



SUNSET MOOD

Actor Sara Ali Khan, in her latest post, said witnessing a setting sun is ‘a day well done’

LEISURE

P2



SC PANEL BIASED

UP Cong chief Ajaib Kumar Lallu asserted that protesting farmers cannot expect justice from the Supreme Court-appointed panel

TWO STATES

P7



WHO EXPERTS REACH WUHAN

13 experts of the World Health Organisation arrived in Wuhan to probe the origins of the deadly nCoV pandemic

INTERNATIONAL

P10

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IRREGULAR by MANJUL



How would he understand our farm laws? He is just a farmer!

GIRL GOING FOR MAKAR HOLY DIP GANGRAPED

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Jan 14: A 19-year-old girl was allegedly gangraped by two persons while she was going to take a holy dip on the occasion of Makar Sankranti in Baripada town Thursday, police said.

As the girl and her sister were heading towards the river for taking the holy dip, two persons of the locality started following them.

The incident took place when one sister was taking a bath in the waterbody and her sibling was standing near the river bed.

The accused lifted her to a secluded place and allegedly raped her. As she screamed for help, the duo fled the spot, police said. The victim also managed to escape the spot and narrated her ordeal to her elder sister, added the FIR.

The woman lodged a complaint at Baripada Town police station on the basis of which the two persons were arrested, Birendra Senapati, Inspector-in-Charge of the police station, said. The accused have been identified as Sanu Singh (25), while the minor boy is 17-yr-old.

The medical examination of the woman has been conducted in PRM Medical College and Hospital, Senapati said.

Trump first Prez to be impeached twice

Ten Republican Congressmen also joined the Democrats to vote in favour of an article of impeachment that charged Trump with a count of “incitement of insurrection”

AGENCIES

Washington, Jan 14: Donald Trump became the first President in US history to be impeached twice when 10 of his fellow Republican Congressmen joined Democrats in the House of Representatives to charge him with inciting an unprecedented insurrection at the US Capitol last week.

In a bipartisan vote, the Democratic-controlled House Wednesday impeached Trump by 232 to 197 votes, exactly one week after pro-Trump rioters forced lawmakers to flee from the very chamber in which they cast ballots in during the fourth presidential impeachment in US history.

Ten Republicans, including the House's No. 3 Republican, Liz Cheney, joined all Democrats to impeach 74-year-old Trump for “incitement of insurrection” for his actions January 6, when he delivered a speech inciting his supporters to storm the US Capitol.

The violence temporarily halted the counting of Electoral College votes and resulted in the deaths of five individuals, including a police officer.

Trump will now face a trial in the Senate, where if convicted he could face being barred from ever holding office again. The Senate is adjourned till January 19, a day before the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden as the 46th President of the United States.

All four Indian-American Democratic House members – Ami Bera, Ro Khanna, Raja Krishnamoorthi and Pramila Jayapal – voted in favour of the impeachment. The House went ahead with the move after Vice President Mike Pence Tuesday refused to invoke the 25th Amendment to remove Trump from office.



US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi shows the article of impeachment against US President Donald Trump at the US Capitol in Washington, Wednesday

REUTERS PHOTO

Trump will not have to quit the White House before his term ends as the Senate is out of regular session.

The House voted after several hours of impassioned debate as National Guard troops kept watch inside and outside the Capitol.

“We know that the President of the United States incited this insurrection, this armed rebellion, against our common country. He must go,” House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said, participating in the impeachment debate. “He is a clear and present danger to the nation that we all love,” the top Democrat said.

“I believe the President must be convicted by the Senate, a constitutional remedy that will ensure that the republic will be safe from this man who is so resolutely determined to tear down the things that we hold dear and that hold us together,” she added.

Can Trump be disqualified?

WASHINGTON: The US Constitution says there are two ways to punish an impeached official: removal from office or “disqualification to hold and enjoy any office of honor, trust or profit under the United States.” Trump is likely to argue at trial that his remarks were free speech protected by the Constitution's First Amendment and that, while he told supporters to “fight,” he did not intend it as a literal call to violence. Removing an official requires a “conviction” by a two-thirds Senate majority under the Constitution. Under precedent, only a simple majority is needed for disqualification. Historically, that vote only happens after a conviction.



BKU leader Mann recuses himself from SC committee on farm laws

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Jan 14: Bhartiya Kisan Union national president Bhupinder Singh Mann Thursday said he is recusing himself from the four-member committee appointed by the Supreme Court to resolve the deadlock between farmers and the Centre over the new agri-marketing laws.

Farmer unions and Opposition parties had raised doubts over the composition of the panel, insisting that its members have been in favour of the three laws in the past.

Mann said he is thankful to the apex court for nominating him to the panel but would give up any position to prevent farmers' interests from being compromised.

“As a farmer myself and a union leader, in view of the prevailing senti-



ments and apprehensions amongst the farm unions and the public in general, I am ready to sacrifice any position offered or given to me so as to not compromise the interests of Punjab and farmers of the country,” he said in a statement here. “I am recusing myself from the committee and I will always stand with my farmers and Punjab,” said Mann who was also an ex-MP.

The apex court had Tuesday stayed the implementation of the three central laws till further orders and announced the formation of a committee to hear the grievances of the farmers and the opinion of the government. Mann's announcement of recusing himself from the SC-appointed committee came on a day when his organisation's state unit decided to disassociate itself from him.

“We decided to disassociate ourselves from Mann as he did not consult with us to work as a committee member,” said BKU (Punjab) president Baldev Singh Mianpur.

“We thought that farmers were fighting for their rights and they were against any committee and then what was the point in being part of the panel,” he said.

India faces lasting corona damage, slow growth: Fitch

A combination of supply-side scarring and demand-side constraints will keep the level of GDP well below its pre-pandemic path

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 14: The Indian economy will suffer a lasting damage from the coronavirus crisis and after an initial strong rebound in FY22 (fiscal year ending March 2022) growth will slow to around 6.5 per cent a year over FY23-FY26, Fitch Ratings said Thursday.

“A combination of supply-side

scarring and demand-side constraints - such as the weak state of the financial sector - will keep the level of GDP well below its pre-pandemic path,” it said in commentary on the Indian economy.

Fitch said India's coronavirus-induced recession has been among the most severe in the world, amid a stringent lockdown and limited direct fiscal support.

The economy is now in a recovery phase that will be further supported by the rollout of vaccines in the next months.

“We expect gross domestic product (GDP) to expand by 11 per cent in FY22 (April 2021 to March 2022) after falling by 9.4 per cent in FY21 (April 2020 to March 2021),” it said.

India's economy had been losing momentum even ahead of the

UNPRECEDENTED RECESSION

■ The rate of GDP growth sank to a **more than ten-year low of 4.2 per cent in 2019**, down from 6.1 per cent the previous year

■ GDP in April-June was **23.9 per cent below its 2019 level**, indicating that nearly a quarter of the country's **economic activity** was wiped out by the drying up of global demand

Further, a 7.5 per cent decline in GDP in the following quarter pushed Asia's third-largest economy into an unprecedented recession

shock delivered by the Covid-19 crisis. The rate of GDP growth sank to a more than ten-year low of 4.2 per cent in 2019, down from 6.1 per cent the previous year.

The pandemic bought a human and an economic catastrophe for India, with nearly 1.5 lakh deaths.



Though the deaths per million are significantly lower than in Europe and the US, the economic impact had been much more severe.

GDP in April-June was 23.9 per cent below its 2019 level, indicating that nearly a quarter of the country's economic activity was wiped out

by the drying up of global demand and the collapse of domestic demand that accompanied the series of strict national lockdowns. Further, a 7.5 per cent decline in GDP in the following quarter pushed Asia's third-largest economy into an unprecedented recession.

Fitch said the medium-term recovery will be slow. “Supply-side potential growth will be reduced by a slowdown in the rate of capital accumulation - investment has recently fallen sharply and is likely to see only a subdued recovery.”

This, it said, will weigh on labour productivity, lowering its projection of supply-side potential GDP growth for the six-year period FY21 to FY26 to 5.1 per cent per annum compared to our pre-pandemic projection of 7 per cent.

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Petrol, diesel prices hiked again, scale new highs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 14: Petrol and diesel prices Thursday were hiked by 25 paise per litre each, the second straight day of increase in rates that took the prices to new highs.

Petrol now costs ₹84.70 per litre in Delhi and diesel is priced at ₹74.88, according to a price notification from oil marketing companies. This is the second straight day of a price increase. Rates were hiked by 25 paise each Wednesday after a five-day hiatus. In Mumbai, the price of petrol was increased to ₹91.32 a litre from ₹91.07 previously, while diesel rates went up from ₹81.34 to ₹81.60 per litre.

Petrol price is at a record high in Delhi and is just a shy away from the highest ever rate of ₹91.34 in Mumbai. Diesel price in Mumbai is at an all-time high.

State-owned fuel retailers – Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) – had January 6, resumed daily price revision after nearly a month-long hiatus.

Rates were hiked on two consecutive days - totalling 49 paise for petrol and 51



PRICES IN BHUB

Petrol - ₹85.36/LTR (+₹0.25)

Diesel- ₹81.58/LTR (+₹0.27)

paise for diesel - before they hit a pause button again.

The price increase cycle resumed Wednesday, after international oil prices rose to their highest level since February 2020, before the coronavirus outbreak in China began spreading across the world, forcing lockdowns that shaved off demand. Rates, however, eased a bit on Thursday with Brent down 11 cents to \$55.95 per barrel while NYMEX light sweet crude was down 10 cents at \$52.81.

The highest ever rate of diesel in Delhi was touched October 4, 2018, when it touched ₹75.45 a litre mark. On that day petrol was priced at ₹84. In Mumbai, the highest level for petrol was also on the same day when it scaled to ₹91.34. The government had responded to the situation in October 2018, by cutting excise duty on petrol and diesel by ₹1.50 per litre.

Villagers auction sarpanch's post, EC cancels polls

AGENCIES

Mumbai, Jan 14: The State Election Commission has cancelled polling in two Gram Panchayats in Nashik and Nandurbar districts of Maharashtra, after it received evidence of public auctioning of the posts of sarpanch and members of the local governing bodies, an official said.

State Election Commissioner UPS Madan has made the announcement just before the Gram Panchayat polls, which are scheduled to be held tomorrow.

According to an official statement, there were reports of public auctioning of the posts of sarpanch and members of Umrane and Khondamali Gram Panchayats in Nashik and Nandurbar districts respectively, and the SEC had received complaints about it.

“The commission took the decision of cancelling the poll process there, after studying the reports from district collectors, poll observers, sub-divisional officers and tehsildars and documents and video tapes,” the statement said.

The SEC has instructed the district collectors and police superintendents to take legal action against people concerned as per Section 171 (C) of the Indian Penal Code or other laws, the statement said. Meanwhile, at least 14 villages have boycotted the Gram Panchayat elections to press for their demand to be a part of the Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation, a district official said Thursday.



MARKET WATCH		
INDEX		VARIATION
SENSEX	49584.16	▲ 91.84
NIFTY	14595.60	▲ 30.70
DOLLAR	73.62	▼ ₹0.25
EURO	88.94	▼ ₹0.30
GOLD	₹49,077	▼ ₹228
SILVER	₹65,625	▼ ₹396

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
MAX	29.6°C	28.8°C
MIN	20.2°C	17.5°C
Humidity	89%	84%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Fog or mist in the morning	

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Your convincing powers are so great that you can even convince people to do what they don't want to do. Today these powers will bear remarkable results. You realise the need to improve your home and your personality. Ganesha says today you will take some concrete steps in this direction.

TAURUS
This day you are going to be very creative, very imaginative in all that you do. Ganesha assures you that your skills and talents will be amply recognized and rewarded. Your colleagues and superiors are going to be pleasantly amazed at the way you perform today.

