Israel.

"Israel will be a global model state," he said. "Israel will share with Pfizer and with the entire world the statistical data that will help develop strategies for defeating the coronavirus."

Israeli Health Minister Yuli Edelstein told The Associated Press the government will turn over data to "see how it influences, first of all, the level of the disease in Israel, the possibility to open the economy, different aspects of social life, and whether there are any effects of the vaccination."



WE AREN'T TERRORISTS



Houthi supporters desecrate a representation of the US flag during a demonstration outside the closed US Embassy over its decision to designate the Houthis a foreign terrorist organisation in Sanaa, Yemen, Monday

Samsung's Lee gets 30-month prison term

AGENCIES

Seoul, Jan 18: A South Korean court sentenced Samsung Electronics vice chairman Jay Y. Lee to two and a half years in prison Monday, which could delay the group's ownership restructuring following the death of Lee's father in October.

The ruling also cements a major shift in South Korea's view on wrongdoings committed by the owners of the country's powerful



conglomerates, or chaebol, which led the country's economic rise after the Korean War on the back of what has been criticised as cozy

relations with politicians.

Lee, the country's most powerful businessman at age 52, had served one year in prison for bribing an associate of former President Park Geun-hye when an appeals court suspended it in 2018; a year later, the Supreme Court ordered him retried. His prison time will count against his latest sentence.

Monday's sentencing by the Seoul High Court can be appealed to the Supreme Court within seven days.

'NOT RIGHT' TO VACCINATE YOUNG BEFORE OLD: WHO

AGENCIES

Geneva, Jan 18: The head of the World Health Organization says it's "not right" that younger, healthier adults in rich countries get vaccinated against Covid-19 before older people in poorer countries.

Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus kicked off WHO's week-long executive board meeting — virtually from its headquarters in Geneva — Monday by lamenting that only 25 vaccine doses have been provided in a single poor country, while over 39 million doses have been administered in nearly 50 richer nations.

"Just 25 doses have been given



in one lowest income country — not 25 million, not 25,000 — just 25. I need to be blunt," Tedros said. He did not specify the country.

Tedros, an Ethiopian who goes by his first name, nonetheless hailed the scientific achievement behind rolling out vaccines less than a year after the pandemic erupted in China, where a WHO-backed team has now been deployed to look into origins of the coronavirus.

FROM MADRAS TO THE WH: IDLIS COME FULL CIRCLE

THE LOCATION OF KAMALA HARRIS' GRANDFATHER HOME IN CHENNAI, IN BESANT NAGAR, IS DOTTED WITH PLENTY OF BIG AND SMALL IDLI SHOPS, WITH MURUGAN IDLI BEING AMONG THE MOST POPULAR

AGENCIES

New York, Jan 18: When was the last time we took the names of fluffy, white idlis, sambar, okra fry and the White House in the same sentence? On January 20, we'll get there.

Seen through a culinary perspective, the travels of US Vice President-elect Kamala Harris' mother Shyamala Gopalan from Madras (now Chennai) and father Donald Harris from Jamaica nearly 60 years ago set in motion a blended kitchen culture that Kamala Harris brings with her to the Vice President's home in Washington D.C.

With it come idlis, sambar, okra, roast chicken, tuna melt sandwiches

and a Veep who's an unapologetic food connoisseur; for Kamala Harris the act of cooking is meditative and joyful in equal measure.

Kamala Harris writes in her memoir: "My mother cooked like a scientist."

She describes the "giant Chinese-style cleaver that she chopped with, and a cupboard full of spices" and loved that "okra could be soul food or Indian food, depending on what spices you chose".

As a young girl, Harris began by loving okra either fried to a crisp with a seasoning of oil and mustard seeds or floating in tamarind stew, in her mother's kitchen in a yellow stucco house in Oakland, California.

Later, among a diverse group of friends and family came new ways



to cook the vegetable and an appreciation for soul food, a term that swept into America's collective vocabulary right around the time that Harris' parents met and later married.

In an ask me anything session on Twitter, Kamala talks about how idlis "with like, really good sam-

bar" are among her favourite South Indian foods. Harris recalls how her mother, during trips to India, sparked a "love for good idli".

Harris is both indulgent and minimal, depending on the context. The idli fits neatly within that construct, it's survivalist cuisine or heavenly,

depending on your approach.

The idli and its cousin the dosa are as much about Shyamala Gopalan's roots as they are about Kamala Harris'. Long before the Kamala connection transported Chennai's Besant Nagar into international fame, the neighbourhood has been a go-to for the city's prime real estate, the softest idlis and famous Hindu temples dedicated to Lord Ganesha, the elephant-headed god of good luck and Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth — from where Kamala gets her first name.

An idli is an idli, wherever you go — soft, round, white and fluffy but like Kamala Harris says, "with like, really good sambar" is the secret.

