



## ALWAYS A LEARNER

Singer Sunidhi Chauhan says in spite of a career of more than two decades she is still a student of music

LEISURE P2



## DEBRIS TO HIT MOON

A chunk of a 'SpaceX' rocket which took off seven years ago will crash into the moon in March, experts say

INTERNATIONAL P10



## SWETAPADMA ADVANCES

Swetapadma Panda (in pix) and her partner Balkeshari Yadav enter the mixed doubles quarterfinals of Odisha Open

SPORTS P12

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## Tatas officially take over Air India

**New Delhi:** Tata Group officially took over Thursday the ownership of national carrier Air India. "The strategic disinvestment transaction of Air India successfully concluded today with transfer of 100 per cent shares of Air India to M/s Talace Pvt Ltd along with management control," DIPAM secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey said in a tweet. "A new board, led by the strategic partner, takes charge of Air India," he added. In October last year, Tata Group became the winning bidder for Air India with a bid amount of ₹18,000 crore. Tatas would pay ₹2,700 crore cash and takeover ₹15,300 crore of the airline's debt.

P11



## Dhinkia panchayat elections in 2023

**Bhubaneswar:** The State Election Commission (SEC) informed Thursday that the elections to the sarpanch's post of Dhinkia gram panchayat in Jagatsinghpur district will be conducted next year. This was stated by the SEC secretary, RN Sahu in a statement. He also said that polls for the 23 ward members will also be conducted at the same time. The tenure of Dhinkia gram panchayat will be over in 2023 as elections were held in 2018, the SEC said. Dhinkia gram panchayat has been in news due to agitation by villagers against the proposed steel plant being planned by JSW. More than 30 villagers were injured during agitations January 14 against the proposed plant.

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# Covid vax now in markets

Both Covishield and Covaxin received EUA January 3 last year. Since then more than 164 crore Indians have received either a single or both doses of the vaccines

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Jan 27:** Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has granted regular market approval for Covid-19 vaccines Covishield and Covaxin for use in the adult population subject to certain conditions, Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya informed Thursday. The minister also said that the government's vaccination drive will continue as it is to provide first and second doses for all and a precautionary dose for senior citizens with comorbidities as well as for frontline workers.

Soon after the approval, highly-placed sources said the two vaccines will now be available in private clinics at pre-decided MRP and people can buy those, but jabs can be administered only as per the prevailing government guidelines. Price for each vax jab is expected to be ₹275.

Gradually, the vaccine will be available in the market at a price lower than at what it was being sold earlier at private hospitals, informed sources in the Health Ministry.

# Panel formed for revamping prisons

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 27:** Following the order of the Orissa High Court, the state government has constituted the Odisha Prisons Development Board to improve and modernise the infrastructure in jails. Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra has been appointed chairman of the panel while DG Prisons and Director of Correctional Services, Santosh Kumar Upadhyay will be the member convener. The secretaries of Home, Finance, Law, Revenue, Higher Education, Skill Development, Women & Child Development and Health and IT departments are other members of panel.

The Home Department issued a notification Thursday detailing the role and responsibilities of board,



being sold earlier at private hospitals, informed sources in the Health Ministry.

"The idea is that those who are keen to get a booster dose can now avail it through private clinics. This is because the vaccine available in private clinics can be used for any purpose, whether it's first dose, second dose or a booster as one wishes, provided that all guidelines including for eligibility of beneficiaries are followed," informed sources.

Also, registration of the vaccination on CoWIN platform will be mandatory. "DCGI has upgraded the permission for Covaxin and



Covishield from restricted use in emergency situations to normal new drug permission in the adult population with certain conditions," Mandaviya said. He added that the approval was granted under the New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019.

DCGI's approval came after the Subject Expert Committee (SEC) on Covid-19 of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) recommended January 19 granting regular market approval to Serum Institute of India's (SII) Covishield and Bharat Biotech's Covaxin for use in adult population

## MIRACULOUS RECOVERY

**Dubai:** A 38-year-old Indian frontline warrior in the UAE was Thursday discharged from hospital after he made a miraculous recovery from Covid-19 that seriously damaged his lungs and left him in an unconscious state for six months. In the half-year long battle against Covid-19, Arunkumar M Nair, an OT technician, breathed with the support of an artificial lung (ECMO machine). He will soon return to Kerala to reunite with his parents. During his hospitalisation, Nair also suffered a cardiac arrest. The Burjeel Hospital in Abu Dhabi said in a statement that a healthcare group has donated ₹50 lakh for the treatment of Nair. "I do not remember anything. I know I had barely escaped from the jaws of death," Nair said.

subject to certain conditions.

While SII had submitted October 25 an application seeking regular market authorisation for Covishield, Bharat Biotech had done so a few weeks back. Covaxin and Covishield were granted emergency use authorisation (EUA), January 3 last year.

# ACCUSED IN PURI RAPE CASE NABBED

Four police teams had been formed to arrest the accused and they had been conducting raids since January 23 when the incident occurred

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Puri, Jan 27:** The accused in the rape of a five-year-old girl here has been arrested, police said Thursday. The accused has been identified as Mahesh Mohanty (35), Puri SP Kanwar Vishal Singh informed. Mahesh was nabbed from a place close to the boundaries of Puri and Bhubaneswar, the SP informed.

Puri police had formed four teams to locate the accused and arrest him. Raids had been conducted at various places in this town and outside Puri district, the SP informed. "The arrest of the accused was possible due to the hard efforts put in by the teams. He will be forwarded to court Thursday itself following a medical test," Singh said. The chargesheet of the case will be filed within 20 days. The incident will be tagged as 'Red Flag Case', the police official stated.

Mahesh, who hails from Jagatsinghpur district, has criminal antecedents and was recently released from jail. The accused had allegedly raped the minor girl on

## Man sexually assaults daughter

**Puri:** In a shocking incident, a man was detained Thursday for allegedly raping his two-year-old daughter at Goudabada Sahi locality here. Sources said that the man was detained after the mother of the victim filed an FIR with Puri Town police accusing her husband of sexually assaulting their daughter. It should be stated here that the man was last imprisoned for eight months for assaulting his wife and children, police said.

the rooftop of her house at Sidha Bakula lane under Puri Town police limits, January 23. Mahesh was staying in a rented house at PWD Colony. As he stayed close to the victim's family, he was well-acquainted with them and he took this opportunity to harm the minor.

The girl was playing alone on the roof when he allegedly raped her. Hearing the girl's screams, her family members reached the spot. They rescued the girl and rushed her to the hospital. By that time, Mahesh had fled the crime scene and had later absconded from the locality. The victim is currently undergoing treatment at the SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack. Police have registered a case against the accused under Sections 376 of the IPC and 6 of POCSO Act.

# SUPPRESSING DISSENT



Police try to break up a demonstration by students demanding online examinations for Class XII at Master Canteen Square in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

**IRREGULAR by MANJUL**

No, not for universal peace, I prayed for inner-party peace!

# Panchayat polls: 35% seats go uncontested

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 27:** Nearly 35 per cent of the 1.06 lakh seats in the ensuing panchayat elections in Odisha have already been decided uncontested. In 36,976 places, which comprise 34.77 per cent of the total seats, only a single person has filed nomination, the State Election Commission (SEC) said Thursday.

Out of the 6,793 sarpanch posts, 126 have been decided uncontested, while 326 of 6,793 panchayat samiti seats have only one candidate. Among the 91,890 ward member posts, 36,523 (39.74 per cent) were decided uncontested, the SEC said.

A total of 3,407 candidates are in the fray for the posts of Zilla Parishad member in 852 constituencies. According to sources in the SEC,

the BJD has fielded 851 candidates for the ZP member posts while the BJP has nominated 848 persons.

Among the other parties who have candidates for ZP member posts are Congress (836), BSP (159), CPI (38), CPI(M) (72), AAP (32), AJSU (12) and JMM (47). Also 298 independent candidates are in fray for the ZP elections.

Similarly, of the 852 Zilla Parishad seats, one has been decided uncontested. "Kalpana Pradhan (BJD) declared elected uncontested as ZP Member, Zone No-2, Ambabhona Block in Bargarh District," the SEC said in a statement.

The panchayat election is scheduled to be held in five phases in Odisha, beginning February 16. Counting of votes will take place February 26, 27 and 28.

# Pope Francis bats for gay kids

Even though same-sex liaison is sinful as per the rules of the Church, it is not a crime to have such tendencies

AGENCIES

**Vatican City, Jan 27:** Finally the Church has come to the aid of gay kids. Pope Francis said Wednesday that parents of gay children should not condemn them but offer them support. He pointed out that even gay children have the right to live and that they should not be ostracised by society. Francis also said that it is not the fault of the kids that they are born with gay tendencies. It is nothing 'unnatural' as per the comments made by the supreme authority of the Vatican. Pope Francis made the comments

at his weekly audience here while referring to difficulties that parents can face in raising offspring.

Those issues included 'parents who see different sexual orientations in their children and how to handle this issue, how to accompany their children, and not hide behind an attitude of condemnation', Francis stated. He had also said that gays have a right to be accepted by their families as children and siblings. He also said kids who are gays should be brought up with the same amount of love like 'normal' kids get.

Francis had also pointed out that while the Church cannot accept same-sex marriage it can support civil union laws aimed at giving gay partners joint rights in areas of pensions, healthcare and inheritance issues.



It should be stated here that last year, the Vatican's doctrinal office issued a document which said that Catholic priests cannot bless same-sex unions. It was a ruling that greatly disappointed gay Catholics.

In some countries, such as the United States and Germany, parishes and ministers had begun blessing same-sex unions in lieu of

marriage, and there have been calls for bishops to de facto institutionalise these.

Conservatives in the 1.3 billion-member Church have said the pope - who has sent notes of appreciation to priests and nuns who minister to gay Catholics - is giving mixed signals on homosexuality, confusing some of the faithful.

Last month, a Vatican department apologised for 'causing pain to the entire LGBTQ community' by removing from its website a link to resource material from a Catholic gay rights advocacy group in preparation for a Vatican meeting in 2023 on the Church's future direction.

The Church teaches that gays should be treated with respect and that, while same-sex acts are sinful, same-sex tendencies are not, the Church had said.

**MARKET WATCH**

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	57276.94	↓ 581.21
NIFTY	17110.20	↓ 167.80
DOLLAR	75.18	↑ ₹0.37
EURO	84.29	↓ ₹0.20
GOLD	₹48,189	↓ ₹662
SILVER	₹62,497	↓ ₹1574

**WEATHER**

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP	MAX 25.2°C	26.0°C
	MIN 16.4°C	16.2°C
Humidity	90%	90%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Mainly clear sky	

# leisure



## I HAVE A CRAZY WORK ETHIC: BRADLEY COOPER

Hollywood star Bradley Cooper has admitted that his passionate approach to work can occasionally make life difficult for some of his co-stars. "I have a crazy work ethic. But it was not easy for the people that I've worked with," said the *American Sniper* actor.

## JANET JACKSON DISMISSES CLAIMS OF 'SECRET' BABY

Singer Janet Jackson - who has four-year-old son Eissa with ex-husband Wissam Al Mana - has slammed speculation she had a 'secret' child in the 1980s with her then-husband James DeBarge.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Whip up some excitement in your life - put on your walking shoes and go explore some unknown destination, suggests Ganesh. Keep yourself busy, but take care not to overdo anything. Today, you will be the centre of attention in group activities.

**TAURUS**  
You will find yourself at the crossroads and each turn and twist will come with its share of pros and cons, says Ganesh. Your sentiments may have an ill-effect on your health. You may spend quality time with family members and friends, hoping to shed the burden thrust upon your soul.

**GEMINI**  
Your health interests will take precedence over career, says Ganesh. There are indications that you will spare more time working out at a gym. Those in the field of marketing and advertising will have a fabulous time. A good marketing strategy will bring maximum profits with minimum efforts.

**CANCER**  
Today, you will be extremely impulsive and spontaneous, feels Ganesh. You better get rid of your negative thoughts and beliefs and start taking care of things at hand. Also, stop focussing so much on the pitfalls, and start working. Listen to music that speaks to your heart and you will be at peace with yourself.

**LEO**  
If one were to put an earnest spirit and a frank attitude together, the result would be a Leo; it's like your hallmark. And with qualities like these in your kitty, don't be surprised if you happen to reach a milestone or two today. Will it be marital bliss or career success? No matter what the area is, be assured that your societal standing shall get a heady boost today, assures Ganesh. Just don't let the success go to your head.

**VIRGO**  
The booster rockets of your ambitions and spirit to work will kick in at the maximum today. Seek recreation after a hard day's work and look to relax at private parties, social-dos and even weddings, says Ganesh.

**LIBRA**  
"Every man has specific natural abilities", said Aristotle. This seems to be true for you today. Your natural talents will be acknowledged and documented at work. This might prompt your equals to hold you up above the rest, and for your seniors to positively encourage you to scale greater heights. But as always, be careful to make sure that success does not make you heady with arrogance, cautions Ganesh. Keep yourself firmly grounded, and remember that, 'pride cometh before the fall'.

**SCORPIO**  
You will find yourself thinking with your heart rather than your head today, says Ganesh. You may not be able to repress your feelings, and you should not even try. But you should be careful about how you express them, particularly in public as people may judge you wrongly on the basis of it, advises Ganesh.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
The day may pan out to be more challenging than you had anticipated. An independent free bird as you Archers are, you may find reality irritating to find your hands tied up in unpleasant money matters. But, then that's a part of life; put in your best to overcome any situation you come across. Your efforts shall help you gain economic independence. Take other challenges head on too. The secret, says Ganesh, lies in diligence, optimism and tonnes of patience.

**CAPRICORN**  
Your exuberance and self-confidence will become the talk of the day for those around you. But it's not for nothing that you will attract so much attention. You will derive pleasure in accomplishing Herculean tasks today, and Ganesh says you will do justice to work too. At home, everything will go smooth and you will enjoy and share the peace in your life with your wife. On the whole, you will have a cheerful day ahead.

**AQUARIUS**  
Team work and cooperation bring out the best in you, so you must make the most of a chance to work in a group. It could be brainstorming, or campaigning for an environmental cause or even playing beach ball! A game of cards in the evening, and consider your day well spent, says Ganesh.

**PISCES**  
The workaholic in your bursts to the fore with a vengeance, and today will see you tackle pending projects with the zeal of a Holy Templar crusader. Your energy levels will be unflagging, and your enthusiasm to wipe your slate clean admirable. Make the most of it, says Ganesh.



## 'FELL A 100 TIMES BUT GOT UP EACH TIME'

**CHENNAI:** Actress Samantha, who seems to be having a whale of a time in Switzerland, where she is on a holiday now, has put out another post on how she learnt skiing.

On Instagram, the actress, who impressed fans and followers a few days ago by putting out a video of her skiing on the icy slopes of Verbier, Switzerland, Thursday said: "I began my skiing journey with toddlers on a bunny slope. Very humbling!"

"Fell a 100 times. Got up each time. The thought of quitting crossed my mind multiple times but boy am I glad, I pushed through. In the time and effort it took for graduating from bunny slopes to completing a Red run, I found something truly special. It's been exhilarating & daunting in the best way imaginable," said the Pushpa actress. The actress, while giving a shout out to her trainer, also made a point by hashtagging the phrases, 'Just The Beginning' and 'Never Felt More Alive.' **IANS**

## I am always a student of music: Sunidhi



**MUMBAI:** Celebrated singer Sunidhi Chauhan, who is exploring the independent music space with singles - her recent being Firaag, says even after having a long career of more than two decades she feels like a student of music who is hungry for learning more.

Sunidhi said: "I would say that my driving force has not changed since the time I was a child, I love music, I love singing."

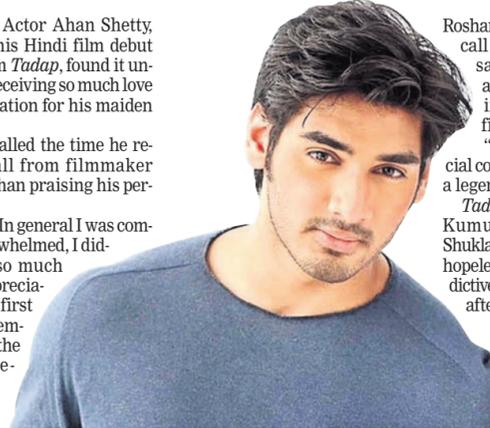
"When I started my journey, it was nothing but the joy of singing and it is still the same. I am a constant learner, even after all these years. So as cliché as it sounds, the truth is, I feel like I just started my journey! That is why I am taking all the opportunities to explore different avenues of music."

Starting her singing career at the age of 12, in 1999, she gained the spotlight with the song *Ruki Ruki Si Zindagi*. Since then, she continues to deliver superhit tracks including *Mehboob Mere*, *Dhoom Machale*, *Beedi Jalaile*, *Sheila Ki Jawani* to *Ae Watan, Kamli, Tu Kuja* to many more.

Sunidhi shared: "My relationship with music has only grown deeper. I feel that ever since I started singing for films, it has evolved not only how I look at music but also the way music has changed in cinema, in the independent space, in the music in-

dustry as a whole. "I am glad that somewhere I am also part of that change. One of the reasons why I am excited about new talents is, I become a part of a new musical vision. As an artist that gives me a chance to grow." **IANS**

## Didn't expect so much love:Ahan



**MUMBAI:** Actor Ahan Shetty, who made his Hindi film debut with the film *Tadap*, found it unbelievable receiving so much love and appreciation for his maiden movie.

Ahan recalled the time he received a call from filmmaker Rakesh Roshan praising his performance.

He said, "In general I was completely overwhelmed, I didn't expect so much love and appreciation for my first film. I remember the day the trailer released, Rakesh

Roshan sir was the first person to call and congratulate me, he said I had a bright future ahead and that he was looking forward to seeing my film.

"That phone call was so special coming from someone who is a legend in our industry."

*Tadap* also stars Tara Sutaria, Kumud Mishra and Saurabh Shukla. It follows the story of a guy hopelessly in love, who turns vindictive along the course of the film after being abandoned.

Presented by Fox Star Studios, *Tadap* is produced by Sajid Nadiadwala and co-produced by Fox Star Studios. **IANS**



## Malayalam film Chavittu selected for Rotterdam film fest

Malayalam film *Chavittu*, directed by the Rahman Brothers, Shinos and Sajas, has officially been selected for the International Film Festival Rotterdam 2022, which opened Wednesday. Making the announcement on Instagram while releasing the film's first look Thursday, actor Siju Wilson said: "Extremely glad and happy to present the official first look of *Chavittu*, which has been officially selected for the International Film Festival Rotterdam 2022."

Wilson said *Chavittu*, produced by Sharafu, is the third movie from the Rahman Brothers after Kalippattakkaran and Vasanthi. It features performances by "brilliant artistes from the Little Earth School of Theatre," he added. The theatre school is based out of Malappuram in Kerala.

"Am honoured to have a small part in *Chavittu* by supporting the production with my dear friend Nevin Cheriaan," the actor added, congratulating the team. **IANS**

### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

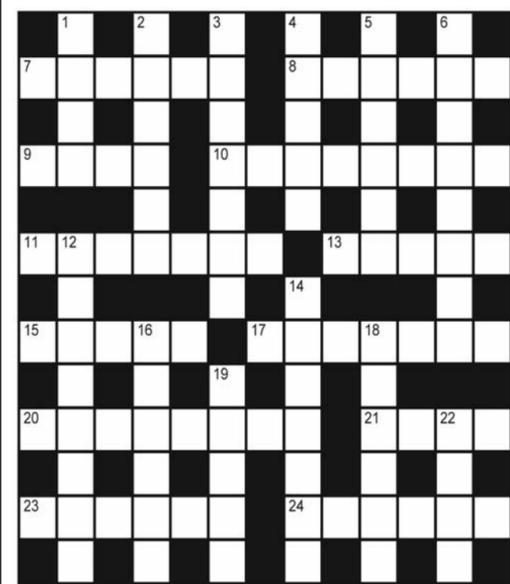


### BREVITY



### FUN post

### CROSSWORD

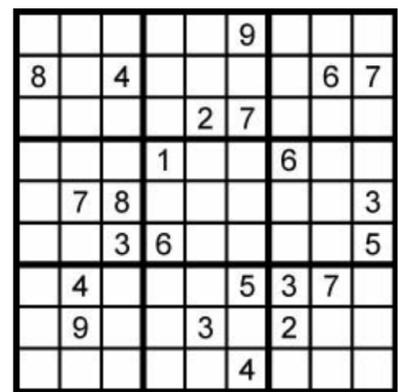


**Across**  
7 Hire  
8 Seed beetle  
9 Matures  
10 Thumbs-up  
11 Hacker's target  
12 Stressed  
13 Bellyache  
14 City on the Tigris  
15 Ill will  
16 Kind of switch  
17 Gorges  
18 Snub, in a way  
20 Pine away  
19 "Likewise"  
21 Silent assents  
22 Off one's trolley

**Down**  
1 Like a stuffed shirt  
2 Drink holders  
3 Habsburg or Ming, e.g.  
4 Steal  
5 Roadwork sign  
6 New York City, to some (3,5)

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS

#### CROSSWORD



#### SUDOKU



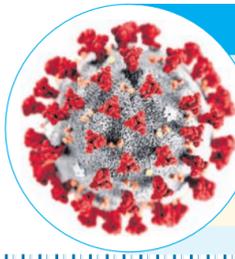
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



## FOREST FIRE

Several trees were gutted as a massive fire broke out at Balukhand sanctuary in Puri, Thursday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	36,41,64,844	28,80,42,531	56,48,004
India	4,03,71,500	3,76,77,328	4,91,700
Odisha	12,31,169	11,63,396	8,550

# The award will help develop local literature: Pratibha Ray

The Centre has announced Padma awards and this year, seven of them have landed in Odisha's kitty. The illustrious recipients of this year's Padma awards have enriched their respective fields with their stellar contributions. Orissa POST has caught up with these luminaries to know about their reactions to the national recognition.