GEMINI
You will feel the urge to chuck your daily routine and spend time leisurely with your friends and family, entertaining and being entertained. You may also decide to embark upon a trip. The number of guests turning up at your place will increase. Family time is here to stay, says Ganesha.

CANCER
You will plan for a good future. You mobilise all resources. Be warned, before taking a step, counsels Ganesha. Beware of middlemen and agents to save yourself from a major financial loss.

LEO
You will be busy dealing with health-related issues. You need to watch your diet carefully. You will work with a feeling of responsibility. You will become more serious about your work. Everything will go smoothly in your personal life, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
Today will be a day full of emotions and insights into love. Despondency may trouble you all through the day. However, Ganesha advises you to remain unaffected by it in your work. At your workplace you will be in great demand as a problem solver.

LIBRA
Ganesha says that today will be spent in entertaining, throwing parties and in general having a good time. You will be able to plan a trip in the near future with your family members. You may be able to put your money into something that is safe or into a business and will also want to invest a good amount for future needs.

SCORPIO
Make it a point to believe only what you see and believe to avoid confusions and confrontations, says Ganesha. Keep your eyes and ears open, so you do not miss out on important happenings around you.

SAGITTARIUS
Ganesha foresees a profitable day in the calendar of all the businessmen. It's time to live your dream as the loan you were waiting for has been sanctioned now. Along with your near and dear ones, you will make your beloved feel special.

CAPRICORN
Hard-work never goes unnoticed and so will be yours. Your superiors will appreciate your talents and contribution to the progress of the company, predicts Ganesha. Supportive and cooperative, your colleagues will help you tread the path you have chosen. Though everything around you appears to be rosy, you may still feel bored and dissatisfied, and wish to change your present job.

AQUARIUS
There are times when nothing goes as per you plans and all you get at the end is sheer disappointment. Be prepared, if today is one of those unfavourable days, warns Ganesha. Problems at work place can be solved with diligence, patience, and positive approach.

PISCES
It is in your nature to love and care for others, and hence people will be extremely fond of you in return too. You will feel like helping others and forgetting and forgiving past wrongs. Post afternoon is a good time to sit down with your family and talk about important issues that need your attention, says Ganesha.

HATHAWAY HATES HER FIRST NAME

Oscar-winning star Anne Hathaway has admitted that she is not comfortable when people call her by her first name, adding that she prefers to be referred to by her nickname Annie. The *Brokeback Mountain* star shared that her co-stars call her by nicknames.

SHAKIRA SELLS RIGHTS TO HER SONGS

Singer Shakira has become the latest artiste to sell publishing rights of all her 145 songs to the Board of Hipgnosis Songs Fund Limited, a UK-based investment company, reports *usatoday.com*. The Grammy winner released her debut album *Magia* in 1991 at the age of 13.



Sara reveals her sunset mood

Mumbai: Actress Sara Ali Khan has shared what, according to her, a day well done seems like, in her latest post on social media.

Sara has posted a picture on Instagram sitting on the rooftop with the setting sun in the backdrop. "When you see the setting Sun... Sara calls it a day well done," she wrote as the caption for the image, which currently has over 1.2 million likes.

Sara, who was recently seen in the digitally released film *Coolie No. 1* along with actor Varun Dhawan, has started shooting for her next Atrangi Re. The film also stars Akshay Kumar, Dhanush and Nimrat Kaur. It is directed by filmmaker Aanand L. Rai.

The *Kedarnath* star, in a recent interview, said, "I am lucky to be in a profession I like. I see a couple of people - friends of mine - do nine-to-five jobs they don't like, and are like, 'oh god! work'. But this is not work. My work is the most exciting part of my life."

ANS



Aahana Kumra to make podcast debut

Mumbai: Actress Aahana Kumra is all set to make her podcast debut. She will narrate a story on the audio web series titled *MnM Talkies*.

"I have recently started working on this podcast, which is produced and directed by Mantra," said Aahana, about the audio story called *I Hear You*, which tells the story of a detective named Priyamvada Parmar.

"I am entering the voicing industry and I think Mantra is perhaps the best person to really hold my hand through this. I am very excited to collaborate with him and enter the new phase of my life. This is a new chapter in my life and I am happy to begin 2021 with this," she added.

"The audio web-series will be released in February and I hope it does the fireworks!" the actress revealed her excitement about working in the Spotify show.

ANS



TEAM Group launches TEAM ODIA YouTube channel with fanfare

POST NEWS NETWORK

BHUBANESWAR: Team Entertainment and Media, the event management wing of TEAM Group of Companies launched Thursday its infotainment YouTube channel 'TEAM ODIA' at Rabindra Mandap here with fanfare. Incidentally TEAM is one of the most sought after venue partners to host corporate events as well as intimate gatherings in this city. The theme music of the channel was also released on the occasion.

"Main objective of the channel will be to showcase the art, culture, tradition and history of Odisha in an entertaining way," said TEAM Chairman Nishikanta Mishra during the launch ceremony. The inaugural event was followed by a star-studded musical evening. Among others, eminent



Mishra speaks at the event



TEAM Group Chairman Nishikanta Mishra lighting the lamp while the guests look on

singers Debasish Mohapatra, Lopita Mishra, Laxmikanta Palit, Swarupa Chakravarti and Babu Panigrahi performed in the show.

This was also the first private event at Rabindra Mandap, after the auditorium remained closed for close to 10 months due to the COVID-19 induced lockdown.

For the uninitiated, Team Admark Private Limited of TEAM Group is a prominent name in the tourism, advertising, and event management seg-

ments in Odisha. In 2017, the company revamped 'Panthika', a getaway destination constructed by Odisha Tourism Development Corporation, near Sakshigopal on the Bhubaneswar-Puri national highway. Renamed as 'Team Jajabara', the multi cuisine restaurant was renovated by Team Admark Infracon. Since then 'Jajabara' has been a favourite and convenient joint for tourists travelling to and from Puri and a weekend getaway destination for families.



Channel's logo being displayed

15 singers join hands to showcase Odia identity

The song *E Mati Odisha E Jaati Odisha* will be released on the occasion of Maha Bisuba Sankranti, also known as the Odia New Year



POST NEWS NETWORK

BHUBANESWAR: In a bid to highlight the rich culture and tradition of Odisha, popular music director Premchand roped in as many as 15 frontline playback singers of the Odia film industry to lend their voice for a song.

Titled *E Mati Odisha E Jaati Odisha*, the song, based on state's culture, traditions and identity, is composed by the director himself while eminent lyricists Basantraj Samal has written the lines.

The singers who are part of this unique

venture include Humane Sagar, Ananya Sritam Nanda, Asutosh Mohanty, Sonam Das, Sabishesh Mishra, Biswajit Mahapatra, Debakrupa Mishra, Alka Abhilekha, Samikhya Mishra, Lopamudra Das, Shriya Mishra, Pragyan Parasmita Hota, Sashank Shekar and Basantraj Samal.

Fifteen singers coming together for one song is a record in Odia music industry, said Anand who was instrumental in making this challenging task a reality.

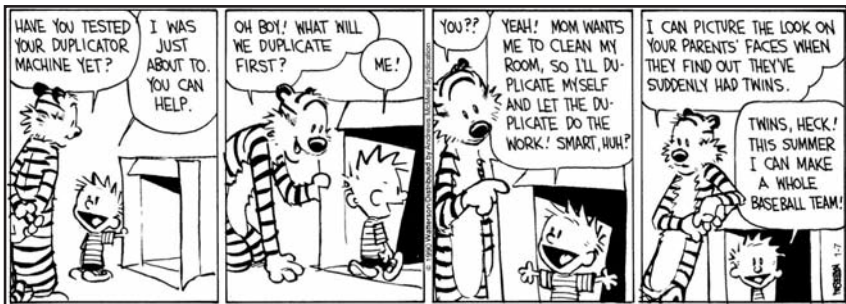
The song will be released on the occasion of Maha Bisuba Sankranti, also known as Odia New Year day for nearly 4.5 crore Odias.

FUN post

PEANUTS



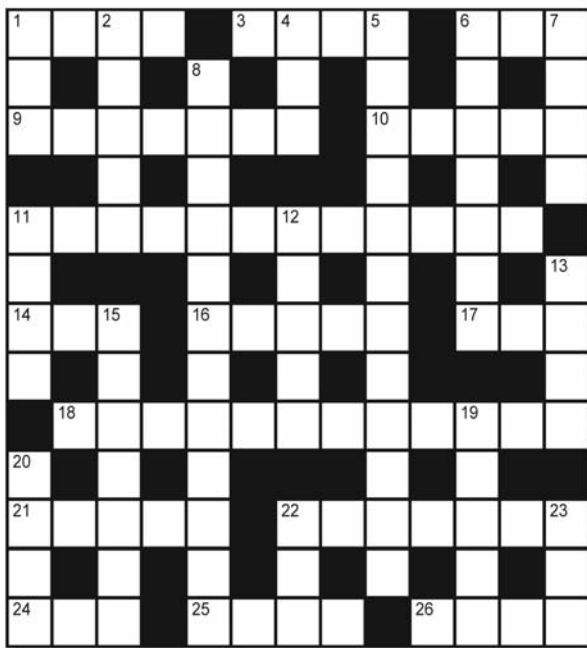
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



CROSSWORD

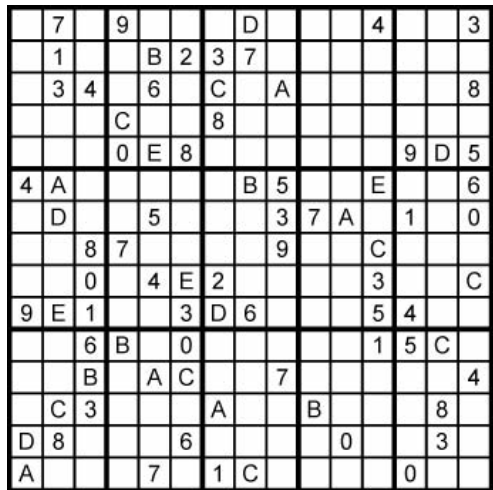


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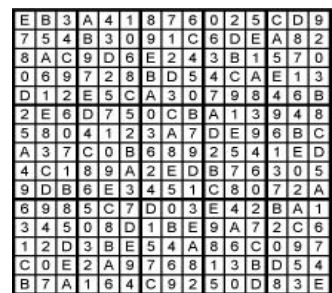
- Across**
- 1 Tender
 - 3 Oodles
 - 6 Prohibit
 - 9 Jungle clearing tool
 - 10 Solemn promises
 - 11 Defect
 - 14 Wool weight
 - 16 Libreville's land
 - 17 Easy mark
 - 18 Salon workers
 - 21 Parting word
 - 22 Wander aimlessly
 - 24 Game piece
 - 25 Hornswoggle
 - 26 Noisy blackbird
 - Down**
 - 1 Total
 - 2 Summary
 - 4 Be in arrears
 - 5 Meteor, maybe (8,4)
 - 6 Shirt features
 - 7 Egg container
 - 8 Carousel (5-2-5)
 - 11 Whit
 - 12 Hot coal
 - 13 Relaxing spots
 - 15 Cartoon
 - 19 Pillow stuffing
 - 20 Zither's cousin
 - 22 Tourist's aid
 - 23 Green

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



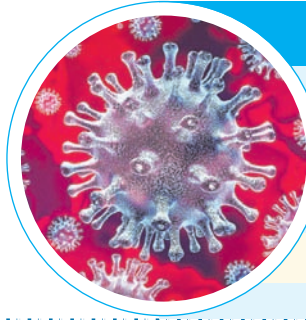
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



HOMAGE TO NOVELIST

Activists of Utkal Sammilani pay floral tributes to Vyasa Kabi Fakir Mohan Senapati on his birth anniversary in front of Utkal University in Bhubaneswar, Thursday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	9,29,77,768	6,64,84,380	19,91,289
India	1,05,12,093	1,01,46,763	1,51,727
Odisha	3,32,763	3,28,832	1,896

TWIN HILLS SET FOR FACELIFT

TOURISM DEPT FLOATS TENDER FOR PREPARATION OF AN INTEGRATED MASTER PLAN TO TRANSFORM KHANDAGIRI-UDAYAGIRI INTO A WORLD-CLASS TOURIST SITE

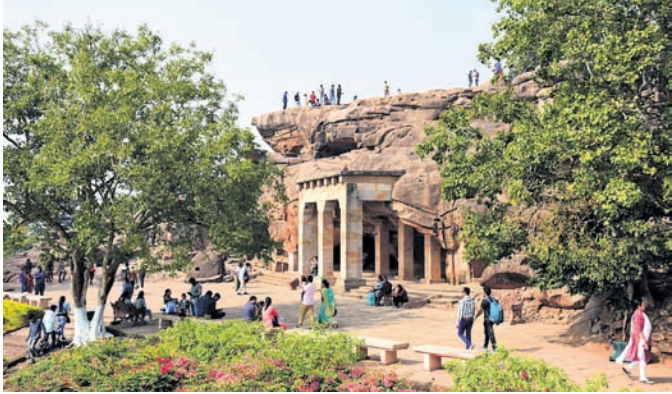
POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: In order to attract more tourists to Khandagiri & Udaygiri caves, the state government has decided to upgrade the infrastructure of the site in the state capital.