In Indian homes, this round, white rice cake is staple fare, it's avail-

able for a few rupees at food carts on street corners, it's the first thing that goes on the stove in millions of Indian homes every morning, it's now firmly on the all-time favourites menu of the first Indian American Vice President of the US.

Plenty from Kamala Harris' network have vouched for the straight-A student quality she brings to almost everything she does. She took it seriously when her mother told her not to do anything "half-assed".

In the kitchen too, her joy and involvement with the particulars of what she puts on the table has served to define Indian American-ness in more granular terms, the way things show up in recipes. It's no longer generic curry or Indian food.

The idli has come full circle.

business



Covid has given us an even stronger sense of purpose. Our firm works with more than 2,000 companies globally, helping people with health and safety has been more rewarding than ever
LARRY GADEA | CEO, ENVOY

SUGAR PRODUCTION RISES 31%

Sugar production rose nearly 31% to 142.70L tonne in the three and a half months of the current sugar season (SS) 2020-21 (October-September) as compared to the last year as per the data released by the apex industry body, Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) Monday



of the day note

Deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes are a major and growing public health epidemic. In 2019 alone, more than 1.54 lakh people were killed in road crashes across the country



NITIN GADKARI | MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

Given the significant overlap between fantasy sports and other games of skill (which today include games like pool, carrom, quiz games, etc., in addition to Rummy), we believe that Niti Aayog's draft paper should include the broader skill gaming industry



BHAVIN PANDYA | CO-FOUNDER AND CEO, GAMES24x7

In 2021, we will carry on this growth legacy with much more innovative products and concepts to make the life of our users even better. Building upon our 5G and IoT product category will be one of the key focus areas for us



TASLEEM ARIF | VP & HEAD, (R&D), OPPO INDIA

'Budget may raise import duties by 5-10%'

REUTERS

New Delhi, Jan 18: India is considering hiking import duties by 5%-10% on more than 50 items including smartphones, electronic components and appliances in the upcoming budget, three government sources privy to the discussions told Reuters Monday.

The move to increase import duties is part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's self-reliant India campaign that aims to promote and support domestic manufacturing, said the sources, who asked not to be named as the discussions are not public.

One of the sources said the government was seeking to target additional revenue of about ₹200 billion to 210 billion (\$2.7 billion to \$2.8 billion) from the moves, as it



looks to shore up revenue amidst the pandemic-driven slowdown that has stung the economy.

Two of the government sources also said the duty hikes could impact furniture and electric vehicles, potentially hurting the likes of Swedish furniture maker Ikea and Tesla, which is planning to launch its cars in India this year.

The officials, however, did not specify how much of a hike was

The move to increase import duties is part of PM Narendra Modi's self-reliant India campaign that aims to promote and support domestic manufacturing

One of the sources said the government was seeking to target additional revenue of about ₹200 billion to 210 billion (\$2.7 billion to \$2.8 billion) from the moves

planned on furniture and electric vehicles. Both Ikea and Tesla executives have previously expressed concerns about the steep duty structure their products already face in India.

The list of items likely to attract steeper duties is set to include appliances such as refrigerators and air conditioners too, three of the

sources said. The finance ministry could not be reached by telephone and did not reply to an email seeking comments. Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman will February 1 unveil the government's annual federal budget for the 2021-22 financial year, which begins April 1. The sources said the proposals may still be tweaked further before they are finalised.

Sitharaman will unveil the budget February 1 amid the shadow of a projected economic contraction of 7.7% for the current fiscal year.

India has in recent years taken a series of measures that industry executives say discriminate against foreign companies. Government officials say such taxes are essential to promote India as a destination for local manufacturing and to support domestic businesses.

Sitharaman holds pre-Budget meeting with state FMs



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 18: As part of pre-Budget deliberations, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Monday held a meeting with state finance ministers who suggested steps to revive growth and boost revenue collection against the backdrop of Covid-19 crisis.

The Finance Ministry in a statement said the meeting was held through video conference and was attended by chief ministers, deputy chief ministers, finance ministers, ministers and senior officers from the states and Union Territories and the Union Government.

Sitharaman highlighted the importance of this meeting as a sign of cooperative federalism and indicated the manner in which the Union Government was strongly supportive of States/Union Territories (with Legislature) fight against the pandemic.

Most participants thanked the Union Finance Minister for financially supporting their States/Union Territories during the worst months of pandemic, by enhancing borrowing limits and providing back to back loans to States, the statement said.

The participants also gave numerous suggestions to the Union Finance Minister for inclusion in the Budget Speech, it said.

According to sources, state ministers expressed their suggestions on growth, investment, resource requirement and fiscal policy.

Total inks \$2.5bn deal with Adani Group

The deal involves Paris-based Total getting a board seat in the largest solar energy developer in the world, as well as a 50 pc stake in a 2.35 GW portfolio of operating solar assets, the two firms said

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 18: French oil and energy group Total has agreed to a \$2.5 billion deal that includes buying a 20 per cent minority stake in Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL) from Adani Group, as it builds up its presence in the renewable energy sector.