**PRATIBHA RAY** (born Jan 21, 1943) is an academic and writer of Odia novels and stories. For her contribution to Indian literature, Ray received the Jnanpith Award in 2011. She was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 2022.



Pratibha Ray was born at Alabol, a remote village in Balikuda area of Jagatsinghpur. She was the first woman to win the Moortidevi Award in 1991. Her first novel Barsha Basanta Baishakha (1974) was a best seller. She started as a school teacher and later taught at various government colleges in Odisha for 30 years.

"This award is not given to me but to my work, literature, language and my state. About future of literature, she said this award will help the development of regional literature and its followers' passion. Books are turning into e-books which is a part of a changing society and we should present that in a positive way to the young generation and should motivate them to spread the regional language and literature," she said adding, dedication to literature is important to be successful in this field and youngsters must take it in serious way.

**PRAMOD BHAGAT** (born June 4, 1988) is an Indian professional para-badminton player from Vaishali district, Bihar. He is currently ranked world number one in para-badminton men's singles SL3, and won a Gold Medal at the 2020 Summer Paralympics in Men's singles SL3. Bhagat will be the first para-badminton athlete to receive the prestigious Padma Shri Award.

Pramod was born June 4, 1988 in Hajipur, Vaishali district, Bihar. He along with his family have settled down in Odisha. The state government has offered him Rs 6 crores and a Class I government job. He is one of six brothers and sisters. When he was five he developed polio, leading to a disability affecting his left leg. At 13, he went to watch a badminton match and was fascinated with the game. For the next two years, he was engulfed in the game with footwork, fitness, and fixture of the game. Pramod played his first tournament against normal category players when he was 15.

"It's truly a humbling experience to be honoured with the Padma Shri and will serve to inspire me to earn more laurels for my country," Bhagat, who is currently in Spain, said. "This will inspire me to strive harder and put in extra efforts in training and in Asian Games and World Championships scheduled for this year," he said adding, last year was great for me as I won an

olympic medal and Khel Ratna Award. This year begins with the Padma award.

**ADITYA PRASAD DASH:** Prof Dash has significantly contributed to research to fight malaria and other vector borne diseases (VBDs) by developing various tools/technologies/strategies in VBDs. As a field biologist, he worked amongst tribals in remote areas of Orissa and Bihar. He understood the real problems of rural India and this experience was a source of strength for him. It helped him evolve improved health policy at global, regional and national levels in later years. Prof Dash, who belongs to Odisha, had served as Director, Institute of Life Science, Bhubaneswar; Director, National Institute of Malaria Research, New Delhi; Director, Centre for Research in Medical Entomology, Madurai; Director, Desert Medicine Research Centre, Jodhpur; and President of National Academy of Vector Borne Disease. He was a distinguished scientist, chair and adviser of World Health Organisation, and President of Odisha Science Academy.

"Consciousness about public health has expanded in the world the course of the Covid-19 which is a good side of the pandemic. This award is a recognition of my hard work and my contributions to science. I will continue to work as VC of Asian Institute of Public Health (AIPH) university," he said.

**SHYAMAMANI DEVI (Pattnayak),** aka Koel (cuckoo) of Odisha, is considered the doyen of Odishi vocal music. Shyamamani wanted to chart the path of music despite stiff resistance from society. She was considered an out-cast among her family and relatives for pursuing music. But with the support from her father and uncle, the little girl mustered courage to continue singing. From being a child artiste with All India Radio in 1950 to receiving a DLitt from University of Culture in 2012, the artiste accomplished what most of her ilk would not think of. She was honoured by Presidents Rajendra Prasad and Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan.

Despite her training in both forms of music, the singer chose to stick to Odishi music which is still struggling to get a classical status. "In Odishi, the conjugal relationship between Radha-Krishna has been best described by Odia poets Banamali, Benudhar and Upendra Bhanja," she adds. The singer has received the Odisha Sangeet Natak Academy special award.

She said, "This award is a result of love of my fans and blessings of Lord Jagannath and my Gurus. Traditional form of music is still relevant and can't

be ignored and extinct. When I started my career, there was lot of resistance because at that time no woman was accepted to sing although my family had a musical tradition and always supported me." "Lord Jagannath has given me enough strength to sing Hs songs. I will continue to sing till my death," the stalwart signed off.

**NARASINGHA PRASAD GURU,** 89, from Balangir is a Koshali author, lyricist and lexicographer. He has been championing the language for decades. He has been awarded the Padma Shri in the field of literature and education. He has written at least 10 books in Koshali language and composed around 500 lyrical renditions broadcast by AIR. He teaches Odia and Koshali. "I had won many awards including Sahitya Academy award but I was not as excited as I am now with the Padma award. I have applied for this over last three years and finally got selected for this award. I think it's a little late but I am still happy and proud of the award," he said requesting the government to give more focus to Kosali language.

**BABA BALIA** devotes most of his time to spiritual discussions throughout the year at different places inside and outside the state. His interpretation of spiritual guidelines aims at awakening consciousness for a better family life as well as social co-existence. The organization organizes conferences at state and national levels. Srimad Baba's contribution and dedication to enrich the spiritual and moral values of human beings is beyond measure. Within last 30 years in thousands of meetings held in towns, cities, and the remotest rural areas of the states and important religious centers of other states Baba's spiritual discourses, his clear, sweet, meaningful words have brought a revolution in the field of religion.

"I never work for any recognition or any awards but for environmental safety, national safety, superstition eradication, respect for widows, among others and I will continue to work on this. The Padma award encourage us more and it will help us in our work," he said.

**GURUPRASAD MOHAPATRA:** Odia IAS officer Guruprasad Mohapatra has been conferred with the prestigious Padma Shri (posthumously). Mohapatra, a 1986-batch IAS officer of Gujarat cadre, died due to COVID-19 in June, 2021. He was working as the Secretary of Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under Ministry of Commerce and Industry. A native of Bhubaneswar, Mohapatra had a Masters in Political Science from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU).

# Gang targeting chemist shops busted

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 27:** The Commissionerate Police Thursday blew the lid off the series loots from chemist shops in the city here between January 20 and 24 this year with the arrest of four members of an interstate gang including its mastermind.

Addressing the media, twin city police commissioner Saumendra Priyadarshi said a special team led by ACP Sanjeev Satpathy has arrested Raju Singh, 43, Sankar Dey, 31, Suranjan Biswas, 35, and Deepak Biswas, 50, all residents of West Bengal. One Aadhaar card, two voter IDs, four cellphones and Rs 39,000 were recovered from their possession, Priyadarshi said.

The police commissioner said Raju, the gang's mastermind, had been working as a paintbrush worker in West Bengal. However, he was left jobless during the pandemic. Raju, along with Sankar, Suranjan



Accused performing a puja before going out on their mission. All four have been arrested

and Deepak, came to Berhampur from Howrah January 12.

"There (at Berhampur), they looted a cosmetic shop and a chemist shop. Later, the gang reached Bhubaneswar by bus January 17 and stayed at a lodge near the railway station. In the Capital city, they looted chemist shops under Badagada, Nayapalli, Lingaraj and Kharavela Nagar police limits January 20, 21, 22 and 24 respectively,"

said the top cop, adding "They were planning to carry out similar loots in Cuttack when we intercepted and arrested them."

About their modus operandi, Priyadarshi said the gang would target mostly chemist shops, divert the attention of the shopkeepers and commit the crime.

"One of the gang members would arrive at the chemist shop posing as a customer to, buy medicine. He would tender lesser amounts than the price of the medicine and flee the spot without paying the remaining amount. While the shopkeeper would chase him to get the remaining amount, another member of the gang would enter the shop and decamp with the cash from the cash-box," the police commissioner added. At least four similar cases are pending against Raju in West Bengal. While Raju used to deposit the looted money in his bank account, his associates received their shares from him," the top cop said.

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			Above 90% 65.6%

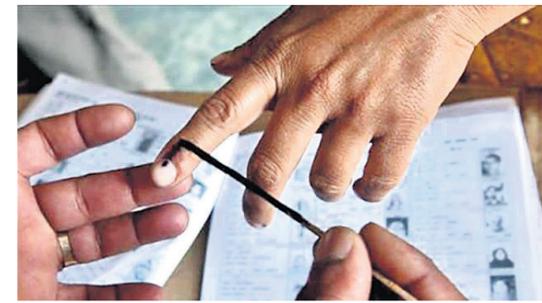
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# Ex-min, ex-MLAs, techie, BJP manifesto promises men SHGs doc contesting rural polls



AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 27:** A former state cabinet minister, two ex-legislators, a Canada-returned software engineer, a doctor, MBA students, former jawans and many others are in the fray for the three-tier panchayat election in Odisha. Former cabinet minister and three-time MLA Anjali Behera has filed her nomination paper for the post of panchayat samiti member's post from Giridharprasad Gram Panchayat under Hindol block of Dhenkanal district. She was elected to Odisha Assembly on a BJD ticket in 2000, 2004 and 2009 and become a cabinet minister of women and child development department from 2009 to 2012 before she was sacked from the ruling party. Behera joined BJP after she lost the 2014 Assembly elections as an Independent candidate. "My father Trinath Naik was a minister. Since I hail from a political family, my aim in life is to work for the people and not for any post. Contesting for panchayat samiti member is not bad. I may be elected as the chairperson of Hindol block," Behera said. A former MLA from Bhandaripokhari Assembly segment, Prafulla Jena has filed nomination for the Zilla Parishad member in Bhadrak district. "The party

**The three-tier panchayat polls in the state will be held in five phases from February 16 to 24**

has fielded me and as a disciplined soldier, I am contesting for the ZP post. I intend to further strengthen BJD in Bhadrak district," he said. Similarly, former MLA from Raghunathpalli Halu Mundari, is also trying his luck as a Zilla Parishad member candidate in Sundargarh district. The Cuttack district Zilla Parishad Chairperson Jyotirekh Nayak this time is not contesting for the ZP member but filed nomination for the Sarpanch post from Orasingha Gram Panchayat under Salipur block. "I want to develop my panchayat first and therefore preferred to contest for the Sarpanch post," she said. Ratikant Panda, a software engineer, who worked in Canada, has also filed his nomination paper as a Zilla Parishad member from Nabarangpur district as a BJD candidate. "I have earned money for self and family. Now, I want to give my service to the people of my district who need development in agriculture, health and education. I think, I can serve them better by using technology," Panda said. Another IT professional Santosh

Pradhan is contesting as a Congress candidate in Brahmagiri area in Puri district. "Getting a job is not difficult for me, but to make people self sufficient is a challenge which I want to take," he said. Lipika Majhi, a young dentist working in a private hospital in Bhubaneswar and daughter of former MLA Bhujabal Majo, has also filed her nomination as a ZP member from Papadahandi block in Nabarangpur district. "I have watched since childhood how my father serves people. Along with my profession, I can serve the people," Lipika said. Paramita Jena, a second year MBA student of Utkal University has also filed papers for ZP member in Balasore district on a BJP ticket. "I am impressed with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. So, I have decided to work for the people," she said. Duryodhan Mohanty (72), a soldier who participated in the 1971 war, and now a Sarpanch in Barunadia Gram Panchayat of Rajkanika block in Kendrapara district, has also filed nomination to try his luck for the third time. He was elected as the Sarpanch in 2007 and 2012 panchayat polls. "In 2002, I returned to the village after serving in the Indian Army for three decades to lead a peaceful life amidst idyllic rural surroundings... The local residents prevailed upon me to contest in the polls. With people reposing trust in me, I won two polls in a row to clean the system in a small way in my gram panchayat", Mohanty said. George William Lagoon, an ex-CRPF jawan has filed his nomination paper for the post of Sarpanch from Ulei gram panchayat in Sundergarh district. "People have trust on the jawans. I will upkeep the faith of the people on security personnel," he said. The three-tier panchayat polls in the state will be held in five phases from February 16 to February 24.

## POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 27:** The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Thursday released its manifesto ahead of the three-tier panchayat elections in the state. In the 22-point charter, the party promises to abolish the alleged PC (percentage) culture in the state. The BJP will not allow corrupt officials and leaders to extort bribes from beneficiaries under the PMAY and Swachh Bharat schemes, said the manifesto. The party also promises to create Men Self Help Groups (MSHGs) in line with Women Self Help Groups (WSHGs). Moreover, WSHGs will be empowered with vocational training to their members. At present, only five per cent of women in the WSHGs are given training, the manifesto stated. The party declares to end the contentious centralised token system for paddy procurement and will streamline the purchase by opening market yards at the panchayat level under the leadership of sarpanchs. State BJP president Samir Mohanty said his party will fight for a transparent paddy procurement system by ending the nexus between millers and middlemen. "The system to send tokens to farmers from Bhubaneswar is delaying the procurement process. This will stop," he said. Various farmer organizations



have been protesting the current system in which farmers can sell paddy only when they get centralized tokens generated at the state level and on pre-decided date and time allotted to them. The manifesto said the party will ensure that farmers are able to sell their harvest, do away with an upper limits fixed for each of them depending on their land holding size at the minimum support price. The BJP also promised to ensure that the cash incentives under PM KISAN reach the farmers. The party said though the Union government gives ₹6,000 per year in three instalments, a lion's share goes to middlemen owing allegiance to the ruling party in Odisha. The BJP said it is committed to strengthening panchayats as envisioned in the Constitution and ensure decentralized decision-making. Gram sabhas will be constituted to make village level development

plans with the help of sarpanchs and ward members. The ward members and sarpanchs will directly spend money given to the panchayats. The party will also ensure piped drinking water and LPG gas connection to each household. The BJP said apart from further strengthening the women self-help groups, considered a major vote bank of the BJD, the party would form men self-help groups and extend similar benefits. The BJP said it would ensure panchayat samitis work effectively without political and bureaucratic interference. It said the Zilla Parishads will be empowered to prepare and execute district level development plans. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) works which are currently done using machines will be stopped so that needy workers get jobs, it said.

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## Daily wager held for killing fellow labourer

**BHUBANESWAR:** The city late Wednesday night witnessed a ghastly murder in Infocity area. The commissionerate police Thursday arrested a daily wager for killing a fellow labourer over a petty argument at Patia under Infocity police limits here. The accused, Surendra Das, is from Ganjam. The deceased Anath Sethi also hails from Ganjam. The deceased and the accused who worked as daily wagers at a private engineering college stay in a house inside the campus of the college at Patia. Sethi and Das, in an inebriated condition, engaged in an argument over the closure of door of their room Wednesday night. Das, in a fit of rage, hit Sethi with a wooden plank rendering him serious. Sethi was rushed to a private medical where doctors referred him to SCB. Sethi Thursday afternoon succumbed to injuries. Police arrested Das by registering a case (15/22).

## Kanika king's kin killed by her son in Cuttack

### POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, Jan 27:** The granddaughter-in-law of erstwhile king of Kanika was killed by her son at Srivihar colony under Bidanasi police limits here Wednesday, police said. The deceased has been identified as Paresh Kumari Singhdeo. Accused Gopal Bhanjadeo has been arrested and produced in a local court, they added. "Gopal accused Paresh Kumari for his financial difficulties," said a police officer, adding the murder might have been due to that. According to police, Gopal ran a dispute with his wife and the couple has been staying separately for last many days. "Gopal had a dispute with his

mother over the ownership of their properties. He had earlier made an attempt to kill Paresh Kumari. A complaint in this regard had been filed with police. However, the police had then just issued a warning to Gopal and let him go," said a source. Gopal allegedly killed Paresh Kumari with a sharp weapon Wednesday morning. "Gopal's sister informed police about the incident. Soon, police rushed to the spot and arrested the accused," said Cuttack Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Prateek Singh. A scientific team has been engaged to assist in the investigation. The preliminary investigation has suggested that the accused killed his mother over a property dispute, added the DCP.

## Bankers held for ₹3.68cr fraud

### POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 27:** The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the state Crime Branch has arrested three persons including two officers of a nationalized bank who illegally extended a ₹3.5 crore loan to a private firm by fraudulently keeping on mortgage a customer's properties without his knowledge. The bankers arrested by EOW were identified as Birendra Pattanayak, former chief manager and Narendra Nayak, field officer of Punjab National Bank's (PNB's) Bapuji Nagar Branch here. The sleuths also nabbed a middle man identified as Prakash Kumar Behera. The EOW has initiated a probe after registering a case based on a complaint lodged by the victim, Prasant Kumar Mohapatra of Baliana. In 2017, Mohapatra contacted

### POST NEWS NETWORK

NPA in 2018 with the outstanding amount pegged at ₹3.68 crore. Mohapatra came to know about the fraud when he received a notice from the bank under the SARFAESI Act in November, 2018. "It was found that ₹1.5 crore from the sanctioned loan has been diverted to the account of the middleman Prakash Behera and ₹10 lakhs was diverted to the account of the complainant to make him believe that the amount is his loan amount. Again, several debit transactions were made from the account of Prakash Behera. Many incriminating documents have been seized during the search of the house of Prakash Behera," claimed a press note released by EOW. The accused had earlier sanctioned loan of ₹2.5 crores for KP Solutions against mortgage of forged land documents and by impersonating genuine mortgagors.

### POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, Jan 27:** The National Cadet Corps (NCC) has felicitated the next of kin (NoK) of as many as 20 martyrs from Army, Navy and Air Force from across the state on the occasion of Republic Day, an official said Thursday. As part of the Prime Minister's initiative to honour the martyrs, NCC has launched a nationwide campaign 'Shaheedon Ko Shat Naman' wherein 26,466 martyrs will be honoured between January 26 and August 15 this year, said a source. On the occasion, NCC officers, permanent instructor staff, associated officers and cadets paid floral tributes to the martyrs. 'Plaques of Gratitude' were presented to the NoK of martyrs at various locations. The martyrs included Udaynath Sethi (Cuttack), Chitranjan Nayak (Cuttack), Umakant Rout (Jagatsinghpur), Nrusingh Charan Rautaray (Cuttack), Banshidhar Pal (Cuttack), Rupak Nayak (Kendrapara), Bamadev Samal (Jajpur), Prakash Kumar Parida (Cuttack), Manoj Kumar Kar (Jajpur) and Suresh Chandra Parida (Cuttack).

## BGU scales new height in job placement

**BHUBANESWAR:** Amid the pandemic gloom, the Birla Global University here has successfully placed MBA students with an average CTC of ₹4.5 lakh, the highest being ₹22 lakh. Most of the students were placed in top-notch corporate like Tata AIG, Godrej Properties, ITC, SBI Life, Reliance Retail. The highlight of the placement was that the students bagged overseas jobs in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Qatar. Many of the under-graduate students of BAJMC, BBA and BCom were also recruited by US based company for their Indian arms. The students of Journalism & Mass Communication also got placed in top rated Media & PR houses with an average salary of ₹5.40 lakh. Birla Global University Vice-Chancellor PP Mathur has congratulated the students who got recruitment.

## I'm not trader, says Prasad on charge of 'secret deal' with BJD

### AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 27:** Senior Congress leader Prasad Harichandan publicly broke down Thursday and asserted that he is not a trader who strikes deals. He was responding to allegations by his critics within the party that he has struck a "secret deal" with the BJD for the upcoming panchayat elections. The allegation came after Congress failed to put up any candidate in six Zilla Parishad seats under the Satyabadi Assembly seat, which Harichandan represented for three terms. "I am not going to BJD or BJP. I am not a trader and I don't strike deals. I don't have to seal a deal with the ruling party for personal



gains. People who are spreading lies against me are the ones striking deals and I will expose them soon," the former home minister in the Giridhar Gamang cabinet said. "Ticket distribution is not my job. The OPCC president does it. The Congress should fight the BJD and

BJP in Satyabadi but unfortunately we are busy fighting in the constituency. We need to put up a united front," the former state Congress chief said. OPCC chief Niranjan Patnaik was not available for comment as he has been infected with COVID-19. Noting that he won't contest the 2024 general elections, Harichandan said, "I am not running away from politics. I will remain in the party and work for it." He said he will quit politics if the allegations against him are proved. Meanwhile, the State Election Commission said the Congress has fielded 886 candidates for the 852 ZP member posts, while the BJP has put up 848 nominees, and the ruling BJD has fielded the highest of 851 candidates.