The Tourism department has issued a tender for preparation of an integrated heritage and tourism master plan for development of Khandagiri-Udayagiri into a world-class tourist attraction with ultra-modern features, amenities and attractions.

The Khandagiri-Udayagiri area is witnessing footfall of over 3 lakh tourists every year. Due to huge influx, the monument and its surroundings have been heavily damaged in recent years. Besides, the presence of active traffic in between twin hills is a major cause for concern for people. Hence, the department has decided to develop the area, sources said.

The department plans to ease the traffic near the site with inclusion of unique and innovative components like sustainable transportation, non-motorised transport and pedestrianisation among others.



Udayagiri in Bhubaneswar

OP PHOTO

It has also planned to put up unique tourism information signages and location orientation map and streetscape with roadside seats and landscaping. The government will also find out alternate space for rehabilitation of local vendors, who have put their stalls near the tourism sites.

Meanwhile, the department has also decided to set up ropeways at various locations including Dhauli, Panchalingeswar, Kapilash and Nrusinganath.

Udayagiri and Khandagiri Caves, formerly called Kattaka Caves or

Cuttack caves, are partly natural and partly artificial caves of archaeological, historical and religious importance. The caves are situated on two adjacent hills, Udayagiri and Khandagiri, mentioned as Kumari Parvata in the Hathigumpha inscription.

They have a number of finely and ornately carved caves built during the 1st century BCE. It is believed that most of these caves were carved out as residential blocks for Jain monks during the reign of King Kharavela.

MAJOR UPGRADE

The Tourism department plans to put up info signages and location orientation maps besides installing roadside seats

The government will also find alternate areas for rehabilitation of local vendors, who have put their stalls near the site

Udayagiri means "Sunrise Hill" and has 18 caves while Khandagiri has 15 caves. The caves of Udayagiri and Khandagiri, called lena or lea in the inscriptions, were dug out mostly during the reign of Kharavela for the abode of Jain ascetics.

The most important of this group is Ranigumpha in Udayagiri which is a double storeyed monastery. Other important caves include Hathigumpha, Ananta gumpha, Ganesha gumpha, Jaya Vijaya gumpha, Mancapuri gumpha, Bagha/Byaghra/Vyaghra gumpha and Sarpa gumpha.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



STF ARRESTS TWO IVORY SMUGGLERS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: A Special Task Force (STF) of state crime Branch Thursday arrested two wildlife smugglers in Sambalpur and seized elephant tusks from their possession.

The accused persons were identified as Hrusikesh Kumbhar of

Dipapali under Ulunda police stations in Subarnapur district and Gopal Krushna Budak, of Keutibahal village under Charmal police station in Sambalpur district.

The STF team recently received information regarding the illegal transaction of ivory at a secluded place under Ainthapalli police station. Following the tip-off, the STF

team Thursday carried out a raid near Bareipalli Chowk where the accused persons were present for the deal. The STF sleuths found that the accused were in possession of two elephant tusk and other incriminating articles. The STF team arrested them by registering a case (3/21) under various sections of IPC and Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

BJP MEETS GOVERNOR OVER RURAL HOUSING CORRUPTION

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: A team of senior leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Thursday met Governor Ganeshi Lal and submitted their memorandum of demands while highlighting alleged irregularities in the sanction of rural housing scheme benefits.

The team comprised State BJP President Samir Mohanty, National spokesperson Sambit Patra, leader of opposition Pradipta Naik and others. The delegation demanded disqualification of illegal beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) and strict actions against them.

"Under the PMAY, the Centre has planned to convert all kucha houses into pucca houses. However,

it has now come under threat due to the actions of the ruling party in the state. The PMAY has now been stolen. The people of the state are suffering due to the issue. Applications that were given in the panchayat elections are still pending with the panchayat office," Mohanty said.

"Upto 30,000 people ineligible parties have got houses by unfair means. We have informed the Governor about the issue," he added.

Such an exercise is anti-constitutional. Naik said that the PM assured housing for all under the scheme. "We demand that only eligible persons get houses under the scheme. The BJD has taken up the housing scheme to brand their party. There are people who have received the houses illegally," he said.

KANDHAMAL RIOTS

Odisha files NHRC report in apex court

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Jan 14: The state government has filed the report of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on the Kandhamal riots in the Supreme Court in support of its submission that the NHRC had only dealt with riots occurred in the district in 2008 and had nothing to do with those of 2007.

In response to a petition seeking additional compensation to the victims of 2007 riots, the state government submitted in the court that the NHRC had only dealt with 2008 riots victims and the apex court's order of 2016 for additional compensation was also confined to 2008 riots victims only.



A three-judge bench of the Supreme Court comprising Justices UU Lalit, Hemant Gupta and S Ravindra Bhat had adjourned the hearing in the matter for three weeks following the state government's request.

Earlier, the apex court in November 2020 had sought the clarification from the state government whether any other agency had dealt

submitted that the state government has given additional compensation to 2008 riots victims but they have been completely neglecting victims of 2007 violence.

Notably, at least three persons were killed and over 100 churches and church institutions, including convents and hostels, 700 houses and other structures were burnt in the riots which devastated the district between December 24 and 27, 2007.

Similarly, 39 people were killed and over 385 churches vandalised, 600 villages ransacked; over 5,600 houses were looted and over 54,000 people were left homeless in the August 2008 riots in Kandhamal district which allegedly set off after the murder of Swami Lakshmananda.

Archbishop John Barua had filed a contempt petition in the SC demanding compensation for victims of 2007 riots

with 2007 Kandhamal riots. Significantly, a contempt petition was filed by Archbishop John Barua in the apex court saying that additional compensation has not been paid by the state government to victims of 2007 riots.

The petitioner contended that the apex court's direction in 2016 was to give additional compensation to all victims of Kandhamal riots. He

Take steps on recruitment of ANMs, says HC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Jan 14: The Orissa High Court has directed the state government to take appropriate steps with regard to the recruitment of trained auxiliary nurse midwives (ANMs) and multipurpose health workers (female) as per the guidelines of Indian Public Health Standard (IPHS) and the National Health Mission (NHM).

Justice Biswanath Rath pronounced the order on a petition filed by Trained Female Health Workers' Association president Bishnupriya Singh.

Justice Rath directed the state government to take appropriate steps with regard to the recruitment of the trained ANMs at primary health centres, community health centres, sub-district health centres and district headquarters hospitals.

As per the petition, the state government had temporarily engaged 2,246 and 6,470 ANMs and female health workers in two phases in 2020 to provide healthcare during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The ANMs and the female health workers collected swab samples, assisted in contact tracing of Covid patients and provided several other healthcare services by putting their lives in danger, said the petition.

However, the ANMs and the female health workers were recently retrenched by the state government. The retrenched health workers submitted the memoranda to the Chief Minister, Health Minister and the Additional Chief Secretary (Health department) seeking permanent recruitment. But, the state government did not take any step in this regard. Subsequently, the president of the trained female health workers' association filed a petition in the HC.

TOUCH OF TRADITION



The pontiff and priests of Radha Ballav mutt near Srimandir in Puri prepare 'Makara Chaula', a traditional delicacy, on the occasion of Makara Sankranti, Thursday

OP PHOTO

Bhub-Pune flight launched

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: Soon after the state government agreed to provide financial support to AirAsia, the private airlines, Thursday, began flight services connecting Bhubaneswar, Pune and Kolkata.

AirAsia had been in talks with the state government for a long time and had planned to connect Pune and Bhubaneswar to boost air connectivity of the state. With its launch, AirAsia became the only airline to offer non-stop flights between Pune and the state capital.

Speaking on its launch, a senior official of AirAsia said, "We are delighted to announce the launch of new flights connecting Bhubaneswar, Pune and Kolkata. The flights are scheduled to ease the convenience of flying with our fly-thru service, enabling a connection between Kolkata and Pune.



PIC FOR REPRESENTATION

We have been working with the state government and enhancing our relationship by ferrying migrants back to Odisha from different parts of the country."

It can be mentioned here that AirAsia began its operations in 2017, in Odisha, and now connects to all four metropolitan cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Kolkata. The Chief Minister Office, Tuesday, had stated that the flight connectivity is being made available keeping in mind boosting air con-

nectivity to Odisha which will improve state's tourism sector and attract more investors. Earlier, Spice Jet had started services from the Veer Surendra Sai airport, Jharsuguda, to Mumbai and Bangalore.

With this, a total of 31 flights will be operating at the Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA). While AirAsia will have four flights running from the BPIA, Vistara has three, Air India four, Alliance Air one, Go Air three and Indigo 15 operating from the city airport.

Mukteswar Dance Festival kicks off



OP PHOTO

Reebdhita Barua and Preetisha Mohapatra perform Odissi at the festival

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: Organised by Odisha Tourism, the three-day dance extravaganza of Mukteswar Dance Festival kicked off here Thursday amid much fanfare.

In the opening act, Pandit A Maheswar Rao & Group presented Shiva Vandana with six Ragas and six stanzas. Directed by Rao, the song was an epic blend of melody and grace.

Following the classical act, a spell bounding solo performance by famous dancer Meera Das enthralled one and all. Her first presentation was Mangalacharan in Shivastuti Puspanjali and later, she performed Pallavi choreographed by Late Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra. Pallavi was based on Raga Billahari and set on Tal ektali. Her last perform-

ance was based on Shabari from Ramayan. The music was composed by Pt Bhubaneswar Mishra.

Interacting with **Orissa POST**, Das said, "The festival celebrates Odissi dance which is one of the oldest classical dance forms in the country. The emotion is captured so beautifully in the form of the danseuse enacting various mudras in the centuries-old temples of the state."

The third act of the evening was a Odissi duet by Reebdhita Barua and Preetisha Mohapatra. They performed recitals based on Shiva sthuthi, Pallavi Yuma Dwanda and abhinay based on Shri Rama sthuthi. The choreography was by Guru Ratikanta Mohapatra. The music was composed by Late Pt. Raghunath Panigrahi and Pradip Kumar Das.