The deal involves Paris-based Total getting a board seat in the largest solar energy developer in the world, as well as a 50 per cent stake in a 2.35 gigawatts portfolio of operating solar assets, the two firms said in statements.

Total had in 2018, agreed to buy a 37.4 per cent stake in Adani Gas Ltd - the city gas distribution firm of the Adani Group, and a 50 per cent stake in the billionaire Gautam Adani-run ports-to-energy conglomerate's under-construction Dhamra LNG project in Odisha.

In the statement, the French giant said the acquisition of a 20 per cent minority interest in Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL) from Adani Group "marks the deepening partnership between the Adani Group - India's leading infrastructure platform - and Total, in the transition and green energy fields in India."



Total is aiming to reduce its dependence on oil and is shifting towards electricity and renewable energy. It is targeting to have 35 gigawatts (GW) of gross renewable energy generation capacity by 2025, from around 7 GW now. It wants to add 10 GW per year afterward.

AGEL is targeting 25 GW of renewable capacity by the same year. As on date, AGEL has over 14.6 GW of contracted capacity, with an operating capacity of 3 GW and another 3 GW under construction and 8.6 GW under development.

Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani had last year signaled room for promoters to dilute their stake in AGEL saying global energy producers, including Total, were in-

terested in investing to expand their renewable portfolios.

"Our entry into AGEL is a major milestone in our strategy in the renewable energy business in India put in place by both parties," Total CEO and Chairman Patrick Pouyanne said.

"Given the size of the market, India is the right place to put into action our energy transition strategy based on two pillars: renewables and natural gas," he added.

Total said the investment in AGEL is another step in the strategic alliance between Adani Group and the French firm, which covers investments in LNG terminals, gas utility business, and renewable assets across India.

China's economy picks up speed after Covid shock

REUTERS

Beijing, Jan 18: China's economy picked up speed in the fourth quarter, with growth beating expectations as it ended a rough coronavirus-stricken 2020 in remarkably good shape and remained poised to expand further this year even as the global pandemic rages unabated.

Gross domestic product grew 2.3% in 2020, official data showed on Monday, making China the only major economy in the world to avoid a contraction last year as many nations struggled to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. And China is expected to continue to power ahead of its peers this year, with GDP set to expand at the fastest pace in a decade at 8.4%, according to a Reuters poll. The world's second-largest economy has surprised many with the speed of its recovery from the coronavirus jolt, especially as policymakers have also had to navigate tense US-China relations on trade and other fronts.

Beijing's strict virus curbs enabled it to largely contain the COVID-19 outbreak much quicker than most countries, while government-led policy stimulus and local manufacturers stepping up production to supply goods to many countries crippled by the pandemic have also helped fire up momentum.

GDP expanded 6.5% year-on-year in the fourth quarter, data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed, quicker than the 6.1% forecast by economists



in a Reuters poll, and followed the third quarter's solid 4.9% growth.

"The higher-than-expected GDP number indicates that growth has stepped into the expansionary zone, although some sectors remain in recovery," said Xing Zhaopeng, economist at ANZ in Shanghai.

"Policy exiting will pose counter-cyclical pressures on 2021 growth."

Backed by the strict virus containment measures and policy stimulus, the economy has recovered steadily from a steep 6.8% slump in the first three months of 2020, when an outbreak of Covid-19 in the central city of Wuhan turned into a full-blown epidemic.

EXPORTS ENGINE REVVS UP

Asia's economic powerhouse has been fuelled by a surprisingly resilient export sector, but China's consumption - a key driver of growth - has lagged expectations amid fears of a resurgence of COVID-19 cases.

Data last week showed Chinese exports grew by more than expected in December, as coronavirus disruptions around the world fuelled demand for Chinese goods even as a stronger yuan made exports more expensive for overseas buyers.

SHORT TAKES

Pawan Hans' bid deadline extended

New Delhi: The government has extended the preliminary bid submission deadline for buying Pawan Hans by a month till February 18. The Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) had in December invited bids for strategic sale, along with transfer of management control, of helicopter service provider Pawan Hans. The date for bid submission was January 19, which has now been extended to February 18 in view of the "prevailing Covid situation and consequent logistical challenges faced by Interested Bidders," DIPAM said in a notice.

Lexus launches new variant

New Delhi: Luxury car maker Lexus Monday launched LS 500h Nishijin, priced at ₹2.22 crore (ex-showroom Delhi). The company has also introduced updates to the LS 500h across its variant line-up, Lexus India said in a statement. Operating convenience has been enhanced, including the ability to control the display screen and audio functions via smartphone, it added. The updated LS 500h is available at a starting price of ₹1.91 crore (ex-showroom Delhi), it added.

