



## FITNESS FREAK

Tamannaah Bhatia says she has regained the strength of her pre-Covid days thanks to consistent workout

LEISURE P2



## DRONE RIVALRY

The Chinese regime is actively growing its fleet of unmanned aircrafts to spy on and compete with adversaries such as the US

INTERNATIONAL P10



## STATE'S IPL PROBABLES

OCA recommends six Odia players for the auction of 14th Indian Premier League (IPL)

SPORTS P12

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Shall we hike fuel prices further? Farmers are still unwilling to cancel their tractor rally!

## SHORT TAKES

### 3rd minister quits Bengal Cabinet

**Kolkata:** West Bengal Minister Rajib Banerjee Friday quit the government over his portfolio being changed and broke down on camera, saying, "I never thought a day would come when I would have to take such a difficult step." He is the third minister to resign this month in the middle of an exodus from Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress ahead of elections. Banerjee did not respond to questions on whether he was headed to the BJP.

### Denizens to pay more for parking

**Bhubaneswar:** Denizens of the state capital will now have to shell out extra money for parking from April 1 as the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) declared revised fares for its parking lots across the city. Earlier, the BMC called for tendering of 32 parking lots in the city. As per the decision, there will be no parking charges for bicycles. As per the revised parking fee released by the civic authority, the fee will be collected on hourly basis. This has been further divided into 4 different segments.

## MARKET WATCH

INDEX	INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	48878.54	↓ 746.22
NIFTY	14371.90	↓ 218.50
DOLLAR	73.22	↓ ₹0.04
EURO	88.79	↓ ₹0.07
GOLD	₹48,876	↓ ₹572
SILVER	₹66,147	↓ ₹1153

## WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP. MAX	31.4°C	30.2°C
TEMP. MIN	15.0°C	13.5°C
Humidity	91%	84%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Moderate fog, clear sky later

# Elected Cong chief by June

SONIA GANDHI TOOK OVER AS INTERIM PRESIDENT IN 2019 AFTER HER SON RAHUL GANDHI STEPPED DOWN

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Jan 22:** The Congress party will have an elected president by June 2021, with the party's working committee on Friday approving holding the internal election after the assembly polls.

The committee after a three and a half hour meeting authorised incumbent party chief Sonia Gandhi to schedule the internal election after the conclusion of assembly polls in five states.

Addressing a joint press conference, Congress leaders K C Venugopal and Randeep Surjewala said elections to the CWC will also be held but it remains to be seen whether they can be scheduled before or after the election to the Congress chief's post.

Sources said the Central Election Authority has proposed the holding of polls for electing the party president and AICC session on May 29 and the working committee discussed the dates, but



authorised Sonia Gandhi to schedule them after the assembly polls.

The CWC passed three resolutions demanding a repeal of the three agriculture laws, a time-bound JPC probe into the alleged violations of national security and Official Secrets Act and another to ensure that the government

ensures free time-bound COVID-19 vaccination for the poor and oppressed sections. The CWC decided that there will be an elected Congress President by June 2021 at any cost, AICC general secretary K C Venugopal said.

AICC general secretary K C Venugopal said the little change of schedule depending on the state elections will be decided soon.

The CWC discussed the schedule of Congress president's elections in May-end, proposed by its election authority.

## PARTY RESOLUTIONS

- The CWC passed three resolutions which included demanding a repeal of the three agriculture laws
- The party sought a time-bound JPC probe into the alleged violations of national security and Official Secrets Act
- Moreover, it urged the Centre to ensure free time-bound COVID-19 vaccination for the poor and oppressed sections

All CWC members unanimously requested Congress president that the internal elections should not interfere with the assembly elections.

He said the Congress president was requested unanimously to reschedule AICC Plenary Session to the end of June 2021 and the Congress chief's election would be concluded by June 2021.

We will conduct elections as per the Constitution of the party. We need a change of schedule due to assembly polls as counting would be underway in May, he said.

Asked about any dissenting notes on the holding of elections, Surjewala said, There was no dissent at the meeting.

**The CWC has decided that there will be an elected Congress President by June 2021 at any cost. There is no dispute over conducting organizational election**

K C VENUGOPAL | AICC GENERAL SECRETARY

## 4,267 driving licenses suspended since Jan 1

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 22:** As many as 4,267 driving licenses (DL) were suspended in the state for violating various traffic rules during the period between January 1 and 21, State Transport Authority (STA) said Friday.

The STA released the data via its official twitter handle. It further revealed that maximum number of DLs have been suspended in the capital city. The authorities have canceled 1,202 DLs in the period under the jurisdiction of both the regional transport offices in Bhubaneswar.

As many as 654 DLs have been suspended by the RTO-I while the Bhubaneswar RTO II division has canceled 548 DLs of drivers found flouting traffic guidelines. Meanwhile, 537 DLs were suspended in Cuttack. Sambalpur RTO has cancelled the driving licenses of 410 drivers in the period.

As many as 279 licenses have been suspended by the authorities in Rourkela during the period.

The major reasons for suspension of the licenses include non-wearing of helmet, over speeding and usage of mobile phones while driving.

Most of the cases include drivers who do not wear helmets during commutation. The data revealed that more than half of the driving licenses have been cancelled for not wearing helmets while driving.

As many as 2,688 DLs out of the



- Maximum suspensions (1,202) were under Bhubaneswar RTO's jurisdiction
- Lack of helmet, overloading and phone usage while driving were major reasons
- As many as 2,688 DLs (more than 50%) were cancelled for lack of helmets

total 4,267 were cancelled for not wearing helmets.

On similar lines, the driving licenses of 255 persons were suspended for talking over mobile phones while driving their vehicles. As per STA's information, 99 DLs have been cancelled for jumping traffic signals illegally, 78 for driving under the influence of alcohol and 66 for overloading.

Meanwhile, 281 driving licenses were cancelled for various other reasons which not mentioned by the STA. In another development, the Commissionerate Police had fined 545 persons for violating the Motor Vehicle (MV) Act and the Orissa Urban Police (OUP) Act in Cuttack on Thursday.

## Govt-farmers stalemate again

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 22:** The government's negotiations with protesting farm unions hit a roadblock Friday as the farmer leaders stuck to their demands for a complete repeal of three farm laws.

Meanwhile, the Centre asked them to reconsider its proposal for putting the Acts on hold for 12-18 months.

Unlike the last 10 rounds of talks, the 11th round could not even reach a decision on the next date for the meeting as the government also hardened its position saying it is ready to meet again once the unions agree to discuss the suspen-

sion proposal. This followed a big climb-down made by the Centre during the last round when they offered to suspend the laws and form a joint committee to find solutions.

Farmer leaders said they will intensify their agitation now and alleged that the government's approach was not right during the meeting. While the meeting lasted for almost five hours, the two sides sat face to face for less than 30 minutes. In the very beginning, the farmer leaders informed the government that they have decided to reject the proposal made by the government in the last round of talks Wednesday.

**Unlike the last 10 rounds of talks, the 11th could not even reach a decision on the next date for a meet**

MORE P8

## AIR PROWESS



Glimpses of flypast by IAF fighters during the rehearsal of Republic Day Parade over Rajpath in New Delhi, Friday

## Students can sit for matric exam at own schools

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 22:** Class X students can appear matriculation or annual high school certificate (HSC) examinations in the state this year at their own schools, sources at Board of Secondary Education (BSE) said Friday.

However, official announcement regarding the same by the state government or the School and Mass Education department is yet to come. The annual Class X board examination is scheduled to be held from May 3 to 15 this year.

Teachers from other schools will be roped in to serve as invigilators during the exams to prevent malpractice and bring fairness in the examination, sources said.

Meanwhile, Board of Secondary Education revised the pattern of examination and distribution of marks in different subjects for annual High School Certificate Examination, State Open School Certificate Examination and Madhyama Examination, 2021.

The pattern can be downloaded from the website www.bseodisha.ac.in. As per the revised pattern, there will be two separate question papers in subjects- General Science and Social Science for HSC & SOSC candidates basing on old & new courses.

As per the pattern, the examination will be held in 20 subjects and each paper will comprise 50 marks of objective and 30 marks of subjective questions. The candidates need to attend each paper in two hours.

Even as the test will be conducted for 80 marks in each subject, the evaluation will be done for 100 marks. The rest 20 marks will be awarded as per marks obtained by a student for 80 marks.

# Global nuclear weapons ban begins without nuclear powers

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**New York, Jan 22:** The first-ever treaty to ban nuclear weapons entered into force Friday, hailed as a historic step to rid the world of its deadliest weapons but strongly opposed by the world's nuclear-armed nations.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is now part of international law, culminating a decades-long campaign aimed at preventing a repetition of the US atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of World War II. But getting all nations to ratify the treaty requiring them to never own such weapons seems daunting, if not impossible, in the current global climate.



## DAUNTING TASK

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is now part of international law, culminating a decades-long campaign

But getting all nations to ratify the treaty requiring them to never own such weapons seems daunting, if not impossible, in the current global climate

**Nuclear weapons pose growing dangers and the world needs urgent action to ensure their elimination and prevent the catastrophic consequences any use would cause**

ANTONIO GUTERRES | UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

When the treaty was approved by the UN General Assembly in July 2017, more than 120 approved it. But none of the nine countries known or believed to possess nuclear weapons—the United States, Russia, Britain, China, France, India, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel—supported it and neither did the 30-nation NATO alliance.

Japan, the world's only country to suffer nuclear attacks, also does not support the treaty, even though the aged survivors of the bombings in 1945 strongly push for it to do so. Japan on its own renounces use and possession of nuclear weapons, but the government has said pursuing a treaty ban is not realistic with nuclear and non-nuclear states so sharply divided over it.

Nonetheless, Beatrice Fihn, executive director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize-winning coalition whose work helped spearhead the treaty, called it "a really big day for international law, for the United Nations and for survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki."

The treaty received its 50th ratification on Oct 24, triggering a 90-day period before its entry into force on Jan 22.

As of Thursday, Fihn told The Associated Press that 61 countries had ratified the treaty, with another ratification possible on Friday, and "from Friday, nuclear weapons will be banned by international law" in all those countries.

The treaty requires that all ratifying countries "never under any circumstances ... Develop, test, produce, manufacture, otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices." It also bans any transfer or use of nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices—and the threat to use such weapons—and requires parties to promote the treaty to other countries.

Fihn said the treaty is "really, really significant" because it will now be a key legal instrument, along with the Geneva Conventions on conduct toward civilians and soldiers during war and the conventions banning chemical and biological weapons and land mines.



## ADELE REACHES DIVORCE SETTLEMENT WITH SIMON

Singer Adele Friday finalised her divorce settlement with estranged husband Simon Konecki. Simon, who is the CEO of Adele Drop4Drop charity, filed for settlement along with Adele Thursday. The settlement of \$171 million got finalised a day later.

## GIGI HADID REVEALS HER DAUGHTER'S NAME

Supermodel Gigi Hadid has finally revealed the name of her daughter in a subtle way. She shared the name by updating her Instagram bio to say 'Khai's mom'. This is the first time Hadid publicly announced her baby girl's name.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com  
accuracy • reliability • trust  
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL \$5181

**ARIES**  
Today, you will turn an attentive ear to your inner voice. As a result, you will be able to execute all your plans with precision. Besides being cheerful, you will even take disappointments with a pinch of salt. Why just today, says Ganesh, you can have this rare quality for keeps.

**TAURUS**  
The competitive streak in you might relent today as you look for a lifestyle that is more relaxed and laid-back. The rat race is tiring and you will feel the urge to get away, far from the maddening crowd and the never-ending routine. Matters pertaining to your home may also occupy some of your time today, says Ganesh.

**GEMINI**  
Today, you will realise that close relationships need care and concern to grow, predicts Ganesh. You will have new responsibilities and achieve huge profits in all your dealings. Pay special attention to your personal health.

**CANCER**  
You will be quite sharp at work, and equally penetrating in the matters of the heart. Though, you may temporarily lose focus, your mind will bring you back to the real world. You will work at a break-neck speed, only to be able to spend as much time as possible with your sweetheart.

**LEO**  
Few and rare are the days when creativity takes flight. After all, even Picasso couldn't make a masterpiece every day. So make the most of this auspicious day, urges Ganesh, during which your imagination peaks and touches new heights.

**VIRGO**  
It is not the time to rest on your past laurels, and you will have to carry on with your work unabated. You will have to keep your focus steady and remain organised to get the same level of success that you had in the recent past. Ganesh advises you not to neglect your relationships, as they are the cornerstones of your success and tranquility.

**LIBRA**  
Wedding bells are ringing, and you are about to get very lucky! Ganesh foresees a plethora of marriage proposals coming your way on this day full of special occasions, as you turn up your charisma and sweep the enthralled opposite sex off their feet with your charm.

**SCORPIO**  
You are in a dilemma and feel like standing at a crossroads of life. Some important decisions of life need time and that's what you want right now. However, keep personal life and work separate to avoid confusion and disturbance. As per Ganesh's advice, it's all right if decision making takes some time, but avoid taking hasty decisions.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
The pressing needs of your loved ones call for extra attention today. You may have a few family friends over for lunch or dinner, and end up chatting a good deal with them. Ganesh says an intimate tête-à-tête with your better half would fare you well.

**CAPRICORN**  
Money will flow in from various quarters today, but it will also find its way out of your pockets. Keep a tab on your income and more on your expenses, says Ganesh. Situation at work may get a little trying, but you will overcome all problems by means of your innate and acquired skills, and past experience.

**AQUARIUS**  
There is nothing like having a good time with your brothers and sisters. Generally, you plan out your routine and activities by yourself, but it is a different day today. Your siblings will make plans for you and you will just go along with the flow, predicts Ganesh.

**PISCES**  
You will have frequent mood swings today but you will still manage to fix a work related goal. Your mood will be better if you focus on work. You might feel stressed about some personal matter, but Ganesh says it is not a matter to worry.

# Singer Narendra Chanchal dies at 80

New Delhi: Singer Narendra Chanchal, who redefined popular devotional singing in India, is no more. According to reports, Narendra Chanchal died Friday in the city. He was 80.

Celebrities like Lata Mangeshkar, Daler Mehndi and Madhur Bhandarkar have paid tributes to the late singer. Chanchal shot to fame with his 'Jagran' hits in the seventies and the eighties, particularly songs dedicated to Sherawali Mata. His ode to Sherawali Mata 'Chalo bulava aaya hai' continues to be popular till date. Chanchal is best known for his live performances. The singer also made a mark in

Bollywood. He is known for rendering the title song of the 1974 Amitabh Bachchan film *Benaam*, composed by RD Burman. In the same year, he also sang *Mehngai mar gayi* for the film *Roti Kapda Aur Makaan*. He also famously sang *Beshak mandir masjid todo* in Raj Kapoor's 1973 superhit *Bobby*, starring Rishi Kapoor and Dimple Kapadia. He also sang *Tu ne mujhe bulaya* with Mohammed Rafi for the hit 1980 film *Aasha*.

Playback legend Lata Mangeshkar expressed her grief over his demise, tweeting: "He was a very good human being." She hoped he rests in peace.

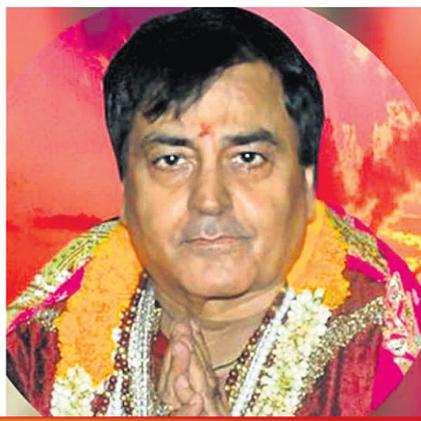
Singer-composer Vishal Dadlani shared that "Shri #NarendraChanchal ji will be remembered forever through the songs he sang. I doubt anyone will ever walk up to Vaishnudevi without hearing his voice resounding through the hills". Actor Manoj Bajpayee tweeted: "What a singer with such inspiring voice. Singing your songs now in your memory, god bless your soul with peace."

Filmmaker Madhur Bhandarkar tweeted: "Saddened to hear demise of Singer #NarendraChanchal ji. He will be remembered for his bhajans and some remarkable songs in Hindi films. My heartfelt condolences to his ad-

mirers and family. Om Shanti."

Singer Daler Mehndi also felt "deeply saddened to learn that iconic and most loved #NarendraChanchal ji has left us for the heavenly abode. In prayers for his soul to rest in peace. Heartfelt condolences to his family and legions of fans".

Honouring the singer, actor Ranvir Shorey said: "Saddened at the demise of vocalist Sh. Narendra Chanchal, singer of many iconic bhajans & Hindi film songs in history. His unique voice had the ability to pierce straight to a listener's heart, making every listening experience an emotional & spiritual one. #RIP #respect."



## Kangana talks about a 'mistake' Sushant made

Mumbai: Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut Friday opened up on what she feels is a mistake committed by late actor Sushant Singh Rajput.

Reacting to a tweet by a news portal appreciating her performance in last year's sports drama *Panga*, the actress tweeted saying she needs no validation of polls and juries anymore.

In this context, the actress claimed that Sushant Singh Rajput made the mistake of letting others decide who he was.

"I need no validation of polls or juries anymore, when we give them power over us then only mafia gives them price tag, Sushant made this mistake he let them decide who he was, remember if you don't know who you are the world will tell you, I know who I am so thanks

but no thanks," Kangana tweeted.