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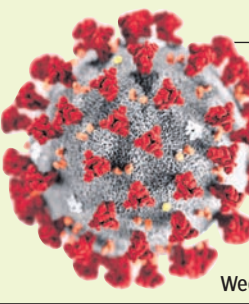
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With 222 fresh cases, state's Covid tally stands at 3,32,763

One fresh fatality pushes Odisha's coronavirus toll to 1,896

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: The state's Covid-19 tally rose to 3,32,763 Thursday as 222 more people tested positive for the infection, while one fresh fatality pushed Odisha's coronavirus death toll to 1,896, a senior Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department official said.



IN NUGGETS

Angul registered the highest number of new cases at 28, followed by Sundargarh (24) and Jharsuguda (23)

Khurda has so far reported 332 fatalities, followed by Ganjam (248) and Sundargarh (169)

Odisha has so far tested over 72.92 lakh samples for Covid-19, including 30,168 Wednesday

As many as 127 new cases were reported in quarantine centres, while 95 fresh infections were detected during contact tracing, said the official.

Angul district registered the highest number of new cases at 28, followed by Sundargarh (24) and Jharsuguda (23) districts, the official pointed out.

As many as 53 patients have died due to comorbidities so far, said the H&FW department official.

Khurda district, under which Bhubaneswar falls, has so far reported 332 fatalities, followed by Ganjam (248) and Sundargarh (169), the official said, adding that Odisha now has 2,192 active cases, while 3,28,622 people have so far recovered from the viral infection.

country reached 1,05,12,093, including 2,13,603 active cases. After 17,652 discharges in a span of 24 hours, the cumulative recoveries reached 1,01,46,763, the Health Ministry said, adding that the death toll climbed to 1,51,727.

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), a total of 18,42,32,305 samples were tested for Covid-19 up to January 13, including 7,43,191 samples tested January 12.

Sources said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch India's Covid-19 inoculation drive January 16 and will interact with some of the healthcare workers who will be receiving the shots on Day 1, the Union Health Ministry said Thursday.

Kalahandi now state's rice bowl: Naveen

In his maiden visit to the district since Covid-19 outbreak, Patnaik inaugurated 54 projects worth ₹1,064 crore and laid the foundation of 52 projects worth ₹1,020 crore

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhawanipatna/Junagarh, Jan 14: Kalahandi district is no longer the 'land of hunger' and has been transformed into Odisha's rice bowl, said Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Thursday while launching projects worth over ₹2,000 crore in the district.

In his maiden visit to the district since the Covid-19 outbreak, Patnaik inaugurated 54 projects worth ₹1,064 crore and laid the foundation of 52 projects worth ₹1,020 crore.

BJP takes on CM on Indravati inauguration

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: Leader of Opposition in Odisha Assembly Pradipta Naik Thursday attacked Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik accusing the later of converting the Indravati canal project inauguration into a party programme.

"The CM converted the government programme into a party programme while inaugurating the Indravati project. The CM ensured that his 35 MLAs are present at the venue. Arrangements were done in 310 sites in Kalahandi district to listen to the programme. The funds for the same were done through BDO," he said.

The block chairmen of other parties were not taken into confidence and thus the party tried to murder democracy.

The Upper Indravati Lift Canal System, built at a cost of ₹986.71 crore, is among the projects that he inaugurated. The system, comprising 43.26 km of concrete canals and 1,142 km of underground pipelines, has the capacity to irrigate 25,275 hectares of cropland.

Patnaik also inaugurated 10 drinking water projects worth ₹20.02 crore and 13 check dams built at a cost of ₹4.83 crore.

Addressing a public meeting attended by people who have tested negative for Covid-19, Patnaik recalled his father and former Chief Minister Biju Patnaik's emotional attachment with Kalahandi.

"Biju Babu was injured in a stone-pelting incident in Kalahandi during his visit as the Chief Minister in the 90s. When I inquired about bleeding from his nose, he said there was nothing to be worried about."

"He had said that the people of Kalahandi love him and he reciprocates it and will work hard for the



development of the district," the Chief Minister said.

From being the "land of hunger", Kalahandi has now been transformed into the state's rice bowl. The district now holds the second position in the state in rice production. This has been possible only due to the hard work and commitment of the farmers, Patnaik said.

Noting that the attempts of "some people" to keep Kalahandi poverty-stricken have failed, Patnaik said that farmers in the district have received ₹1,200 crore during the paddy procurement season last year and the



irrigation potential has increased three folds while the fish production has also gone up significantly.

Observing that Kalahandi has emerged as the best-performing

district in the country in health care, he said that infant and maternal mortality rates, which were 76 and 432 in the year 2000, have improved due to strategic intervention of the state government.

Pointing out that the Indravati river has a major role to play in Kalahandi's transformation, he announced that a museum and a park, with a temple dedicated to Goddess Indravati, will be built on the banks of the river.

Kalahandi Lok Sabha MP and senior BJP leader Basanta Panda also addressed the meeting which was attended by local MLAs, ministers and MPs of the western region. Attendees were allowed to enter the meeting premises only after the verification of their Covid status.

However, the Leader of Opposition P K Naik, who is also the Bhawanipatna MLA, boycotted the Chief Minister's meeting, protesting lavish expenditure at the government programme.

4th flora & fauna survey in Chilika lagoon today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chilika, Jan 14: Chilika Development Authority is all set to conduct the fourth annual Flora and Fauna survey in Chilika Lagoon January 15 to assess the bio-diversity of the Lagoon eco-system.

100 technical personnel will be engaged in the exercise. All boat owners associations and PFCS members were requested not to ply the boats from 6 am to 12 noon.

Visitors were requested not to visit the lake during the period. The ecological richness of the lake is of great value in preserving the genetic diversity because of the multiplicity of its habitat, flora and fauna.

In the past, the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) surveyed the lake between 1985 and 1988 and identified 800 species of fauna, including many rare, endangered, threatened and vulnerable species, but excluding terrestrial insects.

JEWELLER AMONG 5 HELD OVER JAGATPUR BURGLARY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Jan 14: Officials of the Special Squad and Jagatpur police Thursday claimed they have cracked a sensational burglary from a jewellery shop in the Silver City December 4 last year with the arrest of five persons including a jeweller and recovery of the booty.

The officials have recovered 385 grams of gold, 25.5 kg of silver ornaments, ₹12,400, two two-wheelers and four mobile phones from their possession.

According to Cuttack DCP Prateek Singh, the accused have burgled gold and silver ornaments from Basanti Durga Jewellery shop at IB Road in Jagatpur area here late December 4 night last year.

The arrested were identified as Tapan Kumar Sethi of Anantapur under Jagatsinghpur, Amulya Kumar Mohanty of OTM Colony in Cuttack, Ramesh Chandra Sethy



of Ichhapur in Cuttack, Trilochan Sethi of Nayapalli in Khurda and Prafulla Kumar Sahoo, a jeweller of Chauliaganj in Cuttack.

A day later, the shop owner, Dayanidhi Sahoo, approached the Jagatpur police which registered a case (505/2020) under Sections 457 (house-trespass or house-breaking by night in order to commit an offence), 120B (criminal conspiracy) and 380 (theft) of the IPC and began a probe. A special squad of the police had been investigating the burglary.

The DCP said the crackdown began with the arrest of Tapan,

the prime accused. "During interrogation, Tapan confessed to have committed the burglary with three of his associates. After committing the robbery, Tapan and others distributed silver ornaments among themselves, and sold rest of the gold and silver ornaments to Prafulla. During search, the silver ornaments were recovered from the accused, while the ₹12,400 was recovered from the possession of Tapan," the DCP said.

He added that Prafulla confessed to have received the stolen silver and gold ornaments from Tapan.

TRIBUTE TO COVID WARRIORS

Adventure group to scale Dayara Bugyal

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: State-based adventure group Kalinga Daredevils is all set to scale Dayara Bugyal peak in Dehradun (11,181 ft) to salute Covid warriors of the nation.

Around 23 participants, lead by Satyapira Padhan (Guinness World Records title holder in punch strikes), will start their journey from Bhubaneswar to Barsu village in Dehradun soon.

Interacting with Orissa POST, Satyapira said, "This amazing journey will last for 8 days and all the trekkers are experienced. We are undertaking this to offer our tribute to all Covid warriors of the nation. This is a program organised by the Kalinga Daredevils and until now, we haven't received any sponsor for our event. The mountains

are draped with snow and we are ready for the trek."

The participants are Nrusingha Charan Panda, Swaraj Kumar Rout, Sundar Sahoo, Krishna Bhandar Gharia, Reshab Kumar Panigrahi, Soumya Ranjan Rout, Thankur Senapati, Jyotish Kumar Bag, Jogeswar Nayak, BJ Rajesh Bhoi, Murari Sahu, Sachin Behera (Guinness world record holder for knee strike), Hitesh Kumar Meher, Malay Kumar Meher, Aman Chhatra (Guinness world record holder for Kip-ups) Ghana Satnami, Neel Kamal Sahu, Chhabilal Meher, Siddhartha Keshari Pradhan, Pradeep Sinha, Baidyanath Narayan Sinha, Sagar Kumar Mallick and Satyapira Padhan.

A special training is on for this trekking and each participant is quite excited to reach the Himalayas.

CHSE DECLARES INSTANT, OPTIONAL EXAM RESULTS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: The Council of Higher Secondary Education (CHSE), Odisha published the results of Annual Optional HS Examination and Instant HS examination Wednesday. The optional examination was held from November 5 to 7, 2020, and the instant exam was held from November 11 to 12, 2020.

The exams were conducted in Arts, Science, Commerce and vocational streams.

The instant exam was for those candidates who either passed in Practical/Project paper in HSE, but failed/absent in Theory Paper need to appear Theory Examination only or they passed in theory paper but failed/absent in practical/project paper; need to appear both in Theory and practical/project paper; failed/absent in both Theory and practical/project paper or need to appear both in Theory & practical/project paper.

TAKING TO STREETS



Women stage a sit-in at OMP Square in Cuttack, Thursday, opposing a decision to carry out an eviction drive at Police Colony in the Millennium City

SAI Home School launched for students

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: SAI International Education Group, Bhubaneswar launched its online learning platform 'SAI Home School (SHS)' to make learning more accessible to those who are unable to go to the school physically because of the fear of pandemic. With this launch, the group makes learning process easier for the students from Nursery to Class XII at the convenience of their home.

SAI Home School (SHS) will bring the learning not only to the doorsteps but within homes. SHS is a complete package of learning consisting of the subject, teaching, content, practice and doubt clearing. Each module of SHS comprises Mind Maps, Lesson Notes, Home Assignments, Video Recordings of the lessons taught and doubt clearing sessions. These features will ensure that each element of the classroom teaching is available virtually for



students. This will enable students to learn from their home without missing their classes. SHS will be an enabler for revision and practice for the term and board examinations.

After launching the school vir-

tually here Thursday founder, SAI International Education Group, Bijaya Kumar Sahoo said, "As we reflect back on the year 2020, the whole world went on a standstill and education of the students looked uncertain for many. March 13, 2020

the nation-wide lockdown was announced, but we, at SAI International did not allow the lockdown to affect us. SAI International went virtual from the meetings, to the classes and within a week we were back with a bang, with the online classes. We believe with every threat comes in an opportunity to grow and SAI Home School is a leap towards a newer, better and digital future."

Parent Nibedita Das, whose daughter is in Class VIII said, SAI Home School is one of the best digital initiatives taken by SAI International. Now that we know our children can attend classes both physically and digitally, not a single day of lectures and class will be missed. They can watch the classes over and over again for better understanding and they can even book an appointment with the teacher to clear the doubts. I am happy that the pandemic can not hamper my child's education now.

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2 including woman engineer arrested for hooch trade

Bhadrak, Jan 14: Acting on a tip-off, police arrested a woman and her daughter-in-law, who is a civil engineer by profession on charge of manufacturing and selling country liquor in Ghushurigadhia village under Bhadrak Rural police limits Thursday.