L&T bags ₹5K cr order from RVNL

New Delhi: Larsen & Toubro (L&T) Monday said its construction arm has bagged an up to ₹5,000 crore contract from Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd (RVNL) in Uttarakhand. The construction arm of L&T has secured a large order for its heavy civil infrastructure business from Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd (RVNL) for package 4 of the new broad-gauge line between Rishikesh and Karanprayag in Uttarakhand, India, the company said in a regulatory filing.

Steel cos engage with vax makers

New Delhi: Leading steel-producing companies in the country are drawing up plans to vaccinate their employees across offices and plant sites with the start of the nationwide Covid-19 vaccination drive. Domestic steel makers like -- Tata Steel, ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India and Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (RINL) said they will continue to support the government in the nationwide drive and will wait till vaccines are available for corporates.

Honda rolls out new Grazia Sports Edition priced at ₹82,564

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 18: Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India Pvt Ltd. launched its advanced urban 125cc scooter in an all-new avatar, the sporty stunning genius-Grazia Sports Edition.

Grazia is BSVI compliant that comes with 125cc PGM-FI HET (Honda Eco Technology) engine, boosted by Enhanced Smart Power (eSP). The new model is priced at ₹82,564 (ex-showroom Gurugram, Haryana).

Giving stunning comfort to the

rider are features like integrated pass switch, external fuel lid, and re-designed glove box. The telescopic suspension with increased ground clearance (+16mm) ensures smoother ride over rough roads.

The new split LED position lamp, chiseled tail lamp, jet inspired rear wipers, split grab rail and premium black alloy wheels up the style quotient. The fully-digital meter along with multi-function switch makes Grazia Sports Edition - a Stunning Genius!

The new Grazia Sports Edition comes in two colors - Pearl Nightstar Black & Sports Red.



GST COMPENSATION

Centre releases ₹2786.53cr to Odisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, January 18: The Central government Monday released ₹2786.53 crore to Odisha so far to meet the GST compensation shortfall. The report was released by the Finance ministry at the twelfth weekly instalment.

The Centre has also allowed ₹2,858 crore additional borrowings to state of Odisha to meet GST compensation shortfall to help them in mobilising additional financial resources.

The Ministry of Finance, Department of Expenditure has released the 12th weekly instalment of ₹6,000 crore to the States to



meet the GST compensation shortfall. Out of this, an amount of ₹5,516.60 crore has been released to 23 States and an amount of ₹483.40 crore has been released to the 3 Union Territories (UT) with Legislative Assembly (Delhi, Jammu & Kashmir & Puducherry) who are members of the GST Council. The remaining 5 States, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram,

Nagaland and Sikkim do not have a gap in revenue on account of GST implementation.

Till now, 65% of the total estimated GST compensation shortfall has been released to the States & UT with Legislative Assembly.

Out of this, an amount of ₹65,582.96 crore has been released to the States and an amount of ₹6,417.04 crore has been released to the 3 UTs with Legislative Assembly. The amount has been borrowed this week at an interest rate of 4.4315%. So far, an amount of ₹72,000 crore has been borrowed by the Central Government through the special borrowing window at an average interest rate of 4.7024%.

'India, China set to lead vax distribution in APAC region'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 18: Moody's Analytics Monday said India, along with China, would take lead in the Covid-19 vaccine distribution in the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region. India launched its vaccination programme January 16 after the drug regulator DCGI earlier this month approved Oxford Covid-19 vaccine Covishield, manufactured by the Serum Institute of India, and Bharat Biotech's indigenously developed Covaxin, for restricted emergency use in the country.

Moody's Analytics said the Indian government plans to inoculate nearly 300 million high-priority people, including health workers, the elderly and those with higher co-mor-

As the largest producer of vaccines in the world with 60% of the global share, India is well-positioned to contribute to mass vaccine production and distribution needs of other countries in addition to meeting its domestic requirements

bidities by August. "This is an important development. As India is the second most-



impacted country in the world, after the US, the need for local immunisation is paramount to contain the significant socio-economic costs," Moody's Analytics added.

The country's success in advancing on this front will eventually soften the severity of the pandemic within the region, it said. As the largest producer of vac-

cines in the world with 60 per cent of the global share, India is well-positioned to contribute to mass vaccine production and distribution needs of other countries in addition to meeting its domestic requirements, said Moody's Analytics in its report titled 'Asia's vaccine update-A step-up in momentum'.

"With exports of the Covid-19 vaccines expected to begin soon, India (along with China) looks set to take the lead in driving the region's distribution efforts in the months ahead," it added.

Moody's Analytics said another pivotal change was Indonesia's formal approval of China's Sinovac vaccine for emergency use, becoming the first country outside China to do so. "This is a significant develop-

ment and could open the door for other Asian economies to follow suit," it added.