## SAI International hosts e-UNWIND 2021 virtually

### POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 27:** SAI International hosted a never-seen-before virtual cultural fest, e-UNWIND 2021, recently over an immersive and lifelike virtual 3D venue. It was hosted and led by the Class XI & XII students of Humanities and Commerce. The e-UNWIND this year replicated the features of a physical event. However, it was attended from the comfort of the home. The e-UNWIND was declared open by Silpi Sahoo, Chairperson, SAI International Education Group, in the opening ceremony followed by graceful Odissi dance performance by ace Indian Odissi dancer Saswat Joshi. The event had 11,250 participants on its online platform in 6 tracks, enjoying learning from 24 workshops, activities

and competitions. Students from Nursery to Class XII of SAI International School, SAI Angan and SAI International Residential School participated in the Virtual Platform. The one-day mega fest was completely student-led. It encompassed not only a gamut of interesting activities but also some CSR initiatives. The 'SAIoneers' along with their parents showcased their musical and dancing skills on virtual platforms. The larger than life pictorial island 3D virtual platform encompassed Help Desk, Track Lobby, Main Auditorium, e-Booths, Agenda and the Gaming Deck on different parts of the island. The agenda gave an idea of various activities being held and students could accordingly plan a fun day on the island with friends and family.

## OSCW moved seeking action against Jual

**BHUBANESWAR:** A woman, who was allegedly misbehaved by former Union minister and BJP MP from Sundargarh, Jual Oram, Thursday filed a petition before the Odisha State Commission for Women (OSCW) seeking his arrest and suspension from the MP post. The petitioner, Gauri Mundari, said she called up Oram, who was scheduled to visit Rourkela January 24, to seek his support for the candidates in forthcoming Panchayat elections. However, Oram allegedly rebuked Mundari using filthy language over phone. OSCW chairperson, Minati Behera, said the commission has directed Rourkela SP to investigate the matter and submit a report within 15 days.

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# BSF's boat ambulance for Swabhiman Anchal



**Malkangiri, Jan 27:** The Border Security Force (BSF) has launched its boat ambulance service in Chitrakonda reservoir that would benefit the people of Swabhiman Anchal in Malkangiri district. BSF DIG Sanjay Kumar flagged off the much needed boat ambulance near Gurupriya Setu on the occasion of the Republic Day, Wednesday.

Since many villages in Swabhiman Anchal do not have road connectivity, patients in emergency fail to get medical care due to lack of ambulance service. The boat ambulance service of the BSF will come handy for 30,000 people of Jantri, Panasput, Andrapalli and Jodaamba panchayats in the erstwhile cut-off region. A special mobile number 9437162628 has been allotted for the boat ambulance service.

# Works dept techie jailed for graft

**Berhampur, Jan 27:** A special Vigilance court Thursday sentenced an assistant engineer (AE) to three years of imprisonment after convicting him in a disproportionate assets case. Judge Luna Mohanty also slapped a penalty of ₹20,000 on him. The court ruled default on payment of the penalty would invite six months of additional imprisonment. The convict was identified as Santosh Kumar Patra, an assistant engineer of the Works department in Mohana block of Gajapati district.

The judge passed the order after examining the statements of 23 witnesses, special public prosecutor Surendra Kumar Panda said. According to the case diary, the sleuths of Berhampur Vigilance department raided four places including the office and residence of Patra November 18, 2008 on charge of amassing assets beyond his known sources of income. During probe, he was found to be in possession of DA to the tune of ₹15, 14,945. The Vigilance had registered a case and arrested Patra before producing him in court.

# Road blocked over procurement woes

**Polsara, Jan 27:** Upset over non-lifting of paddy from mandis, farmers laid siege to the main road in Polsara of Ganjam district Thursday. Hundreds of farmers blocked the Buguda-Polsara road for hours at Laxmanpalli. The agitating farmers alleged that the secretary of the local cooperative society and a few millers have formed a nexus while paddy is being procured in the names of non-farmers. They also stated that 8kg of paddy is being deducted per quintal citing poor quality while some traders are taking advantage from tardy pace of paddy procurement. Police officials and tehsildar Dillip Nayak tried to placate the farmers. They assured that paddy will be bought within stipulated time as mentioned in the tokens. Civil supplies inspector Hemant Kumar Pradhan said that three SHGs and 16 cooperative societies have been tasked to procure paddy from farmers.

# SEXAGENARIAN RAPES MINOR IN JAJPUR, HELD

**Bijharpur, Jan 27:** A 60-year-old person was arrested Thursday for allegedly raping a minor girl in Bijharpur area of Jajpur district. Jajpur superintendent of police (SP) Rahul PR visited the Bijharpur police station and looked into the matter. According to the complaint, the minor girl was on her way back home after playing with her friends on the embankment of Kharasrota river in Sayadpur panchayat Wednesday when SK Besarat, a resident of Piramahal, lured the girl by offering her chocolate. He took her away on his motorcycle. When the girl did not return home, her family members started a search. On being asked, the victim's friends told the family about Besarat. As villagers reached Besarat's building, they heard the child sobbing. They saw that the doors were bolted from inside. They broke into the house, rescued the child and admitted her to the local CHC. She was shifted to district headquarters hospital after her condition worsened.

# Man, son injured in pre-poll violence

**Bhadrak:** Two persons were injured in an attack allegedly by ruling party workers at Nurupur village under Randia panchayat in Bhadrak district, Thursday. The injured were identified as Prafulla Baral and his son Abhijit Baral, both members of an outfit 'Randia Vikash Manch' and supporters of a political party. The incident sparked tension in the village with panchayat polls drawing closer. The incident occurred after the father-son duo protested against the alleged locking up of the community centre in the village by a person for long. This resulted in a face-off as the ruling party workers allegedly attacked the victims and rendered them hurt. Police registered a case and started an investigation after Baral lodged a complaint with Bhadrak rural police station.

# 5-year-old drowns in sewerage tank

**Jajpur:** In a tragic incident, a five-year-old boy drowned in an abandoned sewerage tank at Khandahata under Jajpur Road police station in this district, Thursday. The deceased was identified as Sai Prasad Barik, son of Kalandi Barik, a native of Bachhipur under Korei police limits in the district. Sources said the child had gone to his maternal uncle's house along with his mother when the mishap occurred.

# Ganjam DM orders probe into plastic rice

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Ganjam, Jan 27:** The Ganjam Collector Thursday directed the district civil supplies officer (CSO) to conduct a probe into the alleged distribution of plastic rice to ration card holders at Puintola and submit a report. District Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange issued the order after reports surfaced regarding alleged distribution of plastic rice to the beneficiaries under ward no-8 of the NAC area. Acting on the order, the CSO di-

rected the Ganjam block marketing inspector (MI), Santosh Das, to conduct a probe into the allegations within next two days and submit the report. Accordingly, MI Das visited Puintola Thursday and enquired about the plastic rice from the retailer. Das also collected the samples of the rice and sent them to the laboratory for examination. The alleged plastic rice is slightly bigger in shape than the normal rice and tastes like a rubber when chewed, some beneficiaries have



Samples of the alleged plastic rice, which is slightly bigger in shape, have been sent to the lab for examination

alleged. However, MI Das is of different opinion. He said that the alleged plastic rice might be enriched with vitamins which is being dis-

tributed in KBK districts. However, the truth will come out once the laboratory examination report is available to them. Notably, the Re 1-kg rice scheme has been launched for people living below poverty line (BPL) as well as scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, differently-abled and beneficiaries of the Antyodaya scheme in the state. However, distribution of sub standard rice to the beneficiaries has held up their health for which they have demanded the district Collector's intervention.



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  10. LT GEN KANWAL JEET SINGH DHILLON, UYSM, VSM, VSM, INFANTRY
  11. LT GEN SAVNEET SINGH, YSM, SM, VSM, INFANTRY
  12. LT GEN SANJIV RAI, AVSM, SM, VSM, INFANTRY
  13. LT GEN MANIK KUMAR DAS, SM\*\*, VSM, INFANTRY
  14. LT GEN SUKHDHEEP SANGWAN, AVSM, SM\*\*, INFANTRY (RETD)
  15. LT GEN JOY CHATTERJEE, VSM, ARMY MEDICAL CORPS (RETD)
  16. LT GEN MADHURI KANITKAR, AVSM, VSM, ARMY MEDICAL CORPS (RETD)
  17. LT GEN NANDA KISHORE SAHOO, VSM, ARMY DENTAL CORPS
  18. MAJ GEN SHAILJANAND JHA, VSM, ARMOURD CORPS (RETD)
  19. SUB NEERAJ CHOPRA, VSM, INFANTRY
- UTTAM YUDD SEVA MEDAL**
1. LT GEN DEVENDRA PRATAP PANDEY, AVSM, VSM, INFANTRY
  2. LT GEN RAVIN KHOSLA, AVSM, SM, VSM, INFANTRY
  3. LT GEN JOHNSON P MATHW, AVSM, VSM, INFANTRY
  4. LT GEN P GOPALAKRISHNA MENON, AVSM, INFANTRY
- ATI VISHISHT SEVA MEDAL**
1. LT GEN RAJENDRA KUMAR BANSIWAL, INTELLIGENCE CORPS
  2. LT GEN RAJ KUMAR SHARMA, ARTILLERY
  3. LT GEN PREM PRASHAD MALHOTRA, VSM, ENGINEERS
  4. LT GEN BASANT KUMAR REPSVAL, VSM, ARMY SERVICE CORPS
  5. LT GEN AJAI KUMAR SINGH, YSM, SM, VSM, INFANTRY
  6. LT GEN SURINDER SINGH MAHAL, VSM, ARMOURD CORPS
  7. LT GEN M UNNIKISHANAN NAIR, SM, SIGNALS
  8. LT GEN MANOJ KUMAR MAGO, YSM, SM\*\*, MECHANISED INFANTRY
  9. LT GEN MV SUCHINDRA KUMAR, YSM\*\*, VSM, INFANTRY
  10. LT GEN KARANBIR SINGH BRAR, ARMOURD CORPS
  11. LT GEN SUBRAMANIAN MOHAN, SM, VSM, AAD
  12. LT GEN DHIRAJ SETH, ARMOURD CORPS
  13. LT GEN REDDY VENKATESHA GA, SC, VSM, INFANTRY
  14. LT GEN DEVENDRA SHARMA, SM, ARMOURD CORPS
  15. MAJ GEN ARVIND BHATIA, INFANTRY (RETD)
  16. MAJ GEN U SURESH KUMAR, YSM, VSM, INFANTRY
  17. MAJ GEN NUDURUPATI DURGA PRASAD, VSM, MECHANISED INFANTRY (RETD)
  18. MAJ GEN HARIHARAN DHARMARAJAN, SM\*\*, VSM, ENGINEERS
  19. MAJ GEN ANIL KUMAR KASHID, VSM, ARTILLERY
  20. MAJ GEN SANJEEV KUMAR SENGAR, INFANTRY
  21. MAJ GEN VIVEK KASHYAP, VSM, ARMOURD CORPS
  22. MAJ GEN RAJEEV PURI, VSM, INFANTRY
  23. MAJ GEN GAJENDRA JOSHI, SM, INFANTRY
  24. MAJ GEN VM BHUVANA KRISHNAN, YSM, INFANTRY
  25. MAJ GEN GULJEET SINGH JAMWAL, SM\*\*, INFANTRY
  26. MAJ GEN RASHIM BALI, SM, VSM, INFANTRY
  27. MAJ GEN MANISH MOHAN ERY, SM, INFANTRY
  28. MAJ GEN PRAVEEN KUMAR AIRY, VSM, SM, INFANTRY
  29. MAJ GEN HARJEET SINGH SAHI, YSM, SM, INFANTRY
  30. MAJ GEN DHEERENDRA SINGH KUSHWAH, SM, INFANTRY
  31. MAJ GEN ASHOK KUMAR JINDAL, VSM, ARMY MEDICAL CORPS
  32. MAJ GEN R RAVIKUMAR, ARMY MEDICAL CORPS
  33. BRIG ARVINDER SINGH, ENGINEERS
- SHAURYA CHAKRA**
1. NB SUB SREEJITH M, SM, INFANTRY (POSTHUMOUS)
  2. HAV ANIL KUMAR TOMAR, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES (POSTHUMOUS)
  3. HAV KASHIRAY BAIMMANALI, ENGINEERS, RASHTRIYA RIFLES (POSTHUMOUS)
  4. HAV PINKU KUMAR, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES (POSTHUMOUS)
  5. SEP MARUPROLU JASWANTH KUMAR REDDY, INFANTRY (POSTHUMOUS)
  6. RFN RAKESH SHARMA, ASSAM RIFLES
- YUDD SEVA MEDAL**
1. MAJ GEN VIRESH PRATAP SINGH KAUSHIK, SM, INFANTRY
  2. MAJ GEN VIRENDRA VATS, SM, VSM, INFANTRY
  3. MAJ GEN VINOD TOM MATHW, INFANTRY
  4. MAJ GEN ROHIT SAWHNEY, INFANTRY
  5. BRIG KOLANKARA MOHAN NAIR, SM, INFANTRY
  6. BRIG HARDAMAN SINGH GILL, INFANTRY
  7. BRIG ROHIN BAWA, INFANTRY
  8. BRIG GURPAL SINGH, SM, INFANTRY
  9. COL SAKET BHARDWAJ, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
  10. COL PRADEEP DUGGAL, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
- BAR TO SENA MEDAL (GALLANTRY)**
1. MAJ BHARAT SINGH JHALA, SM, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
  2. MAJ JAGTAR JOHAL, SM, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
  3. HAV NASEER AHMAD MIR, SM, TERRITORIAL ARMY
- SENA MEDAL (GALLANTRY)**
1. LT COL HEMANT KUMAR SHARMA, ARMY AVIATION
  2. LT COL NEERAJ FRENCH, INTELLIGENCE CORPS
  3. LT COL SAHIL SHARMA, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
  4. LT COL VIJAY PRATAP SINGH, ARMY AVIATION
  5. LT COL VIKRANT SHARMA, ARMY AVIATION
  6. MAJ VIPIN KUMAR GAUR, INFANTRY
  7. MAJ JUSTIN JOSEPH, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
  8. MAJ AJAY DHANIK, ENGINEERS, ASSAM RIFLES
  9. MAJ HARVINDER SINGH, MECHANISED INFANTRY
  10. MAJ AZHAR MAJID, INFANTRY
  11. MAJ SAHIL KERNI, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
  12. MAJ ADITYA KUMAR, MECHANISED INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
  13. MAJ RAVI RAJAN, INFANTRY
  14. MAJ RAHUL SHARMA, ARTILLERY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
  15. MAJ HIMANSHU PAL, MECHANISED INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
  16. MAJ ANMOL CHOUDHARY, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
  17. MAJ AMBESH CHARAN, MECHANISED INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
  18. MAJ GURPREET SINGH SUDAN, ENGINEERS, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
  19. MAJ YOGEN SHARMA, SIGNALS, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
  20. MAJ NARENDER SINGH WALDIA, ENGINEERS, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
- BAR TO VISHISHT SEVA MEDAL**
1. BRIG AJAI SINGH NEGI, VSM, INFANTRY
  2. BRIG KIRANINDER SINGH BRAR, VSM, ARMY MEDICAL CORPS
  3. COL AVNEESH SINGH, INFANTRY
- VISHISHT SEVA MEDAL**
1. MAJ GEN KULBHUSHAN HANUMANT GAWAS, SIGNALS
  2. MAJ GEN ATHIMALAIPT VAIYANATHAN RAMESH, EME
  3. MAJ GEN NAVNEET SINGH SARNA, SM, ARTILLERY
  4. MAJ GEN HARSH CHIBBER, ARMY SERVICE CORPS
  5. MAJ GEN DINESH HOODA, INFANTRY
  6. MAJ GEN DAMODAR VASANTH MAHESH, ARMY POSTAL SERVICE
  7. BRIG AJAY BASANTKUMAR SIBAL, ENGINEERS (RETD)
  8. BRIG YOGESH CHAUDHARY, ARTILLERY
  9. BRIG BIMAL MONGA, ARTILLERY
  10. BRIG CHARNJIT SINGH MANN, ARMOURD CORPS
- MAJ HARVINDER SINGH, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- MAJ PRASHANT SHUKLA, ARMY SERVICE CORPS, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- MAJ RAHUL JEENDER, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- MAJ HARKIRATH SINGH, ARMOURD CORPS, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- CAPT ARCHIT SHARMA, MECHANISED INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- CAPT ROHIT P NAIR, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- CAPT ATUL DHANKAR, SIGNALS, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- CAPT ANIRUDH JOSHI, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- CAPT LAVANYA SHARMA, EME, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- SUB DHARMENDER SINGH, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- SUB JASBIR SINGH, INFANTRY**
- NB SUB KHEKUTO I SUMI, INTELLIGENCE CORPS**
- HAV MOHAMMED SALEEM ANKHOON, TERRITORIAL ARMY (POSTHUMOUS)**
- HAV SUKHA RAM, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- NK HARIOM, INFANTRY**
- NK AJAY KUMAR, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- NK KRISHAN KUMAR PAYALA, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- NK AJIT SINGH, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- NK RAKESH KUMAR, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- NK MUKESH SINGH, MECHANISED INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- NK RASHAL SINGH, MECHANISED INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- NK MANOHER LAL, MECHANISED INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- NK GAURAV YADAV, ARTILLERY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- NK NISHANT SHARMA, MECHANISED INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES (POSTHUMOUS)**
- NK JAGJEET SINGH, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- NK SURJIT SINGH, INFANTRY**
- NK DESHAMUKH NILESH MALHARRAV, INFANTRY**
- NK SANDEEP SINGH, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- L/NK VIKASH KUMAR, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- L/NK VARUN CHOUDHARY, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- L/NK REETESH SINGH, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- L/NK NEKEE RAM, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- L/NK PYARE LAL, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- SEP NADIM IQBAL SHAH, TERRITORIAL ARMY**
- SEP RAMDEV GURJAR, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- SEP JASWINDER SINGH, MECHANISED INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- SEP LALIT RANA, MECHANISED INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- GNR PARMBIR SINGH, ARTILLERY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- GNR KAUSENDER SINGH, ARTILLERY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- SEP GORLA SURENDRA, ARMOURD CORPS, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- SEP HARPREET SINGH, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- SEP MANISH, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- SEP AMARDEEP SINGH, INFANTRY (POSTHUMOUS)**
- GDR RAVI KUMAR, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- GDR VISHNU, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- SEP DUNDAGE ANNASAHAB NINGAPPA, INFANTRY**
- SEP DHARA SINGH GURJAR, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- SEP ABHISHEK SINGH, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- SEP KAMAL SINGH, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- SEP SONU KUMAR, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- SEP PUSHPENDRA SINGH, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- SEP MANDEEP KUMAR, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- SEP MAHIPAL, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- SEP KRISHAN, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- SEP SACHIAN, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- SEP RAVI KUMAR, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- SEP LAXMAN, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES (POSTHUMOUS)**
- SEP JITENDRA YADAV, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- SEP CHANDAN SINGH KANWAL, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- SEP AMARBIR SINGH, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- GNR NIDHEESH EN, ARTILLERY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES**
- SENA MEDAL (DISTINGUISHED)**
1. MAJ GEN SANDEEP SINGH, VSM, ARMOURD CORPS
  2. MAJ GEN SANJAY PURI, VSM, INFANTRY
  3. MAJ GEN VIJAY SINGH, VSM, ARMOURD CORPS
  4. MAJ GEN ALOK JOSHI, INFANTRY
  5. MAJ GEN SUNEET MALIK, SIGNALS
  6. MAJ GEN MANJEET SINGH, SIGNALS
  7. MAJ GEN AJEY SETHI, VSM, ARTILLERY
  8. MAJ GEN SANDEEP JAIN, INFANTRY
  9. MAJ GEN VIJAY BHASKARAN NAIR, INFANTRY
  10. MAJ GEN SUKRITI SINGH DAHYA, VSM, ENGINEERS
  11. MAJ GEN VIPUL SHINGHAL, ARMOURD CORPS
  12. MAJ GEN PUNIT MEHTA, ARTILLERY
  13. MAJ GEN RAJIV GADIHOKE, INFANTRY
  14. MAJ GEN SUDHIR KUMAR SHARMA, VSM, ARTILLERY
  15. MAJ GEN SANJIV SHARMA, SIGNALS
  16. MAJ GEN SANJAY HOODA, INFANTRY
  17. MAJ GEN HARJIT PAL SINGH HANSI, MECHANISED INFANTRY
  18. BRIG AKASHDEEP BHANOT, ARMOURD CORPS
  19. BRIG R PREM RAJ, VSM, MECHANISED INFANTRY
  20. BRIG SANDEEP S SHARDA, VSM, INFANTRY
  21. BRIG KRISHNAN MAHESH, INFANTRY
  22. BRIG MAHIPAL SINGH RATHORE, VSM, INFANTRY
  23. BRIG VIVEK SINGH THAKUR, INFANTRY
  24. BRIG SANJEEV DHAR, INFANTRY
  25. BRIG VIJAY MAHADEVAN, INFANTRY
  26. BRIG NANGARE PARAG KESHAVRAO, INFANTRY
  27. BRIG VIJAY KUMAR R JAGTA, INFANTRY
  28. BRIG HARBINDER SINGH BRAR, VSM, INFANTRY
  29. BRIG VIJAY CHAHAR, INFANTRY
  30. BRIG SANDEEP THAREJA, VSM, ARMY MEDICAL CORPS
  31. COL KAUSTUBH ULHAS KEKRE, INFANTRY
  32. COL NITIN THAPA, INFANTRY
  33. COL RANVEER SINGH JAMWAL, VSM\*\*, INFANTRY
  34. COL AMIT KUMAR DAS, INFANTRY
  35. COL NEERAJ MISHRA, INFANTRY
  36. COL ANADI SINGH, INFANTRY
  37. COL MOHIT PARASHAR, INFANTRY
  38. COL JAGDEEP SINGH, INFANTRY
  39. COL VIKAS MARWAH, ARMY MEDICAL CORPS
  40. MAJ AJAY KUMAR SINGH, INFANTRY
- BAR TO VISHISHT SEVA MEDAL**
1. BRIG AJAI SINGH NEGI, VSM, INFANTRY
  2. BRIG KIRANINDER SINGH BRAR, VSM, ARMY MEDICAL CORPS
  3. COL AVNEESH SINGH, INFANTRY
- VISHISHT SEVA MEDAL**
1. MAJ GEN KULBHUSHAN HANUMANT GAWAS, SIGNALS
  2. MAJ GEN ATHIMALAIPT VAIYANATHAN RAMESH, EME
  3. MAJ GEN NAVNEET SINGH SARNA, SM, ARTILLERY
  4. MAJ GEN HARSH CHIBBER, ARMY SERVICE CORPS
  5. MAJ GEN DINESH HOODA, INFANTRY
  6. MAJ GEN DAMODAR VASANTH MAHESH, ARMY POSTAL SERVICE
  7. BRIG AJAY BASANTKUMAR SIBAL, ENGINEERS (RETD)
  8. BRIG YOGESH CHAUDHARY, ARTILLERY
  9. BRIG BIMAL MONGA, ARTILLERY
  10. BRIG CHARNJIT SINGH MANN, ARMOURD CORPS
- BRIG MRK RAJESH PANICKER, INFANTRY**
- BRIG YOGESH KUMAR AHUJA, ENGINEERS**
- BRIG SUDHISH KUMAR JAINI, ARTILLERY**
- BRIG MANINDER SINGH, ARTILLERY**
- BRIG NAVIN VARMA, ARMY AIR DEFENCE**
- BRIG CHODISETTI SIVA SURYA PRAKASH, ENGINEERS**
- BRIG RAJEEV NAGYAL, SM, INFANTRY**
- BRIG ABHIJIT MITRA, SM, INFANTRY**
- BRIG AMIT NAUTYAL, SM, INFANTRY**
- BRIG HARSH VARDHAN SINGH, MECHANISED INFANTRY**
- BRIG KS GEORGE, JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL**
- BRIG KANWARJIT SINGH, ARMY MEDICAL CORPS**
- BRIG ATUL SETH, ARMY MEDICAL CORPS**
- BRIG VISHAL, ARMY MEDICAL CORPS**
- BRIG J MUTHUKRISHNAN, SM, ARMY MEDICAL CORPS**
- BRIG BK VARGHESE, ARMY MEDICAL CORPS**
- BRIG MOHINDER PANWAR, ARMY DENTAL CORPS**
- COL PK SEETARAM, ENGINEERS**
- COL KULDEEP MAGOTRA, ARMY SERVICE CORPS**
- COL ANAND SAHARAN, ENGINEERS**
- COL RAJESH BISHT, INFANTRY**
- COL SANGRAM SINGH KATOCH, ARMY ORDNANCE CORPS**
- COL RAKESH YADAV, MECHANISED INFANTRY**
- COL NITIN SEHGAL, ARMY SERVICE CORPS**
- COL NISHANT SHARMA, MECHANISED INFANTRY**
- COL DEEPAK SIDODIA, EME**
- COL KIRAN NARAYAN KULKARNI, INTELLIGENCE CORPS**
- COL SUMEET ABROL, SM, INFANTRY**
- COL ROHIT YADAV, INFANTRY**
- COL K SALIL KUMAR, INFANTRY**
- COL AJAY LONDHE, SM, INFANTRY**
- COL ANAND MANWAL, INFANTRY**
- COL VIKRAMJIT SINGH KAHLOON, ARMOURD CORPS**
- COL MANDEEP SINGH DHILLON, INFANTRY**
- COL VIVEK PASUPATHY, INFANTRY**
- COL VIKAS KUMARIA, EME**
- COL MANISH SEHGAL, INFANTRY**
- COL SAMINDER SINGH, MECHANISED INFANTRY**
- COL ABHIMANYU SHEKHAWAT, ARMOURD CORPS**
- COL MANISH KUMAR, ENGINEERS**
- COL AMIT KHANNA, ARMY ORDNANCE CORPS**
- COL SURENDER KUMAR, INFANTRY**
- COL PANKAJ RAWAT, INFANTRY**
- COL SANJEEV SINGH PAWAIYA, INFANTRY**
- COL PARTHASARATHY PATRI, INFANTRY**
- COL RAMACHANDRAN SRIKANT, SM, INFANTRY**
- COL DEEPAK JOSHI, ARTILLERY**
- COL TARUNENDRA PRATAP SINGH, INFANTRY**
- GNR KAMLESH KUMAR SINGH, INFANTRY**
- COL KAUSTUBH DHAGAT, INFANTRY**
- COL ABHISHEK CHAUHAN, INFANTRY**
- COL DIGAMBER SINGH NEGI, INFANTRY**
- COL KARAN SAGAR, SM, INFANTRY**
- COL JAGPREET SINGH MIDHA, INFANTRY**
- COL MANISH KUMAR, INFANTRY**
- COL VIKASH KUMAR, INFANTRY**
- COL SURESH PANDALANGHAT, ARMY MEDICAL CORPS**
- COL DRONACHARYA ROUTH, ARMY MEDICAL CORPS**
- LT COL ANEEL SAROTRA, INFANTRY**
- LT COL JADHAV MAHESH VAISHNU, ARMOURD CORPS**
- LT COL VISHAL SHARMA, ARMY AIR DEFENCE**
- LT COL MADAN CHAUDHARY, GENERAL SERVICE**
- LT COL MEHROTRA SHIKHA SUSHIL KUMAR, INTELLIGENCE CORPS**
- MAJ VIKAS MALIK, APTC**
- MENTION-IN-DESPATCHES**
1. COL DHARMENDRA YADAV, SM, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
  2. COL SAMEER BALWANT GUJAR, SM, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
  3. COL SOMEN PARIDA, ARTILLERY
  4. COL BHEEMAI AH P, SM\*\*, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
  5. COL RAJENDRA KUMAR, INFANTRY
  6. LT COL RAHUL JAIN, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
  7. MAJ ROHIT KUMAR UPRETI, ENGINEERS, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
  8. CAPT A ARIHARA SUDHAN, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
  9. CAPT HARI OM KUMAR, SM, INFANTRY
  10. SUB RAJENDRA SINGH, GRENADIERS, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
  11. HAV DHEER SINGH GURJAR, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
  12. HAV VEERENDRA KUMAR, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
  13. L/DR NAVAL BHASASHEB BHAOURAO, ARMOURD CORPS, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
  14. NK JASWANT SINGH, MECHANISED INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
  15. NK JITENDRA SINGH, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
  16. GNR KARAN SINGH PANWAR, ARTILLERY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
  17. SEP AJAY KUMAR, MECHANISED INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
  18. SEP ZAHMINGSANGA, INFANTRY, RASHTRIYA RIFLES
  19. COL ROHIT MUKHERJEE, MECHANISED INFANTRY
  20. COL VINOD KUMAR ADHIKARI, INFANTRY
  21. COL NITIN MITTAL, INFANTRY
  22. COL RAJEEV KATOCH, INFANTRY
  23. COL ARUPESH CHAKRABORTY, INFANTRY
  24. COL KUNAL RATHIE, INFANTRY
  25. COL JUNA GULERI, INFANTRY
  26. COL IQBAL SINGH, INFANTRY
  27. COL RAHUL MITTAL, INFANTRY
  28. COL AJAYPAL SINGH, INFANTRY
  29. COL GAURAV SETH, INFANTRY
  30. CAPT AMRIT KARKI, INFANTRY
  31. HAV SUDDHEESH KUMAR S, ENGINEERS (POSTHUMOUS)
  32. NK RAMARAO VANJARAPU, ENGINEERS (POSTHUMOUS)
  33. COL KUMAR ADARSH, INFANTRY, ASSAM RIFLES
  34. MAJ VAIBHAV JINDAL, ARMY AVIATION
  35. SUB RAM SHANKER, ENGINEERS (POSTHUMOUS)
  36. MAJ ANKIT THAKUR, ARTILLERY, ASSAM RIFLES
  37. MAJ SIDHARTH SINGH, ARMOURD, ASSAM RIFLES
  38. HAV SHIUJ VARGHESE, ASSAM RIFLES
  39. L/NK MUSHTAQ AHMED MANGRAL, ASSAM RIFLES
  40. COL AMIT BISHT, SM, INFANTRY
  41. COL SAKET RAWAT, MECHANISED INFANTRY
  42. COL NITESH KUMAR, INFANTRY
  43. LT COL RANBIR CHOUDHURY, INFANTRY
  44. MAJ DIGVIJAY THAKUR, INFANTRY