The accused were identified as Alati Singh and her engineer daughter-in-law Saraswati Singh. They were arrested when police raided their residence and found both of them preparing country liquor; Thursday morning.

Police seized the raw materials worth over several lakhs and destroyed around 1000 litres of fermented liquor; Rs 1 lakh and a Tata Indigo car were seized from their possession. However, the two sons of the woman managed to escape from the spot.



Police said they found the family members engaged in manufacturing of country liquor when they raided their residence in morning. Police said the family has been running the illegal business for past few months while efforts are on to nab both the absconding male members, Bhadrak rural police station IIC Alok Jena said. The family members have been making country liquor and selling them at wholesale price to liquor shops in the nearby areas.

No end to illegal mining

Police seize 3 trucks laden with 71 tonnes of iron ores, 24 tonnes of manganese; six people held; minerals were on way to Jharkhand, WB



POOR MONITORING

A few days ago, forest officials of Champua, Joda, Balibandh and Bamebari areas had seized a heavy vehicle carrying huge quantities of illegally mined manganese from Nayagad forest while mines officials failed to get an inkling about the illegal mineral transportation

Police said that minerals were being transported from the forest pockets like Lasarda, Bolani and Barbil to Jharkhand and West Bengal

Such racket was busted amid allegations of rampant illegal mining activities in Joda and other areas

POST NEWS NETWORK

Barbil, Jan 14: In last two weeks, back-to-back seizure of illegally extracted minerals has brought to the fore the fact that illegal mining of minerals has not been stopped in various areas of Keonjhar district despite many preventive measures being taken by the mines department.

A few days ago, forest officials of Champua, Joda, Balibandh and Bamebari areas had seized a heavy vehicle carrying huge quantities of illegally mined manganese from Nayagad forest while mines officials failed to get an inkling about the illegal mineral transportation.

35 tonnes of high grade iron ores were in the truck.

Thursday, Barbil police got a major breakthrough in cracking down on mineral mafia at Matkambeda. They seized three trucks which were carrying illegally extracted mineral to Jharkhand and West Bengal.

Two trucks were loaded with 71 tonnes of iron ores and the other truck was carrying 24 tonnes of managanese. Police arrested six people, including three drivers. The seized minerals were valued over Rs 6 lakh. Police came to know that iron ores and manganese were being transported illegal from closed mines inside Lasarda mines under

Bolani police limits late Wednesday night.

However, many quarters sought to know how the mines official failed to know of this illegal mineral extraction and transportation.

Police had intercepted the trucks on the borders of Barbil police limits. On verification of the documents in the trucks, police came to know that the minerals were illegally shifted.

Police arrested Khirod Bihuli, Rajen Munda of Kumirta village, Mutu Kumar Ojha, three divers – Sohail Khan, Raja Singh of West Bengal and Chandan Kumar of Bihar. They were produced in court Thursday.

However, the mastermind of the illegal mineral transportation, Firoz is absconding. Police said that minerals were being transported from the forest pockets like Lasarda, Bolani and Barbil to Jharkhand and West Bengal.

Such racket was busted amid allegations of rampant illegal mining activities in Joda and other areas. About a week ago, some local youths stumbled upon piles of manganese in a forested area, just 500 metres from Joda police station and the office of the joint director of mines. The illegally mines manganese weighing over 10 tonnes was covered under palm leaves. It was worth over Rs 1 lakh.

Such cases are coming to the fore with seizure of police and forest officials amid allegations that minerals are being illegally excavated in forested area like Raija and Ingani Jharan.

Lone teacher struggles with 75 students

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhamnagar, Jan 14: At a time when Class X students across the state have braced themselves up for the annual High School Certificate (HSC) examinations, 75 students of a High School are a worried lot. The school has only one teacher and he is a Hindi teacher.

The school in question is Jagannath High School under Dehudi Anandapur panchayat of Dhamnagar block in Bhadrak district.

Earlier, the school used to have two teachers- an English teacher and a Hindi teacher. After promotion, the English teacher was transferred elsewhere. And since then the Hindi teacher is managing the show.

The students and parents feel they are at sea as the school does not have teachers for important subjects like Mathematics, Science and English.



Earlier, the school had teachers and a reputation for quality education. Parents of Anandapur panchayat and the nearby Khadipada panchayat and villages like Sathagaon, Biroli, Dandakula and Tikhilia had enrolled their children at this school

Parents who are worried over the future of their children wondered how a single teacher will prepare the students for the examinations particularly when the teaching was badly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. They further alleged that they had taken the matter up with the education department several times but to no avail.

Earlier the school had teachers and a reputation so parents of Anandapur panchayat and the nearby Khadipada panchayat and of villages like Sathagaon, Biroli, dandakula and Tikhilia under Bhandaripokhari block had enrolled their children at this school.

But the current predicament of the school has left them dejected.

When contacted, block education officer (BEO) Pitambar Barik said efforts were on to send teachers to the school in one or two days.

Notably, some teachers of the nodal school in the locality have come to the students' rescue and have been teaching them for five days now to support the efforts of the only teacher.

ZOO AT SAMBALPUR

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Jan 14: Sambalpur is going to have a zoo soon. It will be set up at Jarang under Jujumara tehsil.

Officials of the forest and revenue departments conducted a joint survey and identified the land for the purpose. DFO Sanjit Kumar, Sadar ranger Gourishankar Das and the Jujumara tehsildar visited the area. About 80 acres of land have been earmarked. Infrastructure like a medical, stores and residential quarters will be built for staff on the revenue land. A hill stream is in the area. Its water will be dammed up for animals.

Bhitarkanika to close for 9 days

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, Jan 14: A nine-day ban on entry of tourists into Bhitarkanika National Park will be imposed from January 15 to January 23 for the annual census of saltwater crocodiles.

Bhitarkanika Mangrove (Wildlife) Forest Division Divisional Forest Officer Bikash Ranjan Dash said 22 groups have been formed to count the crocodiles in the 27 creeks and rivers within the park and its nearby areas. The forest department will also deploy nine boats for the census.

The restrictions on the visitors are meant to prevent noise pollution



CROC CENSUS

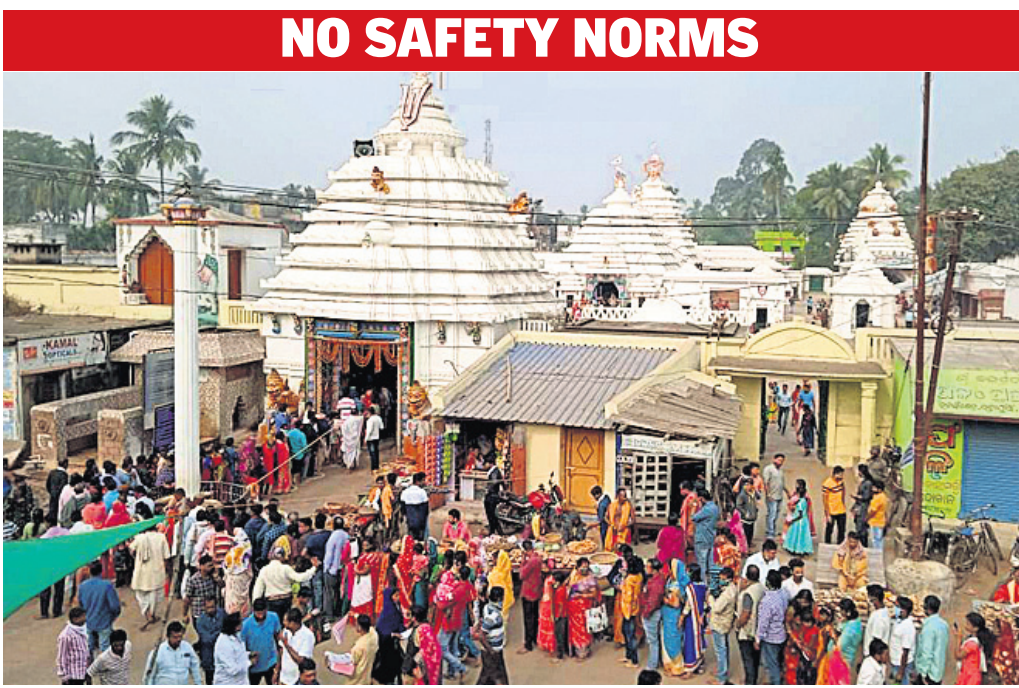
during counting of the reptiles in the park. Winter and exposure of more than 50 percent of mud bank and lunar cycle are suitable for counting of the reptiles.

The head count drive of the endangered estuarine crocodiles would be conducted under the supervi-

sion of wildlife personnel. The enumerators assisted by trained local forest staff and some herpetologists would cover Bhitarkanika river system besides innumerable creeks, water inlets and nullahs.

The team members will scout the rivers and other water bodies of the park and its nearby areas to count the crocodiles while wearing mask and adhering to social distancing norms.

Notably, Bhitarkanika is said to be accommodating over 70 per cent of the total estuarine crocodile (saltwater crocodile) count in the country. Conservation of the crocodiles was started in 1975.



NO SAFETY NORMS

Devotees thronging Bajdevjew temple in Kendrapara on Makar Sankrati, giving a scant regard to Covid norms

OP PHOTO

Millers yet to lift 6 lakh quintals paddy lying in Kalahandi mandis

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatana, Jan 14: Nearly 6 lakh quintals of paddy are left unsold at various mandis and lie with farmers in Kalahandi district amid allegations of tardy paddy procurement. Some millers have lifted less than 70 per cent of paddy against their target.

Taking serious note of the tardy pace of procurement, the administration had issued show causes to 11 millers, who have ignored the notices completely. It is alleged that paddy is not being lifted from mandis now, even though farmers have agreed for reduction of 7 kg of paddy per quintal during weight.

Farmers have expressed unhappiness over their unsold paddy. In the first phase, procurement target was over 40.26 lakh quintals while over 33.50 lakh quintals have been lifted.

Official sources said, 30, 367 quintals of paddy are lying at mandis. In reality, over 6 lakh quintals are laying at 208 mandis. 72 millers have lifted paddy of 51490 farmers at 208 mandis.

It may be noted here that Collector D Gavali Parag Harshad had is-



FILE PHOTO

sued show cause notices to six millers of Dharmgarh sub-division and five millers of Bhawanipatana sub-division for lifting paddy less than 70 percent of their targets, December 29. Despite notices, the millers have not come forward to lift the remaining paddy.

Locals alleged that staff of PACS, millers and officials of the civil

supplies department have formed a nexus to scuttle paddy procurement, thus forcing farmers to sell their paddy at under rates.

Though many farmers have to- kens, they are guarding their paddy at mandis, braving chill and sun. They are unsure when the paddy will be lifted and next target will come.

Siblings ‘godsend’ for road mishap victims in Bargarh

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargarh, Jan 14: Two brothers of Jokhipali village under Bijepur block in Bargarh district have appeared as godsend for many accident victims and set examples for others.

Dibas Kumar Sahu and Akash Kumar Sahu were felicitated by the Bargarh district regional transport department for their humanitarian gesture Monday. The state transport department heaped praise on the siblings through its Twitter handle.

When one of the brothers, Dibas, was asked to narrate some anecdotes, Dibas said he had rescued some persons seriously injured in a road mishap at Dubalabahal Chowk January 14, 2018. He had taken them first to Diptipur primary health centre and then to VIMSAR, Burla in Sambalpur. This way, their lives were saved.

“In another incident that took place at Punjipathar Chowk October 19, 2018; I had taken an injured woman to a nearby hospital on his



scooter,” he recounted.

Similarly, Akash said, “In a road mishap near Bijepur block chowk July 7 last year, two persons were seriously injured. After receiving the information, I rushed to the spot and took the victims to a private hospital in Bargarh. Their lives were saved.”