In a separate tweet, the actress mentioned: "...when people or system fail you it becomes all the more important to be kind to yourself, most people hate themselves because others fail to love them, never make that mistake. Know your worth."

Sushant was found dead in his Mumbai apartment June 14 last year. His death is still being investigated.



## 'Nobody made opportunities for me in the West'

New Delhi: When Priyanka Chopra Jonas started her journey in the West, there was no one to facilitate her entry into Hollywood with adequate opportunities. That is something she wants to change, with the power to create stories. Now that she has turned producer, the actress says she wants to help in the normalisation of South Asian people through stories as a producer.

"I don't put myself in a box. I am very organic with what I feel. I am doing a comedy with Mindy Kaling, which is probably one of the first few romantic comedies in Hollywood that you will see with all-South Asian star cast. I don't remember the last time that has happened. So that's something very exciting. It was my quest," Priyanka told IANS while opening about the road she wants to go on as a producer.

"When I started working there, nobody made opportunities for me. In fact, opportunities for people who are South Asian and look like

us are very limited in Hollywood. I wanted to be able to be a kind of producer that creates that," she added.

The actress continued: "I'm (also) doing a reality show, which is going to have couples from all ethnicities, all religions, celebrating a *Sangeet*. To take an Indian tradition and open it out to the world and have them understand, this is what I'm doing."

It was in 2015 that the actress founded her production company, Purple Pebble Pictures, and started backing films in Hindi, Marathi, Sikkimese and Punjabi, some of which even won National Film Awards. Now, she is going global thanks to the OTT power: She sealed a two-year multimillion-dollar, first-look television deal with the global streaming platform Amazon. She backed horror film *Evil Eye*, and is also producing the drama *Sheela* in which she will appear as Ma Anand Sheela. Priyanka has also executive-produced *The White Tiger* for Netflix.

"I'm taking the India that I know, the India that I have grown up in, and sort of creating things where there is a normalisation of seeing South Asian people in entertainment. In my little way, I'm trying to do as much of that as I can," said the actress, who is married to pop star Nick Jonas.

For Priyanka, it all started at the age of 17 when she was crowned Miss World. She soon stepped into the world of Bollywood in 2003 with *The Hero: Love Story Of A Spy*.



## Tamannaah: I'm back to my pre-Covid body

Hyderabad: Tamannaah Bhatia says she has regained the strength of her pre-Covid days thanks to two months of consistent workout. Tamannaah Friday shared a gym video on Instagram where she can be seen lifting weight. "You don't have to be extreme, just be consistent. 2 months of consistent, supervised workout routines with @devimeena and @kirandembla, and I'm back to my pre-covid body! In your face Covid-19. #BeStrongerThanYourExcuse #MakeItHappen #BeastMode #doiteveryday," the actress shared.

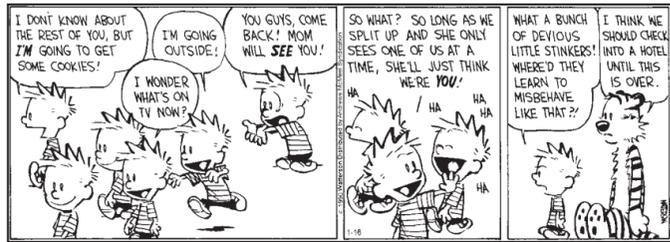
Tamannaah tested positive for Covid in October. The actress underwent treatment at a hospital in Hyderabad for a week. She will next be seen in the upcoming Telugu sports drama *Seetimaarr*. In the film, Tamannaah will be playing the role of a Kabaddi coach named Jwala Singh.

The film, which is currently on the floors in Hyderabad, is being helmed by Sampath Nandi and also stars Gopichand in the lead.

### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

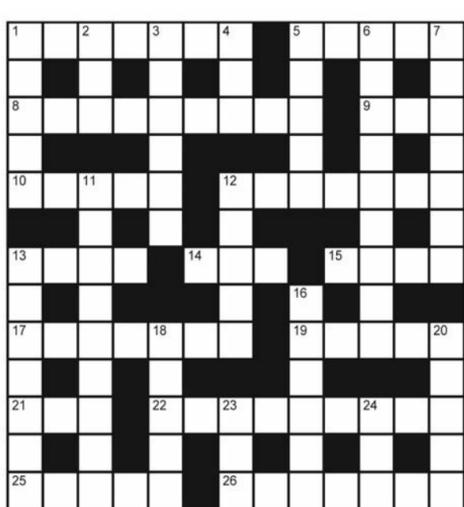


### BREVITY



### FUN post

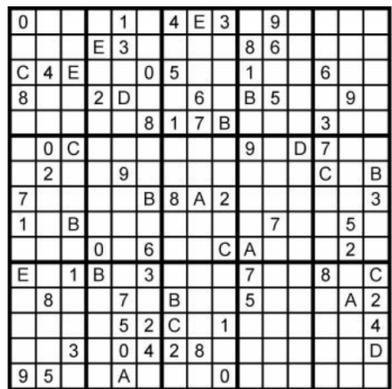
### CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Copy
  - 5 Anniversary buy
  - 8 Yacht necessity
  - 9 Short snooze
  - 10 Button material
  - 12 Skilled conductor
  - 13 Riot spray
  - 14 Furrow
  - 15 Game you can't play left-handed
  - 17 Reindeer herders' locale
  - 19 Dropsy
  - 21 Sense of self
  - 22 Northern Atlantic auk
  - 25 Newspaper section
  - 26 Remittance
  - 4 Toward the stern
  - 5 Jingle
  - 6 What to avoid at the beach
  - 7 Japanese city
  - 11 Loud harsh noise
  - 12 Pitcher's place
  - 13 Big hammers
  - 16 Annually
  - 18 Jibe
  - 20 Dispense
  - 23 Locomote
  - 24 Hotel amenity
- Down**
- 1 Pine product
  - 2 Potpie morsel
  - 3 Pressed

### 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

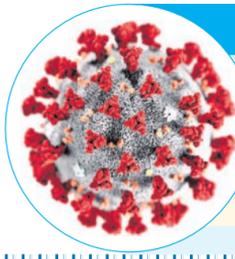


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



**HANDLOOM EXPO**

Women check out saris at Cottonfab-2020 at Exhibition Ground in Bhubaneswar, Friday



**COVID-19 TRACKER**

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	9,83,16,946	7,06,42,992	21,05,771
India	1,06,25,428	1,02,83,708	1,53,032
Odisha	3,34,020	3,30,757	1,903

**Sanjay Nayak appointed new VC of Ravenshaw**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 22:** After appointing new Vice-Chancellors for Sambalpur University and Odisha State Open University (OSOU), Governor and Chancellor of Universities of Odisha, Ganeshi Lal, Friday appointed Sanjay Kumar Nayak as the Vice Chancellor of Ravenshaw University in Cuttack for a period of four years with effect from the date on which Nayak assumes office as such or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

At present, Nayak is working as the Director General (Chief Academic Officer) at Central Institute of Plastic Engineering & Technology, Chennai.

Nayak has more than 34 years of teaching experience and he has authored 35 books. He is instrumental in securing 25 patents and 30 design registrations for India. He has guided one DSc and 40 PhD scholars. Earlier, the Governor had appointed Sanjiv Mittal as the VC of Sambalpur University and Arka Kumar Das Mohapatra as the new VC of Odisha State Open University.

Sanjiv Mittal is now working as the professor of University School of Management Studies at Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, Delhi, while Das Mohapatra was working as a Professor of Business Administration in Sambalpur University.



**State's exports up by 55% till Nov end**

Odisha has exported materials and products worth ₹60,000 crore during the Covid-19 pandemic



Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurates the State Export Award Ceremony-2021 through video-conferencing. 5T Secretary VK Pandian is also seen

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 22:** The adverse situation caused by Covid-19 pandemic notwithstanding, exports from the state increased by 55 per cent during the period ending November of the current financial year compared to the exports during the same period in 2019-20 fiscal.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said this while inaugurating the State Export Award Ceremony-2021 Friday through video-conferencing mode. According to sources, the state has exported materials and products worth Rs 60,000 crore during the Covid-19 pandemic. "This is an outstanding achievement by the exporters of Odisha amid the global recession and stiff international competition. I congratulate the exporting community of the state for this remarkable

feat and hope this upward trend will continue in the coming years," he said.

Stating that export plays a vital role in the economic growth of any state, the Chief Minister said, "Odisha has a magnificent history of overseas trade and commerce. The legends of 'Sadhya Pua' of Kalinga venturing into overseas markets to promote our merchandise continue to inspire us to regain our past glory."

Patnaik said his government is striving to create a conducive atmosphere to promote exports through greater ease of doing business, implementation of 5T mechanism, building infrastructure support and facilities for quality standardization.

"We are among the top five states in the Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2020 released by the Niti Aayog. Our efforts to promote ex-

ports are paying off in boosting our export turnover consistently," he further said.

District-level export promotion committees have been constituted to facilitate export of local products.

There are many local MSME products which have the potential to compete in the global market. That time is not far off when the departmental stores in Europe and America will be stocked with products made by the women Self Help Groups (SHGs) from Kalahandi, Kandhamal and Malkangiri, he said.

As quality of products is an essential factor for boosting export, the CM asked the entrepreneurs to make the quality of a product or a service of world-class standard.

Speaking on the occasion, Industry & MSME Minister Dibya Shankar Mishra said that Odisha has excellent potential to become a major exporting state in the country because of its natural resources, location and other advantages.

The minister, Chief Secretary, Development Commissioner and Agriculture Production Commissioner gave away the awards to the exporters on behalf of the Chief Minister for the years 2017-18 and 2018-19. A total of 26 exporters from Odisha, including Vedanta Ltd, Jharsuguda, Nalco, Falcon Marine Exports and Hindalco Industries Ltd, were awarded in different categories on this occasion.

**R-DAY WARM-UP**



Security personnel during a rehearsal for the Republic Day parade at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar, Friday

**Bridge-cum-check dams to boost irrigation in state**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 22:** The state government has planned to construct check dams on the existing bridge structures on various rivers across the state with a view to enhance large scale conservation of surface water in streams and rivers.

The government has formed a four-member technical team under the chairmanship of engineer-in-chief (Civil) to identify feasible locations. Chief engineer (World Bank projects) is the member-convenor, while the EIC of Water Resources department and chief engineer (flood control and basin manager) are the two other members of the panel.

The government plans to construct at least 40 such storages or check dams in various parts of the state in next five to six years with an investment of over Rs 11,700 crore. To begin with, the Water Resources department has taken up eight such projects this year.

The check dams will be constructed adjacent to the existing

**FACILITATING AGRICULTURE**



The government has formed a four-member technical team under the chairmanship of engineer-in-chief (Civil) to identify feasible locations

The government plans to construct at least 40 such storages or check dams in various parts of the state in next five to six years with an investment of over Rs 11,700 crore

The dams will preferably be constructed in different districts of Western Odisha and the KBK districts as the areas which suffer due to lack of irrigation facilities

bridges (on the upstream side) under Works and Rural Development department. The dams will preferably be constructed in different districts of Western Odisha and the KBK districts as the areas which suffer due to lack of irrigation facilities, sources said.

While the Works and Rural Development departments will identify the bridges where such struc-

tures can be constructed, Water Resources department will prepare the detailed project report in this regard.

The Maharashtra government has constructed such dams across its rivers and these have been of huge help to the farmers. The state government is likely to follow the Maharashtra model for construction of the bridge-cum-check dams.

**124% target met, another adverse reaction reported**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 22:** The state Health department Friday said that it was able to achieve 124 per cent of the target set for Covid-19 vaccination by the end of Friday.

The government had targeted to cover 13,195 persons, while the total of persons who received vaccination was 16,384. On the other hand, a female health worker from Bargarh, who was vaccinated Thursday, suffered adverse reactions.

**COVID VACCINATION**

"A 59-year-old female health worker of Bargarh district had been vaccinated January 21. She developed weakness in the lower limbs and is under observation. Her condition is stable," a statement issued by the Health department read.

The state government, meanwhile, said that it is likely to get the next consignment of Covaxin next week. "We are likely to receive out next consignment of

Covaxin next one week. We have decided that we will only inoculate Bhubaneswar residents with Covaxin," Bijay Panigrahy, state Health and Family Welfare Department Director said.

He also added that the listing of elderly people from state for vaccination in the third phase has not started yet. "Now we are working to prepare the list of frontline workers. We are yet to decide on the list of senior citizens. Their names will come in the third list," he said.

He added that the government is taking a break from vaccination for a few days from Saturday to focus on other routine health related issues. "The Union government has allowed the states undertake vaccination on at least four days every week to ensure and to focus on other health-related issues on the remaining days," he said.

There will be no vaccination on Sundays, the official said, adding, 1.92 lakh registered health workers would be inoculated by Monday.

**MOCK DRILL**



Fire brigade personnel conduct a mock drill at Bhubaneswar railway station, Friday

OP PHOTO

**Moqim files defamation suit against Sambit Patra**

**Cuttack:** Congress MLA from Barabati-Cuttack constituency, Mohammed Moqim, Friday filed a defamation suit against BJP national spokesperson Sambit Patra for the latter's alleged remarks that Congress legislators had accepted money from the ruling BJD in Odisha to keep their mouths shut on the murder of a minor girl in Nayaagarh. Moqim filed the defamation suit before the court of Cuttack Sub-Divisional Judicial Magistrate (SDJM) here under Sections 499 and 500 of the IPC, 1860.

Moqim had served a legal notice on Patra December 7 and sought an unconditional apology from the BJP spokesperson for his alleged remarks against the Congress legislators November 30. The Congress MLA had claimed that Patra's remarks have caused irreparable damage to his prestige and reputation. Moqim filed the defamation suit as Patra did not tender any apology on the issue.

**BMC plans to make city beggar-free**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 22:** The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Thursday stated that it has prepared a roadmap to make the state capital free of beggars by rehabilitating the homeless and destitute in shelter homes.

BMC Commissioner Prem Chandra Choudhary said that civic authority plans to set up 100-bed rehabilitation centres at all regional offices in the city. According to sources, the BMC will also initiate a drive under which it will identify the beggars in the city and shift them to shelter homes. It



will attempt to make them self-reliant by launching various programmes.

Under the programmes, the homeless will be provided shelter and the beggars will be rehabilitated. The rehabilitation centres will be operated by professional organisations, sources in BMC said. It is worth mentioning here that in December last year, BMC had started the process to make 'Ekamra Kshetra', heritage hub of

Temple City, beggar-free.

The civic body made efforts to rehabilitate beggars/destitutes roaming near Lingaraj temple with livelihood support and bring them to mainstream of the society under the 'Sahaya' scheme of the Odisha government. The initiative was a part of the beautification and developmental work of Ekamra Kshetra Amenities and Monumental Revival Action (EKAMRA) Plan.

The administration had deployed non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and government officials in identifying beggars and shifting them to shelter homes.

**Odias in US expect 'better days'**

Biden's speech ushered in peace and harmony. He has reassured the strength of democracy. Now, we all feel a sense of unity, says an NRI Odia

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 22:** Joe Biden, who was sworn in as the 46th President of the United States Wednesday in a historic but scaled down ceremony, has vowed to repair America's alliances and engage with the world once again, saying the country has been tested and its people have come out stronger.

In his inaugural speech, the 78-year-old Democratic leader said: "We'll be a strong and trusted partner for peace, progress and security."

Soon after his sworn-in ceremony, Orissa POST spoke to a number of overseas Odias residing in different regions of the USA to learn about their expectations from Biden administration and what they thought of Donald Trump's tenure as the President of the United States.

Odisha Society of the Americas (OSA) president, Kuku Das, said, "It was a historic moment. President Biden's speech ushered in peace and harmony. He has reassured the strength of democracy. Now, we all feel a sense of unity. Being the



daughter of an Asian-American immigrant couple, Kamala's victory is not only a win for the women but a victory for the American democracy. People of America have high hopes from Biden. Hope the good days are here."

Jayanta Rout of Austin, Texas, said, "We expect a very good diplomatic relation between India and the USA. Indians here are concerned about visa and citizenship processes. From the day one, it seems that the new President has plans to ease out the hurdles in both these processes. As the Vice President, Kamala Harris, is a woman of Indian origin, we are expecting very good ties between the USA and India. Anyway, India has proved its importance on the global stage. So, not only

the USA, but every developed country in the world also wants to maintain good relations with India."

Sadyasnata Pattanaik from Chicago, Illinois, is optimistic of the future as Donald Trump has left the White House. "I am happy that Biden has reversed many of the bad policies of the Trump administration. Although I don't agree with all policies of the Biden-Harris administration, I think it's important that they have brought diversity in the White House again. I am hopeful that things will be better in the future."

Many Odias in the USA feel that the Biden administration would bring the Covid-19 pandemic under control. There are others who expect relaxations in the visa policy along with a strong anti-China stand. Rajesh Panda from Naperville, Illinois, said, "The new President's focus should be on improving the economy and healthcare sector which suffered a big jolt due to the pandemic. Also, the relation between India and the USA should be strengthened for the cause of world peace and harmony."

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SPL TRAIN BETWEEN PURI & RISHIKESH

POST NEWS NETWORK
Bhubaneswar, Jan 22: The East Coast Railway (ECOR) Friday said that it would run a special train between Puri and Yog Nagari Rishikesh during Maha Kumbh Mela at Haridwar in Uttarakhand.