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FOCUS INDIA-RUSSIA TIES

# GEOPOLITICAL FLUX



In times of tectonic geopolitical shift in the broader Indo-Pacific region, India and Russia have one fundamental common interest; the desire to evolve a multi-polar world order

“If you ask anyone in India who is our country’s greatest friend, every person, every child knows that it is Russia.” These were the words of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to President Vladimir Putin during their maiden meeting at the BRICS Summit in Brazil in July 2014. It is no surprise then, that in December 2021, Putin broke precedence when he chose to visit India for the 21st Annual India-Russia Summit, and the inaugural round of 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue; he had earlier declined to leave Russia to attend the G-20 in Rome, followed by COP 26 in Glasgow citing the Covid pandemic.

The two nations indeed share a special and privileged strategic partnership. Since the mid-1950s, Soviet socialist democracy has assisted the Indian economy; be it military cooperation, food aid, steel plants, trade delegations, or agricultural expertise, to name a few. India has also not forgotten the Soviet ‘Treaty of Peace and Friendship’ in August 1971, which offset China’s plan to open a second front to support the ‘evil empire’ of Pakistan, when it started the Indo-Pak War in December 1971.

And then, the year 1991 shares the national memory of both India and the Russian Federation (RF); RF for the dissolution of USSR in December 1991, India, for its own glasnost (openness) moment, the balance of payments crisis followed by the liberalisation of the economy.

The RF has consistently supported India in its bid for a permanent seat at the UNSC, and membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). Both countries are also engaged in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) as also in groups such as BRICS and RIC (Russia India China). Russia is also sympathetic to the Indian cause of being a ‘victim of terror’ due to ‘policy of state sponsored terrorism’ from neighbouring Pakistan and has extended its support to India on abrogation of Article 370.

Some might argue that since

1991, successive Indian governments have cultivated closer ties with the United States. Nothing could be further from truth. While Indo-US strategic relations have significantly improved, especially after the historic 2006 Civil-Nuclear deal, this has happened alongside even stronger bilateral relations between India and Russia.

As in chess, where an ‘Indian Defence’ is a popular opening for those who find themselves playing black, India’s strategic options have continued to get complicated after the end of the Cold War. Much like the India of the Mahabharata era, the world in the 21st century is ‘multi-polar.’ New Delhi, then, has learnt much from the chess wizard Avon Nimzowitsch’s ‘Nimzo Indian Defence’ to create latitude for itself and foster stronger ties with Russia, while co-operating with the United States to foster a healthy balance of power relationship in Asia.

In September 2019, during his visit to Vladivostok, PM Modi unveiled India’s ‘Far East Policy’ while at the same time both sides signed an agreement to develop a Vladivostok-Chennai sea route. This is a win-win paradigm for both nations. While becoming India’s springboard in the East Asian market, this maritime corridor also provides Russia a much sought after ‘Pivot to Asia.’ A vi-

brant sea route between Chennai and Vladivostok will help upscale trade relations between the two nations. This will bolster bilateral maritime trade between India and Russia from the current \$11 billion to \$30 billion by 2025. For India, then, the VCMC corridor will demand what the American naval theorist Alfred Mahan said, “to secure commerce, by political measures, conducive to military, or naval, strength.” And then to secure their national interests, the Indian Navy and Russian Navy will require establishing an increased maritime presence in the disputed waters of Western Pacific Ocean. This in the long run will balance China’s rising maritime hegemony in Asia.

Russia was the first foreign country to engage in India’s nuclear power industry including the evolution to exercise and operate nuclear submarines. On the civilian nuclear co-operation, over 10 atomic plants are planned to be set-up in Kudankulam in Tamil Nadu. On the military side, the lease of Chakra SSN for two successive cycles of 10 years each, assistance in operationalising the nuclear triad onboard the SSBN Arihant, and continuing support for India’s indigenous SSN programme are good examples of long-term relationship between the two countries. While France and the

United States have emerged as prospective options to diversify India’s nuclear engagement, it seems that in the near future, Russia will continue to be our strongest ally in terms of transfer of nuclear technology.

Russia has been the most consistent and reliable partner for India’s security interest in the region. Around 60-70 per cent of India’s defence imports are from Russia. The ‘Indra’ (India and Russia) series of maritime exercises between Indian Navy and Russian Navy since 2003 has grown from strength to strength. In its latest edition, in July 2021, Navy’s frigate Tabar attended the 325th RuFN Day celebrations at St Petersburg by sailing across 8,000 nautical miles. The joint development of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile (to be developed under the aegis of ‘Make in India’) is yet another classic example of strengthening ties between the two nations. In addition, India’s only aircraft carrier, the Vikramaditya and its air wing, is the crown jewel testimony of vibrant India-Russian ties. Finally, as news is coming in (as recent as 14 Jan 2022) of Biden administration’s decision to waive CAATSA sanctions against India for buying Russian S-400 air defence system, it is yet another proof of an emerging multi-polar world order.

In times of tectonic geopolitical shift in the broader Indo-Pacific region, India and Russia have one fundamental common interest; the desire to evolve a multi-polar world order. This enduring interest will continue to drive close co-operation between the two largest nations in Eurasia. As natural allies, India must continue offering its resources and support to Russia; in return Russia provides the support of its power to India. The endeavour must be that while India and Russia are operating as individual instruments in an orchestra (with their distinct pieces of brilliance), both nations must obtain a wide-ranging set of ‘symphonies’ that will establish and sustain cooperation in areas of mutual national interests.

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THE MOTHER

## Green Nuclear Power

With its 2020 “taxonomy for sustainable activities,” the European Union found a way to use the European Central Bank to steer capital markets by directly subsidizing interest expenses for ‘green’ investment projects. Many European politicians, especially those from Green parties in German-speaking countries, have applauded this approach. But now, they are dismayed to find that the European Commission, under pressure from France, will classify nuclear power as a type of green energy.

Having emerged from the anti-nuclear movement, today’s European Greens never dreamed that this ostracised source of power would not only regain respectability but even be associated with their own brand. Their humiliation couldn’t be greater. But whether nuclear power is a form of green energy isn’t just a question of ideology. Huge sums of money are at stake, because the ECB will be offering banks particularly attractive refinancing conditions if they use EU-classified green bonds as collateral. The ECB also has made clear that it is more willing to buy up a disproportionate share of green bonds, thereby creating a new interest-rate structure within capital markets. Now that environmentally friendly investment goals are increasingly benefiting from lower interest rates, significant portions of Europeans’ savings – accumulated over generations – are being diverted from other parts of the economy into projects classified as green.

Viewed from the perspective of an economist, this is quite hair-raising. We are seeing a wholesale redirection of capital – the most important non-human factor of production in a market economy – and it is being done in a way that blatantly violates the principle of allocation neutrality, a key postulate of economic theory.

The economics of environmental externalities is straightforward. If the aim is to internalise negative externalities into the market – a worthy goal – it should be done through a direct pricing mechanism like a carbon tax or an emissions-trading system. By contrast, changing the interest rate – that is, the price of capital – merely invites a slew of costly allocation distortions, because capital, as a production factor in green enterprises, has only a very loose complementary relationship with avoiding environmental damage. Europe’s current approach therefore amounts to a scatter-shot policy.

The EU’s Maastricht Treaty does not give the ECB the authority to engage in economic and environmental policy; rather, monetary policymakers must secure an individual authorisation and an extension of their remit. Such an extension requires unanimous consent from all EU countries by means of an amendment to the Treaty. This barrier should have ensured that the principle of allocation neutrality was upheld. But, as so often happens, EU policymakers have come up with legal trickery to avoid a formal Treaty change. Putting aside the fundamental legal and economic concerns about the ECB’s manipulation of interest rates, the prospect of nuclear power receiving a green classification is a welcome development. It also makes perfect sense, considering that nuclear power plants don’t emit CO2. In terms of the broader climate agenda, Green politicians made a huge mistake when they demonised nuclear power, and the rest of the world has recognised this.

After all, the big shift away from nuclear power, and toward wind and solar, occurred only in Germany and a few other countries, following various accidents that received a great deal of media attention. New nuclear power plants are once again being planned and built throughout the world. Fifty-seven are currently under construction, 97 are planned, and 325 additional plants are being proposed. The first country that seriously considered abandoning nuclear power entirely was Sweden, following the 1979 Three Mile Island accident in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. But it has kept most of its nuclear power plants, and it has long since given up on an exit. Similarly, despite the 2011 Fukushima accident, Japan has once again fully embraced nuclear energy, following a safety review and modernisation of its power stations.

Even more promising, there is ongoing research into new types of nuclear power plants, including designs based on thorium and models that avoid the old nuclear-waste storage problem by using reprocessed fuel rods. These are inherently safer than the old power plants.

Viewed in this global, twenty-first-century context, Germany has become the wrong-way driver on the Autobahn. No wonder the Greens are internally divided. Most of them are still fuming, but some of the party’s more astute members are secretly happy that nuclear energy is available as a cheap, CO2-free alternative to fossil fuels. With its adjustable energy supply, nuclear power will be crucial for those periods when a protracted wind or solar lull threatens to bring electricity generation to a halt. Best of all, German Greens can save face by simply blaming the French.

The writer is Professor Emeritus of Economics at the University of Munich.

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WISDOM CORNER

- Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth. MUHAMMAD ALI
- Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see a shadow. HELEN KELLER
- Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning. ALBERT EINSTEIN

WORDSWORTH

**Rocket**  
In the spring following the Great Fire in 1666, Londoners were astonished to see a sudden eruption of a plant they called London rocket. It wasn’t the plant itself they thought remarkable – a close relative of the hedge mustard, rather more than a foot tall, with small yellow flowers – but the vast quantities of it that appeared, growing everywhere on burnt areas. (This was mirrored after the London blitz of 1941 by an unexpected flowering of the purple rosebay willowherb, another adventitious plant of waste places). You might think that the plant was called rocket because it shot up so quickly, but not so. The name is shared with a number of species of Sisymbrium found in various places throughout the world, all members of the cabbage family, many of which were (and still are) used as salad vegetables. The name came ultimately from the Latin *eruca*, which was applied to some member of the group, probably colewort (it has been suggested that it comes from *eructare*, “to belch”, the source of our word eructation, because of its sad propensity to generate wind). It got to us in its strangely garbled form via the Italian *ruca* (losing its initial letter), whose diminutive was *ruchetta*, which became the French *roquette* (still the name for the plant today), and so to English in its modern form sometime in the early sixteenth century. The Latin *eruca* has confused at least one writer, as it has two meanings; as well as a cruciferous plant it could also refer to a caterpillar. But the most familiar connotation today of the word rocket remains the device that rushes off with a bang and a flash, whether for fun, as a weapon, or as the device that hurls satellites into space.



Sumit Kumar Singh

**RUSSIA HAS BEEN THE MOST CONSISTENT AND RELIABLE PARTNER FOR INDIA’S SECURITY INTEREST IN THE REGION**



Hans-Werner Sinn

**With its adjustable energy supply, nuclear power will be crucial for those periods when a protracted wind or solar lull threatens to bring electricity generation to a halt**

SPECTRUM GREEN FINANCE

## Banks and the green leap forward



Stuart P.M. Mackintosh

**BANK REGULATORS SHOULD BE BOLD, AND HELP BANKS AND ECONOMIES MAKE THE GREEN LEAP BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE**

Many of us had hoped, perhaps naively, that global leaders gathering at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow last fall would significantly accelerate international and national efforts to slash greenhouse-gas emissions. It was not to be. Governments made some progress on methane emissions, deforestation, and the transition to electric vehicles. But other necessary action – above all, much more ambitious national pledges and plans – was postponed for another year.

The world cannot afford to waste any more time. On current trends, we have ten years before we exhaust our global carbon budget, reach interlinked points of no return, and crash through the 1.5° Celsius limit on global warming that governments and scientists warn is essential if our children and grandchildren are to have a livable future. So, what is to be done? As a top priority, regulators and central banks should charge banks the real price for their polluting fossil-fuel portfolios, thereby permanently shifting incentives in favour of financing the green transition.

As the International Energy Agency has made abundantly clear, the exploitation and development of new oil and gas fields must stop. The IEA also warns that the world cannot build any new coal-fired power plants if it is to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 and thus limit the increase in global temperature to a safe level. Tightening the capital requirements regarding the financing of fossil-fuel projects can help us meet this goal. Specifically, banks should be required to pay a “one-for-one” capital charge for any new fossil-fuel lending – as recently proposed by an international coalition of investors, academics, and civil-society groups. In addition, regulators should introduce a capital charge for existing fossil-fuel loans. This levy would depend on the nature of the activity being financed and would increase over time.