A teacher at Tumuripani Project UP School in Jharbandh block, Dibas besides rescuing accident victims organises various programmes to create awareness about road safety among people. Akash, who works as a teacher at a private school in Bargarh town, has made it a point to ensure no accident victim is left to die due to absence of timely help.

It was Deepa Barik, a social activist, that first brought the government's attention to these siblings' noble works through her tweets.

Bus with 50 people on board overturns in Dhenkanal district

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, Jan 14: A bus carrying more than 50 passengers overturned near Ramial bridge under Kamakhyanagar police limits in Dhenkanal district in the wee hours of Thursday, injuring five persons.

The ill-fated vehicle was heading towards Balasore from Rourkela. The driver of the bus lost control over the wheels around 3 AM as a result of which it turned turtle.

On being informed about the mishap, police and Fire Services personnel rushed to the spot, rescued the victims, and admitted them to Kamakhyanagar Hospital for treatment.

While two persons were critically injured in the mishap, others sustained minor injuries.

According to a source, ‘Sri Ramjee’, the ill fated bus, started its journey from Rourkela for Balaosre Wednesday night, but it faced mishap on the way.



YOGA FOR HEALTH

Akhila Bharatiya Yuba Sikhyak Sangh holds a mass Surya Namaskar at Arkit Garden in Rourkela

OP PHOTO

Chick pea farming makes women self-reliant

POST NEWS NETWORK

Champua, Jan 14: Scores of women are still confined to their households, but some women have become successful farmers by taking up chick pea farming in tribal-dominated Champua area of Keonjhar.

These women farmers of Godhuli village have managed to strengthen their economy and earn enough to feed their families. They have shown the way to others who idle away their time.

Reports said, after paddy farming, women in this village cultivate chick pea. Chick pea has much demand in the market. They have been doing this farming over last few years. The government provides them seeds of chick pea.

Chick pea has been raised across acres of land. They harvest the produce within 100 days from the sowing. After harvest, the women make bundles of the chick pea bearing plants and sell them in local market for Rs 10 to Rs 20 per bundle.



Some of them directly sell it to traders at the farmland. This farming has also spread in parts of Mayurbhanj too, as its demand is growing for its nutritional value.

Mandodari Nayak, a woman farmer of the village, asserted that chick pea cultivation fetches good earning for women in the village.

“We have become self-dependent and managed to meet our daily expenses with earning from this farming. Demand for indigenous variety of chick pea has gone up. We lay stress on farming the desi sola,” she added.

Another woman farmer, Sashikala Nayak, said there is no

CHICK PEA HAS BEEN RAISED ACROSS ACRES OF LAND. THEY HARVEST THE PRODUCE WITHIN 100 DAYS FROM THE SOWING


AFTER HARVEST, THE WOMEN MAKE BUNDLES OF THE CHICK PEA BEARING PLANTS AND SELL THEM IN LOCAL MARKET FOR RS 10 TO RS 20 PER BUNDLE

SOME OF THEM DIRECTLY SELL IT TO TRADERS AT THE FARMLAND. THIS FARMING HAS ALSO SPREAD IN PARTS OF MAYURBHANJ TOO, AS ITS DEMAND IS GROWING FOR ITS NUTRITIONAL VALUE

marketing problem for chick pea in the local market as its demand is growing. “Government seeds are often supplied late. Apart from household works, we partly work for chick pea farming. But we have to keep watch on the birds that often feed on it. It is a profitable one,” she observed.

“By your stumbling, the world is perfected.”

SRI AUROBINDO



TIME-OUT

After weeks-long protests by farmers in the vicinity of Delhi demanding outright repeal of three new farm laws, the Supreme Court Tuesday suspended the implementation of the laws until further order. Simultaneously, the top court constituted a four-member committee to go over the three laws and discuss issues with various stakeholders and submit a report within two months. Earlier, the court had shown frustrations at the way the government had been carrying out negotiations with the agitating farmers. The SC Monday had stopped short of putting a stay on the three laws. However, a day later it carried out the threat and put the implementation of the laws on hold. While welcoming the stay, farmers have openly disfavoured the formation of the committee. Their main contention is that all members of the SC-appointed panel are pro-government and previously supported the new farm laws and therefore they cannot expect much relief from the panel. Farmer unions have pooh-poohed the idea of constitution of a panel as they think this is a classic ploy by the government to prevaricate. The Centre has not immediately let out its reaction to the SC move.

The stay has not completely surprised the government as it knew the case will be headed for a stay. The court had hinted so much when it had first heard the matter earlier this month. An immediate relief for the Centre will be a disruption-free observance of the Republic Day. Another immediate benefit of the ruling is it is expected to break the protracted deadlock. While the stay on the implementation of the three laws looked like a victory for the agitating farmers, it was also a face-saver for the government. The Centre did not want to lose its face by agreeing to suspend the implementation of the laws and may have wanted the Supreme Court to do that bit on its behalf. In the seventh and the eighth rounds of discussions between the farmers and the government, the latter had categorically refused to negotiate on the repealing the three farm laws. It said the impasse, if not resolved through talks, may be referred to the Supreme Court.

The reactions of the farmers' outfits to the two-legged ruling of the court that they would continue with the stir do not augur well for all the stakeholders involved in the issue. The farmers must give respect to the democratic process of discussions. Having said that the interim stay has opened a Pandora's Box, the SC has put on hold the laws without examining their constitutionality – its bounden duty. Putting a stay on a legislation that has already been passed by Parliament could also be termed a judicial overreach. The court has not explained how it selected the members of the committee and on what basis. Further, how can a committee's decision be legally binding on the parties when the highest court of the land has failed to do so? It is not clear what the government will do now. Now that the committee has been entrusted with the task to talk to both the parties, the government may try to take cover behind the panel. The interim stay on the three legislations may exert pressure on the farmer unions to show flexibility, failing which the unions may risk losing the support of public opinion. However, the Centre must not recoil from its responsibility. It should continue to explore ways and means with a positive mind to end the impasse. Till then the interim stay on the implementation of the three farm laws will only work as a time-out during the faceoff between the Centre and the farmer unions.

WISDOM CORNER

- “I wake up every morning and think to myself, ‘how far can I push this company in the next 24 hours.’”

LEAH BUSQUE
- “If people are doubting how far you can go, go so far that you can't hear them anymore.”

MICHELE RUIZ
- “We need to accept that we won't always make the right decisions, that we'll screw up royally sometimes – understanding that failure is not the opposite of success, it's part of success.”

ARIANNA HUFFINGTON

WORDSWORTH

Bright

It's a noun, not an adjective. If you say, “I'm bright”, that's an immodest (and possibly inaccurate) statement. But “I'm a bright” says that you don't believe in God, more strictly that your view of the world is naturalistic, free of what its inventors describe as “supernaturalism and mystical elements of all kinds”. The term has only recently been coined by Paul Giesert and Mynga Futrell, two educators from Sacramento, California. They modelled it on gay, to provide an umbrella term for a potential coalition of all those who felt themselves isolated and without political influence in the USA because they professed no religious belief. The philosopher Daniel Dennett has taken it up and publicised it in newspaper articles, from two of which the quotations below have been taken. Somehow, I don't think it's going to catch on.


Bringing home the Bacon

It's also been said that it refers to the old fairground contest of catching the greased pig, whose prize was the pig, so the winner brought home the bacon. Your story reminded me at once of one of the tales told in that infamous e-mail about life in the 1500s that endlessly circulates online. That claims “it was a sign of wealth that a man could ‘bring home the bacon.’” That's true today, though usually in a broader sense of supplying material support to one's family or achieving success, but it's hard to assert with a straight face that it was so back in 1500 or 1300. We can't absolutely prove it wasn't around then – proving a negative is always difficult – but its total absence from the historical record before 1906 rather gives a pointer to its being modern. The first recorded user of the expression was Mrs Gans, mother of Joe. He was a famous boxer at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, the first native-born black American to win a world title. That was in 1900, when he was 26. Six years later he fought Oscar “Battling” Nelson in Goldfield, Nevada, now virtually a ghost town but then a booming community, the largest in the state. The match has been rated as the greatest lightweight championship bout ever contested, whose fame has endured enough that its centenary was recently marked in the area. Various stories say that after he won the fight (it ended in Gans's favour after 42 rounds when his opponent hit a low blow and was disqualified) he sent a telegram back to his mother in Baltimore: “Bringing home the bacon”. Other reports claim that what he really said was that he wasn't only bringing back the bacon but the gravy, too. These are probably later elaborations of what clearly soon became a widely known story.

LOL

Lawyer in heaven

On their way to get married, a young Catholic couple is involved in a fatal car accident. The couple found themselves sitting outside the Pearly Gates waiting for St. Peter to process them into Heaven. While waiting, they began to wonder: Could they possibly get married in Heaven? When St. Peter showed up, they asked him. St. Peter said, “I don't know. This is the first time anyone has asked. Let me go find out,” and he left. The couple sat and waited, and waited. Two months passed and the couple was still waiting. While waiting, they began to wonder what would happen



if it didn't work out; could you get a divorce in heaven. After yet another month, St. Peter finally returned, looking somewhat bedraggled. “Yes,” he informed the couple, “You can get married in Heaven.” “Great!” said the couple, “But we were just wondering, what if things don't work out? Could we also get a divorce in Heaven?” St. Peter, red-faced with anger, slammed his clipboard onto the ground. “What's wrong?” asked the frightened couple. “OH, COME ON!,” St. Peter shouted, “It took me three months to find a priest up here! Do you have any idea how long it'll take me to find a lawyer?”

WORSENER BY CYBER LOOT

FOCUS GDP CRISIS



Shivaji Sarkar

THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL OFFICE PROJECTIONS DO NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT ₹1.25 LAKH CRORE CYBER CRIME LOSSES IN 2019. THE COUNTRY LOST ₹128 CRORE DURING OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2019 AND 21,041 SUCH CASES WERE REGISTERED IN THESE THREE MONTHS

The projection for India's growth is not a surprise. It is on a continuous roll and the loss of ₹11.3 lakh crore or contraction of 7.7 per cent of GDP in absolute terms also may be a modest assessment because it is just only the economic and industry activities that are included in it. This means the growth in real GDP during 2020-21 is estimated at minus 7.7 per cent as compared to 4.2 per cent growth rate in 2019-20. This is 20 basis points more than the 7.5 per cent contraction projected by the Monetary Policy Committee of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Never before since 1952, India had such deep crisis.

Only hope remains on the most maligned agriculture growing at 3.2 per cent among the eight core sectors, as per the National Statistical Office (NSO) advance estimates for preparing the Budget 2021-22. It means if agriculture is given encouragement, it can give a major boost to the economy.

The state governments' revenues are in a worse situation as the debt rises phenomenally. The Centre's fiscal deficit itself would be over 7 per cent of GDP against the target of 3.5 per cent. The growing borrowings are likely to further hit the economy as it would have twin effects of severe inflation and shrinking of lending capital. It threatens the health of the banking sector, as its losses are mounting.

The unemployment rate, a key indicator of distress, as well as rural joblessness has jumped to a six-month high in December to 9.06 per cent, while rural rate climbed to 9.15 per cent, according to CMIE. This means about 17 to 18 crore people are affected.

The NSO projections do not take into account ₹1.25 lakh crore cyber crime losses in 2019, revealed by the National Cyber Security coordinator Lt Gen Rajesh Pant. The country lost ₹128 crore during October-December 2019 and 21,041 such cases (mainly ATM and debit cards) were registered in these three months, Anurag Thakur, MoS, Ministry of Finance told Lok Sabha quoting the RBI. Out of the total loss, ₹85 crore was lost in a single month of October 2019.