Denizens to pay more for parking

POST NEWS NETWORK
Bhubaneswar, Jan 22: Denizens of the state capital will now shell out extra money from April 1 for parking as the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has declared to revise fares for its parking lots across the city.



WHILE NO CHARGE WILL BE LEVIED ON PARKING BICYCLES, ELECTRIC VEHICLES WILL BE GIVEN 40 PER CENT DISCOUNT ON PARKING FEES
TWO-WHEELERS WILL HAVE TO PAY ₹5 FOR UP TO TWO HOURS
FOR AUTO-RICKSHAWS, FOUR-WHEELERS AND HEAVY VEHICLES, THE PARKING CHARGES WILL BE ₹5, ₹20 AND ₹25 RESPECTIVELY

hicles, the charges will be ₹20, ₹40 and ₹50 respectively. The charges are 20 per cent extra for parking vehicles for more than five hours. As per sources, the revised parking fee has been done to promote public transport in view the rising motorization.

NGT asks committee to examine BARFI impact on Mahanadi

POST NEWS NETWORK
Bhubaneswar, Jan 22: The Eastern Bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has asked a special committee to examine the allegations of exploitation of the Mahanadi riverbed by the proposed Baliyatra Riverfront Improvement (BARFI) project.

It was alleged that the BARFI project was an attempt to monetise the riverbed for commercial purpose which is likely to reduce the water-retaining capacity of Jobra Barrage in Cuttack



The bench declined to pass any fresh order on the issue of encroachment on the Mahanadi riverbed in Cuttack as it had already passed a detailed order on the issue. In a similar matter, the environment watchdog had earlier asked the state government to constitute an expert committee and look into the issue as well as frame rules for the conservation of the Mahanadi riverbed, sources said.

BJP leaders protest 'anti-farmer policy' of BJD government

BJD spokesperson Shreemayee Mishra said the BJP was making a drama to divert the attention of people from the farmers' agitation on Delhi borders

Bhubaneswar, Jan 22: More than 15 senior BJP leaders are sitting on a dharna inside the Town police station in Sambalpur since Thursday protesting the 'anti-farmer policy of the state government' and demanding procurement of all surplus paddy of farmers.

Naveen to lay foundation for Khannagar bus terminal today



Cuttack, Jan 22: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik is scheduled to lay foundation stone for an ultramodern bus terminal at Khannagar here Saturday.

Mock drill for CM's visit
The administration Friday conducted a mock drill to ensure fool-proof security for the Chief Minister's visit.

Retd Army officers stage stir before EOW office

Bhubaneswar, Jan 22: Several retired Army officers Friday staged a demonstration before the office of the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the state crime branch here.



registered a case (19/2015) with the EOW seeking strict actions against both the accused in 2015. Both were later arrested by the EOW in 2015 and 2016. However, they managed to get bail within six months on the condition to make a settlement with the complainants at the earliest. But, the MD of Brookson

Docs from Odisha join hands to help people

Bhubaneswar, Jan 22: The doctors' commitment to the health of patients as was demonstrated in immense measure as the pandemic enveloped the globe.



Sabyasachi Misra, who has helped thousands of migrant workers during the difficult months of lockdown and the Covid crisis, will lead the efforts of ODIA at the local level.

tal, women healthcare and vaccination of elderly people," Dr Ray added. ODIA is also setting up teams to respond to emergency situations and frame guidelines for emergency relief teams.

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Visually-impaired couple ties nuptial knot in Cuttack district

Bargarh offers recipe for paddy distress sale

POST NWS NETWORK

Choudwar, Jan 22: Rinu and Muna exchanged garlands at Shimilihanda village of Kayalpada panchayat under Tangi Choudwar block in Cuttack district Thursday. But their marriage has become the hot topic of discussion among the locals of the area. There is nothing new in a man and woman getting married.



also born blind. He too lost his mother when he was just three years old. To top it all Muna's father died two years later. However, the love of his grandparents helped him overcome the losses. Even though, he is also Matric pass-out. In spite of all difficulties, Muna survived. With a god-gifted voice he started singing. Now he earns by performing in various cultural events and he also sells stationery items on trains. So he ekes out a comfortable living. They say marriages are made in heaven. Fate brought the families of Rinu and Muna together. Marriage of the two between the

families was discussed and finalised. The Radhamadhab mutt at Shimilihanda village was chosen as the marriage venue. Villagers thronged the venue Thursday to witness the marriage. Elderly persons were present along with Choudwar-Cuttack MLA Souvik Biswal to bless the couple. Rinu's father is confident that she will not face any difficulty in her married life. "She has been doing household chores on by her own. She can manage everything," he stressed. Rinu and Muna can't see each other. However, as life partners they can always feel the love they have for one another. People are sure that jointly and by supporting one another, they can always overcome all the hindrances in life. Block vice-chairperson Janaki Parida said she would see to it that the couple receive all benefits of government schemes for visually-impaired people.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargarh, Jan 22: With the government set to close paddy procurement soon, the district is headed for massive distress sale of paddy. Farmers claim they are holding on to large stocks of paddy even as tokens that they have received will be outdated as millers are not lifting paddy from the mandi saying, mandis have not been tagged to them. It has been over two months and a fortnight since paddy procurement started in the district but the problems regarding procurement are yet to be resolved. Many of the farmers in this district have been left with lots of paddy. The delay in procurement has sparked resentment among farmers. They have been unable to prepare for the next rabi crops while no word is coming from the authorities when the paddy procurement will begin. Initially purchase of paddy was hit as farmers did not have tokens. The token issue has again cropped up when procurement process is



coming to an end. Farmers of Padmapur, Paikamal, Jharbandh blocks under Padmapur sub-division have been seized with the token problem. Farmers alleged that millers do not lift paddy from them even as mandis have remained opened in their areas. However, millers claimed they are not coming to mandis as they are yet to be tagged. Farmers are getting apprehensive as the validity of their tokens will soon come to an end. They alleged that mandi authorities and millers cited various reasons for not lifting paddy. Earlier, they were harassing them on the pretext of unavailability of tags while now they refuse to purchase their stocks due to expiry of tokens. Farmer leader Ramesh Mohapatra said the problem is man-made and a direct result of the connivance of millers and departmental officials. They are harassing gullible farmers on various pretexts. He feared that farmers would be forced to resort to distress sale if millers fail to procure paddy from them. Left with no options, farmers will be forced to hand over paddy to traders. Farmers have demanded immediate renewal of tokens and procurement of paddy from all registered farmers. He warned that farmers would hit the street if their demands for paddy procurement are not met by the authorities. Millers may procure paddy from outside of the district even as procurement is yet to get over in the district. The matter assumes significance after a report claimed that the Odisha State Civil Supplies Corporation has permitted some millers in the district to lift paddy from Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur and Nuapada districts.

SKOCH semi-finalist award to Gajapati

POST NWS NETWORK

Paralakhemundi, Jan 22: The project director, watershed-cum-deputy director, soil conservation of Gajapati district Rabindra Kumar Sahu has received the prestigious "SKOCH" semi-finalist award for 2020 for the outstanding farm pond projects on integrated farming system and value addition under Rainfed Area Development (RAD) programme and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

These projects maintain focus on enhancing the sustainable livelihoods along with socio-economic status of poor farmers and to mitigate the impact of drought, flood and or other extreme weather events through promotion of integrated farming system with allied activities like agriculture, horticulture, fishery, livestock and to promote value addition through a sustainable farming system and in maximising farm returns.



Art and sports teachers gheraoing the office of the district project coordinator of Samagra Sikshya Abhiyan over payment of their arrears in Keonjhar, Friday

Miscreants loot ornaments worth ₹11L in Nabarangpur

POST NWS NETWORK

Nabarangpur, Jan 22: Four bike-borne masked miscreants looted a local businessman of gold and silver ornaments worth Rs 11,00,000 at a place between Bharasundi and Chhatabeda villages under Raigarh police limits in Nabarangpur district Thursday night.



The victim, Asharam Gond, a resident of Mahubhata village under Parua panchayat, deals in gold and silver ornaments. He sells these ornaments at weekly markets in Raigarh town and nearby villages including Beheda and Gona villages.

Asharam Gond, a resident of Mahubhata village under Parua panchayat, deals in gold and silver ornaments

According to the report he lodged at the Raigarh police station, he had gone to Gona weekly market Thursday. In the evening, he was returning to his house on his motor cycle. As usual, he was also carrying the ornament boxes with him. At a deserted place between Bharasundi and Chhatabeda villages, he was waylaid by four bike-borne miscreants. All of them were brandishing knives. After a scuffle between them and Asharam, they snatched the jewellery box away from him and sped away from the spot. An injured Asharam, somehow managed to reach Raigarh police to lodge a report. Raigarh police have launched an investigation and a manhunt to nab the miscreants.

Highest Tricolour flagpole in Rourkela



Rourkela, Jan 22: This Republic Day, people in the Steel City will have a proud moment. They will be witnesses to the Tricolour flying on the tallest flagpole in Odisha. The tallest flagpole is being installed at sector-6 area in this city by the Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP). The National Flag will be flown at a height of around

230 feet. The flagpole measuring over 70 metres has been installed but it is yet to be inaugurated as some ancillary work around the pole is underway. According to RSP sources, the pole is expected to be inaugurated on Republic Day itself along with the unveiling of the Tricolour. Getting to learn that the Steel City will henceforth be known for having the state's tallest flagpole, the local residents are very happy. Prior to this flagpole here, the one on the premises of the Orissa High Court has been the tallest till date to fly the Tricolour. It has a height of 215 feet, while the second tallest flagpole till date is located at JSPL's Angul plant. The height of the JSPL flagpole is 207 feet.

Father-in-law sexually assaults woman for failing to conceive

POST NWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Jan 22: A woman lodged Friday an FIR at Mahanga police station of Cuttack district alleging that her father-in-law has sexually assaulted her for not being able to conceive. The woman also alleged that the same person was mentally torturing her also on a regular basis. The incident was reported from

Itamundali village. The woman's claim has been supported by her husband who has said that the accused has also assaulted him. The victim in her FIR mentioned that the accused, Choudhury Mahendra Das, also a resident of Itamundali village, is constantly harassing her for not being able to conceive. In her complaint, the woman said the accused tried to rape her Friday when her husband was not in

the room. Hearing her screams, the husband rushed into the room and saved her. In a fit of anger, Mahendra then assaulted his son. Following the incident, the couple filed a complaint with the Mahanga police against the accused. They threatened self-immolation if justice was denied to them. "We have received a complaint from the victims and lodged an FIR against the accused, the IIC said.

Engineer-turned-farmer scripts success story in Jagatsinghpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

Biridi, Jan 22: Despite being an engineer, he finds the lines 'chasa kama jahar kede sukha tahara, sie sina dunia ku jogouchhi aahaara' (He who takes up agriculture lives happily, provides food to the world) meaningful. Meet the engineer-turned-successful farmer Chinmay Dash of Chashikhanda village of Baisi Mouza under Biridi block in Jagatsinghpur district. Chinmay, son of Chittaranjan Dash, a retired teacher, was working at a private company in Hyderabad after obtaining a degree in engineering. However, he did not have job satisfaction and returned home. During the initial days of the COVID-19 outbreak last year, he decided to try his hand at farming. He not only gave it a thought but also started working on it. Now Chinmay is regarded as a



successful farmer in the locality. He has constructed a pond in his backyard and is into fish farming. This apart, he is cultivating strawberries

FRUITS OF LABOUR. DURING THE INITIAL DAYS OF THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK LAST YEAR, CHINMAYA DECIDED TO TRY HIS HAND AT FARMING. HE NOT ONLY GAVE IT A THOUGHT BUT ALSO STARTED WORKING ON IT. CHINMAYA'S STRAWBERRY AND CAPSICUM REARING HAS ATTRACTED THE ATTENTION OF FARMERS OF OTHER VILLAGES ALSO. THEY ARE VISITING HIM TO GET SOME INFORMATION ON THE FARMING OF THESE TWO ITEMS. CHINMAYA HAS URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO GIVE MORE PRIORITY TO AGRICULTURE, MAKE FARMERS AWARE ABOUT ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES AND CREATE MARKETING FACILITIES FOR THEIR PRODUCES.

and capsicums of different varieties on pots on his rooftop. There are also varieties of fruit trees in his garden.

Chinmay's strawberry and capsicum rearing has attracted the attention of farmers of other villages also. They are visiting him to get

some information on the farming of these two items. "I am happy that farmers are showing interest in giving up traditional farming. It gives me immense pleasure when they visit me. Block assistant agriculture officer Pradipta Behera and his associates have been offering their valuable suggestions on occasions. I have a dream to see more and more youths take up agriculture instead of running after jobs," Chinmay said. "I also urge the government to give more priority to agriculture, make farmers aware about advanced technologies and create marketing facilities for their produces," said the engineer-turned-farmer. When contacted, assistant agriculture officer Behera said, "Chinmay has set an example for others by taking up non-traditional farming. What he is today is due to his interest and endeavours."

Mayurbhanj police solve murder case of Jharkhand man

POLICE SAID THE ACCUSED DUO HAD KILLED THEIR UNCLE BY STRANGULATING OVER A PAST ENMITY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Jan 22: Jashipur police Friday claimed to have solved the case regarding the murder of a person belonging to Jharkhand. The body of the deceased was fished out from a well in Mayurbhanj district. Two have been arrested for murder. The accused have been identified as Bhola Murmu (20) and Sarat Murmu (21) and the deceased as Jaypal Hembram. Incidentally, Jaypal was the uncle of the two accused. A body was found floating in an abandoned well at a place bordering Odisha and Jharkhand, near Jammalia village under Raruan block in Mayurbhanj district January 15. However, as the well is located in a disputed area close to the borders of Odisha and Jharkhand, the police of the two states were initially reluctant to take up the case.

Finally it was decided that the area comes under Jashipur police limits. Police then fished out the body and started an investigation. Police after investigation found out that the deceased was a resident of Jharkhand. They then zeroed in on Bhola and Sarat, residents of a village on the Jharkhand side. After their arrest, the two confessed that they had killed Jaypal. After their arrest, they were produced in a local court and remanded to judicial custody. Police said the accused duo had killed their uncle by strangulating over a past enmity. After killing him, they carried the body on a bicycle for nearly six kilometres to the Odisha. Then they had thrown the body into an abandoned well to avoid police investigation. However, all their efforts to nullify their criminal act have gone to waste.



PUBLIC NOTICE. Notice is hereby given to all concerned that, Biswanath Debta S/o.- Late Haribandhu Debta, R/o.- Sambhupada, Po.- Budharaja, P/S.- Ainthapali, Dist.- Sambalpur has sworn an affidavit on dt. 18.01.2021 and has reported to OIC, Town Police Station on 16.01.2021 regarding loss of original Regd Sale Deed No. 362/82 dt. 10.02.1982 of D.S.R. Sambalpur. Biswanath Debta S/o.- Haribandhu Debta has applied to The LIC HOUSING FINANCE LTD., Sambalpur to avail loan for purchase of the above property by mortgaging the said property documents. All concerned therefore, having any claim over the property purchased under the said document Regd. Sale Deed No. 362/82 dt. 10.02.1982 of D.S.R. Sambalpur is required to file their claim with the undersigned within 15 (Fifteen) days from the date of publication of this notice failing which it will be presumed that, the property having link with the said document/s is/are free from encumbrances and any claim in respect thereof against the applicant as a Mortgagee and the company as the mortgagee shall be void and ineffective after the lapse of 15 (Fifteen) days of publication of this notice. Sd./- (A.K. Debta) Advocate, LIC Housing Finance Ltd. At/Po.- Modipara, Sambalpur, Odisha Mobile No. 9437158519

OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, BHAWANIPATNA. "e" Procurement Notice. No. 94 Dated: 19.1.21. Tender Call Notice - EOBBM/Online - 03/2020-21. No. C-320: The Municipal Council, Bhawanipatna invites online bid in Single Cover System through e-procurement. Tender reference No. : EOBBM/Online-03/2020-21. Name of Work : Civil Works. Total Nos. of works : 56 (Fifty Six). Value of Works : Rs.220000.00 to Rs.1944000.00. Date of availability of : From 25.01.2021 at 11.00 A.M. Tender for Online Bidding : Upto Dt.06.02.2021 at 5.00 P.M. Date of Opening of Bids : Dt.11.02.2021 at 04.00 P.M. Name and address of the : Executive Officer, Bhawanipatna Municipality. Further details can be seen from procurement portal the website: www.tendersorissa.gov.in. Sd./- Executive Officer Bhawanipatna Municipality OIPR-13100/11/0001/2021

Each victory gained over oneself means new strength to gain more victories. SRI AUROBINDO



Foreign assets on radar

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) is strengthening its drive against unaccounted foreign assets and benami properties with a slew of steps.

The FAIUs will function under director-general ranked income tax officers, and depending on how these units are grouped, they will also have directors, additional directors and sufficient support staff to perform their mandated job.

Sources also reveal that CBDT is not averse to hiring the services of experts like data analysts and chartered accountants from outside the government if required.



BABUDOM BYTES Dilip Cherian

Don't keep vigilance cases pending, says CVC In a significant move, the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) has urged cadre controlling authorities including the Union Home Ministry and the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) to facilitate and approve vigilance clearance of IAS, IPS and IFS officers if the state government or relevant department fails to respond within three months on vigilance queries.

The communication from Chief Vigilance Commissioner Sanjay Kothari also states that in all instances where the authorities fail to provide details of vigilance cases against babus within three months, the officers will be considered as clean and fit for promotion.