Changing banks’ investment incentives in this way would have immediate and rapid effects on their strategies and portfolios. In taking these simple but important steps, policymakers would align capital regulations with the growing international climate consensus among central banks, many of which now accept that their mandates contain an implicit requirement to act on climate change in order to help ensure financial stability. The Basel Committee on

Banking Supervision is currently considering how regulation should treat climate-change risks. These technocrats need to take the initiative and make climate polluters pay, thereby underscoring the absolute necessity of a halt to new fossil-fuel lending. When bank lobbyists claim that such a step would be too costly, the appropriate response is: “Compared to what?” The reinsurer Swiss Re, which has some of the world’s best climate modellers, estimates that one-fifth of all countries face possible ecosystem collapse because of biodiversity loss and forecasts that failure to act on climate change could cost as much as 18% of global GDP by 2050. The European economy could contract by 10.5%. This cost – the multi-trillion-dollar, hot-house reality of inaction and delay – is too great to bear.

In comparison, the problems of stranded assets and non-performing loans that will emerge as investors increasingly shun fossil fuels are far easier to manage. Most banks will be able to absorb these losses and reorient their loan books to speed the green transition. If some cannot make the shift because they are “all in” on fossil fuels, national regulators may need to establish “bad banks” to take

the literally toxic assets off their books and restructure them. They have intervened in similar ways before, and they can do so again.

Banks around the world can and should amplify and accelerate the green transition. Governments alone do not have the resources to pay for the shift to net zero. But governments and banking regulators, acting in concert, can change the incentive structures in the financial sector. That would help to redirect a huge flow of funds to necessary projects to ensure sufficient energy supplies to replace fossil fuels. Those new projects will boost productivity, foster growth, pull economies out of secular stagnation, and begin a decades-long industrial transformation to what I call Green Globalization 2.0.

Green globalization can bring about a more sustainable, resilient, equitable, and livable future, not only for humans but for all species on the planet. We know what is required. Bank regulators should be bold, and help banks and economies make the green leap before it is too late.

The writer is Executive Director of the Group of Thirty.

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## Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Promising the moon

Sir, Every major political party in India wants to win elections, and there is nothing wrong with it. In the process, they make one hell of a lot of promises to the people. Most of them are far-fetched, unrealistic and outright ridiculous. But still the promises are unabashedly made because there are certain sections of the society that are gullible to tall promises though the clever can easily see through the assurances that are essentially meant to be broken once the election results are out. As long as there are sections of the people ready to be exploited there will be political parties that go the whole hog to give free ration, fixed amount of direct money transfer into women’s accounts, monthly cash to women, yearly fixed incentives running into lakhs, monthly remuneration to the jobless, free electricity upto certain units’ consumption, and so on. No party dithers from promising the moon to its electorate. Most of the parties promise free but are not forthcoming on the huge burden their ‘free promises’ will put on the exchequer if at all the promises are to be remotely met. Apparently, the Election Commission (EC) can do little to stem the rot. Its hands are full with the onerous responsibility of conducting the elections and enforcing the Model Code of Conduct. Who else can arrest the unsavoury practice? The courts, of course. The Supreme Court had lamented the ‘culture’, and said doling out freebies would disturb the level playing ground in an election even as it had said earlier that assuring freebies to the people does not amount to corruption.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Well-calibrated move

Sir, The Union government’s decision to confer the Padma Vibhushan, posthumously to former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister late Kalyan Singh and late General Bipin Rawat, who hailed from Uttarakhand and was India’s first Chief of Defence Staff, appears to be a well-calibrated move ahead of the Assembly elections. The government also announced the names of classical vocalist Prabha Atre and Gita Press founder Radheysham Khemka for the second-highest civilian award. Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad, actor Victor Banerjee, Microsoft CEO Satya Narayana Nadella, Alphabet CEO Sundararajan Pichai and Communist veteran Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee (who rejected the award) are among the 17 Padma Bhushan awardees. Neeraj Chopra, who bagged a gold medal in the Tokyo Olympics, was conferred with a Padma Shri and a PVSM award. Kudos! NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

# national

## of the day quote

In the last nearly eight years, a conscious effort has been made to provide equitable development and attention to every region of Jammu & Kashmir



JITENDRA SINGH | UNION MINISTER

There has been a huge uproar in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar over UPTNT and now over Railways' RRB-NTPC results, this is a proof of the failure of the governments



MAYAWATI | BSP CHIEF

The current pace and scale of climate finance and technology support from developed countries are not matching the global aspiration to combat climate change



BHUPENDER YADAV | UNION ENVIRONMENT MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### Maoists trigger blast on rly tracks

**Giridih/Dhanbad/Latehar:** In two separate attacks, suspected Maoists triggered a blast on the railway tracks in Jharkhand's Giridih district, damaging its fish plates, and also blew up a mobile tower in Hazaribag, the police said. The banned outfit had called for a 24-hour bandh in Jharkhand and Bihar to protest the arrest of its top leader Prashant Bose alias Kishan Da, who was carrying a bounty of Rs 1 crore on his head. Bose was the mastermind behind more than 100 incidents of attack and arson in Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra.

### Weekend curfew lifted in Delhi

**New Delhi:** The Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) Thursday ordered lifting of weekend curfew and the odd-even system of opening non-essential shops in the city, besides allowing restaurants, bars, cinema halls and multiplexes to reopen with 50 per cent capacity, given the improving Covid situation. These decisions were made at a DDMA meeting headed by Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal.

### 2 elephants die

**Rangia/Guwahati:** An elephant was killed and another was injured when a goods train knocked them near Palasbari in Kamrup district of Assam, prompting the Northeast Frontier Railway to conduct a "detailed enquiry", officials said Thursday.

### TN lifts curbs

**Chennai:** With Coronavirus cases on the decline, the Tamil Nadu government Thursday withdrew restrictions such as night curfew and Sunday lockdown while permitting schools to reopen February 1 for classes 1 to 12.

# Maha clears wine sales at supermarkets

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, Jan. 27:** In a significant decision, the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in Maharashtra Thursday permitted all supermarkets and walk-in stores to sell wine manufactured in the state as part of its new wine policy, officials said. The decision was taken by the state Cabinet presided over by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray - and it immediately attracted flak from the Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Interestingly, the move comes a week after neighbouring Madhya Pradesh permitted liquor sales at all its airports, select supermarkets in

# Early signs of plateau in Covid cases: Govt

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Jan 27:** Early indications of Covid cases plateauing have been reported in some places but the trend needs to be observed, the Union government said Thursday whilst noting that 400 districts have logged over 10 per cent positivity rate in the week ending January 26.

Stressing the need to continue with precautions to curb the surge in infections, it noted that Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan were recording a high number of Covid cases and positivity. Simultaneously, a decline in Covid cases and positivity rate have been observed in Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Odisha, Haryana and West Bengal, the government stated.

Addressing a press conference here, Lav Agarwal, the joint secretary in the Health Ministry, said, "Early indication of a plateau in cases are being reported in certain geographies. The trend needs to be observed and required precautions need to be continued."

"Top 10 states in terms of active cases contribute to more than 77 per cent of the total active cases in the country. Over 90 per cent of these active cases are under home isolation, indicating mild to moderate clinical severity," Agarwal said in a statement. At the press conference, a comparison of the key indices during the second and third surge of Covid infections in India was presented.

It showed that May 7 last year, at the peak of the second wave, 4,14,188 new cases and 3,679 deaths were reported.

As many as 17,40,446 tests were carried out on that day and the proportion of fully vaccinated people was approximately 3 per cent. On January 21 this year, 3,47,254 new cases and 435 deaths were reported. A total of 19,35,912 tests were reportedly carried out on the day and the proportion of fully vaccinated people was approximately 75 per cent. A clear trend in terms of fewer cases needing oxygen-sup-

## Covid curbs extended

**New Delhi:** The Union Home Ministry Thursday extended the existing Covid-19 containment measures till February 28 in view of the wave of infections, driven by the Omicron variant, still raging and 407 districts reporting a positivity rate of over 10 per cent. In a communication to all states and Union territories, Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla said active cases have increased to over 22 lakh even though a majority of the patients are recovering fast and a low percentage of cases are in hospitals.

ported beds or ICU beds is observed, Agarwal said. "The number of active cases and corresponding deaths are much lower during the present surge vis-a-vis the earlier surges," he said highlighting vaccination is providing support in terms of fewer cases, fewer hospitalizations and less severity of the cases being reported in the country.

Warning against any lax in observing Covid-appropriate behaviour, Agarwal said 400 districts reported over 10 per cent weekly Covid positivity while in 141 districts it was between five to 10 per cent in the week ending January 26.

About the prevalence of the Omicron variant of coronavirus in India, he said, 1,292 cases of the latest variant of concern were found on genome sequencing in December which rose to 9,672 in January. Agarwal said 11 states have over 50,000 active Covid cases, which include Karnataka, Maharashtra and Kerala with over 3 lakh active infections. About the vaccine coverage, the press conference was informed that 95 per cent of India's adults have been administered the first dose of Covid-19 vaccine while 74 per cent are fully vaccinated. Also, 97.03 lakh healthcare, front-line workers and comorbid people aged 60 and above have been given the precaution dose of Covid vaccine while 59 per cent of adolescents in the 15-18 year age group have received the first dose.



# India, central Asian countries pitch for boosting trade, connectivity

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 27:** India and leaders of five central Asian countries on Thursday announced setting up of a joint working group to boost connectivity to the region through the Chabahar port in Iran.

During the India-Central Asia Summit hosted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi with presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, the leaders emphasised that connectivity projects could be a force multiplier for trade and economic cooperation and contacts between countries and people.



The leaders also stressed on making concerted efforts to boost trade and investment in sectors such as medicine, healthcare, education, information technology, business process outsourcing, infrastructure, agriculture and agri-processing, energy, space industry, textiles, leather and footwear

As per 2011 Census, 31 per cent of the Indian population or about 380 million people live in urban areas. This is a six fold increase from mere 62 million in 1951

KT RAMA RAO | TELANGANA'S MINISTER FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT



## MATTER OF CONCERN

The Swadeshi Jagaran Manch Thursday said that the government should conduct a scientific study to find out the health impact of beedi consumption and keep it separate from other tobacco products while deciding taxation



## MILITARY TRADITION



Tri-services band perform during the full dress rehearsal for Beating the Retreat ceremony at Vijay Chowk in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

# CONG TO GO WITH CM FACE IN PUNJAB POLLS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jalandhar, Jan 27:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Thursday said the party will go into the Punjab Assembly polls with a CM face and the decision on it will be taken soon after consulting party workers.

Addressing a virtual rally in Jalandhar, Gandhi said Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi and state party president Navjot Singh Sidhu have assured him that whoever is chosen as the CM face, the other will support him.

Over the past several weeks, both Channi and Sidhu have indicated, directly or indirectly, keenness to be declared as the party's CM face. Differences in the party continued to simmer even after the ouster of Amarinder Singh as the CM and Channi's elevation to the post.

Earlier in the day, in a show of unity, Rahul Gandhi led party candidates to the Amritsar's Golden Temple, where they offered prayers and sat for a langar. Rahul at the rally said both Channi and Sidhu told him that the biggest question in Punjab is who will lead the Congress in the state.

"Media people call it the chief ministerial candidate," he said.



Over the past several weeks, both Channi and Sidhu have indicated, directly or indirectly, keenness to be declared as the party's CM face

"Normally, we do not do this, but if the Congress party, our workers and Punjab want this, then we will take a decision on the CM face for you," Gandhi said. The demand for declaring chief ministerial face will be met at the earliest, he said.

"We will take this decision after consulting our workers. And the person will take Punjab ahead and others will work as a team," he said. "Both Sidhu and Channi gave me an assurance that two people cannot lead and only one can lead. Both told me whoever leads, the other will put all his energy behind him," said Rahul Gandhi in a statement.

Earlier in his address, Sidhu said people want clarity who will implement the agenda and roadmap of the party, to which Channi later said he was never after any post and anyone whose name is announced, he will wholeheartedly back him.

# Breach of marriage promise is not cheating: K'taka HC

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bangalore, Jan 27:** The Karnataka High Court has said that a breach of promise of marriage by an individual can't be considered as a crime of cheating under the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

The individual was allegedly in love with a woman for eight years and then had married another woman breaking the marriage promise.

The court further quashed an FIR against the individual and his family members lodged on the charges of cheating after committing to marry the woman. The bench headed by Justice K. Natarajan has given the order while taking up the petition filed in this regard by Venkatesh, a resident of K.R. Pura in Bangalore. "It is stated that the petitioner has violated the promise of marriage. But, it can't be considered cheating if a marriage promise is violated. The aspect of breaking of marriage can't be included in the purview of Indian Penal Code 415," the bench noted. Criminal case could be filed when a marriage agreement is made with the intention of cheating. But, it has not been established in this case that the petitioner has broken the marriage promise for the purpose of cheating.

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Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of **Union Bank of India, Jagda Branch** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (Second) Act, 2002 (Act. No. 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice calling upon the Borrower/Guarantor in loan A/c mentioned below to repay the amount mentioned in the notice plus interest thereon within **60 days** from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Guarantor and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules. The Borrower/Guarantor in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the **Union Bank of India** for an amount mentioned below & interest thereon. **The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.**

JAGDA BRANCH / Name and Address of Borrower/Guarantor	Liabilities due as per Notice (in ₹)	Date of Demand Notice / Date of Possession	Description of Secured Asset
<b>Borrower: M/s. Rangoli Student Shops, Prop.: Mrs. Pravat Pradhan, W/o: Nityananda Pradhan, A/P.O.: Qrs. No.: A/259, Koel Nagar, Rourkela, Dist.: Sundargarh, PIN-769014 / Guarantor: Mr. Nityananda Pradhan, S/o: Khagali Charan Pradhan, A/P.O.: Qrs. No.: A/259, Koel Nagar, Rourkela, Dist.: Sundargarh, PIN-769014</b>	₹ 21,37,395.09 as on 31.03.2021 + Interest thereon	19.08.2021/ 25.01.2022	Equitable Mortgage of Land and Building House No.: A/259 situated at Khata No.: 176, Plot No.: 181 (P), Area: Ac.0.022Dec., Mouza: RTU-27 Koel Nagar, P.S.: Jhirpani, Rourkela in the name of <b>Smt. Pravat Pradhan</b> , Bounded by North: Plot No.: 181 (p) Road, South: Plot No.: 181 (p) property of Mr. Sahu, East: Plot No.: 181 (p) Property of Mr. Biswal, West: Plot No.: 181 (p) Property of Mr. Jena

**Place: Sambalpur, Date: 27.01.2022**  
Sd/- Authorised Officer, Union Bank of India



four major cities and also allowed issuing home bar licences to those earning Rs 1 crore or more annually. Briefing the media, Nationalist Congress Party Minister Nawab

Malik said that supermarkets with a minimum area of 1,000 sq ft or more shall be allowed to sell wine - as opposed to beers and other liquors - under the new policy enacted last year after the earlier 20-year-old policy lapsed.

Wine sales will be permitted through a shelf-in-shop in the supermarkets or walk-in stores, with a single cupboard measuring 2.25 cubic metres, kept locked and selling only sealed bottles of wine, with an annual specified licence fee of Rs 5,000 from such establishments.

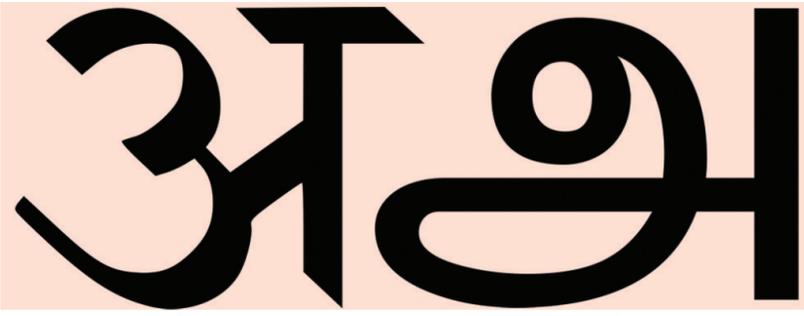
The state has around four-dozen wineries, most centred in Nashik district which accounts for 80 per

cent of the wine produced in India, besides small wineries in other districts like Ahmednagar, Sangli, Pune, Solapur and Buldhana.

The country's fledgling wine industry is worth around Rs 1,000 crore with Maharashtra, a pioneering state in this sector, contributing nearly two-third to the revenue.

BJP Leader of Opposition, Devendra Fadnavis, and others slammed the government move, terming it as the MVA's special love for the liquor industry, just like its decisions to lift the prohibition in Chandrapur, cut in excise duty on imported liquor from 300 per cent to 150 per cent etc.

# TN to Guv: Two-language policy no setback, clear NEET exemption Bill



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chennai, Jan 27:** Insisting that the dual language policy of Tamil and English being followed in Tamil Nadu is not a setback to students' eligibility or in their opportunities, the government Thursday rejected the idea of enforcing a three-language policy in the state and sought the Governor to expeditiously forward the NEET exemption bill for Presidential assent.

Reacting to Governor R N Ravi's remarks during his 73rd Republic Day address to the people of Tamil Nadu, pertaining to exposing state's school students to an opportunity to learn other Indian languages, Minister for Tamil Official Language and Culture & Industries Thangam Thennarasu said those aware of the history of agitations against the language in Tamil Nadu would understand that "other Indian languages" would only mean the Centre's agenda of thrusting Hindi.

"Such a remark implies advocating a three-language policy for Tamil Nadu," the Minister said and pointed out that since the days of late Chief Minister C N Annadurai (since 1967), the state has been following the two language policy of Tamil and English.

"I hope the Governor would understand that the two-language policy has not been a setback to our students in any way in their education or in opportunities for

**It is important that our school students learn other Indian languages like students in other states. Depriving our students of knowledge of other Indian languages is unfair to all. Besides fostering brotherliness and better mutual appreciation, a linguistic intellectual and cultural cross-pollination will enrich all of us and also open several opportunities for our harmonious growth**

**R N RAVI | GOVERNOR, TAMIL NADU**

**Such a remark implies advocating a three-language policy for Tamil Nadu. Since the days of late Chief Minister C N Annadurai (1967), the state has been following the two language policy of Tamil and English. I hope the Governor would understand that the two-language policy has not been a setback to our students in any way in their education or in opportunities for higher positions**

**THANGAM THENNARASU | MINISTER FOR TAMIL OFFICIAL LANGUAGE AND CULTURE & INDUSTRIES**

higher positions," Thennarasu said in a statement here.

In his speech, Ravi had stressed that it is important that school students of Tamil Nadu learn other Indian languages like students in other states. "Depriving our students of knowledge of other Indian languages is unfair to all. Besides fostering brotherliness and better mutual appreciation, a linguistic intellectual and cultural cross-pollination will enrich all of us and also open several opportunities for our harmonious growth," he had said.

The Governor had also said that prior to NEET, the share of government school students in admission to government medical colleges was hardly 1 percent. "Thanks to the affirmative action of 7.5 per cent reservation for government

school students, the number has improved significantly," he had said. Thennarasu however, claimed that the 7.5 percent quota for those who cleared NEET could help them overcome the "NEET discrimination to some extent," and that the reservation was only "temporary".

He urged the Governor to forward the TN Assembly Bill seeking exemption for the state from NEET in medical admissions, to the President for his assent. "I hope the Governor would approve the Bill and stand by the state government in fulfilling the dreams of poor and rural students in pursuing medical education," the Minister said.

The opposition AIADMK too is on the same page with the ruling DMK with regard to dual language policy.

# CM flags off Seva Portal 2.0 to speed up services in AP

The Chief Minister also stated that the new updated portal has over 30 services of Revenue and Land Administration, 25 services of Municipal Administration, 6 services of Civil Supplies, 3 services of Rural Development and over 53 services of Energy departments

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Amaravati, Jan 27:** Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy Thursday launched AP Seva Portal 2.0, an improved version of the Citizen Service Portal, to provide better services to the people of his state. Speaking on the occasion, the



Chief Minister stated that all the officials, right from village/ward secretariats to higher authorities, will be using AP Seva Portal, a digitalised platform to provide citizen services in a transparent manner. The initiative will take governance much closer to people where even those in remote villages can also avail citizen services right from their doorstep, without running from pillar to post.

With the new service, members of the public can track the status

of their applications all by themselves without any hassle.

SMS alerts on the status of the application will also be sent to the applicants and the portal is also enabled with payment gateways to access paid services. All the applications can be approved online and the officials can also provide certificates and documents online with digital signature. Further, he said that the applicants can avail the services from any secretariat across the state.

The Chief Minister also stated that the new updated portal has over 30 services of Revenue and Land Administration, 25 services of Municipal Administration, 6 services of Civil Supplies, 3 services of Rural Development and over 53 services of Energy departments.

He recalled that village/ward secretariat services along with a volunteer system was brought to deliver governance to the village level, where almost 4 lakh people are part of the delivery mechanism and offering over 540 services directly to the people.

Since 6 January 2020, as many as 3.46 crore government services have been provided to the public through village/ward secretariats, he said.

Ministers Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy, Botsa Satyanarayana, chief secretary Sameer Sharma and other senior officials were present also present in the event.



Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin presenting Chief Minister's Trophy to T Pitchiah, Inspector of Police, Tiruppur South on Republic Day

PTI PHOTO

# Row over casino in AP refuses to die down

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Vijayawada, Jan 27:** The row over a casino allegedly organised during Sankranti at a property owned by an Andhra Pradesh minister is refusing to die down with main opposition TDP Thursday lodging a complaint with Governor Biswa Bhusan Harichandan with 'evidence'.