One must note that all cases



The projection for India's growth is not a surprise. It is on a continuous roll and the loss of ₹11.3 lakh crore or contraction of 7.7 per cent of GDP in absolute terms also may be a modest assessment because it is just only the economic and industry activities that are included in it

are not reported or recorded. And these do not include phone banking through NEFT transactions by criminal insurance agents of HDFC-type companies have mastered. Lt Gen Pant says cyber threats are increasing as smart cities and 5G are being rolled out. The worst is in states such as Uttar Pradesh, where the police reject e-FIRs on phone banking frauds without even primary queries, forget about the investigation. The impact on the country is far more as it disrupts family budget and consequent purchasing power. Quite a few have reportedly committed suicide as they lost their earnings.

While calculating seven months' data released in preparation to the Budget efforts many gaps remain. In 2014, it was expected that the new dispensation would correct the system. It has only worsened though policing and regulatory costs have since have risen several times. Yes, the country is in a difficult situation and Covid-19 unwise lockdown alone

is not to be blamed for the minus 23.9 per cent contraction reported in June 2020.

It had started reflecting by December 2019, when salaries for central university staff, autonomous bodies and others started being delayed. The government had also stopped sanctioned expenditures and imposed severe cuts.

The GDP growth had started slowing down through 2019. The phenomenon had caused concern in the last Economic Survey, which had indicated distress in many areas. This certainly accentuated as at least 17 crore people suffered severe jolt due to job losses, contraction of wages or closure of business activities for the better part of 2020. Many are yet to have the wages restored to pre-pandemic levels. It has contracted purchasing of power of almost every individual, family and corporate.

No wonder the NSO assesses private consumption shrinkage by 9.5 per cent and 14.5 per cent in

gross fixed capital formation – indicator for private investment. In other words it sees general poverty increasing. In 2016 too, post note ban disorder private consumption had fallen. The policy makers apparently are not learning lessons from knee-jerk actions that jolt the entire socio-economic processes.

Except merger of banks possibly to window-dress losses little has been done over the years to check the losses of banks. The 14 public-sector lenders, which included five banks, posted an aggregate loss of ₹74,278 crore for 2019 against ₹65,723.52 crore in 2018, based on figures available on the CapitalLine Database. This loss was in spite of the State-run entities posting a positive aggregate of ₹63,645 crore in 2019 and ₹62,371 crore for FY18. The losses are mounting and most banks are avoiding giving loans to students and other needy.

The 2020-21 GDP at 2011-12 prices would be ₹134.40 lakh crore as against provisional estimate growth rate of ₹145.66 lakh crore. Though the NSO says that there could be revisions at the end of March, the overall distress would not disappear. The next financial year could be better provided the industry functions in a better manner, jobs rise, lending and repayments are healthy. These are hopes but revenue collections suffered in the first three months are found difficult to recover. Revenue shortfall from taxes and disinvestments in PSUs is estimated at over ₹7 lakh crore but the room for expenditure cut is limited with an eye on growth. It would be interesting to see how the government borrows.

The pandemic apart, the projections suggest that country's policies have not matched the problems. It calls for total review of each and every aspect of the social and economic life and revival of the planning process. It is apparent that agriculture that employs over 80 crore (or 60 per cent of population) has been given a short shrift. The development strategies like bullet train and toll roads possibly are disastrous and unilateral financial powers to rulers need check for a positive growth in five years – the sooner the better.

INFA

SPECTRUM LIFE



Sudha Devi Nayak

THE PAIN OF LOSS IS SO INTENSE, SO HEARTBREAKING BECAUSE IN LIVING WE DEEPLY CONNECT WITH ANOTHER HUMAN BEING AND GRIEF IS THE REFLECTION OF THE CONNECTION THAT HAS BEEN LOST

Julian Barnes's “Levels of Life” is a meditation on love, loss and grief that touches us with immediacy that is overwhelming. Martin Fletcher of The Independent has said “Anyone who has loved and suffered loss or just suffered should read this book, and reread it and reread it” and The Times has said “To read it is a privilege. To have written it is astonishing”. Indeed it requires tremendous courage and tremendous grief, even self effacement to bare your soul before the world. Yet it is grief contained, written in a style that is measured with an elegant restraint, honesty and truthfulness. Grief is the great denominator, freeing people from hierarchy; there are no heroes in grief. There is the singularity in grief with Barnes saying, “One grief throws no light upon another” but also the commonality as none of us can escape its true pangs. Barnes opens the novel with “You put together two things that, have not been put together before. And the world is changed”. Yes life is the coming together of disparate things, more so love. The first part of his book combines photography and aeronautics. It is a bal-

looning adventure of Nadar the photographer with 8 companions and his wife Ernestine. Up in the air he sees the silent immensities of welcoming beneficent space where no evil force can reach him and negative emotions fading away, leaving forgiveness. The balloon crash landed near Hanover with its balloonists suffering injuries. Nadar continues life with his wife whom he loves dearly and whom he nurses till her death. If there was a pattern to his life she provided it. He dies soon after and his aerostatic photographs are near forgotten. But they represent a moment the world grew up.

In the second part also Fred Burnaby an English traveller and adventurer and Sarah Bernhardt the legendary actress travel in their respective balloons and land in France and what follows is their imagined affair. Barnes says here that we are but groundlings who aspire to the exaltation of art, religion, love. But when we soar there are necessarily no soft landings, we can also crash. “So why do we constantly aspire to love? Because love is the meeting point of truth and magic and truth, as in photography and

magic as in ballooning.” Burnaby's and Bernhardt's love was doomed from the beginning, with his reticence and her waywardness. He longed for a stable relationship but she lived in the moment, constantly in search of new emotions and sensations and her heart desired more excitement than one person can give whereas Burnaby felt we are all incomplete and seek completion through another person. It was not to be.

The third part is the emotional epicentre of the book, an insight into love and sorrow. Barnes loses his wife of thirty years when nothing prepares him and he had little to help him to cope. Friends and acquaintances who dwell on his loss sounded empty and meaningless. He does not agonise over their reactions and they didn't matter when the worst has happened. Every love story is a grief story when one or the other is left behind. What has been taken away is greater than the sum of what was there. Life has lost its celebratory qualities, reduced to a mere passive continuance. Sometimes he feels life itself is deprived of her beauty, body and radiant curiosity. Happiness is al-

ways shared happiness as there can never be solitary happiness which is a contradiction in terms. He misses her in every action and inaction. He contemplated suicide but suicide meant killing her off altogether, an erasure of all her memories. He calls on others' memories of her; he is in communion with her, even articulating her responses. “The fact someone is dead may mean they are not alive but doesn't mean they don't exist.”

He is candid in his grief but protective of her privacy, giving away little. She remains the elusive figure of his grief. The pain of loss is so intense, so heartbreaking because in living we deeply connect with another human being and grief is the reflection of the connection that has been lost. He mentions the German word “Sehnsucht” which means “inconsolable longing” “in the human heart for the loved one. The loss happens in a moment but its aftermath lasts a life time. No one could express it better than Pablo Neruda Love is so short, forgetting is so long. In Barnes' words, “Part of love is preparing for death. You feel confirmed in your love when she dies.”

Reconsider farm laws

Sir, The Supreme Court of India has issued an exemption order on the implementation of the three agri-business laws enacted by the Central government. For this purpose the SC has formed a committee. But the question is, are the four people who are on the committee in favour of the Agriculture Act? All the four have supported the new policy and in favour of the government. So how they will submit in favor of the farmers? The court's attempt to separate the farmers from the agitation before January 26 failed. If the court wanted to settle through the committee, an independent committee had to be formed. There is still time for this independent committee to be formed. The government has previously said it is not ready to repeal the new agricultural policy under any circumstances. In such a scenario, the farmers have no choice but to continue the movement. If the movement goes on for a long time, it is certain that the movement will be huge and that will be a bad omen for democracy. From that point of view, the message between the government and the peasant leaders to be held on the 15th should be positive.

Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

India in UNSC

Sir, India started its two-year term as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) this month with its specific objective of speaking out against terrorism. India's membership comes at a time when there is considerable disagreement among the P5 members about a few issues. Considering the profound impact of Covid-19 on the lives and livelihoods of people across the world, the fierce rivalry between the USA and China and the long-standing border disputes between India and its neighbouring countries, India's membership assumes immense significance. India has been demanding reforms in the UN for a long time. The present structure of the UNSC delegates most of the powers to Britain, France, the USA, Russia and China whereas the non-permanent members have smaller roles. The powerful members are against reforms in the UNSC. Most of the UN Secretary Generals have stressed upon the importance of reforms in the world body. Notwithstanding the short period of the term, it provides India an excellent opportunity to prove that it is a world power and establish its agenda of multilateralism and reforms. During this term India needs to give priority to its progress in different domains – terrorism, multilateralism, international peace and security and technological advancements.

Venu GS, KOLLAM

Apex court’s panel biased: Cong

Since all the four members of the apex court-appointed committee had publicly expressed their views in favour of the laws passed by the Centre, justice cannot be expected

AJAI KUMAR LALLU | PRESIDENT, UP CONGRESS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mathura, Jan 13: Uttar Pradesh state Congress president Ajai Kumar Lallu asserted that farmers protesting against the three central farm laws cannot expect justice from the Supreme Court-appointed panel because four of its members have already favoured the laws in past. Talking to reporters here, Lallu said with the apex court intervening in the matter, the farmers had expected that it would repeal the law. But with the Supreme Court merely staying their implementa-



tion, the farmers are worried and they will not be satisfied with anything less than the repeal of those laws, Lallu added. “Since all the four members of the apex court-appointed committee had publicly expressed their views in favour of the laws passed by the Centre, justice cannot be expected,” said Lallu. When the Supreme Court intervened in the matter taking note of the plight of farmers sitting under the open sky in the chilling cold, the

farmers expected the repeal of the law by the court, but they have been dismayed over the apex court’s order. The UP Congress chief made these remarks while interacting with reporters on the Yamuna Expressway while on his way back to Lucknow from Agra, where he had appeared in a court for law-makers to seek bail in a case of disobeying government officials and violating various provisions of the Epidemic Act in May last year. Lallu had appeared in Agra’s

Farmers dismayed

When the SC intervened in the matter taking note of the plight of farmers, the farmers expected the repeal of the law by the court

But with the SC merely staying their implementation, the farmers are worried and they will not be satisfied with anything less

MP/MLA court along with his party colleagues Pradeep Mathur and Vivek Bansal. The trio had been booked on May 19, 2020 by Fatehpur Sikri police under sections 188 and 269 of the Indian Penal Code and section (2)4 of the Epidemic Act when they had visited Agra with a fleet of over 800 buses to hand them over to the UP government to ferry migrants workers on their long march back home amid the Covid lockdown. The trio was granted bail by Additional District Judge Umakant Zindal.

RATION SEIZED FROM SP LEADER’S WAREHOUSE

Fahimuddin, the SP leader, failed to provide a convincing answer when asked about the presence of government ration in his warehouse

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Badaun (UP), Jan 14: A truck-load of government ration was seized from the warehouse of a Samajwadi Party leader in Alapur area here following a joint raid by a team of the revenue and food and civil supply departments, an official said Thursday. The administration had received inputs about foodgrains meant to be distributed under the public distribution system being diverted to the black market, District Supply Officer Raman Pratap Singh said. The raid was carried out Wednesday following a directive from District Magistrate Kumar Prashant and we seized 550 sacks of rice, Singh added. Fahimuddin, the SP leader, failed to provide a convincing answer when asked about the presence of government ration in his ware-



The administration had received inputs about foodgrains meant to be distributed under the public distribution system being diverted to the black market

RAMAN PRATAP SINGH | DISTRICT SUPPLY OFFICER

house, he said, adding that the same amount of foodgrains were found missing from a neighbouring ration shop. An FIR was lodged against the ration shop owner and SP leader, he said. Fahimuddin is the district secretary of the SP Prem Pal Singh Yadav, the party’s district unit pres-

ident said. According to Yadav, he had no information about government ration being recovered from Fahimuddin’s warehouse and said that he was waiting to get an “authentic report” on the matter. Truck-load of govt ration seized from SP leader’s warehouse in UP.