Sources say that this order is consequent to the commission discovering that often cadre-controlling authorities do not adhere to the rule, leading to long-pending and unresolved complaints shown against the officers' names.

If the CVC has its way, this could put an end to the many frivolous vigilance cases that are kept pending for months (and years in some cases) and give deserving officers their career dues.

Sharma to spearhead Modi's UP plan The advent of Arvind Sharma, a former Gujarat cadre IAS officer and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's trusted lieutenant, in the hurly-burly of Uttar Pradesh politics is being watched keenly.

Speculation is rife that Sharma could be named the Home Minister or even deputy chief minister of UP. But many see a larger plan for Sharma in UP politics. They feel that Modi wouldn't depute his trusted ex-babu to simply become an MLC or minister.

The move also reiterates Modi's oft-seen penchant for introducing his trusted bureaucrats in politics. Retired bureaucrats and technocrat professionals are his first choice—bringing RK Singh, Hardeep Puri and SK Jaishankar into politics is an example.

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

WISDOM CORNER

- When you cease to dream you cease to live. MALCOLM FORBES
Don't watch the clock; do what it does. Keep going. SAM LEVENSON
Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see a shadow. HELEN KELLER

WORDSWORTH

Yealm This is a term of the thatcher's trade. A yealm — in older works spelled yelm — is one of the individual bundles of straw, a sort of straw tile, that's laid on the roof.

FOCUS CURRENCY THE YEAR OF THE RENMINBI?

When the billionaire investor Ray Dalio recently predicted that the Chinese renminbi will become a global reserve currency, the world took notice.

Like a beauty pageant, the contest for reserve-currency status is one of relative attractiveness. International traders and investors must decide which among the currencies available to them is most convenient to use.

Relative attractiveness is difficult to quantify. But underlying this concept is one factor that can be measured precisely: the size of the issuing country's economy.

China, clearly, has the necessary hardware. It been the world's largest trader since 2013, its economy is now larger than that of the United States in purchasing power parity terms.

Since then, China has made great progress in boosting the renminbi's relative attractiveness. Its economy has continued to grow much more rapidly than US GDP and emerged more resilient from the COVID-19 crisis.



After years of poor policy and political tumult in the US, it is not unreasonable to ask whether China's currency will soon be in a position to challenge the greenback.

'Belt and Road' clients across the developing world are beginning to use the renminbi in their growing trade and financial transactions with China.

But the dollar has proved stubbornly resistant. As Gita Gopinath, the International Monetary Fund's chief economist, and her colleagues have shown, an overwhelming preponderance of trade continues to be invoiced in dollars.

A key reason for the dollar's resilience vis-à-vis the renminbi is that America's economic hardware is complemented by powerful software: all of the intangible qualities that underpin investor confidence.

To build trust in its financial system, China needs to shore up its highly leveraged, overextended banks. After that, it should remove its capital controls and ensure greater transparency.

None of this can be accomplished quickly, and convincing investors that the changes are irreversible will take even longer still.

Next comes the task of building confidence in the sovereign. China will need to convince other countries that it is and will remain a reliable economic partner.

China may have helped negotiate the recently agreed Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, but it has also used trade sanctions as a form of political punishment against one of its main trading partners, Australia.

Moreover, China has been cracking down on free speech and democracy activists in Hong Kong, with scant concern about the implications for the city's standing as an international financial centre.

To be sure, the US has raised questions about its own reliability as a financial partner, particularly under Donald Trump.

only with that country directly, but also with any foreign banks that operate there. As a result, other countries — including many US friends and allies — now recognise how vulnerable they are to US unilateral action.

More recently, the Trump administration has again taken direct action against China, ordering that US financial institutions and investors cut ties with certain state-run Chinese firms.

It is not clear which country has done more to undermine confidence in its own software, so one should not confidently assume that the dollar's reign is unshakeable.

Moreover, it is worth remembering that history is not on the dollar's side. The late MIT economic historian Charles P. Kindleberger famously predicted that "the dollar will end up on history's ash heap, along with sterling, the guilder, florin, ducat, and if you chose to go way back, the Levantine bezant."

It is an open question whether any decisive transition from the dollar to the renminbi will begin this year. But when it comes to the long term, China's rulers are confident in their currency's prospects.

Arvind Subramanian is a former Chief Economic Adviser to the government of India. Josh Felman is Director of JH Consulting.

SPECTRUM DEFENCE

India's evolving swarm drone force

With its evolving drone adventurism manoeuvre put on show, the Indian Army celebrated its most auspicious anniversary on January 15, 2021.

The occasion was spectacular with the parade of India's growing military prowess. The fabulous attraction for the larger audience was the caravan of the evolving drone deployment platform — the new fangled wing of India's 21st C. war-craft.

To the amusement of the gallery at Delhi cantonment, 'child-drones' released and ordained over by 'mother-drones' played havoc to the demo targets, exhibiting India's ongoing drone development mission.

Drones capable of enhanced surveillance, anti-terror manoeuvres, and lethal-Kamikaze-kinetics, can

their hideouts in the neighbourhood are no longer safe.

India has exhibited its capacity of executing 'surprise, kinetic and Kamikaze-type strikes' with surgical precision as deep as 50 km inside enemy territory.

Chinese demonstration of its swarm capacity in the recent past followed by its supply of military drones to Pakistan were two important wake up calls.

Drones can make a country victorious, and the result of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict is an eye-opener.

India has been deploying drones at all strategic locations across sectors in a phased manner.

inflict precipitated assaults targeting opponents' tactical weaponry adventurism.

Drones swarms carrying electronic combat implements can overwhelm an adversary's air defence capabilities by saturating radars and air defences thereby obfuscating an enemy's system to respond.

India's drone evolution is in full swing. Further evolution into drone dynamics will enhance the country's firepower as well as ammo-control capacity by a significant order and magnitude.

The writer is a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the School of National Security Studies, Central University of Gujarat, Gandhinagar. Views are personal.



Padmalochan Dash

THE INDIAN ARMY IS WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE DRDO AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO DEVELOP DRONE SWARMS

Careful when you wish

Two men died and went to Heaven. St. Peter greeted them, and said "I'm sorry, gentlemen, but your mansions aren't ready yet. Until they are, I can send you back to Earth as whatever you want to be."



"I'd like to be one cool stud!" was the reply. "Easy," replied St. Peter, and the other guy was gone.

Relevance of Netaji

Sir, India is observing Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's birth anniversary in such a time when the farmers across the country are protesting against the 'anti-people' farm laws.

New era in US

Sir, US President Joe Biden has started strongly by signing 17 executive orders, memos and directives on his first day in office.

Protect election warriors

Sir, An association of government employees in Andhra Pradesh has requested to postpone the Panchayat elections in the state for some time in view of COVID-19.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 words).

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

# Maha parties, farmers to intensify stir

The ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi allies Shiv Sena-Nationalist Congress Party-Congress, Communist Party of India(M), Swabhimani Shetkari Sanghatana besides other political and affiliated farmers' organisations have thrown their full weight behind the farmers agitating at the Delhi borders

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, Jan 22:** Almost all non-NDA parties have announced plans to intensify the stir against the three new farm laws and participate in the farmers' long march in Mumbai January 25 and the massive farmers' agitation in New Delhi scheduled for January 26, top leaders said here Friday.

President of Vasantrao Naik Sheti Swavalamban Mission President Kishore Tiwari - accorded a Minister of State rank - said a 60-member delegation of farmer-widows has already left for Delhi and a second batch was getting ready to leave soon, to demand the total repeal of the three new farm laws.

"The farmer-widows represent the real face of the farmers considering the challenges they face, and the delegation which includes Aparna Malikar of the KBC-fame, will recount their travails as they try to survive after their husbands committed suicide," Tiwari told IANS.

Nationalist Congress Party President Sharad Pawar will join a massive 'long march' scheduled from Azad Maidan to Raj Bhavan in Mumbai January 25 with the participation of all non-BJP parties, said party spokesperson Mahesh Tapase.

"Several top farmers' leaders have met Pawar in New Delhi in the past few days since he has deep knowledge of the issues concerning the agriculture sector and had



Picture used for representation

pioneered the MSP policy when he was the Union Agriculture Minister," Tapase told IANS.

Senior Congress leader and former minister Naseem Khan, who is coordinator for the farmers' agitation, said the state party chief Balasaheb Thorat will join the 'long march' in Mumbai while the state unit has extended its full support to the ongoing farmers' protests in Delhi. The Samyukta Shetkari Kamgar Morcha (SSKM Maharashtra) has announced a series of programmes as part of its ongoing 50-day long agitation in support of the farmers demand for total and unconditional repeal of the three farm laws.

Starting with a tractor and vehicle rally Saturday, a massive 'dharma' Sunday and a peasants-workers

rally to Raj Bhawan to submit a memorandum to the Governor Monday; the agitation will be capped off by a Republic Day flag hoisting ceremony at Azad Maidan, said All India Kisan Sabha President Dr. Ashok Dhawale.

SSS President Raju Shetti has said that farmers will join the agitation in Mumbai and Delhi over the next three days with a single-point demand "to repeal the three new farm laws in the interests of the nation's food-creators" and their just demands must be accepted by the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government at the Centre.

Similarly, Shiv Sena labour leader Raghunath Kuchik, designated as the Minister of State, has been assigned by Chief Minister Uddhav

Thackeray to lead a party farmers' delegation to Delhi. OSD Prafulla Sardar said the Shiv Sena deputy leader Kuchik is likely to reach the national capital to express the Sena's full support to the agitating farmers' demands and also join in the protests. Khan said the Congress has been protesting against the three farm laws right from the beginning and its senior party leader Rahul Gandhi has also joined the protests in Delhi besides opposing the laws in Parliament.

"We have already carried out a series of successful mass agitations in Maharashtra and other states and the MVA government will not implement these laws in the state. The next three days shall be crucial for the interests of the farming community and their current historic struggle," Khan told IANS.

Dhawale pointed out that though the Supreme Court has temporarily stayed the implementation of the laws, it formed a four-member commission, of which one person has quit the panel, terming the decision of the SSKM and other farmers' bodies not to appear before the committee as 'correct'.

"We have requested the MVA government to convene a special session of the state legislature to discuss the agrarian crisis, adopt a resolution asking the Centre to revoke the three farm laws and four labour codes, and enact a law to ensure the MSP and other demands of the peasantry," Dhawale said.

# IS KCR SET TO HAND OVER MANTLE TO SON KTR?

REMARKS BY A FEW MINISTERS AND MLAS DURING THE LAST COUPLE OF DAYS HAVE GIVEN CREDENCE TO THE BUZZ IN THE POLITICAL CIRCLES

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad, Jan 22:** Has Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrababu Naidu decided to anoint his son and cabinet minister K.T. Rama Rao as the Chief Minister? Remarks by few ministers and MLAs during the last couple of days have given credence to the buzz in the political circles.

While at least three ministers and few MLAs of the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) had dropped hints with remarks that Rama Rao has all the qualities to become the Chief Minister, Deputy Speaker T. Padma Rao went a step ahead on Thursday to address Rama Rao as the soon to be CM. "Congratulations to KTR who will soon become the Chief Minister. I convey congratulations on behalf of the Assembly and railway employees. I hope that KTR will work to protect the railway employees after becoming the Chief Minister," Padma Rao said at a function of railway employees' union.

KTR, as Rama Rao is popularly known, remained silent as Padma Rao addressed him as soon to be-



come Chief Minister. Minister for Backward Classes Welfare, Gangula Kamalakar, also stated on Thursday that KTR has all the qualities to become the Chief Minister of Telangana. "There is no need for discussion on this issue. It is our internal matter and not related to the BJP," he said while reacting to BJP state president Bandi Sanjay's statement that CM Chandrababu Naidu's visit to the Kaleswaram project site was not to check the works or the water flow, but to pray for his son KTR before anointing him as the Chief Minister. "KCR is our boss and if he decides to make KTR the Chief Minister, we all will accept the decision," Kamalakar said.

Earlier, Minister for Animal Husbandry, T. Srinivas Yadav, had also added to the buzz over KTR becoming the Chief Minister. "What is wrong if KTR is made the CM," he had asked. "We are a responsible party, KCR has been serving the state as the Chief Minister for more than six years. When he has to take the decision (on making KTR the CM), he

will take it," the minister had said.

Health Minister Eatala Rajender too dropped hints that KCR will be handling the mantle to his son. "If the need for change arises, Chief Minister KCR will himself hand over the reins to KTR. There is no problem in change of leadership," he said. On BJP criticising KCR for not attending the Covid vaccination inauguration function on January 16, Rajender pointed out that KTR attends 99 per cent of the programmes. Two MLAs, Mohammed Shakil Aamir and Bajireddy Govardhan, also appealed to KCR to make KTR the Chief Minister. They said this would motivate young leaders in the party.

Another MLA and former minister, D. Redya Naik, had recently predicted that KTR will become the Chief Minister by March.

The TRS government last month completed two years in its second term. There have been the talks in the party circles for several months about an imminent change in the leadership.

# Serum pegs losses due to fire at ₹1000cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Pune, Jan 22:** The Serum Institute of India (SII) Friday said it has suffered losses of over Rs 1,000 crore due to the devastating fire that erupted a day before at its premises here, even as Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said that whether the blaze was an accident or sabotage will be known once the probe gets over.

Five contractual labourers died in the fire that broke out in a five-storey building in the SII's Manjari premises in Pune Thursday.

The chief minister visited the SII Friday to take stock of the damages. He later addressed a press conference, where Adar Poonawalla, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the SII was also present. Talking to reporters, Poonawalla said, "The extent of the damage is more than Rs 1,000 crore because of the equipment and products over there that were to be launched."

He, however, reiterated that the Covishield vaccine production has not been impacted due to the blaze. "Fortunately, we have got multiple facilities and as CM sir has explained, the COVID-19 vaccine's supply will not be affected due to the incident," Poonawalla added.

"We were very lucky that the incident took place in the building where the COVID-19 vaccine was not being stored. It has happened where other vaccines are being produced and we will make up that production," he said.

He added that the facility meant for Rotavirus and BCG vaccines has suffered major damages in the fire. "But we will try and make up the supply gap in our other facilities. Mainly, the loss is financial and there will not be any loss in terms of supplies," the SII CEO said. Poonawalla said this was a new building where additional production capacity was being put in

place. He added that the fire incident took place at the filling line and bulk production line.

"These new filling lines and bulk production lines were under installation. This was brand new facility. The incident happened when the installation and other things were going on and no actual vaccine was being made there that time and it was for the future so the losses are for the future," he said.

The Manjari facility is where Covishield, the SII vaccine against COVID-19 which is being used in the nationwide inoculation drive, is manufactured.

The building where the fire broke out is one km from the Covishield vaccine manufacturing unit.

Thackeray told reporters that the stock of Covishield vaccines is safe and the fire has not hampered their production.

"The probe to ascertain the cause of the fire has started and after it is complete, we will come to know whether it was an accident or sabotage. Let the investigation get complete. It is not correct to say anything now," the CM said. "Last week, there was a ray of hope when the vaccination drive began, but the news about the fire at the centre that is manufacturing the vaccine, came as a cause of concern. Unfortunately five people died in it," he said.

The manufacturing of COVID-19 vaccines has remained unharmed, he said. "The first two floors of the building, where the fire erupted, were in use. The blaze occurred on other two floors above them where new facilities were being created. The Covishield vaccine manufacturing unit is located at a distance from the site of the fire," the chief minister said.

"The Serum Institute has taken up the responsibility of looking after the kin of those killed in the fire. The state government will also do whatever it can," he said.



## ON WARPATH



Congress supporters participate in a protest march against Republic TV Editor-in-chief Arnab Goswami over his leaked WhatsApp chats related to the Balakot airstrike and other sensitive national issues, in Mumbai, Friday.

# Telangana to implement 10 pc EWS quota

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad, Jan 22:** The Telangana government has decided to implement 10 per cent reservation to the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) in the state, Chief Minister K. Chandrababu Naidu announced Thursday.

He said a high-level review meeting will be held in the next two to three days on the matter and appropriate orders will be issued.

"There is a need to implement 10 per cent reservation in jobs and education to those economically weaker classes. We have decided to implement 10 per cent reservations to the EWS while continuing the reservations to those who are

already enjoying the benefit as it is," he said.

"As on date in the state, 50 per cent reservations are being implemented to the weaker sections. With 10 per cent reservations to the EWS, the reservation percentage will be 60 per cent," he added.

It was in 2019 that the Centre had announced 10 per cent quota for EWS but the Telangana government had not taken a decision to implement it in the state.

The Narendra Modi government had told the Supreme Court early this month that the decision to implement the 10 per cent quota for the economically weak sections in states lie with the state governments.

The Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment stated this in response to a petition seeking the implementation of the quota in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

The Telangana legislature in 2017 had already passed a bill enhancing Reservation for Muslims from four per cent to 12 per cent and for Scheduled Tribes (STs) from six per cent to 10 per cent.

The state had requested the Centre to amend the Constitution to relax 50 per cent upper limit for quota to all sections as prescribed by the Supreme Court. Despite repeated demands by the Chief Minister, the Centre did not agree to the proposal.

# Maha forms panel to study rise in leopard deaths

A TOTAL OF 172 LEOPARDS DIED IN THE STATE IN 2020 DUE TO VARIOUS REASONS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Jan 22:** The Maharashtra government has set up an 11-member committee to study the rising number of leopard deaths in the state, their attack on humans and to suggest measures to curb such incidents.