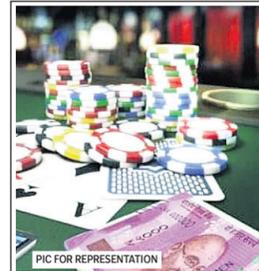
Video clips and photographs of illegal casino organised at K Convention in Gudivada, travel details of 13 women flying back to Goa, and representations made to the DGP Krishna district Collector and other officials were submitted to the Governor by a delegation of Telugu Desam Party (TDP) leaders.

The TDP, while submitting the flight details of 13 women, claimed that they were brought for dances during the casino and returned to Goa January 17.

The party handed over a letter by TDP chief and former Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu to the Governor, demanding sacking of Civil Supplies Minister Kodali Nani and a comprehensive probe into the illegal activity organised during Sankranti celebrations.

The main opposition party also brought to the notice of the Governor the alleged attack on a fact-finding team of TDP during its visit to Gudivada last week and the alleged high-handedness of police. Chandrababu Naidu also enclosed the report of the fact-finding committee with his five-page letter.

The TDP team was prevented from visiting the K Convention Centre January 21. The same day Minister Kodali Sri Venkateswara Rao (Nani) made a sensational statement that if it was proved that the casino was organised at a



PIC FOR REPRESENTATION

function hall owned by him, he would quit politics and commit self-immolation.

Kodali Nani, as the minister is popularly known, said like all other places, cockfight and gambling were held at Gudivada during Sankranti.

BJP state chief Somu Veerraju and other leaders were also detained by police on January 25 when they were on their way to Gudivada

The TDP fact finding team was prevented from visiting the K Convention Centre January 21

The same day Minister Kodali Sri Venkateswara Rao (Nani) made a sensational statement that if it was proved that the casino was organised at a function hall owned by him, he would quit politics and commit self-immolation

Kodali Nani, as the minister is popularly known, said like all other places, cockfight and gambling were held at Gudivada during Sankranti

following 'Chalo Gudivada' given by the party in protest against the illegal casino organised at the minister's function hall.

A row erupted over the casino after some videos went viral on social media January 16. Opposition TDP and BJP have slammed the YSRC government for bringing in casino culture into the state. The TDP President sought the

Governor's intervention to sack the minister to ensure an impartial probe. He demanded an inquiry through an appropriate agency into the episode of illegal casino.

He said the fact-finding committee's report clearly established that the minister was behind the conduct of casino. He alleged that the equipment for casino were procured illegally while all laws related to income tax and foreign exchange were violated.

Naidu also claimed that the illegal casino was organised from January 14 to 16. He alleged that in addition to the gambling and betting, indecent exposure of women and vulgar dance was also promoted at the casino.

"The casino is not only against the Telugu pride and culture but is in direct contravention to the culture and ethos of people of Andhra Pradesh," Naidu wrote.

# NIA takes over fake passport case; focus on ex-LTTE cadres

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chennai, Jan 27:** The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has registered a case and commenced an investigation after three Sri Lankan nationals were arrested with fake Indian passports. Two were arrested with fake Spanish passports while the third was arrested with a fake Spanish passport.

The arrests were made by the state police in October 2021 but the premier investigating agency took over the probe in January 2022 after registering a case under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), Passports Act, Foreigners Amendment Act, and relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code.

The elite 'Q' branch of the Tamil Nadu police had in October 2021 arrested a person, Letchumanan Mary Francis in Chennai, and another

Sri Lankan national was arrested at Madurai airport while he was boarding a Sri Lankan Airlines flight.

The Tamil Nadu 'Q' branch had also arrested another Sri Lankan national in the last week of October 2021 when he was trying to board a Sri Lankan airlines flight from Tiruchi airport with a fake Spanish passport. These arrests alerted NIA who have now registered a case and commenced an investigation.

A special team of officers of the NIA is investigating the case which will have international ramifications. The R&AW and the CIAs had given inputs of the now-defunct LTTE cadres trying to fan up Tamil nationalism with certain political parties supporting it.

The LTTE cadres and leaders spread across the globe are trying to liven up the organization to try and bring up a Tamil Eelam.

## ELECTRIFYING EV TREND

# More public charging stations on cards

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chennai, Jan 27:** Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Company (TANGEDCO) plans to set up more Public Charging Stations (PCS) across the state as the demand for Electric Vehicles is on the rise.

Currently, the PCS are present only in Metro stations and users of Electric Vehicles (EVs) are of the opinion that more PCS are required as long rides are impossible due to lack of charging stations across the highways.

TANGEDCO is planning to increase the tariff rates of the PCS and is preparing a new plan awaiting Tamil Nadu Electricity Regulatory Commission (TNERC)'s approval for finalising the tariff. At present, Metro terminals are charging Rs 10 per hour and a two-wheeler run on electric power can travel up to 30km on charging for one hour. The Union Government has already directed the states to set up PCS every 25km on both sides of the highway and the TANGEDCO has



already commenced work for setting up such facilities.

The Ministry of Power, Government of India has already communicated to state governments run power bodies like TANGEDCO to invite young entrepreneurs to run the PCS.

It may be noted that the Centre has already sanctioned 651 PCS for Tamil Nadu under the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles (FAME) scheme but till now not a single PC has

been built in the state other than those in the Metro stations.

Senior Engineers with the TANGEDCO are of the opinion that the department must set up PCS within substations in National highways as well as in city limits as there would be power fluctuations and to overcome this it is better to set up in substations.

With the Union Government supporting the state Power departments to set up PCS across the state to improve the Electric Vehicle

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**With the Union Government supporting the state Power departments to set up PCS across the state to improve the Electric Vehicle sales for increasing the Carbon footprint, it is up to TANGEDCO to immediately jump into the bandwagon and implement as many PCS as possible within Tamil Nadu**

sales for increasing the Carbon footprint, it is up to TANGEDCO to immediately jump into the bandwagon and implement as many PCS as possible within Tamil Nadu.

# Tenders floated for 500-acre mega sports city on Chennai outskirts

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chennai, Jan 27:** The Tamil Nadu State Industrial Development Corporation (TSIDC) has floated tenders for appointing consultants to conduct techno-economic feasibility studies for a new sports city in a 500-acre area in the outskirts of Chennai on the East Coast Road. The estimated project cost is Rs 700 crore.

The swanky sports city will have athletic tracks, cycle velodromes, an indoor hockey stadium, high-end gymnasiums, and all the modern amenities a sports city can boast of. The sports complex will be coming up at a place on the banks of Buckingham canal where the previous AIADMK government had planned a 3,000-acre administrative city.

Tamil Nadu Sports Minister V Meyyanathan told media that the sports city will be one of the bests of its kind in the country and at par with international standards. The minister said, "We have studied Pune's Shree Sivaji Chhatrapati Sports Complex as well as Netaji



PIC FOR REPRESENTATION

Subhas National Institute of Sports, Patiala. However, the Sports complex that is coming up in Chennai will be better than these facilities."

The Tamil Nadu sports department is keen on implementing the motto of 'Catch them Young'. The department will scout for raw talents in rural Tamil Nadu, train them from as young as 8 to 9 years and develop them into world-class athletes. The sports complex will provide them food, accommodation, and world-class training with internationally renowned coaches, fitness trainers, sports psychologists,

sports medicine experts available for the sportspersons at any time of the day round the clock.

The new sports complex will have stadiums for Persons with Disabilities to undergo training in addition to other 18 sports items.

While there are several stadiums in many parts of Tamil Nadu, the state was lacking an integrated sports training complex and the new facility will be an apt substitute for this. Interestingly, Tamil Nadu has doubled the number of athletes participating in the Olympics when compared to previous games.

# national

## of the day quote

We (Ministers) have discussed several issues including Covid situation, how to manage it in the days to come, representations given by various organisations (for relaxations), regarding the functioning of schools and colleges among others. We have referred it to the experts' committee

**BASAVARAJ BOMMAI** | KARNATAKA CM

There have been continually and serially extreme transgressions of constitutional prescriptions -- justifying NHRC observation that in the state there is law of the ruler, not rule of law

**JAGDEEP DHANKHAR** | WEST BENGAL GOVERNOR

Goonda raj will return to Uttar Pradesh if Samajwadi Party comes to power in the Assembly polls

**AMIT SHAH** | UNION HOME MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### Oppn UDF meets Kerala Governor

**Thiruvananthapuram:** A delegation of the opposition UDF Thursday met Governor Arif Mohammed Khan at the Raj Bhavan here and submitted a memorandum requesting him not to give assent to the proposed ordinance amending the state Lok Ayukta Act by the Left government in Kerala. The front leaders, led by Leader of Opposition in the state Assembly V D Satheesan, appraised him about the concerns regarding the amendment and pointed out the legal aspects against it. They also wanted the Governor to send the ordinance for the assent of the President of India even as the state Law Minister P Raveev made it clear later that the presidential scrutiny was not needed in this connection.

### 2 minors killed in building collapse

**Cuddalore(TN):** Two children in the age group of 8 to 13 years were killed in a building collapse near here Thursday, when a group of three boys were playing there, police said. The incident took place at Old Ramapuram village when the building, constructed for the welfare of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees but not in use now, collapsed. The roof and side wall of the building suddenly caved in, trapping the boys under the debris, killing two on the spot, police said.

### MP shivers

**Bhopal:** Parts of Madhya Pradesh Thursday remained under the grip of a severe cold wave as northerly winds blew into the state, a senior official of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said here. The lowest minimum temperature of 3.5 degrees Celsius was recorded in Raisen district. The IMD has issued orange alerts about severe cold waves or cold waves for the districts of Bhopal, Jabalpur, Rewa, Umaria, Chhindwara, Balaghat, Seoni, Chhattarpur, Sagar, Hoshangabad, Betul, Raisen, Sehore, Dhar, Khandwa, Khargone, Ratlam, Ujjain and Guna. Besides, yellow alerts of severe cold and cold days have been issued for the next two days.

### Naxals kill man

**Raipur:** Naxals allegedly stabbed a 32-year-old man to death suspecting him of being a police informer in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district, police said Thursday. The incident took place between Banda and Bater villages under Konta police station limits Wednesday evening, an official said.



The country always follows the principle of tolerance and secularism. We always believe in cultural nationalism and it is our constitutional commitment

**ABBAS NAQVI** | UNION MINISTER MUKHTAR

## Woman gangraped, paraded in street

OF THE 11 PEOPLE ALLEGEDLY INVOLVED, 7 ARE WOMEN AND FOUR MEN, INCLUDING JUVENILES



**DELHI SHOCKER**

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Jan 27:** A woman was allegedly abducted, gang-raped and paraded by her attackers on the streets of east Delhi's Kasturba Nagar with her hair chopped, face blackened and a shoe garland around her neck, police said Thursday. Of the 11 accused, nine people, including seven women from one family, have been nabbed. The incident, which once again highlights the vulnerability of women in the national capital and is described by police as provoked by personal enmity, took place on Wednesday afternoon, a few metres from a police booth that was closed since it was Republic Day.

Preliminary investigations indicate the woman and a boy belonging to the family of the accused were friends.

"The boy committed suicide in November last year and his family is now blaming the victim. They have alleged it was because of her that he took the extreme step. To extract revenge from her, they allegedly abducted her. They wanted to teach her a lesson," a senior police official said.

Those accused in police custody said during their interrogation they perpetrated the sexual assault and the subsequent public humiliation to defame the survivor, officials disclosed. The other

two accused have also been identified but are absconding. Twelve sections of the Indian Penal Code, including that of abduction and gang-rape have been added to the case, and the survivor's family provided police security, police said.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, East Delhi MP Gautam Gambhir and DCW chairperson Swati Maliwal were among those who condemned the brutal assault and the subsequent public humiliation and asked for strong action. Terming it really shameful, Kejriwal said in a Hindi post on Twitter, "How did the criminals get so much courage? I request the Union Home minister and the LG to direct police to take strict action and pay attention to the law and order situation. Delhiites won't tolerate such heinous crimes and criminals at any cost."

In her complaint to the police, the woman alleged she was abducted by her acquaintances who live near her mother's place.

They took her to their house where they allegedly assaulted her. Besides, they chopped her hair and forcefully made her wear a garland of slippers. They then humiliated her in public by parading her, an official said. Neighbours at Kasturba Nagar refused to share any details and said they were inside their homes or were out for work when the incident happened.

## Job-seekers burn train coaches

AGENCIES

**Lucknow, Jan 27:** Thousands of youngsters in India have burned down empty train coaches and blocked rail traffic this week in protest against what they call irregularities in recruitment by the mammoth railways department, one of the world's largest employers. Student associations have called for more protests this week mainly in the eastern state of Bihar, which has been reporting one of the highest jobless rates in the country. India's unemployment is estimated to have exceeded the global rate in five of the last six years.

The violence erupted Monday after test results for different job categories showed that the names of the same people appeared multiple times, which unsuccessful candidates felt wrongly excluded them. Millions of people had applied for some 150,000 jobs in Bihar and neighbouring Uttar Pradesh state,

## STRAY DOGS KILL WOMAN

In a shocking incident, a 30-year-old woman was fatally injured when she was attacked by a pack of stray dogs while returning home after collecting fodder for her cattle. The woman succumbed to injuries on way to hospital. The incident took place in Bijnaura village under Hasanpur police circle when the woman, Nathia, was bitten by dogs. She had deep wounds on her face, stomach and throat



FILE REUTERS PHOTO

they said. "The recruitment process has not been transparent," said Ashutosh Singh, one of the protesters in Bihar, where coaches of a stationary train were set on fire on Wednesday in the district of Gaya. "A number of the selected candidates had their names in various categories, which is very unfair." The Ministry of Railways said

Wednesday a committee had been formed to look into the concerns of the candidates. It earlier said those found involved in the vandalism and destruction of public property could be barred from appearing for railways jobs apart from other legal action. India's railways employs more than 1.2 million people. In Bihar's capital Patna, authorities

ties have registered police complaints against some 400 unnamed people and six institutes involved in coaching students for railways and other jobs, senior official Chandrashekhar Singh told Reuters by phone. In Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state where local elections start next month, authorities suspended six police personnel for using "excessive force" against protesters in the city of Prayagraj.

Three civilians had also been arrested, senior police officer Ajay Kumar said by phone. The Congress student wing National Students' Union of India (NSUI) Thursday organised a protest march in support of the agitating students in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and burnt the effigy of Union Rail Minister Ashwini Vaishnav. The police tried to stop the protesters from marching to the Rail Bhawan, and were detained and taken to the Mandir Marg Police station.

## CLEANLINESS DRIVE



United Way Mumbai volunteers during a cleanliness drive at Mahim beach in Mumbai

PTI PHOTO

## Spurious liquor kills 6 in Buxar

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Patna, Jan 27:** Six persons died and four others were seriously ill after they consumed poisonous liquor in Buxar, sources said Thursday.

The incident was reported from Ansari village under Murar block in the district Wednesday. According to the families of the deceased, the victims had consumed poisonous liquor Wednesday evening and their health started deteriorating around 10 p.m.

Some of them were rushed to private hospitals where they succumbed this morning. The deceased were identified as Sukhu Mushar (60), Shiv Mohan Yadav (55), Bhurug Singh (48), Minku Singh (35) Anand Kumar (30) and an unidentified person.

Bunty Singh, Munna Chaudhary, Sanjay Chaudhary and one more person are currently undergoing treatment in the private hospital. When contacted, an official of Murar police station said that the reason of deaths will be ascertained only after the post-mortem report.



According to the families of the deceased, the victims had consumed poisonous liquor Wednesday evening and their health started deteriorating around 10 pm

"We have sent the bodies to Sadar hospital for the post-mortem to find out actual reasons of death. The families of the deceased have claimed that they had consumed liquor on Republic day," the official said, requesting anonymity.

Earlier this month, 13 persons died and more than half-a-dozen people lost their eyesight in Choti Pahadi of Nalanda district January 15. As many as 18 persons lost their lives in Maker and Amnaur blocks of Saran district January 18.

## Firing along Assam-Arunachal border over road construction

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Itanagar/North Lakhimpur (Assam), Jan 27:** Tension flared up over road construction on a disputed stretch of Assam-Arunachal border at Gogamukh in Dhemaji district, after locals objected to a rural road being built by a contractor of the Arunachal state government, leading to violence, officials here said Thursday.

The incident took place at Hime Basti area under Assam's Gogamukh police station Wednesday evening, a senior official said.

"Local villagers from Assam obstructed the construction of the road by Arunachal government. When they went to the site to protest, the contractor involved with the construction fired one round in the air," he added.

The Arunachal Pradesh government is constructing a PMGSY road of 70 km length from Likabali to Durpai in the district using the services of a local contractor. Angry people from Assam forcibly stopped the work, damaged a few vehicles and set ablaze the temporary camp built for the road construction gang, the official said. "On being informed, a team



from Assam Police rushed to the spot. We are now dominating the area so that no untoward incident takes place," a police official said. Arunachal's Lower Siang District Superintendent of Police (SP) Kushal Pal Singh said "the issue (dispute) is an old one and Wednesday's evening incident was between a few locals with vested interests," adding, security measures have been intensified in the area and "The situation is normal. He said no government forces or organizations were involved in the incident.

The fracas over the border road takes place just two days after Assam and Arunachal

People opposed the road construction of the Arunachal state government, leading a contractor to fire in the air on a disputed Assam-Arunachal border at Gogamukh in Dhemaji district

Pradesh Monday decided to conduct a ground level survey on status of the inter-state boundary to resolve the vexed border row at a chief ministerial level meeting.

On January 24, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma held a meeting with his Arunachal Pradesh counterpart Pema Khandu to discuss the border issue. Assam and Arunachal Pradesh share an 804.1-km border in Udalguri, Sonitpur, Biswanath, Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Tinsukia, Dibrugarh and Charaideo districts. There are 1,200 points of disputes along the inter-state border between the two states.

## 246 militants surrender

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Guwahati, Jan 27:** A total of 246 militants from two outfits surrendered before Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma Thursday and deposited a large cache of arms and ammunition at a function held here.

Welcoming the surrendered extremists, Sarma said that his government has been focusing on peace and growth in the state and today's surrender would go a long way in putting Assam on the road to further development.

Officials said that 169 cadres of the United Gorkha Peoples Organisation (UGPO) and 77 members of the Tiwa Liberation Army (TLA) surrendered at a function held at the international auditorium of Srimanta Sankardev Kalashetra at Panjabari in Guwahati. According to a senior police officer, the surrendered cadres of UGPO, which was formed in 2007, belong to Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa, Biswanath, Bongaigaon, Kamrup (Rural), Tinsukia, Dhemaji,

Udalguri and Sonitpur districts.

The officer said that 77 TLA cadres belonging to Morigaon, Nagaon, West Karbi Anglong, Kamrup (Metro) and Karbi Anglong districts also surrendered en masse.

The TLA had started its violent activities in 2014 and was mainly active in Morigaon, Nagaon, West Karbi Anglong districts of Assam.

At the time of surrender, the militants together deposited 277 various types of sophisticated arms, several grenades and 720 rounds of ammunition.

During the function, one-time financial grant of ₹1.5 lakh each was distributed to the 462 ex-militants from five different outfits who had laid down their arms in 2020.

The five militant outfits - Rabha National Liberation Front, Adivasi Dragon Fighters, National Santhal Liberation Army, National Liberation Front of Bengalis and United People's Revolutionary Front - are currently not active in Assam after the surrender of most of their cadres.



ANS

## No leniency even in minor accidents: Apex court

THE COURT SAID DRUNKEN DRIVING AND PLAYING WITH THE LIFE OF OTHERS IS VERY SERIOUS MISCONDUCT

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Jan 27:** Refusing to show leniency to a driver, who was dismissed from service for driving under the influence of alcohol, the Supreme Court has observed that just because no major accident was reported cannot be a ground to show leniency in such cases.

"It was sheer good luck that the accident was not a fatal accident. It could have been a fatal accident," a bench of Justices M.R. Shah and

B.V. Nagarathna said while hearing the plea of petitioner, who caused the accident in an inebriated condition, seeking leniency on the grounds that it was a minor accident and challenging the Allahabad High Court order.

The court said drunken driving and playing with the life of others is very serious misconduct.

The employee Brijesh Chandra Dwivedi (since deceased) was a driver posted at the 12th Battalion, PAC at Uttar Pradesh's Fatehpur. While he was on duty driving a



DRUNKEN DRIVING

REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

truck carrying the PAC personnel from Fatehpur to Allahabad on Kumbh Mela duty, it suffered a motor accident with a jeep. He was charged with having caused the accident while driving under the influence of alcohol.

On completion of the departmental inquiry, the inquiry officer proposed punishment of dismissal, which was confirmed by the appellate authority.

Feeling aggrieved and dissatisfied with the award of punishment of dismissal, the employee filed a

writ petition before the Allahabad High Court, which dismissed his petition. Thereafter, he approached the apex court.

During the pendency of the proceedings before the top court, the employee died and thereafter his heirs were brought on record.

However, considering his 25 year long service and that he has since died, the court said that it finds that the punishment of dismissal can be said to be too harsh and may be treated as compulsory retirement.