Separately, the Philippines has also approved the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for emergency use. The country has one of the highest number of daily Covid-19 infections in Southeast Asia and has been suffering from a protracted first wave of the virus since last spring.

"The Philippines will receive the first batch of vaccines through the COVAX facility, while the government negotiates a bilateral deal with Pfizer."

"COVAX plays a crucial role in providing vaccines for lower-income countries and will smoothen some of the uneven post-pandemic recovery in the region," it added.

TRICKY TASK AHEAD

Siraj 5-fer, Shardul spell keep India in hunt but Australia set 328-run target for visitors on a challenging fifth day wicket at Gabba

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Brisbane, Jan 18: Indian pacers Mohammed Siraj (5/73) and Shardul Thakur produced another inspirational effort in adverse circumstances but India were set a challenging target of 328 by Australia as the Border-Gavaskar Trophy headed towards an exhilarating finale in the fourth Test here.

The target is a tricky one and the Indian batsmen would get a fair idea whether to go for it by lunch on the final day which is Tuesday. This was after Siraj and Thakur combined to share nine wickets while dismissing Australia for 294 in their second innings.

Siraj punched way above his weight with his maiden five-wicket haul but couldn't prevent Australia from posting an imposing target for his team in only 75.5 overs of the second innings batting.

At stumps, India were four for no loss with Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill at the crease. The highest target chased here is 236 and that was seven decades ago which is an indicator why this Australian ground can be equated with Fort Knox. The home team hasn't lost a game here since 1988.

Thakur's dream Test match also got better with figures of 4/61 and a match haul of seven wickets. The most poignant moment was his apparent joy when he took the catch to help Siraj pip him to the coveted

five-for landmark.

As Siraj showed that scuffed red kookaburra acknowledging the 957 people in the stands on the first working day of the week, the most generous applause came from his partner in crime, who walked a foot behind him clapping with gusto.

It was the kind of day that Test aficionados wait eagerly – ebbs and flows keeping everyone on the edge of their seats.

The possibility of rain adds to the excitement and the changing weather did affect the contours of Australia skipper Tim Paine's facial expressions which exhibited relief and despair in equal measures.

Among the two captains, Paine is supposed to be the enforcer but this Indian team hasn't stopped surprising its detractors with a spirit, which has made this series one of the finest played in recent times.

If Weather Gods don't decide to play the boss, there will be an official winner but certainly not a 'loser'. This is the first Indian team which has earned well-wishers in exponential numbers for soldiering on manfully without any complaints.

A bowling attack with less than four-Test experience (if Thakur's debut is discounted) got 20 wickets without being over-expensive.

Yes, a Mohammed Shami or Jasprit Bumrah's experience would have been invaluable but their absence showed that in terms of tempera-

ment, India's next batch of pacers is game-ready.

Yes, they would make mistakes but their predecessors also made plenty on their way to glory. The two top quality deliveries that Siraj produced got rid of opposition's two best batsmen – Marnus Labuschagne (25) and Steve Smith (55).

Both deliveries were different from each other like chalk and cheese. Labuschagne got a fuller delivery on the off-stump that moved in a shade and he jabbed at it with Rohit taking a smart

catch at second slip.

For Smith, who was on the offensive, Siraj produced what in cricket parlance is known as the 'heavy ball' or the 'effort ball' – the one that climbed and grew big on Smith and forced him to lob one at gully for rival skipper Ajinkya Rahane.

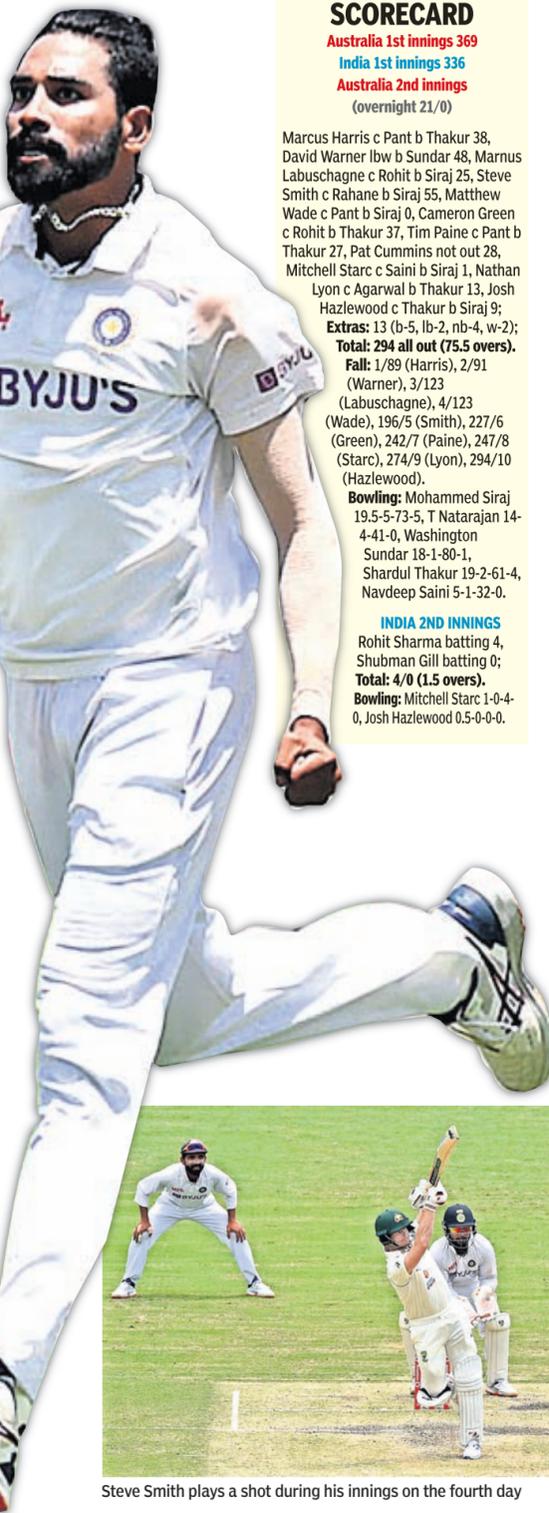
But there was a time during the morning session when Siraj was either being pulled or driven through covers imperiously as David Warner (48) and Marcus Harris (38) took control to send him and T Natarajan on a leather-hunt.