State Forest Minister Sanjay Rathod made the announcement Thursday. The committee is headed by Sunil Limaye, additional principal chief conservator of forests, he said.

"It will study the increase in the number and causes of leopard deaths, loss of human life due to attacks by these animals and find solutions to it," Rathod said.

The committee is expected to submit its report to the state government in three months, the minister added.

As per the available data, the number of people killed in leopard attacks in Maharashtra more than tripled to 27 in 2020 as compared to eight such incidents recorded in 2019, a senior forest department official has said.

At the same time, the number of leopard deaths also increased in 2020 as compared to the previous year.

A total of 172 leopards died in the state in 2020 due to various reasons. This figure stood at 110 in the previous year, the official said.

The rise in death of humans as



well as leopards indicates growing incidents of man-animal conflict, he said.

In 2020, a total of 27 people were killed in attack by leopards in var-

# With focus on Covid vaccination, Telangana conducts fewer tests

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad, Jan 22:** Shifting their focus to Covid vaccination, health authorities in Telangana are conducting fewer tests, leading to a further drop in daily count of positive cases.

The government and private laboratories in the state conducted 28,791 samples during the last 24 hours ending 8 p.m. Thursday. Of these 24,892 samples were tested in government laboratories and 3,899 in private facilities.

The state has a daily target of 50,000 tests but the authorities were conducting 40,000 to 45,000 tests, except on weekends and holidays when half of the targeted tests were conducted. Since the first week of this month, the daily tests dropped to around 30,000 as most of the officials in the health department were busy with vaccination.

Experts have warned against complacency at a time when there is drop in positivity rate. They say testing remains the key to check the virus spread.

In its daily media bulletin, the health department does not provide details like type of tests. It is believed that 50 per cent of the total tests are Rapid Antigen tests. As there are more false negatives in Rapid Antigen tests, experts say that the state is already missing out on positive cases.

There are 1,076 Rapid Antigen testing centres in the state. Twenty government and 56 laboratories are conducting RT-PCR/CB-NAAT/TRUENAT tests.

The state has so far conducted 76,02,975 tests. Samples tested per million population rose to 2,04,271.

Health officials said as per the World Health Organisation (WHO) benchmark of 140 tests per million population, the daily testing target for the state is 5,600.

The drop in number of tests means fewer cases being detected. Over the last couple of weeks, the daily count has dropped to 250-300.

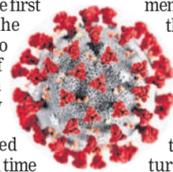
Telangana High Court, during a hearing on a batch of public interest litigations on Thursday, remarked that the government must know that the more it tests, the more safe its public would be. A division bench headed by Chief Justice Hima Kohli pointed out that even in a city-state like Delhi, 40,000 tests are done per day.

The court directed the government to record the results of the tests for two weeks from January 25 and furnish it by the next date of hearing. It also asked the government to indicate number of tests, type of tests and turnaround time in conveying the result of the tests to people.

The court observed that with its constant directions and the government showing compliance the situation has improved here with number of cases coming down to below 500.

The high court directed the state government to furnish it with details of serosurveillance it had conducted in the last six months along with the aspects found in the survey and steps taken to contain Covid spread in the areas identified in the survey.

Meanwhile, during the last 24 hours, the state reported 214 new cases, taking the cumulative tally to 2,92,835.



# national



It looks like that the state (MP) machinery serves liquor to the people. It is like a mother who is responsible for feeding and protecting her child, giving poison to the baby  
UMA BHARTI | BJP VICE-PRESIDENT

## WORK RESTARTS AT RAM TEMPLE SITE

The work restarted at the Ram temple site in Ayodhya, two months after it stopped due to a problem caused by the groundwater



## of the day quote

I told them (MPs) what are the states expectations from them and issues they should raise in Delhi. Like the one of Maratha quota  
UDDHAV THACKERAY | MAHARASHTRA CHIEF MINISTER

Economies of all countries in the world were affected due to the coronavirus. But, the world is surprised and watching the V-shaped recovery of the Indian economy  
AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

Currently, the plight of the municipal corporations is that neither the Central government, nor the Arvind Kejriwal dispensation has been giving any fund to them  
ABHISHEK DUTT | DELHI CONGRESS VICE PRESIDENT

# 'No resolution possible if stir loses sanctity'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 22:** The government's negotiations with representatives of thousands of protesting farmers hit a roadblock Friday as the unions squarely rejected the Centre's proposal to put three contentious laws on hold, while the Agriculture Minister blamed external "forces" for their rigid stand and said no resolution is possible when the sanctity of agitation is lost.

Farmer leaders, however, said they would settle for nothing less than a complete repeal of the laws, enacted in September last year, which they find pro-corporate, and a legal guarantee for the procurement of crops at government-fixed MSP (minimum support price).

The unions said they will intensify their agitation now and alleged that the government's approach was not right during the meeting. They also said their tractor rally will go ahead as per the plans on January 26 and unions have told the police that it is the government's responsibility to maintain peace.

While the meeting lasted for almost five hours, the two sides sat face to face for not even half an hour. In the very beginning, the farmer leaders informed the government that they have decided to reject the proposal made in the last



Narendra Singh Tomar and Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal along with others during the 11th round of talks with farmers leaders at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi, Friday

round of talks Wednesday. The three central ministers, including Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, urged the union representatives to reconsider their stand, after which the two sides went for a break that lasted for more than three hours.

The break, during which the farmer leaders had their langar (community kitchen) food, also saw the 41 farmer leaders holding consultations among themselves, at times in smaller groups, while

the three central ministers waited in a separate room at Vigyan Bhawan. After the meeting, Bharatiya Kisan Union (Ugrahan) leader Joginder Singh Ugrahan said the discussions have broken down as the unions rejected the government's proposal.

Another farmer leader Rakesh Tikait said the ministers said the suspension period can be increased to up to two years, but the unions remained firm on their demand for a complete repeal and a legal

guarantee for MSP. The ministers told the unions that they have been given all possible options and they must discuss internally the proposal of suspending the laws. Talking to reporters after the meeting, Tomar said the government has always maintained a sensitive approach towards farmers and their interest, but some forces were definitely at works to keep the agitation on and those forces certainly do not want farmers to benefit. "No resolution is possible when

the sanctity of an agitation is lost," he said while adding that no decision can be reached in the interest of the farmers if vested interests get an upper hand.

On whether he saw any division among the union leaders on the government proposal, Tomar did not give a direct reply but said, "We thanked all farmer leaders, including those who support our proposal and those who are against it." There have been reports that some unions were in support of the government's proposal, but they decided to go with the majority view to reject the offer.

Tomar said the government will wait if there are some who think about the interest of the farmers and consider our proposal, the talks can be taken forward.

Asserting that the agitation involved people mainly from Punjab and some from a few other states, Tomar said the government always tried to respect farmer unions and wanted the discussion to continue in the right direction.

Asked what options the government has if the unions do not reconsider the offer and intensify their protest, Tomar said, "We have given them all possible options. If they have a better option, except for the repeal, they can tell us," he said.

## Health worker dies days after getting Covid jab

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chandigarh, Jan 22:** A health-care worker who had received a coronavirus vaccine six days ago died in Gurgaon Friday, but an official said there was nothing yet to suggest any link with the inoculation.

The 55-year-old woman, Rajwanti, who used to work at the Bhangrola primary health centre in Gurgaon district of Haryana, died in her home at Krishna Colony, an official said. She had been administered a COVID-19 vaccine last Saturday, Chief Medical Officer Virender Yadav said over phone. "Her family reported her sudden death at her home today, but there is nothing yet to suggest any link with the vaccination." "However, we have sent her viscera for investigation and details will be known once the report comes," Yadav added. The nationwide vaccination drive began last Saturday with several frontline workers, the foremost warriors in the battle against the coronavirus pandemic, getting the shots in the first phase.

## SHORT TAKES

### T'gana road mishap: Toll rises to nine

**Nalgonda (Telangana):** The death toll rose to nine in a Telangana road accident involving women farm labourers, with two more succumbing while undergoing treatment, police said Friday. Six women farm workers were among seven people killed and at least six others injured when a jam-packed autorickshaw and a container truck collided head-on on a highway in the district Thursday. "Two more women died while undergoing treatment and 11 others are being treated in hospital," a police official said.

### Rabri, Tejashwi to meet Lalu

**Patna:** Following the deterioration in the health condition of incarcerated former Bihar Chief Minister and RJD supremo Lalu Prasad, his wife Rabri Devi and son Tejashwi Yadav are going to meet him in Ranchi later Friday. Tejashwi said the entire family is concerned about Lalu Prasad's health.

### Arms, foreign currency seized

**Aizawl:** A joint operation by Assam Rifles and customs department Friday recovered three assault rifles and foreign currency from a village along the Indo-Myanmar border in Champhai district of Mizoram, an officer of the paramilitary force said. Three AK-56 rifles along with three empty magazines, wrapped in a piece of cloth, were recovered from a jungle near Zote village, he said.

### Kidnapped student rescued

**Noida/Gonda:** A 21-year-old medical student who was kidnapped from Uttar Pradesh's Gonda district on January 18 for Rs 70 lakh ransom has been rescued and five people, including a doctor who works in Delhi and allegedly plotted the conspiracy, have been arrested, police said Friday.

### 25 kg gold stolen at gunpoint

**Chennai:** Six masked persons brandishing pistols on Friday barged into a Muthoot Finance branch in Tamil Nadu's Hosur Friday and fled about 25 kg gold jewellery valued at about Rs 7.5 crore and Rs 96,000 cash, police said. The gang members held up the company staff and a couple of customers at gun point, and even assaulted some of the staffers.

## China closes door for Kerala medical students

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 22:** Around 10,000 students from Kerala, studying medicine and allied courses in China, are facing an uncertain future as the Chinese government is not allowing them back in the country to resume their studies.

After the Covid pandemic struck Wuhan and other parts of China, several students had come back home and the first reported Covid case in India was a medical student in Wuhan who had come to her hometown Thrissur on vacation.

Susan Ann Varghese of Thiruvananthapuram and a final year medical student at China, told IANS that she "cannot go back as the Chinese government is not allowing the Indian students to return and the universities which had taken initiative to send us back home are not responding".

Students have paid the final year fee of Rs 3.25 lakh and the classes are being conducted online. However the National Medical Commission will not recognise medical courses conducted online and this will create major problems for the students as delayed classes will lead to the course being left incomplete.

Madhavan Nair, of Kozhikode in Kerala, whose son Rohan Nair

is also a final year medical student in China, told IANS. "We have been left in the lurch there is no progress on the classes of my son. We have taken huge loans to send him to China and I don't know if his course will be recognised at the end. Someone should take the initiative and get him and other students to their universities."

As the issue is international, the state government cannot do much. Kerala Health Minister K.K. Shailaja, while talking to IANS, said: "As this is an inter-country issue, Central government can intervene more. We are trying to bring the issue to the Central government's notice".

With most of the students hailing from middle and lower middle class families, any delay in completion of courses will throw their family budget off the rails and parents and students are anxious as they look for a solution to this vexed issue.

"We are helpless, we have brought the matter to the notice of the Union government through our MPs and are expecting the government to immediately act on the matter and to help us out of this situation," Rajan Mathew, a businessman from Kottayam, whose son Ranjith is a final year medical student in China, told IANS.



Representative image

## SOARING HIGH



Fighter planes fly in a formation during the bilateral Air Exercise between Indian Air Force and French Air & Space Force, in Jodhpur

## LADAKH TO MAKE DEBUT IN R-DAY PARADE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 22:** There is a palpable excitement among members of the Ladakh contingent for the Republic Day Parade as the young union territory is all set to make its debut in the extravaganza on Rajpath with a beautiful tableau depicting the iconic Thikse Monastery and its cultural heritage.

The Union Territory of Ladakh was created in 2019 after the central government bifurcated the state of Jammu and Kashmir into two UTs. On Friday, during a media preview of the R-Day tableaux held here, members of the Ladakh contingent were feeling "on top of the world".

"Our tableau will be showcased for the first time on Rajpath in the grand parade. We had struggled



Artists from Ladakh perform on their tableau during the rehearsals

to get a separate UT status and that aspiration was fulfilled in 2019 and we had celebrated it in Ladakh. And, now as an independent UT, with our own identity, we will be taking part in the ceremonial event. We feel very happy," said Diksit Palmo, who hails from Leh. She is one of the five women

in the 11-member contingent led by a government official.

Palmo says she also was part of the contingent of the then state of Jammu & Kashmir in 2015, but this time, "our identity is our own".

The tableau prominently depicts the historic Thikse Monastery located on top of a hill in Thikse

in Leh district, and is one of the most-visited tourist sites in the region. Artistes dressed in colourful traditional Ladakhi 'gunchas' interacted with reporters on Friday during the media preview of the R-Day tableaux held at Delhi Cantonment.

Dorjay Youron, who is from Thikse, was doubly excited to know the landmark of her hometown will be showcased on the Rajpath. Rinchen Dolma, another member of the contingent, said, "We are proud to represent our region with our own name - Ladakh, and not as a constituent of J&K, which also has a different identity now." A total of 17 states and UTs will be represented on the Rajpath in this year's parade through their vibrant tableaux, besides that of various ministries and the three armed forces.

## 'India in 3rd position in scientific publications after China, US'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 22:** India has seen an exponential increase in the number of scientific publications over the last 10 years and is in the third position globally after China and the US, the Department of Science and Technology (DST) said Friday.

Of the 13,045 patents in 2017-18, as many as 1,937 were by Indians. Out of 15,550 patents filed by Indians at Indian Patent Office during the period, 65 per cent were filed from Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Delhi, the DST said.

India's national investment in

research and development (R&D) has increased from Rs 1,13,825 crore in 2017-18 to Rs 1,23,847 crore in 2018-19. At the same time, various initiatives of the DST such as the National Initiative For Developing And Harnessing Innovations (NIDHI) have played a crucial role to reach this position, the DST said.

The implementation of initiatives like NIDHI have nurtured 3,681 start-ups through the network of around 150 incubators created by the DST and generated 1992 intellectual property. Further, in the last five years, jobs generated in the form of direct employment were 65,864 and



Representative image

Rs 27,262 crore of economic wealth, it added.

"The number of publications has increased exponentially over the last 10 years. "According to data from the US agency, the National Science Foundation (NSF), India is currently in third place, only behind China and the United States, with 1,35,788 scientific articles in the year 2018," the DST said.

The NSF database shows that India's growth rate of scientific publication was 12.9 per cent, as against the world average of 4.9 per cent, the DST said. India recorded the fastest average annual growth

rate of publications between 2008 and 2018 with 10.73 per cent. In comparison, the average annual growth rate of China and the United States are 7.81 and 0.71 per cent respectively.

"Our efforts for connecting the invention ecosystem that excels in creating knowledge and the innovation ecosystem facilitating knowledge consumption have helped bring about this transformation, and the 5th National Science Technology and Innovation Policy will help us take this forward more effectively," DST secretary Ashutosh Sharma said.

## of the day quote

During our government, the farmers were getting price above the MSP. After the Nitish Kumar government came to power in 2005, it abolished this Act in 2006

**TEJASHWI YADAV** | RJD LEADER

I am asking Jagan Mohan Reddy whether there is democracy or emergency in your government?

**SOMU VEERARAJU** | ANDHRA PRADESH BJP PRESIDENT

Each politician wants to be a CM. But the decision which the party and Sharad Pawar saheb take is final for us. All want to be CM. Everyone who has worked (in politics) as long as I have (must be wanting to be CM). My voters too must be wanting me to be a CM

**JAVANT PATIL** | MAHARASHTRA MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### Bomb scare in Noida

**Noida (UP):** Panic gripped a busy Noida neighbourhood on Friday morning as heavy security was deployed in the area, which was cordoned off following an alert that a bomb-like device was found on a road, according to officials. However, when checked, it turned out that it was not an explosive device and had no detonator, a police spokesperson said, adding that it was a suspicious-looking object with a watch strapped to it and was placed on the road divider in Sector 63.

### Man held with fake currency

**New Delhi:** A man was arrested with fake currency with a face value of ₹4 lakh in east Delhi's Anand Vihar area, police said on Friday. The accused has been identified as Sheikh Shehzad, a resident of Motihari district in Bihar, they said. Further details are awaited.

### Fire breaks out in Delhi's ITO

**New Delhi:** A fire broke out on the second floor of a multi-storey building in central Delhi's ITO on Friday morning, fire officials said. No casualties were reported. A security guard stuck on the terrace of the building of Institution of Engineers was rescued by fire fighters, they said. "We received a call at 8.30 am about a fire in a metre board in the Institution of Engineers building at ITO," said Atul Garg, director, Delhi Fire Service.

### Journalist killed

**Kolkata:** One journalist was killed and another was seriously injured in a road accident in the southern part of the city's Anwar Shah Road in the early hours of Friday, police said. Soham Mallick was killed and Mayukhranjan Ghosh was seriously injured when the bike they were riding skidded and hit a roadside tree near Lords More in Lake Gardens area at around 4.15 AM, they said. Both Soham and Mayukhranjan work in the news desk of an upcoming vernacular news channel. A police officer said there are scanning the CCTV footage of the area to find out whether the bike actually skidded or was hit by any unknown vehicle causing the mishap.