# international



Russia should refrain from coercive force posturing, aggressive rhetoric and malign activities directed against allies and other nations. Russia should also withdraw its forces from Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova where they are deployed without these countries' consent  
JENS STOLTENBERG | SECRETARY-GENERAL, NATO

## ANCIENT DISCOVERY

Israeli archaeologists have discovered a lead amulet with ancient Hebrew script, dating back to about 3,300 years ago. The artifact was found on Mount Ebal in Samaria region in the northern West Bank Wednesday



## of the day quote

Our special relationship with the Afghan people and the guidance spelt out in UNSC Resolution 2593 would continue to guide India's approach to Afghanistan. We remain steadfast in our commitment towards humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan



TS TIRUMURTI | INDIA'S PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UN

The construction of the new capital city is not merely a physical move of government offices. The main goal is to build a smart new city, a new city that is competitive at the global level, to build a new locomotive for the transformation



JOKO WIDODO | PRESIDENT, INDONESIA

Launching a WTO case is not a step we take lightly. However, after repeated failed attempts to resolve the issue bilaterally, we see no other way forward than to request WTO dispute settlement consultations with China



VALDIS DOMBROVSKIS | EXECUTIVE VP, EUROPEAN COMMISSION

## SHORT TAKES

### Soldier kills five including civilian

**Kyiv:** A member of Ukraine's National Guard Thursday opened fire on his fellow soldiers, killing five people and wounding five more, Ukraine's Interior Ministry said. The serviceman was detained by police but his motives remain unclear. The incident occurred in the city of Dnipro, 500 kilometers (310 miles) southeast of Kyiv Thursday morning. The soldier, identified by the authorities as Artemiy Ryabchuk, 20, was on guard duty at a military factory and opened fire on his colleagues, fleeing the scene immediately after.

### Inmates fined over prison food fight

**Berlin:** Two female inmates at a German prison have been served a hefty fine for a brawl that began with a food fight. German news agency dpa reported Wednesday that the cellmates at a prison in Augsburg began throwing potato mash at each other following a disagreement. Then one woman threw her entire plate at the other, who responded in kind. The situation then escalated into a brawl in which both inmates were injured, dpa reported.

### Peru reports new oil spill off coast

**Lima:** Peru reported a new and 'relatively small' oil spill off the coast of Callao province, which was already affected by some 6,000 barrels of oil accidentally spilled at the La Pampilla refinery over a week ago, local authorities have said. The new spill, by the same refinery operated by Spanish energy company Repsol, occurred Tuesday in the district of Ventanilla, as work was being done prior to the removal of the Pipeline End Manifold, underwater distribution and collection equipment.

### UAE delivers 1mn Covid vax to Gaza

**Gaza:** The UAE has delivered 1 million Sputnik V vaccine doses to the Gaza Strip through the Rafah border crossing, an official said. "It is the largest shipment of vaccine doses that are shipped to the Gaza Strip which will help combat the current wave of Covid-19 that had significantly increased in the last couple of days," Gaza Health Ministry told reporters.

## Iran's state TV hacked

The hack represented a major breach of Iranian state television, long believed to be controlled and operated by members of the Islamic Republic's intelligence branches, particularly its hard-line Revolutionary Guard. Such an incident hasn't happened for years

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Dubai, Jan 27:** Channels of Iran's state television broadcast images Thursday showing the leaders of an exiled dissident group and a graphic demanding the country's supreme leader be killed, an incident that state TV later described as a hack. For several seconds, graphics flashed on screen showing the lead-

ers of the Mujahedeen-e-Khalq and the name of a social media account, which claimed to be a group of hackers who broadcast the message honouring the dissidents.

The MEK, now largely based in Albania, did not immediately answer telephone calls seeking comment. Iran's state TV acknowledged the breach as a "hack," saying the case was "under investigation".

A clip of the incident seen by the AP showed the faces of MEK leaders Massoud Rajavi and his wife, Maryam Rajavi, suddenly superimposed on the channel's regular 3 pm news programming. A man's voice chants, "Salute to Rajavi, death to (supreme leader) Khamenei."

Then, a speech from Rajavi briefly plays over the images. He can be heard saying, "Today, we still honor the time that we declared death to the reactionary. We stood by it ..."

Massoud Rajavi hasn't been seen publicly in nearly two decades and is presumed to have died. Maryam Rajavi now runs the MEK.

## RARE SNOW



Palestinians enjoy the snow next to the Dome of the Rock Mosque in the Al Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem Old city, Thursday  
PTI PHOTO

## Jerusalem, West bank shrouded in rare snow

Jerusalem was blanketed in white Thursday after a winter storm covered much of the region's higher altitudes with snow.

The holy city's iconic golden Dome of the Rock was dusted in snow. Main highways to Jerusalem and its major arteries were shut, and schools and businesses closed for the day as municipal snowplows worked to clear streets.

Israel Police also closed major highways in the mountainous West Bank due to the hazardous road conditions. Snowfall in the hills around Jerusalem is uncommon, occurring perhaps once per winter.

A winter storm has been battering the eastern Mediterranean, bringing heavy rains and wind to the Middle East. Istanbul and Athens were covered in snow earlier this week.

## UKRAINE STANDOFF

# Kremlin keeps door open as US rejects key demands

REUTERS

**Moscow, Jan 27:** Russia said Thursday it was clear the United States was not willing to address its main security concerns, but kept the door open for further dialogue in their standoff over Ukraine.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Moscow, which has built up its forces near Ukraine, would not rush to draw conclusions after Washington responded Wednesday to Russian proposals for a redrawing of post-Cold War security arrangements in Europe.

Describing tensions in Europe as reminiscent of the Cold War, Peskov said Moscow needed time to review the US written response but US and NATO statements that Russia's main demands were unacceptable did not leave much room for optimism.

The nuanced Kremlin reaction made clear that Russia was not rejecting the US and NATO responses out of hand or closing the door to diplomacy. The Russian foreign ministry said the best way to reduce tensions was for NATO to withdraw forces from eastern Europe, but also sought to quash fears of a looming invasion.

Though it denies planning to invade Ukraine, Russia says it wants



Moscow says US response ignores its main concerns 'Serious conversation' still possible on some topics  
Ukraine sees diplomacy continuing in next 2 weeks

to enforce red lines to protect its own security. It presented demands in December that NATO halt any further enlargement, bar Ukraine from ever joining and pull back forces and weaponry from eastern European countries that joined the alliance after the Cold War ended.

### DIPLOMATIC WINDOW

The written US and NATO responses were not made public, but both had already rejected those demands while expressing willingness to engage on other issues such as arms control, confidence-building measures and limits on the size and scope of military exercises. US Secretary

of State Antony Blinken said Washington remained committed to upholding NATO's open-door policy and NATO said it would not compromise its core principles.

Western countries have warned of economic sanctions on Russia if it invades Ukraine, building on measures imposed since 2014, when Moscow annexed Crimea and Russian-backed separatists began fighting government forces in eastern Ukraine. Ukrainian, Russian, German and French diplomats discussed the conflict in eastern Ukraine in Paris Wednesday and agreed more talks should be held in Berlin in two weeks.

# No one is allowed to raise funds for Jihad, says Pak HC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

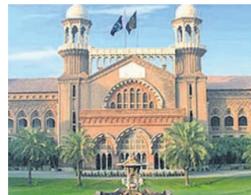
**Lahore, Jan 27:** Inciting public to raise funds for 'Jihad' (holy war) is not allowed to individuals or any organisation in Pakistan and is considered as treason, the Lahore High Court has ruled as it dismissed appeals of two terrorists convicted for raising funds for a proscribed terror outfit.

The court ruling came Wednesday on the appeals of Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) terrorists, Muhammad Ibrahim and Ubaidur Rehman, who were arrested in Sargodha, some 200-km from Lahore, and handed down five-year imprisonment each by an anti-terrorism court for terror financing early this month.

"Inciting public to raise funds for 'Jihad' is not allowed to individuals or any organisation in an Islamic state (Pakistan) as it is considered treason," a two-judge bench headed by Justice Ali Baqar Najafi said while dismissing the appeals.

"It is the job of the state to collect national funds for a declared war, if essential. The same cannot be raised by a person or any organization," it said.

The court said TTP is a defunct and proscribed organisation that has caused damage not only to the state institutions and targeted the



state high functionaries but also intensified the wave of terrorism in the country in the past, which would not have been possible without financial support.

Mumbai terror attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed of Jamaat-ud-Dawah (JuD) has also been convicted of 'terror financing' for several years and is serving his sentence at Lahore's Kot Lakhpat jail.

The 71-year-old radical cleric and a UN-designated terrorist, whom the US has placed a USD 10 million bounty on, has been convicted for 36 years of imprisonment in five terror financing cases.

His punishment is running concurrently. Saeed-led JuD is the front organisation for the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) which is responsible for carrying out the 2008 Mumbai attack that killed 166 people, including six Americans.

The JuD was also involved in raising funds from the people for 'Kashmir Jihad'.

## NK fires 2 missiles in sixth launch this month

REUTERS

**Seoul, Jan 27:** Nuclear-armed North Korea fired what appeared to be two short-range ballistic missiles Thursday, drawing condemnation from the United States for what would be the sixth round of missile tests this month.

The series of tests is among the most missiles ever launched by North Korea in a month, analysts said, as it begins 2022 with a dizzying display of new and operational weapons.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said it had detected the launch of what it presumed were two ballistic missiles at about 8 am from near Hamhung, on the east coast



of North Korea. They travelled for about 190 km to an altitude of 20 km, JCS added.

North Korea said this month it would bolster its defences against the United States and consider resuming all temporarily-suspended activities, an apparent reference to

a self-imposed moratorium on tests of nuclear weapons and long-range missiles. The launch came after North Korea fired two cruise missiles into the sea off its east coast Tuesday, adding to the tension over its tests.

- SIXTH MISSILE TEST THIS MONTH BY NORTH KOREA
- THEY APPEAR TO BE SHORT-RANGE BALLISTIC MISSILES
- NORTH KOREA DEFENDS TESTS AS MEASURE FOR SELF-DEFENCE
- US CONDEMNS TEST AS THREAT, VIOLATION OF UN BAN

Earlier in the month, North Korea tested tactical guided missiles, two hypersonic missiles capable of high speed and manoeuvring after lift-off, and a railway-borne missile system.

The (Kim Jong Un) regime is developing an impressive diversity of offensive weapons despite limited resources and serious economic challenges, said Leif-Eric Easley, an international affairs professor at Ewha University in Seoul.

Certain tests aim to develop new capabilities, especially for evading missile defences, while other launches are intended to demonstrate the readiness and versatility of missile forces that North Korea has already deployed, he said.

## British, Aus ships deliver 'contactless' aid to Tonga

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Canberra, Jan 27:** British and Australian navy ships arrived in Tonga Wednesday and attempted to deliver aid without making contact with anybody ashore to avoid spreading the coronavirus in a nation which has never had an outbreak.

The danger of spreading the disease was underscored when nearly two dozen sailors aboard the Australian ship HMAS Adelaide were reported infected Tuesday, raising fears they could bring the coronavirus to the small Pacific archipelago

devastated by an undersea volcanic eruption and a tsunami January 15.

Since the pandemic began, Tonga has reported just a single case of COVID-19. It's one of the few countries in the world currently completely virus free. About 61% of Tongans are fully vaccinated, according to Our World in Data.

Meanwhile, the US announced it would provide an additional \$2.5 million in humanitarian assistance to Tonga through the US Agency for International Development. The aid was in addition to an initial pledge of \$100,000.

# SpaceX rocket junk will crash into moon in March: Experts

THE ROCKET WAS DEPLOYED IN 2015 TO PUT INTO ORBIT A NASA SATELLITE CALLED THE DEEP SPACE CLIMATE OBSERVATORY (DSCOVR)

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**Washington, Jan 27:** A chunk of a SpaceX rocket that blasted off seven years ago and was abandoned in space after completing its mission will crash into the Moon in March, experts say.

The rocket was deployed in 2015 to put into orbit a NASA satellite called the Deep Space Climate Observatory (DSCOVR).

Since then, the second stage of the rocket, or booster, has been floating in what mathematicians call a chaotic orbit, astronomer Bill

Gray told AFP Wednesday.

It was Gray who calculated the space junk's new collision course with the Moon. The booster passed quite close to the Moon in January in a rendezvous that altered its orbit, said Gray. He is behind Project Pluto, software that allows for calculating the trajectory of asteroids and other objects in space and is used in NASA-financed space observation programs.

A week after the rocket stage whizzed close to the Moon, Gray observed it again and concluded it would crash into the Moon's dark side



March 4 at more than 9,000 kilometers per hour: Gray appealed to the amateur astronomer community to join him in observing the booster; and his conclusion was confirmed.



The exact time and spot of impact may change slightly from his forecast but there is widespread agreement that there will be a collision on the Moon that day.

"I've been tracking junk of this sort for about 15 years. And this is the first unintentional lunar impact that we've had," Gray told AFP.

**'Time to start regulating'**  
The impact of the SpaceX rocket chunk weighing four tons on the Moon will not be visible from Earth in real time. But it will leave a crater that scientists will be able to observe with spacecraft and satellites like NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter or India's Chandrayaan-2, and thus learn more about the geology of the Moon. Spacecraft have been intentionally crashed into the Moon be-

fore for scientific purposes, such as during the Apollo missions to test seismometers. But most rockets do not go so far from Earth. SpaceX brings its rocket boosters back through the Earth's atmosphere so they disintegrate over the ocean. The first stage is recovered and reused.

Gray said there could be more unintentional crashes into the Moon in the future as the US and Chinese space programs in particular leave more junk in orbit. It's actually no one's job to keep track of the junk that we leave out in deep earth orbit, he added. I think now's the time to start regulating it.

## of the day quote

We will come out with the green hydrogen policy in the next 10 days. We will give free transmission for 25 years

**RK SINGH** | POWER AND NEW & RENEWABLE ENERGY MINISTER

Accelerating growth is the objective of every Budget as it should be of this one. But this Budget should pay special attention to bridging the widened inequality in the economy

**D SUBBARAO** | FORMER RBI GOVERNOR

EV manufacturers have highlighted concerns around GST inverted structure and have requested reducing taxes on input costs

**TARUN MEHTA** | CO-FOUNDER AND CEO, ATHER ENERGY

## SHORT TAKES

### Sebi strengthens MF regulations

**New Delhi:** To further safeguard the interest of mutual fund (MF) investors, Sebi has made it mandatory for trustees of mutual funds to obtain the consent of unitholders when majority of trustees decide to wind up a scheme. MF trustees will be required to obtain the consent of the unitholders when the majority of the trustees decide to wind up a scheme or prematurely redeem the units of a close-ended scheme. The trustees will have to obtain consent of unitholders by simple majority of the unitholders present and voting on the basis of one vote per unit held and publish the results of voting within 45 days of the publication of notice of circumstances leading to winding up.

### Electronic goods exports up 49%

**New Delhi:** Electronic goods exports rose by 49 per cent to \$11 billion during April-December 2021 as against \$7.4 billion in the same period of the previous year, the commerce ministry said Thursday. Top five export destinations were the US, UAE, China, Netherlands and Germany, it added. Mobile phones constituted a major chunk of electronic goods shipments. Other sectors which recorded healthy growth included IT hardware, consumer electronics, industrial electronics, auto electronics, components, LED lighting and telecom equipment.

### Future to sell 25% stake in FGIICL

**New Delhi:** Debt-ridden Future Group has announced that it will sell its 25 per cent equity in Future Generali India Insurance Company Limited to its JV partner Generali for a cash consideration of ₹ 1,252.96 crore as part of its asset monetisation plans to pair debts. Besides, Generali has also acquired an option to buy out the Future Enterprises Limited's remaining interest in FGIICL, which operates in the general insurance business, said a late-night regulatory filing by the Future Group firm. FGIICL is a joint venture between Future Enterprises and Generali Participations Netherlands NV (Generali).

### BoAt files papers for ₹2,000cr IPO

**New Delhi:** Imagine Marketing, owner of consumer electronics brand BoAt, has filed a preliminary prospectus with Sebi to raise ₹2,000 crore through an initial public offering. The public issue consists of a fresh issue of equity shares, aggregating up to ₹900 crore and an offer for sale aggregating up to ₹1,100 crore.



**We are very sanguine about bringing the LIC IPO in early March**  
**TUHIN KANTA PANDEY** | TUHIN KANTA PANDEY

## AIRTEL AFRICA FORAYS INTO FTSE 100 INDEX

Bharti Airtel Thursday announced that its subsidiary Airtel Africa has been included in the FTSE 100 Index, which includes the top 100 companies on the London Stock exchange, with effect from January 31, 2022. The company had a market capitalisation of over \$7.5 billion as per closing price January 26, with an enterprise value of \$10.7 billion



# Air India back in Tatas' hangar

*While the homecoming of sorts of Air India will be a joyous moment for the 153-year-old conglomerate, it remains to be seen how would it map the future of its airlines business, considering the fact that the aviation industry crippled by the pandemic is yet to recover from the deadly blows*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 27:** Nearly seven decades after it lost control, Tata Thursday regained ownership of Air India and promised to turn the loss-making carrier into a world-class airline.

N Chandrasekaran, Chairman of Tata Sons, which in October last year beat a consortium led by rival SpiceJet promoter to win the bid for the national carrier, first called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi before heading to the Air India office where the takeover formalities were completed.

A new board of directors met, shortly thereafter, formalising the management takeover.

The government has retained debt of ₹15,300 crore in Air India and Air India Express Ltd (AIXL) while 100 per cent shares of Air India, AIXL and the national carrier's 50 per cent shareholding in AISATS have been transferred to Talace.

The finance ministry in a statement said the Air India strategic disinvestment transaction has been

completed Thursday with the government receiving a consideration of ₹2,700 crore from Talace Pvt Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Tata Sons.

In a tweet, Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey said the strategic disinvestment

transaction of Air India has concluded successfully with transfer of 100 per cent shares of Air India to Talace along with management control.

"A new board, led by the strategic partner, takes charge of Air India," Pandey said after completion of the handover process at the airline headquarters here.

The government has settled over ₹61,000 crore of Air India's legacy debt and other liabilities that were left in AIAHL - the company holding residual assets and liabilities of the airline - ahead of the transfer of the national carrier to the Tata Group, a top official said Thursday.

In a statement, the group said Chandrasekaran was joined by Chairman

**We are excited to have Air India back in the Tata Group and are committed to making this a world-class airline. I warmly welcome all the employees of Air India to our Group, and look forward to working together**

**N CHANDRASEKARAN** | CHAIRMAN, TATA SONS

**Air India will bloom under the wings of the new owners and the airline will pave the way for a thriving and robust civil aviation sector in India**

**JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA** | CIVIL AVIATION MINISTER



## 7-YEAR HIGH

# Oil nears \$90; petrol, diesel price constant



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 27:** With the forthcoming high stake assembly elections in states like Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, the freeze on petrol and diesel prices is now the longest ever even as international oil prices climbed to \$90 per barrel for the first time in seven years. Brent - the key global oil benchmark - soared to \$90.02 per barrel Thursday.

Analysts expected weaker Omicron impact to keep prices elevated. But domestic fuel prices - which are directly linked to international oil prices - have not been revised for 83 days now, beating the 82-day hiatus of 2020.

Petrol costs ₹95.41 a litre in Delhi and diesel is priced at ₹86.67 - the same as it did after accounting for the excise duty cut and a reduction in VAT rate by the Delhi government.

The basket of crude oil that India buys averaged \$88.23 per barrel January 26, according to Oil Ministry's Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell.

The Indian basket was at \$74.85 in October 2021, \$74.47 in the following month and \$75.34 in December, according to PPAC.

**RUSSIA, THE WORLD'S SECOND-LARGEST OIL PRODUCER, AND THE WEST HAVE BEEN AT LOGGERHEADS OVER UKRAINE, FANNING FEARS OF DISRUPTION OF ENERGY SUPPLIES TO EUROPE**

**US FED LIKELY TO TIGHTEN MONETARY POLICY IN MARCH AND PLANS TO END ITS BOND PURCHASES THAT MONTH IN ITS BATTLE TO TAME INFLATION**

Prior to tax reductions, petrol price had touched an all-time high of ₹110.04 a litre and diesel came for ₹98.42. These rates corresponded to Brent soaring to a peak of \$86.40 per barrel on October 26, 2021. Brent was \$82.74 November 5, 2021, before it started to fall and touched \$68.87 a barrel in December.

Prices, however, started to rise thereafter and Thursday soared to \$90 per barrel - the highest since 2014. Petrol and diesel prices have been frozen in the past before crucial elections but the current 83-day hiatus is the longest since daily fuel price revision was adopted in June 2017. Prior to this, there was a 82-day hiatus in rate revision between March 17, 2020 and June 6, 2020.

## BITCOIN CRASH

# 30K millionaires wiped in 90 days

THE DROP IN THE BITCOIN RICH LIST CORRELATES WITH THE ASSET'S VOLATILITY THAT HAS BEEN HEIGHTENED IN RECENT WEEKS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Jan 27:** Almost 30,000 Bitcoin millionaires have been wiped in the last three months as the volatile cryptocurrency is witnessing a free fall - from \$69,000 in November to nearly \$36,000 (as of Thursday) - owing to regulatory scrutiny and geopolitical unrest.

According to data acquired by financial news portal Finbold, between October and January, the number of Bitcoin addresses holding over \$1 million has reduced by 28,186 or 24.26 per cent.