And then it was Thakur, who despite his 5 feet 7 inch frame, bounced Harris into swaying. The brush off gloves went to Rishabh Pant.

In the very next over, Warner, who was in sight of his first half-century of the series, was rapped on the back-foot by Washington who bowled one that kept straight.

The opener ended up being cramped for room on the back-foot while going for the cut shot. Four wickets fell in the session as India got back into the match.

The second session saw Smith up the ante before Siraj delivered and another three wickets. A few missed catches made it an exciting contest.



SCORECARD

Australia 1st innings 369

India 1st innings 336

Australia 2nd innings

(overnight 21/0)

Marcus Harris c Pant b Thakur 38,

David Warner lbw b Sundar 48, Marnus

Labuschagne c Rohit b Siraj 25, Steve

Smith c Rahane b Siraj 55, Matthew

Wade c Pant b Siraj 0, Cameron Green

c Rohit b Thakur 37, Tim Paine c Pant b

Thakur 27, Pat Cummins not out 28,

Mitchell Starc c Saini b Siraj 1, Nathan

Lyon c Agarwal b Thakur 13, Josh

Hazlewood c Thakur b Siraj 9;

Extras: 13 (b-5, lb-2, nb-4, w-2);

Total: 294 all out (75.5 overs).

Fall: 1/89 (Harris), 2/91

(Warner), 3/123

(Labuschagne), 4/123

(Wade), 196/5 (Smith), 227/6

(Green), 242/7 (Paine), 247/8

(Starc), 274/9 (Lyon), 294/10

(Hazlewood).

Bowling: Mohammed Siraj

19.5-5-73-5, T Natarajan 14-

4-41-0, Washington

Sundar 18-1-80-1,

Shardul Thakur 19-2-61-4,

Navdeep Saini 5-1-32-0.

INDIA 2ND INNINGS

Rohit Sharma batting 4,

Shubman Gill batting 0;

Total: 4/0 (1.5 overs).

Bowling: Mitchell Starc 1-0-4-

0, Josh Hazlewood 0.5-0-0-0.

POST DAY 4 PLAY REACTIONS

MOHAMMED SIRAJ

Pitch: When they (Aussies) bowl, obviously there will be some confusion, it will play in the mind of the batsmen that there are cracks on the pitch but our batsmen are prepared for this. We will come to know only tomorrow (Tuesday).

Favourite dismissal: In the whole series, I feel it would be Steve Smith's wicket, there was extra bounce from the area where I thought I will get it. He is the best batsmen in the world and it gave me a lot of confidence, also the wicket of Marnus (Labuschagne), it boosted my confidence.

Emotions: My dad had wished that his son would play and the entire world would watch him. I hope he could have been there to watch this day. This is because of his blessings that I have got a five wicket haul in Tests. I am speechless and can't express my feelings in words. It was a tough situation, dad's demise. I got strength after talking to mom and my focus was to realise dad's dream.

Leading India bowling attack: I don't consider myself as a senior bowler but since I have played a lot of domestic and India A, it helped. I missed Jassi bhai (Jasprit Bumrah). So I had to take more responsibility and build pressure and don't try too many things. You set up the batsman by first bowling a series of inswings followed by an outswing, after that 1-2 over bowled on same channel, and then change the line. The idea is to keep on building pressure.