**Modiji, the farmers of country have woken up when will you wake up? The deaths of 146 farmers will not go in vain**

**RANDEEP SINGH SURJEWALA** | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY

### 'DONKEY MARCH' AGAINST TANDAV

Chirag Paswan's Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) took out a "donkey protest" against the controversial Amazon Prime web series "Tandav" in the Bihar capital



# 'Phase 1 trial data shows Covaxin is safe'

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Jan 22:** India's first indigenous vaccine against COVID-19, Covaxin, showed enhanced immune response without any serious side effects in the participants enrolled for the phase 1 trials, according to the results published in The Lancet Infectious Disease journal.

Developed by Bharat Biotech in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune, the vaccine has been granted emergency use authorisation in clinical trial mode by the Indian government.

Covaxin, which is now undergoing phase-3 trials, had raised concerns among experts over its emergency approval earlier this month by India's drug regulator. The vaccine, codenamed BBV152, was well tolerated in all dose groups with no vaccine-related serious adverse events, noted the authors of the study funded by Bharat Biotech.

The same results were earlier published in the preprint server medRxiv in December. However, there has been no new data released in the public domain which could demonstrate further safety and efficacy of the preventive.

The authors said that all adverse events were mild and moderate, and were more frequent after the first dose, adding that one adverse event was reported but was unrelated to the vaccine. The randomised phase 1 trial to assess the safety and immunogenicity of BBV152 was carried at 11 hospitals across India. Adults aged 18-55 years who were deemed healthy by the inves-



## PM SLAMS POLITICS OVER VACCINE

**LUCKNOW:** Trashing politics over coronavirus vaccines and trying to allay fears, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday said the call on launching them was taken by scientists. In a televised interaction with health workers in his Lok Sabha constituency Varanasi, Modi referred indirectly to criticism over the emergency-use clearance given to Bharat Biotech's Covaxin. The Prime Minister said all sorts of things are said in politics but he went by the scientists' decision. Politicians talk about "this and that" ("Idhar ki bhi baat hoti hai, udhar ki bhi"). "I gave only one reply that I will do what the scientists say, this is not the job of us politicians to decide," he added. "And when the go-ahead from the scientists came, we had to decide from where to start. Then we decided to start from health workers who remain in contact with patients constantly," Modi said through video conference.

tigator were eligible. Between July 13 and 30, last year, 827 participants were screened, of whom 375 were enrolled.

Among the enrolled participants, 100 each were randomly assigned to the three vaccine groups, and 75

were randomly assigned to the control group. Two intramuscular doses of vaccines were administered 14 days apart. "BBV152 led to tolerable safety outcomes and enhanced immune responses. The vaccine was well tolerated in all dose groups

with no vaccine-related serious adverse events," the authors of the study said. The most common adverse event was pain at the injection site, followed by headache, fatigue, and fever. Covaxin is an inactivated vaccine developed by chemically treating novel coronavirus samples to make them incapable of reproduction.

This process leaves the viral proteins, including the spike protein of the coronavirus which it uses to enter the human cells, intact. Given as two doses, three weeks apart, the viral proteins in the vaccine activate the immune system and prepare people for future infections with the actual infectious virus. According to Bharat Biotech, the therapeutic can be stored at room temperature for at least a week.

# CBI files case against Cambridge Analytica, Global Science Research

The data was allegedly sold for commercial gains to Cambridge Analytica which used it for profiling users and influencing elections in India, the complaint alleged

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 22:** After nearly 18 months of preliminary enquiry, the CBI has booked the UK-based Cambridge Analytica and Global Science Research for alleged illegal harvesting of data of 5.62 lakh Indian Facebook users for profiteering and manipulating elections, officials said Friday.

The agency registered case against Cambridge Analytica and Global Science Research represented by Aleksandr Kogan, both based in the UK, under Indian Penal Code section related to criminal conspiracy and Information Technology Act violations related to receiving stolen computer resource and negligence in handling personal data collected by them, they said.

Based on news reports of illegal data harvesting to manipulate elections, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) had sent a complaint to the CBI on July 25, 2018 based on which the agency had registered a preliminary enquiry into the matter, they said.

It is alleged that Kogan of GSR had created an application "Thisisyourdigitallife" having per-



mission from Facebook to collect certain categories of its users' data for "research and academic purposes". It illegally collected additional data of not only the 335 users of the application but also of their friends' network on Facebook, the social media giant without their consent or knowledge, the FIR alleged.

Although the application had 335 users in India, it was able to harvest data of 5.62 lakh Facebook members who were in their friends' network, Facebook had told the MeitY in its response. Cambridge Analytica in its response had told the ministry that it received data of only US-based users from GSR.

The company did not respond to further queries, the complaint alleged. During the enquiry, the CBI contacted all the 335 Indian users of the GSR's application out of which only six responded.

### ILLEGAL DATA HARVESTING

## HAPPY FEET



Sikkim tableau artists pose for photographs during the tableaux press preview as part of the Republic Day rehearsals, at Ravindra Rangshala in New Delhi

## INS MUMBAI CELEBRATES 20TH ANNIVERSARY

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Jan 22:** INS Mumbai, a frontline guided missile destroyer of the Indian Navy, celebrated its 20th anniversary on Friday, the Indian Navy said.

Various events such as blood donation camp, tree plantation drive and a run between two prominent locations of Mumbai -- Girgaon Chowpati and JK Kapur Chowk, Worli, where the ship's model is installed -- were conducted to commemorate the occasion.

The ship's association with Mumbai city is unique as it is the only Indian Navy ship stationed at the country's financial capital.

The ship has an extremely illustrious lineage and rich legacy of dominance at sea since its first avatar of HCS Bombay in the 18th century. "The ship's motto is 'Aham Praytam Tvidametesam Balama', which translates to 'I am Invincible', resonating with the spirit of the city. The ship's crest also draws inspi-

ration from the city depicting the main gateway entrance to the Bombay Castle Barracks commissioned in 1951 in the honour of great Maratha Admiral Kanhoji Angre," Indian Navy said in a statement.

INS Mumbai, built indigenously at the Mazagon dock, is the latest of three P-15 class destroyers and was commissioned by the then Governor of Maharashtra P.C. Alexander.

Since commissioning, the ship has rendered yeoman service to the nation and has always excelled in all her endeavours. She was adjudged the 'Best Ship' thrice and the 'Most Spirited Ship' twice, which is a rare feat for any warship.

With a displacement of over 6,500 tonnes, the ship is manned by 350 sailors and 40 officers. The ship spans 163 metres in length, 17 metres at the beam, and propelled by four gas turbines, it is capable of achieving speed in excess of 32 knots.



## Major explosion kills 5 in K'taka

AGENCIES

**Bangalore, Jan 22:** Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa Friday said five people were killed in the powerful explosion of a truckload of gelatin sticks at a stone crushing unit in Shivamogga district and assured action against unlawful mining and those responsible for the mishap. Conceding illegal mining in Shivamogga, his native district, Yediyurappa said the quarry owner and two of his associates have been arrested for the explosion that occurred on Thursday night and he would inspect the blast site on Saturday.

While police last night said at least six labourers in the truck were

### 6 DEAD IN COAL MINE DISASTER

**SHILLONG:** A mechanical structure collapsed at an illegal coal mine in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills district, killing six miners, an official said Friday. The tragedy occurred at the junction of Dienshalalu, Sarkari and Rymbai villages late Thursday, Deputy Commissioner E Kharmalki said. Altogether six persons were killed.

killed in the explosion that left the bodies dismembered beyond recognition, Yediyurappa told reporters that five people were dead.

Announcing an ex-gratia of ₹5 lakh each to the families of the victims, he said a probe into the ex-

plosion was on and a team of officials, including those from bomb disposal, mines and geology departments, were on the job.

A clear picture on the casualty was expected to emerge soon with the authorities not ruling out the possibility of the death toll increasing, citing reports that there may have been more people at the site when the mishap occurred.

In a tweet, the Chief Minister said: "My deepest condolences to the bereaved family members. I wish a speedy recovery to the injured."

He told reporters here that he would direct the deputy commissioner of Shivamogga district to release a solatium of ₹5 lakh to the families of the victims.

# Pandemic time used for self-development, survey reveals

IN TERMS OF SPECIFIC SKILLS, THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS RECEIVED A WHOPPING 96 PER CENT ACCEPTANCE, TO ITS BEING VERY IMPORTANT FOR CAREER GROWTH

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Jan 22:** The pandemic year 2020 is past us but not the coronavirus and the impact it brought into our lives is probably the biggest disruption of our lifetimes.

The impact at our workplaces was such that WFH format and other factors led to 50 per cent workforce choosing for Self-Development programs on digital platforms. This and more was revealed in a nationwide survey conducted by myJen.ai, a fast growing Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered communication platform.

Key findings of myJen AI survey 'Pivoting to the New Normal'

### 1. SELF-DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS RECEIVED TREMENDOUS UPTAKE (50 PER CENT WORKFORCE)

When it came to percentage of people using pandemic time for self-development, a 35 per cent of respondents felt that more than 50% used this time for Self-Development, on the same aspect around 45 per cent people felt that around 40 per cent people used this time for Self-development, leading to a majority (around 80 per cent) having voiced that more than 40 per cent of work force used pandemic time for Self-Development.



### 2. MAIN SUBJECTS ATTRACTION FOR SELF-LEARNING

About choosing the subject for Self-Learning, the main attraction for working population were led by Technical skills followed by Strategic Thinking & Innovation Skills, Social Media Marketing, Communications Skills and finally Leadership Skills in this order. In terms of specific skills, the importance of Communications Skills received a whopping 96 per cent acceptance, to its being very important for career growth.

### 3. A THUMBS UP FOR DIGITAL PLATFORMS

As direct face-to-face communications with their peers and leaders

got restricted due to the pandemic, it was the digital platforms and telecom services which ran the show virtually for organisations. A majority of professions voiced that more than 50 per cent people believe that Digital Platforms can be beneficial for self-development. The survey was conducted across different cities in India and was responded to by around 350 participants. The participants included Learning & Development Heads, People Managers and other function leaders of organizations from across 30 different industries including Education, Technology Infrastructure, Banking, Consulting and Financial to name a few.

# international



President Biden has visited India many times, respects and values the long bipartisan successful relationship between leader in India and the United States  
JEN PSAKI | WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

## MATHEMATICIAN NIKHIL SRIVASTAVA WINS PRESTIGIOUS PRIZE

Nikhil Srivastava, a young Indian mathematician, has been named winner of the prestigious 2021 Michael and Sheila Held Prize along with two others for solving long-standing questions on the Kadison-Singer problem and on Ramanujan graphs



### of the day quote

As a WHO member state, the United States will work constructively with partners to strengthen and importantly reform the WHO, to help lead the collective effort to strengthen the international COVID-19 response  
TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS | WHO DIRECTOR-GENERAL

One of the new things in this administration is, if you don't know the answer, don't guess. Just say you don't know the answer  
DR ANTHONY FAUCI | TOP US CONTAGIOUS DISEASE EXPERT

President Joe Biden's administration took steps in the wrong direction on Biden's first day in office  
MITCH MCCONNELL | SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

### SHORT TAKES

#### US faces acute vaccine shortage

**New York:** Some Covid-19 vaccination sites in New York City have begun cancelling or postponing shots or stopped making new appointments amid vaccine shortages around the US that President Joe Biden has vowed to turn around. Smaller-than-expected deliveries from the federal government have caused frustration and confusion and limited states' ability to attack the outbreak that has killed over 4,00,000 Americans.

#### Canada Guv General resigns

**Ottawa:** Canada's Governor General Julie Payette has announced her resignation after the conclusion of a harassment investigation at her office. "Everyone has a right to a healthy and safe work environment, at all times and under all circumstances. It appears this was not always the case at the Office of the Secretary to the Governor General," Xinhua news agency quoted Payette as saying in a statement Thursday.

#### EU leaders call for Navalny's release

**Brussels:** The European Union used a video summit of its 27 leaders to call on Russia to immediately release Opposition leader Alexei Navalny and make sure that his rights are fully respected. Navalny was arrested last Sunday at a Moscow airport as he tried to enter the country from Germany, where he had spent five months recovering from nerve agent poisoning. EU summit host Charles Michel said the leaders "expect Russia to urgently proceed with the independent and transparent investigation into the attack on his life."

#### Iran targets Bitcoin

**Tehran:** Iran's capital and major cities plunged into darkness in recent weeks as rolling outages left millions without electricity for hours. Traffic lights died. Offices went dark. Online classes stopped. With toxic smog blanketing Tehran skies and the country buckling under the pandemic and other mounting crises, social media has been rife with speculation. Soon, fingers pointed at an unlikely culprit: Bitcoin. As frustration spread among residents, the government launched a wide-ranging crackdown on Bitcoin processing centres.

## Beijing building military drones to rival US: Report

AGENCIES

**Washington, Jan 22:** The Chinese regime has been actively growing its fleet of unmanned aircrafts to spy on and compete with adversaries such as the United States, a leaked document from China's Ministry of National Defense reveals.

The July 2017 document described Beijing's ambition to dominate what it called "full dimensional warfare" - referring to control over sea, land, air, space, and the electromagnetic spectrum where military equipment communicates - by developing advanced military drones, The Epoch Times reported.

To accomplish the above, the regime detailed a plan to design one to two types of small, long-range military drones and establish a factory to produce 1,000 drones per year. The document stated there would be a 130 million yuan (about \$20 million) investment to build the drone-making firm that would begin production by the end of 2018.

"Implementation of the program will arm our national defense with the latest combat power in future vertical warfare and make it capable to contend with US military weapons, giving it marked military significance," the document stated.

While the file did not reveal the cost for making such drones, a 2017 directive from the Party's Equipment Development Department described a project that matched the description of the above-mentioned drones, with an estimated budget of



An employee shows the new Mavic Pro 2 drone in a DJI store in Shanghai, May 22, 2019  
AFP PHOTO

A leaked document described Beijing's ambition to dominate what it called "full dimensional warfare" - referring to control over sea, land, air, space and the electromagnetic spectrum

To accomplish the above, the Xi regime detailed a plan to design one to two types of small, long-range military drones and establish a factory to produce 1,000 drones per year

around 6 million yuan (\$927,859) to build a prototype and publish a flight test report by 2020. The Chinese defense department document branded such drones as critical to "whether a nation could engage in modern-day combat."

"In future warfare, seizing more information resources while con-

trolling and restricting other nations' information will be a key component for competing with nations during peaceful periods, and an important combat strategy in times of war," it said, citing "low costs" and the "ability to fight in a dangerous environment" as some of the features that made these drones desirable.

The project called for collaboration with a number of Chinese engineering and aeronautical universities. Zhejiang University, one of the schools named, houses an institute for drone development that has received roughly 100 million yuan (\$15.5 million) for projects from the Chinese air force and other state agencies.

China-made commercial drones have dominated the world market.

## 10 workers trapped in gold mine in China

REUTERS

**Qixia (China), Jan 22:** The 10 known survivors trapped since a deadly January 10 gold mine explosion in northern China have been using laser pointers and loudspeakers to try to find their missing colleagues, state media reported Friday.

The rescue operation, which has been able to get food and medicines to the miners, was expected to take at least another two weeks, authorities have said.

White bottles of food and water sent down to the trapped workers had a note stuck on them saying, "We are all waiting for you, keep going!", photos shared by propaganda department officials with Reuters Friday showed.

The food items sent to the workers include millet porridge, quail eggs, pickles and sausages and medical supplies included disinfectant, masks and cotton socks.

"The physical condition, psychological condition and living environment of 10 miners in the middle section of the mine are good," the People's Daily, the official newspaper of China's ruling Communist Party, reported on Friday.

"The miners continued to search for other trapped persons through laser pointer projection and loudspeaker shouting," it said.

A total of 22 workers were trapped in the Hushan mine by the Jan 10 blast in Qixia, a major gold-producing region under the administration of Yantai in coastal Shandong province.

One has died and 11 were not in contact with the rescue teams, according to a Xinhua radio report on Thursday.

## Putin critic claims Prez owns palace with 'lap-dancing clubs'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Moscow, Jan 22:** Russian opposition figure Alexei Navalny, who was detained earlier this week, has claimed that President Vladimir Putin owns a 1 billion euro palace which has a 'lap-dancing club', theatre and a casino inside its premises, according to media reports.

In a video posted on Instagram, Navalny, who is known to be a harsh Putin critic, claimed to possess the leaked floor plans of Putin's lavish property on Russia's southern Black Sea coast, The Daily Mail reported.

3D images of the estate's interior allege "Putin's palace" features an arcade room with slot machines and a dance mat, a spa and a theatre inside the mansion, along with an underground ice rink and even vineyards in the grounds. Navalny also claimed that the estate, which also includes a church

and strip club fitted with a lap dancers' pole, is 39 times the size of Monaco. "It is a separate state within Russia. And in this state, there is a single, irreplaceable tsar: Putin," The Daily Star newspaper quoted the opposition figure as further saying in the video.

The video is part of an investigation published on Navalny's blog with a two-hour Youtube video, which was recorded just before his arrest Sunday upon his arrival in Moscow from Germany where he was treated after being allegedly poisoned. But, Putin's spokesperson Dmitry Peskov has rejected Navalny's claims, saying the latter claim that Russian federal troops were guarding the compound was "pure nonsense", adding that Putin "doesn't own palaces".

Peskov further said that the colossal estate "has nothing to do with either the President or the Kremlin so we haven't the slightest desire to be interested" in who owns it.