In general, the Bitcoin-rich list has plunged over the last three months. "Wallets holding over \$100,000 have dropped 30.4 per cent from 505,711 to 353,763. The number of addresses with \$1 million and above dropped 23.5 per cent from 105,820 to 80,945. Wallets holding over \$10 million and above also registered a drop of 32.08 per cent from 10,319 to 7,008," the report mentioned.

"A combination of factors such as regulatory scrutiny, turbulent markets, geopolitical unrest, and Covid combined with having an



adverse effect on the asset's performance. However, despite the volatile start to the year, a number of analysts continue to laud the asset as a hedge against rising inflation," the report elaborated.

Due to the rapid decline in the value of Bitcoin since the start of the year, the number of liquidations has also increased in recent weeks, with \$372 million in long positions in the perpetual market across all exchanges

being liquidated in only one day, January 22.

Bitcoin, along with other digital cryptocurrencies, has crashed to its lowest levels and the continuing meltdown has wiped out over \$1 trillion from the global crypto market value.

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

## Essar JV to set up UK's largest H2 hub

REUTERS

**Chennai, Jan 27:** India's Essar Group said Thursday it has formed a joint venture with the United Kingdom's Progressive Energy to invest 1 billion pounds (\$1.34 billion) in building a hydrogen manufacturing unit at its Essar Stanlow refinery complex.

The joint venture, Vertex Hydrogen, will produce 1 gigawatt (GW) of hydrogen per year from two units from 2026, Essar said in a statement.

Essar, which owns 90% of the venture, said companies such as Tata Chemicals, Encirc, InterGen, Solvay, Ingevity, Novelis, Glass Futures and Saica Paper have already expressed interest in procuring hydrogen from Vertex.

The British government is targeting installation of 5 gigawatts (GW) of low-carbon hydrogen facilities by 2030 to reduce the share of natural gas in its energy mix.

The UK aims to replace up to a fifth of natural gas with "green" hydrogen, and use "blue" hydrogen, produced from natural gas and steam. Unlike green hydrogen, blue hydrogen is not emissions-free, but the carbon emissions are captured, stored and used in other applications.

## Tesla closes '21 on a high note



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**San Francisco, Jan 27:** Elon Musk has said that 2021 was a breakthrough year for Tesla and for electric vehicles in general, as the EV maker ended last year with \$5.5 billion in net income, compared to \$721 million in 2020.

Tesla produced 305,840 vehicles in the fourth quarter, a 70 per cent increase over the previous year.

For the full year 2021, the company delivered 936,172 vehicles, just short of the promised 1 million vehicles but still an increase of 87 per cent over the previous year.

Tesla said its first Model Y vehicles to be made at its new Austin, Texas factory were nearing completion.

"If we were to introduce new vehicles, our total vehicle output will decrease; we will not be introducing new vehicle models this year. It wouldn't make sense,"

**While we battled, as everyone did, with supply chain challenges through the year, we managed to grow our volumes by nearly 90 percent last year**

**ELON MUSK** | CEO, TESLA

said Musk. According to him, 2022 is the year "we will be looking at factory locations to see what makes the most sense with possibly some announcement by the end of this year".

Tesla also highlighted its controversial Full Self-Driving product as "a primary area of focus." "There are several profound improvements to the FSD stack that are coming in the next few months," he said.

# Asian markets slid to 15-month lows

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Jan 27:** Stock markets in Asia have tumbled to their lowest in nearly 15 months after America's central bank chief confirmed widely expected plans to increase interest rates this year, beginning in March, The Guardian reported.

Luigi Speranza, chief global economist at BNP Paribas Markets

360, now expects the Fed to raise interest rates six times this year, after last night's hawkish comments from Jerome Powell.

"We read Fed Chair Powell's comment that this cycle is different from the previous one as an indication that the Fed's bias is for a steeper tightening than the markets and we had envisaged. We have moved our call for this year to six 25bp hikes from four

**Equity benchmark Sensex tumbled 581 points Thursday, in tandem with a global selloff**

previously and now expect the fed funds target range at 2.25-2.50 per cent at end-2023, 25bp higher than we had previously forecast", The

Guardian reported.

Last month, the Fed's officials predicted they would increase rates three times in 2022, while the markets had been pricing in four increases.

"The Fed's gone from being the market's best friend, to a possible enemy," said Kyle Rodda, analyst at the online trading platform IG in Sydney, adding that the Fed was set on "bringing inflation down, rather than protecting asset prices".

# Nadella ranked No 1 among CEOs in Brand Finance list

THE TOP 10 OF THE BRAND FINANCE RANKING IS DOMINATED BY CEOs FROM THE TECH AND MEDIA SECTORS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New York, Jan 27:** The Brand Finance Brand Guardianship Index just in has ranked Microsoft boss, Satya Nadella, as the top CEO in the world.

Nadella, a first-generation Indian immigrant to the US, has been credited with overhauling Microsoft's fortunes by changing its culture towards one of teamwork, innovation, and inclusivity, and instilling a growth mindset throughout the business.

Three other Indian-origin expat

CEOs rank high Sundar Pichai of Google is at 5, Shantanu Narayan of Adobe at 6, and Puneet Renjen of Deloitte at 14.

N Chandrasekhar of the Tatas is at 25 in the list and Anand Mahindra of M&M and Mukesh Ambani of Reliance are at 41 and 42, respectively. State Bank of India's Dinesh Kumar Khara is at 46.

Tech boasts six of the top ten - Tim Cook is in second place, having overseen Apple become the first to hit a \$3 trillion market valuation.



Cook is followed by CEOs of household tech names Tencent's Huateng Ma at 4, Pichai at 5, and Netflix's Reed Hastings at 7. AMD CEO Lisa Su is a new entrant at 10. This makes her the highest-ranked female. She newly qualifies for the ranking as AMD has propelled into the Brand Finance Global 500 2022 after a 122 per cent brand value growth over the past year.

This is reflected in the ranking, as the rise in the number of tech brands has come hand in hand with a decrease in the number of

female CEOs in the top 100 - from eight in 2021 to five this year.

At a country level, the index mirrors the Brand Finance Global 500 2022 ranking, with the US and China leading the way.

Apple has retained the title of the world's most valuable brand following a 35 per cent increase to \$355.1 billion - the highest brand value ever recorded in the Brand Finance Global 500 ranking.

Tripling in brand value over the past year, TikTok is the world's fastest-growing brand. With 215 per cent growth, the app's brand

value has increased from \$18.7 billion in 2021 to \$59.0 billion. Claiming 18th spot among the world's top 500 most valuable brands, TikTok is the highest new entrant to the Brand Finance Global 500 2022 ranking.

Overall, media brands accounted for the top 3 fastest-growing brands in the ranking - with another social media app, Snapchat, brand value up 184 per cent to \$6.6 billion and South Korean internet brand Kakao, brand value up 161% to \$4.7 billion, following closely behind TikTok.

# BARTY ENDS DROUGHT

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Melbourne, Jan 27:** Ash Barty ended a long drought by reaching the Australian Open final with a 6-1, 6-3 win over unseeded Madison Keys. She still has one to go. Barty is the first Australian woman to reach the singles final of her home Grand Slam tournament since Wendy Turnbull in 1980. No Australian has won the title since Chris O'Neil in 1978. The top-ranked Barty conceded only 17 games on her way to the semifinals and continued her strong form by beating Keys, the 2017 US Open runner-up. Barty hit 20 winners to only eight for Keys. She converted four of her six break-point opportunities, and saved the only two break points she faced on her serve. In six

matches so far at the tournament, she has dropped one service game. Barty has won major titles on grass at Wimbledon and on clay at the French Open, and is one win away from adding another on a hard court. "It's unreal. Honestly, it's just incredible," Barty said in her on-court TV interview. "I love coming out here and playing in Australia. As an Aussie, we're exceptionally spoiled to get to play in our own back yard. Now we have a chance to play for a title. It's unreal."

Barty will next play Saturday against 2019 Australian Open semifinalist Danielle Collins, who thrashed 2020 French Open champion Iga Switek 6-4, 6-1 in the other semifinal on Rod Laver Arena. While Barty is potentially one win away from giving the host nation a title, there's a guaranteed win in another competition. Nick Kyrgios and Thanasi Kokkinakis, dubbed "Special K," ensured an all-Australian men's doubles final with 7-6(7-4), 6-4 win over third-

*World No.1 becomes the first from Australia to reach final of home Grand Slam since 1980. If she triumphs she will become the 1st Australian to win since Chris O'Neil in 1978*

seeded Marcel Granollers and Horacio Zeballos in a nearly full Rod Laver Arena. Fans were allowed into the main stadium with grounds passes during the day session and didn't need stadium tickets for the afternoon session. On a near-empty adjoining Margaret Court Arena, Matthew Ebden and Max Purcell beat the second-seeded team of Rajeev Ram and Joe Salisbury 6-3, 7-6(11-9). Also on Day 11, Dylan Alcott's farewell tournament ended with a loss in the wheelchair quad final to Sam Schroder of the Netherlands. Alcott was named Australian of the Year at celebrations for the national day and attended a ceremony in the capital of Canberra between his win in the semifinals and the final. Alcott retires with 15 Grand Slam titles in wheelchair quad. He completed an unprecedented Golden Slam last year, winning all four majors as well as the Tokyo Paralympics gold medal. After her win, Barty paid tribute to Alcott's career: "He's inspired a nation," said Barty, who watched the wheelchair quad final with her physiotherapist. "We were watching his match today (and) when he was saying his acceptance speech, we were crying. I couldn't be more proud of him."

# HOCKEY LEGEND CHARANJIT DIES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 27:** Captain of India's 1964 Tokyo Olympics gold medal-winning hockey team, Charanjit Singh, died on Thursday at his home in Una, Himachal Pradesh after suffering a cardiac arrest that followed prolonged age-related illnesses.

The former mid-fielder was 90 and would have turned a year older next month. He is survived by two sons and one daughter. Charanjit suffered a stroke five years back and was paralysed since then. "Dad was paralysed after suffering a stroke five years back. He used to walk with a stick but since the last couple of months, his health deteriorated and this morning he left us," his younger son VP Singh told this agency.

Besides captaining the Olympic gold-winning team in 1964, he was also a part of the silver-winning side in the 1960 edition of the Games. He was also a part of the 1962 Asian Games silver-winning team. "His last rites will be performed today (Thursday) after my sister reaches Una from Delhi," VP Singh said. His wife died 12 years ago. While his elder son is a doctor in Canada, his younger son was next to him when he breathed his last. His only daughter is married and based in New Delhi. The two-time Olympian was a part of India's glorious days. A charismatic halfback, Charanjit had led the Indian team to a historic gold medal in 1964 Tokyo Olympics, beating Pakistan in the final and also featured in the Indian team that won silver in the 1960 Games in Rome. He was one of the architects of India's stunning performance at the 1960 Olympics before an un-



fortunate injury forced him to sit out of the final against arch-rivals Pakistan, which they lost by a slender 0-1 margin. The 1960 disappointment still fresh in his mind, a Charanjit-led India turned the tables around four years later, defeating Pakistan by the same margin to clinch the gold medal. Hockey India condoled the death of Charanjit, saying that the country has lost a legend of the sport. "It is a sad day for the hockey fraternity. Even in his old age, he would light up every time there were conversations about hockey and he could accurately recall every great moment he was part of during India's golden days of hockey. "He was a legendary halfback who inspired an entire generation of players. He was a very cool-headed captain and he will forever be remembered for his incredible skills on the field and for his humility off the field," HI president Gyanendra Nigombam said.

# Swetapadma enters quarters

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Cuttack, Jan 27:** Odisha's rising star Swetapadma Panda, along with her partner Balkeshari Yadav came from a set down to beat the pair of Asith Surya and Pranjal Prabhuchimulkar 12-21, 21-13, 21-19 to seal a quarterfinal berth in the mixed doubles event of the ongoing BWF Odisha Open Super 100 badminton tournament at the Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Hall here, Thursday. The duo will face the pair of Rahul Kumar Shah and Rudrani Jaiswal for a place in the semifinals of the USD 75,000 event. Unseeded Mithun Manjunath stunned seventh seed June Wei Cheam of Malaysia in straight games to storm into the men singles quarterfinals. Manjunath took 40 minutes to outclass Cheam 21-11, 21-18. He will next face Priyanshu Rajawat. Third seeded Indian Subhankar Dey, who had beaten sixth seed Xiaodong Sheng of Canada Wednesday, also eased into the last eight with a 21-16, 21-14 win over compatriot Rahul Yadav Chittaboina. Kiran George also moved to the men's singles quarterfinal with an easy 21-12, 21-13 win over compatriot Chirag Sen. Subhankar will play George in the next round. Continuing her good run of form, young Indian shuttler Malvika Bansod got the better of compatriot and junior World No.1 Tasnim Mir in straight games to advance to the women's singles quarterfinals. Bansod took just over half an hour to dispatch 16-year-old Tasnim 21-13, 21-15 in the women's singles pre-quarterfinals of the BWF Super



100 tournament. The 20-year-old Bansod, who had lost to PV Sindhu in the final of the Syed Modi International last week before defeating her idol Saina Nehwal at the India Open earlier this month, will take on the winner of the clash between Tanya Hemant and Vijetha Harish. Fifth seed Ashmita Chaliha also booked a quarterfinal spot as she got the better of compatriot Anupama Upadhyay 21-17, 21-16. She will take on Rucha Sawant, who defeated Nikki Rapria to reach the final eight. Chaliha will face

Rhucha Sawant in the quarterfinals. Qualifier Unnati Hooda cruised past eighth seed Disha Gupta of USA 21-6, 21-9 in just 20 minutes to set up a quarterfinal clash against Samiya Imad Farooqui. In the mixed doubles event, the India pairing of Dhruv Rawat and Shikha Gautam lost 11-21, 14-21 to the Sri Lankan duo of Sachin Dias and Thilini Hendahewa in the second round, while Ayush Makhija and Deeksha Choudhar handed Chirag Arora and Nish Rapria a 21-5, 21-16 loss to move to the quarterfinals.

# AMIT, SHILANAND IN INDIA SQUAD FOR PRO LEAGUE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 27:** Star Odisha defender Amit Rohidas and young forward Shilanand Lakra have been included in the India squad, led by Manpreet Singh, for the double-leg FIH Pro League ties against South Africa and France to be played, February 8-13. Manpreet will be assisted by ace dragflicker Harmanpreet Singh. Young dragflicker Jugraj Singh and striker Abhishek are the two new faces in the squad. Jugraj, who is from Attari, came into the senior national camp for the very first time this time after he impressed the national selectors during the first Hockey India Senior Men Inter Department National Championship, where he turned up for Services Sports Control Board. Abhishek, on the other hand, is a striker who was earlier part of the junior program and had played for the India colts in Sultan of Johor Cup in 2017 and 2018. The 20-member squad also includes goalkeepers PR Sreejesh and Krishan Bahadur Pathak; defenders Harmanpreet Singh, Rohidas, Surender Kumar, Varun Kumar, Jarmanpreet Singh and Jugraj. The midfield will be under the watchful eyes of Manpreet and also includes Nilakanta Sharma, Hardik Singh, Jaskaran Singh, Shamsher Singh and Vivek Sagar Prasad. The forward line includes Mandeep Singh, Lalit Kumar Upadhyay, Akashdeep Singh, Shilanand, Dilpreet Singh and Abhishek.

# India eves look for podium finish



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Muscat, Jan 27:** Their title hopes already over, India would be desperate for at least a podium finish when they take on China in the third-fourth place play-off match of the women's Asia Cup hockey tournament here Friday. Lack of match practice due to the COVID-19 pandemic after a successful 2020, where they finished a historic fourth at the Tokyo Olympics, cost India dearly as they produced inconsistent performances in crucial matches to crash out of the title race. After thrashing lowly Malaysia 9-0 in their opener, India suffered a 0-2 defeat against Asian Games champions Japan before thrashing Singapore 9-1 to qualify for the semifinals. But in the semifinals, some sloppy defending and poor penalty corner conversions put paid to India's hopes as they were beaten

2-3 Korea, who set up a clash against Japan in the summit clash Friday. The Indians controlled the game in the first two quarters to go into half time with a slender 1-0 lead. But a determined Korea stunned the Indians in the 31st, 45th and 47th minutes before Lalremsiami reduced the margin just six minutes from the hooter but in the end it proved to be too late. After resolute defending in the first two quarters, the Indian defence led by skipper and goalkeeper Savita conceded three soft goals to hand over the match to Korea. And come Friday, the Savita-led Indian defence, which also includes the experienced duo of Gurjit Kaur and Deep Grace Ekka, will have to be on their toes to finish on the podium. While the Indian forwardline have enjoyed decent outings in the tournament so far with the likes of Vandana Katariya, Monika,

Navneet Kaur and Lalremsiami finding the net on more than one occasion, it is the lack of co-ordination between the midfield and backline that put paid to India's hopes. Penalty corner conversion is another key area where Indian need to improve by leaps and bounds. Barring a hat-trick against Singapore, seasoned drag-flicker Gurjit Kaur and her partner Ekka looked off-colour from set pieces throughout the tournament. Going by world rankings and recent head-to-head record, India definitely hold an edge over China in Friday's match. While India are placed 10th in the world rankings, China are ranked 13th. In their last three outings, India had defeated China twice - 3-1 in the Asian Champions Trophy in 2018 in Donghae, Korea and 1-0 win in the last Asian Games - before playing out a 0-0 draw in the Tokyo Olympic Test event in 2019.

# Odisha FC lose to Hyderabad

PNN & ISL

**Goa, Jan 27:** Hyderabad FC underlined their credentials as one of the top contenders this season with a brilliant come-from-behind performance to beat Odisha FC 3-2 in the Indian Super League at the Tilak Maidan Stadium Thursday. Jerry Mawihmingthanga (45th minute) gave Odisha the lead at the stroke of halftime but Hyderabad put on a show in the second half with goals from Joel Chianese (51st), Joao Victor (70th) and Akash Mishra (73rd) in the space of 20 minutes. Jonathan Cristian (84th) reduced the margin but it was too little too late as Odisha succumbed to a defeat and remained in seventh place. Hyderabad consolidated their lead at the top with 23 points from 13 games although Kerala Blasters, sitting second, have two games in hand and are on 20 points. Odisha were not doing enough to test Laxmikant Kattimani in



Hyderabad goal before Jerry scored against the run of play, turning in a Nandhakumar Sekar low cross at the front post past Kattimani. Post the breather, the Hyderabad started on the front foot and it took them six minutes to draw level as Chianese leapt high to nod in an Akash cross after the full-back bombed through the left flank to whip in a sumptuous cross. Hyderabad went 2-1 up when Victor received a pass from Asish

Rai, turned and shot first time as the ball arched past the keeper and bulged the net. Three minutes later, Hyderabad threatened to take the game away from Odisha. Yasir Mohammad swung in a lovely ball from a free-kick inside the box where a lurking Mishra applied a deft flick past the keeper and into the back of the net. Jonathan fired home a powerful shot past Kattimani after he was fed by Redeem Tlang to throw the game wide open in the dying minutes.

# Bishnoi gets maiden India call-up

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 27:** Young leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi was Wednesday rewarded with a maiden India call-up for the upcoming T20 series against the West Indies, while senior wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav also returned to the white-ball setup after a knee surgery. Skipper Rohit Sharma on the day cleared his fitness test and as reported by this agency January 17, was back in-charge for the series that starts with ODIs in Ahmedabad from February 6. Among senior players, Ravichandran Ashwin has been dropped from the white-ball team, while Washington Sundar, who missed the South Africa series due to COVID-19, was back in the squad. "Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammad Shami have been rested from the series," BCCI secretary Jay Shah was quoted as saying in a press release.



The other notable comeback has been Baroda batter Deepak Hooda, who had changed states and did wonderfully well for Rajasthan in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy as well as Vijay Hazare Trophy. However it is understood that Himachal Pradesh captain Rishi Dhawan wasn't in consideration as his bowling is friendly medium pace and can't be seen as a finisher in white-ball cricket. It is also learnt that vice-captain KL Rahul will be available from the second ODI onwards as he is set to miss the first 50-over game due to personal reasons. Bishnoi has been one of the finds of the Indian Premier League for the Punjab outfit and has been picked up by new franchise Lucknow Super Giants from the drafts for the next IPL. In 42 T20 games, he has 49 wickets at a great economy rate of 6.63. In 17 List A games, he has 24 wickets and an

economy rate of 5.48. Bhuvneshwar Kumar has been dropped from the ODI squad but retained for the T20Is while former skipper Virat Kohli featured in both the teams. **ODI squad:** Rohit Sharma (C), KL Rahul (vc), Rituraj Gaikwad, Shikhar Dhawan, Virat Kohli, Surya Kumar Yadav, Shreyas Iyer, Deepak Hooda, Rishabh Pant (wk), Deepak Chahar, Shardul Thakur, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Washington Sundar, Ravi Bishnoi, Mohd. Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, Avesh Khan **T20I squad:** Rohit Sharma (C), KL Rahul (vc), Ishan Kishan, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, Surya Kumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant (wk), Venkatesh Iyer, Deepak Chahar, Shardul Thakur, Ravi Bishnoi, Axar Patel, Yuzvendra Chahal, Washington Sundar, Mohd. Siraj, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Avesh Khan, Harshal Patel.