STEVE SMITH

Pitch: I think the game is in a nice place for us. I think the wicket has started to play a few tricks today, couple of balls shot up. So, tomorrow it is just going to be about bowling (in) good areas and letting the natural variation of the day five wicket sort of do its work and hopefully we can hold on to all the chances.

Game plan: The Indian players have obviously batted well. Obviously in Sydney, it was 130 (overs) or something, obviously it is a different wicket to that. But for us it is just being patient, not searching too much, bowling good areas and just letting it happen. I think the more you sort of go searching for on these kind of tracks, then you probably don't get the reward. So, it is just about hitting good areas consistently and letting the natural variation of the wicket take its course.

Starc scene: I am not sure (about it), to be honest with you. Like, I saw the same thing, walking back, (Mitchell) grabbing at his right hamstring. I'm sure he'll get assessed by the medical staff and one thing I know about Mitchell is he's tough and he's played through some injuries before and got the job done, so he will be hopefully good to go tomorrow.

Lyon's role: There is nice little crack I think, forming outside the right-hander's off-stump, he (Lyon) will probably be looking to sort of aim at. So I think if he hits good areas consistently tomorrow, there is certainly no reason why he can't create some chances on day five.

RICKY PONTING

Result: I think a drawn series will be worse than the loss a couple of years ago. That's the way I look at it, considering how hard India have found it going through 20 players in a series, (Australia) having (David) Warner back for the last couple of games, (Steve) Smith back for all them that they didn't have last time around. A draw would not only feel like a loss to them but be a worse result than last series.

Backing Aussies: India's resilience has got to give up at some stage. They can't keep doing what they've been doing, being so resilient, and tomorrow it might be that day. The last day of the series, potentially playing for another draw, I've just got a feeling that something's got to give. And Australia, on the other hand, they know they have to go flat out and give everything to win the series.

Challenge for India: Ninety-eight overs tomorrow, 324 still to get so they're going to have to score at a rate that they haven't scored in the series so far. It's going to be intriguing to me to see if they come out with the thought of trying to win the game or if they're happy to try and defend and sit on it and block the day out and not even entertain (thoughts of) going for the runs. That story will be told pretty early on in the day tomorrow.

Pant's promotion likely: Rohit and Gill have every chance to get them off to a good start. If they do that I think they might use Rishabh Pant up the order again, like they did in Sydney, because if it does get down to a run chase and (India are) behind the (required) run rate early on. I can't see how Pujara is going to be the guy to drag them back into the chase.



Shardul Thakur is congratulated by his teammates after getting a wicket



Steve Smith plays a shot during his innings on the fourth day

Subhanshu shines as Odisha script 1st win

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 18: Subhanshu Senapati (64, 48b, 4x4, 3x6) helped Odisha register their first win in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 tournament as they defeated Assam by four wickets in their Elite Group B match in Kolkata, Monday.

Chasing 149 runs to win, Odisha didn't get much support from the openers as they were reduced to 26/2 in 4.2 overs. However, Subhanshu made sure of keeping required rate intact.

Odisha middle order made small contributions, but it was Subhanshu who kept the target within their reach. There was a time when the win looked like slipping away when Subhanshu got out in the first ball of the 18th over.

With 28 needed off 17 balls, Pratik Das (20 n o, 6b, 3x4, 1x6) and

Suryakant Pradhan (13 n o, 5b, 1x4, 1x6) went after the Assam bowlers and finished off the game with an over to spare. Pritam Das (2/19) and Riyan Parag (2/24) bowled well for the losing side.

Earlier, Assam posted 148/5 after winning the toss and opting to bat first. Assam batters got starts, but couldn't convert those into big scores. Skipper Parag (42, 26b, 3x4, 2x6) was the top scorer and he was ably supported by a late cameo by Rajjakuddin Ahmed (32, 19b, 2x4, 2x6).

Govind Poddar (2/28), Pappu Roy (1/20) and Sarbeswar Mohanty (1/24) shared four wickets among them, Ahmed's wicket came as run-out.

Brief scores: Assam 148/5 (Riyan Parag 42, Rajjakuddin Ahmed 32; Govind Poddar 2/28) lost to Odisha 154/6 (Subhanshu Senapati 64, Pratik Das 20 n o; Pritam Das 2/19, Riyan Parag 2/24) by 4 wickets.

ODISHA FACE HYDERABAD TEST



Head coach Stuart Baxter and Steven Dias during Odisha's training session ahead of their ISL match against Hyderabad, Tuesday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Goa, Jan 18: Odisha FC will take on Hyderabad FC in their Indian Super League (ISL) encounter at the Fatorda Stadium, Tuesday.

Odisha come into the game after a demoralising loss against Chennaiyin FC – their seventh de-

feat of the season, which is also the most by any side. They only have six points in their kitty and anything less than a win Tuesday would further dent their playoff hopes.