A black flamingo is seen in a salt lake in Larnaca, Cyprus  
REUTERS PHOTO

## Google threatens to make search engine unavailable in Australia

While Google threatened to make its search engine unavailable in Australia, Prime Minister Scott Morrison quickly hit back, saying "we don't respond to threats"

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Wellington, Jan 22:** Google Friday threatened to make its search engine unavailable in Australia if the government went ahead with plans to make tech giants pay for news content.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison quickly hit back, saying "we don't respond to threats." "Australia makes our rules for things you can do in Australia," Morrison told reporters in Brisbane.

"That's done in our Parliament. It's done by our government. And that's how things work here in Australia." Morrison's comments came after Mel Silva, the managing director of Google Australia and New Zealand, told a Senate inquiry into the bill that the new rules would be unworkable.

"If this version of the code were to become law, it would give us no real choice but to stop making Google search

## US seeks five-year extension of N-pact with Russia: WH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Washington, Jan 22:** The United States seeks a five-year extension of the New START treaty, the White House has said, asserting that President Joe Biden has long been clear that this is in the national security interest of the US.

"The United States intends to seek a five-year extension of New START as the treaty permits. The president has long been clear that this is in the national security interest of the US," White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki told reporters at her daily news conference.

This extension makes even more sense when the relationship with Russia is adversarial as it is at this time. New START is the only remaining treaty constraining Russian nuclear forces and is an anchor of strategic stability between the two countries, she said.

"Even as we work with Russia to advance US interests, so too we work to hold Russia to account for its reckless and adversarial actions," she said.

And to this end, the president is also issuing a tasking to the intelligence community for its full assessment of the Solar Winds cyber breach, Russian interference in the 2020 election, its use of chemical weapons against opposition leader Alexei Navalny, and the al-



leged bounties on US soldiers in Afghanistan, Psaki said.

Pentagon's new spokesman John Kirby said that Russia's compliance with the treaty has served American national security interests well, and Americans are much safer with New START intact and extended.

"We cannot afford to lose New START's intrusive inspection and notification tools. Failing to swiftly extend New START would weaken America's understanding of Russia's long-range nuclear forces," he said.

"Extending the treaty's limitations on stockpiles of strategic nuclear weapons until 2026 allows time and space for our two nations to explore new verifiable arms control arrangements that could further reduce risks to Americans," Kirby said.

The Pentagon, he said, stands ready to support the state department as they effect this extension and explore those new arrangements.

## Iran leader's warning to Trump: "Revenge is inevitable"

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**Tehran, Jan 22:** Iran's supreme leader's office has posted a photomontage of former US president Donald Trump playing golf under the shadow of a warplane alongside a pledge to avenge a deadly 2020 drone strike he ordered.

The post on Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's @khamenei site Twitter account late Thursday warned there was no escape from payback for the US strike outside Baghdad airport which killed Iran's storied foreign operations chief General Qasem Soleimani and his Iraqi lieutenant.

"Revenge is inevitable. Soleimani's killer and the man who gave the orders must face vengeance," it said.



"Revenge can take place at any moment." Trump left office on Wednesday and flew straight to his Mar-a-Lago golf club in Florida, without attending the inauguration of his successor President Joe Biden.

Iranian officials have pledged repeatedly that Soleimani will be avenged.

## After Trump setbacks, Kim starts over with Biden

NORTH KOREA HAS A HISTORY OF TESTING NEW US ADMINISTRATIONS WITH MISSILE LAUNCHES AND OTHER PROVOCATIONS AIMED AT FORCING THE AMERICANS BACK TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Seoul, Jan 22:** Last year was a disaster for North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

He helplessly watched his country's already battered economy decay further amid pandemic border closures while brooding over the collapse of made-for-TV summits with former President Donald Trump that failed to lift crippling sanctions from his country.

Now he must start all over again with President Joe Biden, who has previously called Kim a "thug" and accused Trump of chasing spectacles instead of meaningful reductions of Kim's nuclear arsenal. While Kim has vowed to strengthen his nuclear weapons

programme in recent political speeches, he also tried to give Biden an opening by saying that the fate of their relations depends on whether Washington discards what he calls hostile US policies.

It's unclear how patient Kim will be. North Korea has a history of testing new US Administrations with missile launches and other provocations aimed at forcing the Americans back to the negotiating table.

In recent military parades in Pyongyang, Kim showcased new weapons he may test, including solid-fuel ballistic systems designed to be fired from vehicles and submarines, and the North's biggest intercontinental ballistic missile.

A revival of tensions would force the US and South Korea to reckon more deeply with the possibility that Kim may never voluntarily deal away the weapons he sees as his strongest guarantee of survival.

Kim's arsenal emerged as a major threat to the United States and its Asian allies following tests in 2017 that included a detonation of a purported thermonuclear warhead and flight tests of ICBMs that demonstrated the potential to reach deep into the American homeland.

A year later, Kim initiated diplomacy with South Korea and the US, but it derailed in 2019 when the Americans rejected North Korea's demands for major sanctions relief in exchange for a piecemeal deal partially surrendering its nuclear capabilities.

North Korea won't likely be the top priority for Biden, who while facing mounting domestic issues is also gearing up for a push to get back into a 2015 nuclear deal with Iran that Trump blew up in favour of what he called maximum pressure against Iran.

The Biden administration's "sequence of policy attention will likely be: Get

America's own house in order, strengthen US Alliances and align strategies toward China and Russia, and then address Iran and North Korea," said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul.

But North Korea never likes to be ignored. Although Biden served as vice president under Barack Obama, whose policy was to wait out North Korea while gradually increasing sanctions, that method might not work because the North's weapons capabilities have grown significantly in the years since.

While sanctions, border closures and crop-killing natural disasters have created the toughest challenges of Kim's nine-year rule, he won't be in a hurry to offer concessions, Easley said. Kim's government has a high tolerance for domestic suffering and could expect extensive help from China, its only major ally.



# business



**The focus area for the bank has been arresting the slippages and improving asset quality. That exercise is yielding the result. Both gross NPA and net NPA ratios have come down very significantly**

**PADMAJA CHUNDURU | MD & CEO, INDIAN BANK**

## DUCATI LAUNCHES BS-VI SCRAMBLER RANGE

Italian superbike maker Ducati Friday launched BS-VI Scrambler range in India with prices starting at ₹7.99 lakh. The model year 2021 Scrambler range for India now includes the Scrambler Icon, Icon Dark and 1100 Dark Pro



## of the day quote

The two main reasons for apartment sizes reducing in previous years were affordability and millennials' preference for low-maintenance homes. Keen to generate more buyer interest with smaller price-tags, developers whittled down their flat sizes



**ANU PURI | CHAIRMAN, ANAROCK**

The government's fresh proposal to keep farm laws in abeyance for one-and-a-half year and constitute a joint committee with farmer leaders is quite justified and reasonable which indicates its willingness to resolve the crisis



**PRAVEEN KHANDEWAL | SECRETARY-GENERAL, CAIT**

Technology and healthcare sectors witnessed significant activity during lockdown given the sudden increase in demand for relevant talent across functions. Hiring activities among internet-based businesses remained relatively robust across India and is expected to maintain the momentum in 2021 as well



**NICOLAS DUMOULIN | INDIA MD, MICHAEL PAGE**

## SHORT TAKES

### Grasim enters paints business

**Mumbai:** Grasim Industries, the flagship company of the Aditya Birla Group, Friday announced its entry into the paints business, with a capital expenditure of ₹5,000 crore over the next three years. The domestic paints business is dominated by three companies: Asian Paints, Kansai Nerolac and Berger Paints. "Making a foray into paints is a strategic portfolio choice for Grasim, as it looks to identify new growth engines," Aditya Birla Group Chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla stated after the board meeting.

### Gold snaps 3-day gain

**New Delhi:** Snapping a three-day winning streak, gold prices Friday slipped by ₹263 to ₹48,861 per 10 grams in the national capital, due to a weak trend in the international market, according to HDFC Securities. The precious yellow metal had closed at ₹49,124 per 10 gm in the previous session. Silver prices also declined by ₹806 to ₹66,032 per kilogram, compared with the previous close of ₹66,838 per kg.

### KAPL gets govt approval

**New Delhi:** The government has given approval to drug firms including Aurobindo Pharma and Karnataka Antibiotics & Pharmaceuticals under the PLI scheme for promotion of domestic manufacturing of critical bulk drugs. The PLI scheme aims at promotion of manufacturing of critical key starting materials/drug intermediates and APIs in the country.

### Tata Motors hikes prices of PVs

**New Delhi:** Tata Motors Friday said it has increased prices of its passenger vehicle (PV) range by up to ₹20,000 to offset rising input costs and semiconductor. The company joins others like Maruti Suzuki and M&M, which have also hiked their vehicles' prices. "Rising input costs and material costs of steel have compelled the company to pass on the part of the cost to customers," Tata Motors said.

# India Inc optimistic about growth in FY22: Survey

**ACCORDING TO A RECENT SURVEY CONDUCTED BY DELOITTE TOUCHE TOHMATSU INDIA LLP, 68% OF THE 180 INDUSTRY LEADERS ARE POSITIVE ABOUT INDIA'S ECONOMIC REVIVAL**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Jan 22:** India Inc. is optimistic about the Union Budget FY21-22 as it is expected to give a strong push to the economy, business and industry. According to a recent

survey conducted by Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India LLP (DTTILLP), a majority (68%) of the 180 industry leaders are positive about India's economic revival.

The survey noted that respondents believe that the mass vaccination drive, the government's stimulus packages and other policy changes, focused attention to infrastructure, and continuing efforts on digitisation are some key areas helping India revive and thrive.

About 60% of the survey respondents feel Atmanirbhar Bharat, the government's flagship programme aimed at attaining "self-reliance", is well received. Respondents also expressed that extending R&D incentives, increasing FDI limit in different sectors and further simplifying its processes, along with supply chain reforms, would further enhance the programme's effectiveness.



ply chain reforms, would further enhance the programme's effectiveness.

Respondents felt that increasing the credit support to MSMEs would help the industry rebound sooner.

Respondents felt that focusing on the infrastructure sector with timely and adequate financing, as outlined under the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP), should be a priority area in this budget.

About 60% survey respondents cited that incentivising infrastructure investments will provide the desired impetus to the sector.

"The Financial year 2020-21 saw unprecedented disruptions to lives and livelihood all across the world. Recent data and business signals suggest that the economic recovery may be on the way. Schemes such as Atmanirbhar Bharat and PLI

have done especially well in supporting self-reliance and stabilising the country's economic growth.

While these schemes have helped the manufacturing, life sciences, and consumer products sectors the most, the rest of the industry is also positive about stimulating their respective businesses through injection of R&D spend and income-linked incentives.

For the economy at large, most industry leaders believe that boosting infrastructure spending would lend their sectors the needed impetus," said Sanjay Kumar, Partner and Leader Public Policy, Deloitte India.

The government has announced total special economic stimulus packages worth ₹29.87 lakh crore (US\$404 billion), 15% of GDP (including RBI measures).

## OnePlus, Oppo integrate parts of R&D



AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Jan 22:** OnePlus and Oppo are integrating parts of their research and development with OPLUS to "maximise resources", a move that could see the smartphone brands work more closely in the future.

While the companies did not disclose details around the integration, the development is expected to include the R&D teams of Oppo and OnePlus in India as well. "To better maximise resources and further position OnePlus for growth, we are in the process of further integrating some R&D capabilities within OPLUS, our long-term investor."

OnePlus will continue operating independently and working to deliver the best possible user experience for existing and future OnePlus users," OnePlus said in an e-mailed statement.

In a similarly worded statement, Oppo said, "in order to enhance customer experience and strengthen service network, OPLUS is in the process of further strengthening some R&D teams within our long-term investor OPLUS to better maximise resources".

Oppo will continue operating independently to deliver the best user experience, it added. Oppo's R&D team in Hyderabad has over 400 people. Recently, Oppo India had said it is in the process of filing 80 patents and will enhance focus on the development of 5G device ecosystem this year.

## Tata Motors offers refrigerated trucks for Covid vaccines

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Jan 22:** Homegrown auto major Tata Motors Friday said it is offering refrigerated trucks for smooth rollout of the countrywide Covid-19 vaccination drive.

To ensure reliable, safe and speedy transportation of the vaccines, the new range of vehicles has been designed and engineered as per the temperature, volume and weight requirements.

The vehicles are available in a variety of capacities and tonnage points to suit the diverse needs, Tata Motors said in a statement.

"These vaccine trucks and vans are available on the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) portal for purchase," it added.

Tata Motors said it has tied up with leading reefer (refrigerated load body) manufacturers of the country, furthering its preparation of offering ready-to-use reefers and insulated vaccine vans.

The refrigerated trucks are available in a variety of capacities and tonnage points to suit the diverse needs, in intermediate commercial vehicle and medium commercial vehicle segments, besides small commercial vehicle and pick-up range, to facilitate last-mile and for rural transportation of vaccines.

# RBI proposes four-layer regulatory structure for NBFCs

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, Jan 22:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Friday proposed a four-layered regulatory structure for non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) with progressive increase in intensity of regulation. According to a discussion paper released by the RBI, the NBFCs will be split into four layers - base, middle, upper and top.

The classification of the NBFCs, it said, will be based on host of parameters including size, leverage, interconnectedness, substitutability, complexity and nature of activity, among others.

"...The regulatory framework envisages a progressive increase in the intensity of regulation," said the RBI's discussion paper on 'Revised Regulatory Framework for NBFCs - A Scale-Based Approach'.

Stakeholders can send their comments on the paper to the RBI within a month.

Over the years, the NBFC sector has undergone considerable evolution. Higher risk appetite of NBFCs has contributed to their size, complexity and interconnectedness, making some of the entities systemically significant, posing potential threat to financial stability.



**While NBFCs are under RBI's regulation since 1964, the central bank introduced a comprehensive regulatory framework for the systemically important NBFCs in 2006**

While NBFCs are under RBI's regulation since 1964, the central bank introduced a comprehensive regulatory framework for the systemically important NBFCs in 2006, which was further refined in 2014.

Since then, the RBI has been carrying out calibrated modifications to mould the regulations to the changing environment. Accordingly,

within the universe of systemically important NBFCs, an additional identifier has been placed at ₹5,000 crore, wherein, additional regulations have been made applicable to such large NBFCs.

"Unbridled growth aided by less rigorous regulatory framework within an interconnected financial system can sow the seeds of systemic risk. Failure of any large and deeply interconnected NBFC is capable of transmitting shocks in to the entire financial sector and cause disruption even to the operations of the small and mid-sized NBFCs," the RBI said.

"Under the circumstances, regulatory framework for NBFCs needs to be reoriented to keep pace with the changing realities," it said, and added a calibrated and graded regulatory framework proportionate to the systemic significance of NBFCs may be best suited.

## PLANT CLOSURE

# Apex Court declines Vedanta's interim plea

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Jan 22:** The Supreme Court Friday declined to entertain a plea by Vedanta seeking early hearing on its appeal filed against the Madras High Court order, which declined to allow the reopening of its Tuticorin plant.

As the Tamil Nadu government had filed a special leave petition in the top court for expunging certain remarks in the Madras High Court order, a bench headed by Justice RF Nariman and comprising Justices Navin Sinha and KM Joseph admitted it and tagged it with the main matter.

In the meanwhile, during the hearing, counsel appearing for Vedanta requested the top court for an early hearing on its appeal against the Madras High Court order but the bench declined to entertain this plea.

The mining major had moved the top court in August against the High Court order declining to allow the reopening of the Tuticorin plant as it had upheld the orders of Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) which directed the closure of the plant in May 2018.

December 2, the SC had declined



to entertain an interim plea by Vedanta Ltd seeking permission to inspect and operate Sterlite Copper unit at Tuticorin for four weeks to assess the pollution level.

Senior advocate AM Singhvi, appearing for the company, had submitted that Vedanta is producing 36% of the copper demand of the country and it is a case of mala fide closure of the plant. Vedanta sought handing over of the plant for three months, where two months would be needed to start the unit, and in order to find out whether the plant is polluting, the company should be allowed to run it for four weeks.

The TN government objected to these submissions and submitted before the top court that the plant has been polluting consistently. But, Singhvi contended the court should allow the company to run the plant, which would help in ascertaining whether the plant is polluting beyond the acceptable limit.

## BIZ BUZZ

### Amway launches Home Fruit, Veggie Wash

**Bhubaneswar:** Amway India, one of country's leading FMCG direct selling companies announced the launch of its latest innovation in-home care category with Home Fruit and Veggie Wash. Building on its expertise in homecare solutions and in its endeavour to cater to the growing need for hygiene care products, Amway forayed into the vegetable and fruit hygiene space with this launch. Amway Home Fruit & Veggie Wash is a 5-in-1 cleaning solution for fruits and vegetables. The cleaning solution has no added chlorine, bleach, alcohol, artificial colour or animal-based ingredients.



### SBI organises blood donation camp

**Bhubaneswar:** A blood donation camp was organised by Stressed Asset Resolution Group, based in Mumbai in coordination with State Bank of India (SBI), Local Head Office, Bhubaneswar and Indian Red Cross Society Friday at SBI's, Local Head Office Bhubaneswar. The blood donation camp was inaugurated by Ruma Dey, CGM, SBI, Bhubaneswar Circle in the presence of Bejoy Kumar Kuzur, GM-II, Anup Kumar Sinha, DGM & CDO, Basanta Kumar Mallick, AGM, Stressed Asset Recovery Branch, Bhubaneswar. This camp was organised at the 'All India Level' in all the Circles of SBI. Dey also donated blood on the occasion. She expressed her gratitude for arranging the camp and urged to arrange such events in future as well.