But despite the odds stacked against them, Odisha coach Stuart Baxter is hoping for an improved show against Hyderabad, who he la-

10-man East Bengal hold Chennaiyin FC

GOA: Chennaiyin FC were held to a goalless draw by a 10-man SC East Bengal in their Indian Super League (ISL) clash Monday at the GMC Stadium in Bambolim. Red and Gold's Ajay Chhetri was sent off in the 30th minute of the match following his second booking in the evening as the Kolkata giants played with a man down for the majority of the game. Both teams had their fair share of chances to break the deadlock but neither could find the back of the net.

beled as one of the most complete sides in the league.

"With the team we had in the first game, we played a good game, although it was decided by a penalty after a massive mistake by us," Baxter stated. "I'm hoping we can show we have improved and deal with them a lot better."

Hyderabad may have only have got a point against point leaders Mumbai City FC in their previous game, but the result was important in more ways than one.

In what was one of their most difficult matches of the season, they put on a gritty display, registering their third clean sheet of the season,

restricting Mumbai – a side that has scored the most this season – to a goalless draw. The Nizams could have also bagged the three points, had they converted their chances.

Now Hyderabad coach Manuel Marquez will be hoping for more of the same from his side when they face bottom-placed Odisha. A victory in their next game will put Hyderabad level against FC Goa, who currently sit third.

The last time these two sides met early in the season, Hyderabad got the better of an injury-marred Odisha side thanks to Aridane Santana's penalty. With form on their side, Hyderabad will start favorites again.

Chandrasekhar 'recovering well'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Jan 18: Former India leg-spinner BS Chandrasekhar has been hospitalised after suffering a stroke but is recovering well and is set to be discharged in the next couple of days, his family said Monday.

The 75-year old legendary former leg-spinner complained of 'tiredness and fatigue' Friday evening and his speech became a 'little bit cluttered', his wife Sandhya Chandrasekhar Bhagwath told this agency, describing the health scare as a 'very, very minitest stroke'.

"Chandra is recovering very well, and he will be back home Wednesday or Thursday," she said. Sandhya said that Chandrasekhar has now been shifted to a regular ward and undergoing physiotherapy. "There is some kind of blockage in the brain. It's a very, very minitest stroke," she said, adding that he will probably be alright in a week or two.

City Stones breach Crystal Palace wall

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Manchester, Jan 18: John Stones scored his first Premier League goals for Manchester City in a 4-0 victory over Crystal Palace to help his team leap up to second in the Premier League.

The defender netted twice and Ilkay Gundogan and Raheem Sterling also scored fine goals as City claimed a fifth successive win by overpowering a Palace side missing Wilfried Zaha at the Etihad Stadium.

City moved above Liverpool after the champions drew 0-0 with Manchester United, who played a game more than their neighbor.

The opening goal came after some



Kevin de Bruyne brilliance in the 26th minute. The Belgian brilliantly controlled a cross-field pass from Sterling on the left and instinctively curled a cross into the area with the outside of his right boot.

Stones read it perfectly and rose to head home his first of the night.

De Bruyne showed more restraint as he fist-bumped Kyle Walker in recognition of what was his 100th assist for City.

The second goal arrived 11 minutes into second half. It was all Gundogan's own work as he won the ball from Andros Townsend and then curled a shot into the top corner from the edge of the area.

City got their third in the 68th. Guaita did well to keep out a firm header from Dias but the ball rebounded to Stones, who lashed it back into the net almost instinctively.

Sterling wrapped up a fine night's work for City when he curled home a free kick from the edge of the area in the 88th.

Messi sees red as Bilbao win Spanish Super Cup

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, Jan 18: Lionel Messi lost his cool after another Barcelona collapse, hitting an opponent away from the ball and being sent off for the first time while playing with the Catalan club in the team's 2-3 loss to Athletic Bilbao in the final of the Spanish Super Cup.

Inaki Williams' goal in extra time gave Athletic the lead and a come-from-behind win. Barcelona had little chance of recovering when Messi swung his right arm toward the head of an Athletic player while trying to free himself. Messi was shown the red card following a video review.

After Athletic scored in the 90th



minute to seal a 2-2 draw and force extra time, Williams netted the title clinching goal with a neat curling shot from just inside the area, with the ball hitting the far post before going into the top corner.

The goal three minutes into extra time secured Athletic their third Super Cup title, and first since they beat Barcelona in the 2015 final. The Basque Country club also won the title in 1984.

Barcelona opened the scoring with a shot from the middle of the area by Antoine Griezmann in the 40th minute but Athletic equalised two minutes later with a close-range strike by Oscar de Marcos after a well-placed cross by Williams.

Griezmann put Barcelona ahead with another shot from inside the area in the 77th but Athletic evened the match again with Asier Villalibre finding the net following a set piece in the 90th.

Villalibre was the player hit by Messi in the final minutes as the players tangled together outside the area. The ball was already on the left side of the area when the incident happened.