# Assotech Group plans to invest ₹900cr in Odisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 22:** Real estate promoter Assotech Group has now decided to invest around ₹900 crore in the sector in Odisha in the next five years which is likely to be utilised in developing township in the state capital.

Sanjeev Srivastava, MD of the group said that seeing at the immense potential of the city and needs, the group would invest the amount for a housing township project at Rudrapur. He said that the project named Assotech Pride is under construction since 2019.

"We have started the ambitious project of making quality apartments on the site with all possible



modern amenities. We have also received required approvals from RERA and other organisations and our works are been executed ahead of time because of the use of modern advanced technology in building construction," he said.

In a press conference, he informed the reporters that the group has roped in the advanced tech-

nology of Aluminium Form Work Shuttering which is otherwise confined to western countries and metro cities. "This is probably the first time such technologies will be used for building high rise apartments in the state," he said.

He was also joined by SS Rout, the vice president of the firm. The group claimed that the township project would not only pave way for employment for the locals but also aid in generating revenue for the state government.

The firm also said that they would construct 485 apartments for the 'economically weaker section' of the society as per the compliance of building rules of the state government.

# Tea industry may continue to face challenges in 2021-22

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Jan 22:** The tea industry may continue to face challenges in the next financial year with hike in wages and its impact on prices, as production returns to normal, according to a report. Rating agency Icria in the report also expects the challenges for the tea industry to remain in 2021-22, after considerable improvement in performance during 2020-21.

The impact on bulk tea prices once the production returns to normal in the new season would be a critical factor determining the profitability in the next financial year, the rating agency said.

West Bengal has recently announced a 15 per cent increase in wage rates, on an interim basis,

which would increase the cost of production for bulk tea companies, it added.

Domestic tea prices have witnessed a significant increase in the current financial year, with the North India (NI) auction average increasing by 46 per cent y-o-y during April-December 2020 and the South India (SI) auction average up by 41 per cent during the same period, the report stated.

Tea prices witnessed a sharp increase on the back of a 10 per cent fall in domestic production, while consumption remained firm, it said.

While tea prices moderated during November-mid December 2020, following a seasonal quality decline amid normal production levels in September and October 2020, the prices rebounded in the recent auc-



tions in the domestic market in the calendar year 2020. Thus, the profitability of NI-based bulk tea players is expected to witness a significant improvement in 2020-21, on the back of a sharp improvement already witnessed in the first half of 2020-21

and significantly lower losses expected in the second half of 2020-21.

However, the sustainability of the same in 2021-22 will depend on the price and input costs, the rating agency stated.

ICRA Vice-President and Sector

Domestic tea prices have witnessed a significant increase in the current financial year

The impact on bulk tea prices once the production returns to normal in the new season would be a critical factor in determining the profitability

On the global front, the 11% decline in production from India and Sri Lanka is estimated to result in an overall decline in global production

season." He added that trend in prices apart, another challenge facing the industry is the increase in wage rates. "West Bengal has already announced an interim wage increase, Assam is also likely to follow along similar lines."

Das also said the sustenance of the healthy profitability would be critical to ensure the long-term financial health of the bulk tea industry.

Meanwhile, on the global front, the report said the decline in production from India and Sri Lanka (a contraction of 11 per cent for both in 11 months of 2020) is estimated to result in an overall decline in global production in 2020.

This is despite a significant increase in the Kenyan crop by 32 per cent during the nine months of 2020, it added.

# Burnley end Liverpool run

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Liverpool, Jan 22:** Liverpool's 68-match unbeaten streak at Anfield in the Premier League ended with a 0-1 loss to Burnley in the latest setback of a fading title defense.

Ashley Barnes scored from the penalty spot in the 83rd minute Thursday after the forward was brought down by goalkeeper Alisson Becker as Burnley became the first team to win in the league at Anfield since April 2017.

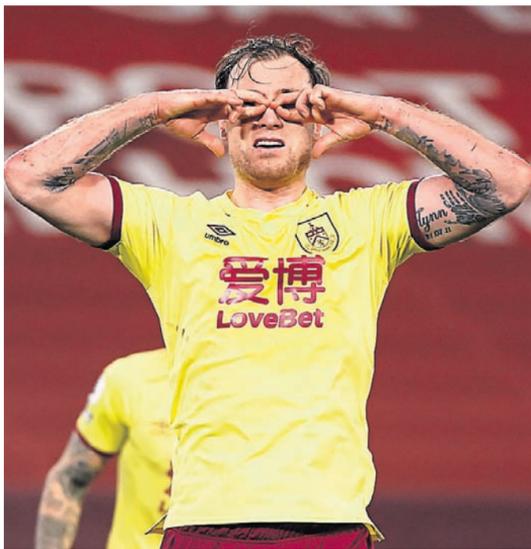
It was Burnley's first win at Liverpool since 1974 and it leaves Jurgen Klopp's side six points behind leader Manchester United halfway through their title defense, having not scored in four successive games.

"It obviously didn't work out tonight and that's what we have to admit," Klopp said. "It's obviously my fault."

Frustrations boiled over at the halftime whistle as Barnes reacted angrily to Fabinho appearing to flick out at him, provoking a small melee, but referee Mike Dean only showed the Brazilian a yellow card. Meanwhile Klopp and Burnley manager Sean Dyche had their own heated exchange as they headed down the tunnel.

While Liverpool is chasing a record-equaling 20th English title, Burnley is trying to stay in the league and it moved seven points above the drop zone.

Liverpool was again made to pay for their lack of a cutting edge — having left the out-of-form Mohamed Salah and Roberto Firmino on the bench for an hour — and the team has now gone 7 hours, 18 minutes without scoring in the league.



Jurgen Klopp consoles Liverpool goalie Alisson Becker after their loss

The only point taken off Liverpool at home in last season's title charge came in a draw with

Burnley. Dyche's team finished this game with the same amount of possession — 29 per cent — but crucially went one better.

Burnley employed similar tactics of defending resolutely, competing physically and taking the opportunity when it arose. The same could not be said for Klopp's side, who had 27 attempts but only six on target.

With captain Jordan Henderson out with a minor groin problem and Salah and Firmino rested, the onus was put on replacements Divock Origi, who has one league goal since December 2019, and Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain.

Neither lived up to the billing and were taken off before the hour-

mark, with Origi missing the chance of the night just before halftime.

An uncharacteristic miss-kick from Burnley captain Ben Mee put Origi clean through, but his lack of game time and confidence showed as he blasted a shot past goalkeeper Nick Pope but against the crossbar.

The Belgium striker's only goal this season came in the 7-2 League Cup victory at Lincoln. Pope arrived at Anfield with five clean sheets in his last 10 league games, but he was not properly tested in the opening 45 minutes.

Sadio Mane had an early header blocked by Dwight McNeil, but there followed a succession of shots from Xherdan Shaqiri, Oxlade-Chamberlain, Origi and Andy Robertson which the England international dealt with comfortably.

Burnley's one real opportunity came when Alisson dropped a cross under pressure from Chris Wood, but he reacted well to block Barnes' shot.

Just over 10 minutes into the second half and with the game drifting, Klopp sent on Salah and Firmino, with the Egyptian straight into the action by forcing Pope into his first decent save low at his near post.

Burnley substitute Johann Berg Gudmundsson blazed wide from close range, but it was not as bad as the Firmino effort which was so off-target that compatriot Alisson, 80 yards away, dropped to his knees, held his head and let out a yell.

After Burnley's goal, Liverpool chased an equaliser but Firmino's close-range shot was deflected wide by Mee.

# Barca advance in Copa del Rey

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Madrid, Jan 22:** Ousmane Dembele scored early in extra time after missing a penalty late in regulation as Barcelona defeated third-division club Cornella 2-0 in the round of 32 of the Copa del Rey.

Martin Braithwaite also scored Thursday for Barcelona, which had already seen Miralem Pjanic miss a penalty in the first half.

In the Spanish league, Luis Suarez scored twice as leader Atletico Madrid came from behind to defeat Eibar 2-1 and open a seven-point gap to second-place Real Madrid.

Barcelona avoided an upset in the Copa del Rey a day after Madrid lost 2-1 to third-division club Alcoyano in extra time. Atletico had already been stunned by Cornella in the second round.

Barcelona advanced despite playing without Lionel Messi, who was suspended for two matches after hitting an opponent away from the ball in the team's 2-3 loss to Athletic Bilbao in the Spanish Super Cup final Sunday.

Dembele scored with a right-foot shot from outside the area two minutes into extra time. He had his 80th-minute penalty saved by Cornella goalkeeper Ramon Juan Ramirez, who also stopped Pjanic's spot-kick just before halftime.

Barcelona controlled possession but struggled to capitalize on its many scoring chances on the artificial turf at the small Cornella stadium in Catalonia. The hosts threatened a few times on counterattacks.

Cornella went a man down when Albert Estelles was sent off with a second yellow card in the final minutes. Braithwaite's goal came on a breakthrough just before the final whistle.



Martin Braithwaite celebrates his goal with Pedri, Thursday

**Suarez saves Atletico**

Suarez scored a goal in each half after Eibar had taken the lead with a penalty converted by goalkeeper Marko Dmitrovic in the 12th minute. Suarez equalised in the 40th with a low cross shot from close range after the Eibar defense failed to clear the ball from inside its area. The Uruguay striker netted the winner by converting an 89th-minute penalty after he was fouled inside the area.

It was the sixth league win in a row for Atletico, which still has a game in hand compared to Real Madrid and third-place Barcelona,

which is 10 points off the lead.

Eibar, winless in three matches in all competitions, was in 15th place, two points from safety.

**Lackluster show**

In a match between clubs fighting against relegation, Valencia was held to a 1-1 draw against Osasuna. Jonathan Calleri put the visitors ahead with a volley in the 42nd and Valencia equalised with an own goal by Osasuna defender Unai Garcia in the 69th.

Winless in 13 consecutive league games, Osasuna stayed second-to-last in the 20-team standings. Valencia was 14th, three points from the relegation zone.

# Sindhu, Sameer lose in Thailand Open ties



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangkok, Jan 22:** World Champion PV Sindhu dished out a below-par performance to lose her quarterfinal match, while Sameer Verma's gallant fight ended in agony in the Toyota Thailand Open Super 1000 tournament here Friday.

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Ashwini Ponappa, however, entered the mixed doubles semifinal with a stunning win over World No.6 pair of Peng Soon Chan and Liu Ying Goh of Malaysia in a nail-biting quarterfinal duel.

Sindhu looked a pale shadow of the player who had won the world championship gold in 2019 as she was all at sea against home favourite Ratchanok Intanon, who rode on her precision and quality of strokes

to outclass the Indian 21-13, 21-9 in a lop-sided contest.

In men's singles, Sameer's giant-killing run also came to an end after he squandered a match point to go down 13-21, 21-19, 20-22 to World No.3 Anders Antonsen of Denmark in a quarterfinal contest. With the defeat of Sindhu and Sameer, Indian challenge in singles competition ended in the tournament.

The only bright spot was the duo of Satwik and Ashwini as they shocked the fifth seeded Malaysian pair 18-21, 24-22, 22-20 after toiling hard for one hour and 15 minutes. The World No.22 Indian pair will be up against top seeds Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Sapsiree Taerattanachai of Thailand.

# Fall helps MCFC edge out SCEB

AGENCIES

**Goa, Jan 22:** Mumbai City FC (MCFC) edged out SC East Bengal (SCEB) 1-0 in their Indian Super League (ISL) encounter at the Tilak Maidan, Friday.

Mourtada Fall scored the only goal of the match in the 27th minute from Hugo Boumous' cross to seal crucial three points for the Islanders. The Red and Golds dominated proceedings in the second half but failed to find an equaliser as their unbeaten run comes to an end.

Mumbai City extended their lead at the top of the ISL table to give points after Friday's match while East Bengal remained on the 10th position.

MCFC should have taken the lead in the 14th minute, had Boumous not missed a sitter. Cy Goddard whipped in a cross from the left flank and SCEB custodian Debjit Majumdar fumbled while collecting the ball in the air. Boumous capitalised on the opportunity and tried to slot the ball home but sent it above the crossbar despite having an empty net in front of him.

However, Boumous settled the things in the 27th setting up the all important goal of the match. Bipin Singh made a swift run down the right side and tried to send a low ball inside the box eyeing Adam Le Fondre but Narayan made important interception and cleared the ball.

In the resulted corner-kick, Goddard curled in the ball which Boumous met inside the box and floated in a cross again. An un-



marked Fall managed to reach for the ball before heading into the net.

The lead could have been doubled before the break, but this time Le Fondre missed a golden opportunity. Bipin curled in a cross from the

left side and Le Fondre was unmarked but failed to head the ball in from a handshaking distance.

After the change of ends, the match turned out to be even more interesting affair with both the

sides creating several scoring chances. However, MCFC defence wall managed to keep the lead intact and eventually came up with full three points.

# OCA nominates six players for IPL-14 auction

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 22:** The Odisha Cricket Association (OCA) Friday recommended as many as six players for the auction of 14th Indian Premier League (IPL). The tournament is set to be played in April and May later this year.

Subhansu Senapati, Rajesh Dhupar, Rajesh Mohanty, Papu Ray, Gourav Choudhury and Tarini Sa are the state players who will have their opportunities to be a part of the cash-rich T20 league.

Subhansu and Gourav have been recommended as batsmen, while Mohanty and Sa have been nominated as pace bowlers. Dhupar has been included as wicket-keeper for the auction and Ray as spinner.

Sources close to the state cricket board said that the players have been selected on the basis of their impressive performances at the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 cricket tournament as well as their past records.



**AUCTION LIKELY TO TAKE PLACE FEBRUARY 18**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 22:** The IPL players auction ahead of the 2021 season is likely to be held February 18, a BCCI official told PTI, Friday. "The auction will be held February 18. The venue is yet to be decided," the official said.

The BCCI is also yet to decide whether the IPL will happen in India or not even though Board President Sourav Ganguly has repeatedly asserted that everything possible would be done to keep the glitzy event at its home.

The 2020 edition was held in the UAE in September-November due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A smooth conduct of India's home series against England from next month should pave the way for the lucrative league to be held at home.

The player retention deadline ended January 20 and the trading window closes February 4. Top Australian draws like Steve Smith and Glenn Maxwell were released from Rajasthan Royals and Kings XI Punjab respectively on the last day of the retention deadline.

# ONTHHPC launches 2 grassroots centres



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 22:** The Odisha Naval Tata Hockey High Performance Centre (ONTHHPC) launched two new grassroots centres — one each in Dhenkanal and Deogarh, thus taking the tally of grassroots centres to 12. The inauguration took place virtually at the Kalinga Stadium here.

As many as 25 coaches including a lady coach have been recruited to promote women coaches in the grassroots. ONTH is hopeful that the foothall at these two centres should

increase the overall tally to about 2500 young trainees reached through the grassroots initiative as on date.

In another development, ONTHHPC has also commenced its boys' resident programme at the Kalinga Hockey Complex. A total of 31 cadets have been selected for the programme. These players, in the age group of U-17 years, have been chosen from the two-week long selection camp that took place November 17-December 1 last year here.

As many as 21 players are from Odisha, while seven are from

Manipur, two from Uttar Pradesh and one from Assam. The HPC has also created a standby list of eight (including five from Odisha) talented players.

The HPC has also recommended some players to sports hostels run by the Department of Sports & Youth Services, Govt. of Odisha, in Panposh and Sundargarh. These hostels are also Regional Development Centres and serve as a stepping stone to the Odisha Naval Tata Hockey HPC.

Tusharkanti Behera, Minister of Sports & Youth Services,

Electronics and IT was present there as chief guest. Among others, Vishal Kumar Dev, Principal Secretary, Sports & Youth Services and Tourism, Govt of Odisha, Padma Shri Awardee Dillip Tirkey, Chanakya Chaudhary, vice president Corporate Services, Tata Steel and Chairman, Hockey Ace Foundation (HAF) and Goutam Mukherjee, CEO, HAF were also present at the venue.

"I am delighted to be here for the inauguration of the boys' resident programme at the Odisha Naval Tata Hockey HPC. I congratulate each and every cadet who has successfully cleared the selection trials and has been inducted into our Hockey High Performance Centre," said Behera.

"This is an elite opportunity and platform for you to excel in Hockey and you should feel extremely proud. This is the first step towards achieving your sporting dreams. This HPC will play a crucial role and along with experienced and expert coaches will endeavour to groom you all into future national and international players," he added.

# Odisha purple begin campaign with win



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 22:** Odisha Purple began their campaign in style as they defeated Odisha Red comprehensively by 57 runs in the first match of the inaugural MGM Odisha Women's T20 cricket tournament at the KIIT Cricket Stadium here, Friday.

The Purple posted 122/4 in their allotted 20 overs after winning the toss and opting to bat first. Sarita Meher was the top scorer with 55 off 59 balls.

She was ably supported by her

skipper Madhusmita Behera (45 off 45 balls). Preeti Priyadarsani (1/13) was the most economical bowler for the Red.

In response, the Red were bowled out for a paltry 65 with more than five overs to spare. Rajashree Swain was the top scorer for the losing side with an unbeaten 16 off 21 balls.

DJ Reddy (3/6) was standout among the Purple bowlers. She was ably supported by Subhra N Swain (2/7) and Banalata Mallick (2/27). Madhusmita, who was awarded Player of the match prize, also bagged a wicket.