‘Allegations against minister serious’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 14: Terming the rape claim by a woman against Maharashtra Social Justice Minister Dhananjay Munde as serious, NCP president Sharad Pawar Thursday said the party will discuss the issue and decide on it “as soon as possible. Pawar also referred to the NCBs arrest of the son-in-law of another NCP minister Nawab Malik in a drug case and said people concerned should cooperate with the agency. The NCP chief said there is no personal allegation against Malik. Pawar told reporters that Munde met him on Wednesday and explained the details in connection with the allegation. “I think the allegation against him (Munde) is serious. Naturally, we will have to discuss the issue as a party. I will discuss the same in detail with my key colleagues and take them into confidence,” Pawar said. “Further steps will be taken after knowing their views. We will do this as soon as possible, he added. Munde told reporters that Pawar and other leaders of the party will take a call on the issue of his resignation.



The 37-year-old woman, an aspiring singer, had said she wrote to Mumbai police commissioner on January 10, stating that Munde repeatedly raped her in 2006. She also claimed that she approached Oshiwara police here earlier but her complaint was ignored. Munde, NCP leader from Beed district, has denied the allegations, claiming he is being blackmailed by the woman and her sister. Munde (45) said the woman’s claims were part of a conspiracy to blackmail him. He, however, acknowledged that he was in a relationship with the woman’s sister and has two children with her. In a statement issued on Tuesday, Munde said his wife, family and friends were aware of this relationship, adding the two kids have been accepted by his family.

NCB raids home of Maha minister’s kin

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 14: The Narcotics Control Bureau Thursday conducted searches at the city-based residence of Maharashtra NCP minister Nawab Malik’s son-in-law Sameer Khan, who has been arrested in a drugs case, an NCB official said. Besides, a Mumbai court remanded Khan in the NCB’s custody till January 18. Khan was arrested by the NCB on Wednesday over his alleged role in the drugs case in which three persons, including British national Karan Sajani, were arrested here last week after seizure 200 kg of drugs, an official said. A team of the NCB on conducted searches at Khan’s residence in suburban Bandra. No seizure was made from his house, the official said. The NCB team also conducted searches in Juhu area, he added. Meanwhile, Khan was produced before a local court which remanded him in the NCB’s custody till January 18 for further probe into the case, special public prosecutor Atul Sarpande said. NCP chief Sharad Pawar Thursday also referred to Khan’s arrest by the NCB and said people concerned should cooperate with



the agency. Talking to reporters here, Pawar said there is no personal allegation against Malik. Khan was arrested by the NCB on Wednesday after several hours of questioning. He had been summoned by the agency after it found an alleged online transaction of Rs 20,000 between him and one of the accused in the drugs case in which British national Karan Sajani and two others were arrested last week, sources said. State minister Nawab Malik, without mentioning any incident, in a tweet on Thursday said, “Nobody is above the law and it should be applied without any discrimination. Law will take its due course and justice will prevail.”

Scrap farm laws now: Shiv Sena

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 14: The Shiv Sena Thursday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to honour the sentiments of protesting farmers and scrap new controversial farm laws, and said he will grow bigger in stature by doing so. An editorial in the Shiv Sena mouthpiece ‘Saamana’ also accused the Centre of trying to end the farmers’ protest by using the Supreme Court as the front. The SC Tuesday stayed the implementation of the new farm laws till further orders and decided to set up a four-member committee to resolve the impasse between the Centre and farmers’ unions protesting at Delhi borders. The editorial said the deadlock over the issue continues despite the SC’s decision, and noted that the farmers’ bodies have rejected the committee’s four members as they allegedly supported the farm laws earlier. Prime Minister Modi should welcome the protest and the courage of farmers. (He) should scrap the laws honouring the sentiments of farmers. Modi will grow bigger than what he is today. Grow bigger Modi! the Marathi publication said. The sentiments of farmers need to be understood if the government wants the situation not to deteriorate further, it said, referring to the tractor rally planned by farm-

ers’ bodies in Delhi on January 26. It claimed that 60 to 65 farmers have made sacrificed their lives in the protest so far, and the country has not seen such a disciplined agitation till now after Independence. The editorial also termed as shocking the Centre’s claim before the Supreme Court that ‘Khalistanis’ have infiltrated the farmers’ protest. It is also the government’s failure if Khalistanis have infiltrated the protest. The government does not want to end the protest and wants to play politics by giving the agitation a colour of treason, it alleged. It claimed the government will block farmers by lifting the stay on the implementation of the laws once protesters at the Singhu border (near Delhi) return home. Hence, what has to happen will happen only now. The farmers’ bodies are in a ‘do or die’ mood, it said. The Marathi daily also asked if lakhs of farmers will be labelled as anti-national if they are not going to accept the Supreme Court’s decision. The SC stayed the implementation of new farm laws till further orders and decided to set up a 4-member panel to resolve the impasse

Gujarat cadre IAS officer joins BJP after taking VRS

A K Sharma, a 1988 batch officer from Mau district in Uttar Pradesh, is considered close to Prime Minister Narendra Modi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Jan 14: Gujarat cadre IAS officer A K Sharma, who recently took voluntary retirement from the service, joined the BJP here Thursday, a party spokesperson said. A K Sharma, a 1988 batch officer

from Mau district in Uttar Pradesh, is considered close to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and had worked with him in Gujarat. Sharma joined the party in the presence of state BJP president Swatantra Dev Singh and Deputy Chief Minister Dr Dinesh Sharma at the party headquarters here. In a tweet, Swatantra Dev Singh welcomed Sharma into the party. “Today former IAS officer Arvind Kumar Sharma was welcomed in the BJP family. The party will definitely get new impetus with Sharma’s capabilities and dedication who has been associated with the ideology of ‘sabka saath, sabka



vikas,” he said. Sharma had expressed his desire to work for the BJP and will be joining the party, BJP spokesperson Chandra Mohan had said earlier in the day. Sharma joins the BJP at a time the party is finalising candidates for

elections to the 12 seats of the Legislative Council on January 28. The last date for the filing of nominations is January 18. Asked if Sharma could be made a candidate, Chandra Mohan said the names are decided by the central leadership. Sharma had worked with Narendra Modi from 2001 to 2020. He initially worked in the Gujarat chief minister’s office and later in the PMO. Sharma held the charge of the secretary (MSME) at the Centre before taking the voluntary retirement, sources said, adding that he had his schooling from Mau.



Panel to study liquor ban impact

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandrapur, Jan 14: The Maharashtra government has set up a 13-member high-level committee to study the socio-economic impact of liquor ban in Chandrapur district. The previous BJP-led state government banned sale and consumption of liquor in Chandrapur on April 1, 2015. In June last year, state Relief and Rehabilitation Minister Vijay Wadettiwar, who is also Chandrapur’s guardian minister, said he is in favour of lifting the liquor ban in Chandrapur once the COVID-19 crisis ends. As per a government notification issued on Tuesday, a 13-member committee, headed by former principal secretary Ramnath Jha, has been formed to conduct a survey on the social and economic impact after and before the imposition of the liquor ban in Chandrapur. The committee would also seek the opinion of public representa-



tives, social organisations and various other organisations about the ban on liquor in Chandrapur district, the notification said. The other members of the committee include Chandrapur’s superintendent of police, civil surgeon, women and child welfare and social welfare officers, as well as lawyers, academicians and excise department officials. The committee’s report was submitted to the state government in September. Wadettiwar in June last year claimed the number of kidney infections and cancer cases has increased in the district due to the consumption of “duplicate liquor” (fake brews of some brands) being smuggled here.

Daughter eligible for govt jobs on compassionate ground: HC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Allahabad, Jan 13: The Allahabad High Court has ruled that a married daughter of a government official dying during his service is no less eligible than her married brother for the state job on the compassionate ground. Justice J J Munir gave the ruling on a plea by a state native Manjul Srivastava challenging a June 2020 order of the Prayagraj’s district basic education officer. He had rejected her claim to the appointment on the compassionate ground following her fathers death during his service to the state government. The bench held that rejecting her claim only because she is married would breach the Fundamental Rights under Articles 14 and 15. The court recalled even earlier, in the case of Vimla Srivastava, it had been held that the exclusion of married daughters from the definition of ‘family’ in the rules for appointment on compassionate grounds was unconstitutional and violative of Articles 14 and 15 of the Constitution. Therefore, even if the state government has not amended the rule, it cannot be considered a subsisting provision for deciding the claim of a married daughter. The court pointed out that even otherwise the word daughter figures in the rule shorn of any adjective

married daughter is no less eligible for government jobs on compassionate grounds than her married brother or unmarried sister. The bench held that rejecting the claim of a deceased government official’s daughter for a job on compassionate grounds only because she is married would breach the Fundamental Rights under Articles 14 and 15. The court recalled even earlier, in the case of Vimla Srivastava, it had been held that the exclusion of married daughters from the definition of ‘family’ in the rules for appointment on compassionate grounds was unconstitutional and violative of Articles 14 and 15 of the Constitution. Therefore, even if the state government has not amended the rule, it cannot be considered a subsisting provision for deciding the claim of a married daughter. The court pointed out that even otherwise the word daughter figures in the rule shorn of any adjective

Fact file

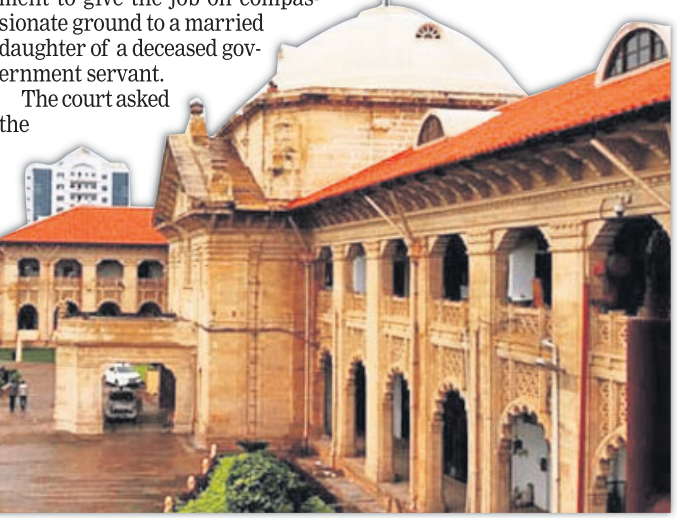
Justice J J Munir gave the ruling on a plea by a state native Manjul Srivastava challenging a June 2020 order of the Prayagraj’s district basic education officer

He had rejected her claim to the appointment on the compassionate ground following her fathers death during his service to the state government

The bench held that rejecting her claim only because she is married would breach the Fundamental Rights under Articles 14 and 15

in the definition of deceased’s family and accordingly the word ‘daughter’ has to be read unqualified by her marital status. Accordingly, the relevant rules do not even require any further amendment to allow the government to give the job on compassionate ground to a married daughter of a deceased government servant. The court asked the

District Education Department to consider and decide Majul’s claim for compassionate appointment by law without reference to her marital status, within two months.





We have to prepare teachers who can inculcate an inquisitive habit in our children and empower them to ask questions in the classrooms
MANISH SISODIA | DELHI DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

109 TEST +VE FOR UK VARIANT nCoV STRAIN

The number of people who have tested positive for the new UK variant of SARS-CoV-2 in the country has climbed to 109, the Union Health Ministry said Thursday



of the day quote

In the past few weeks, we have received inputs of several attacks on journalists and civil society activists in Afghanistan. The targeted killing of journalists and civil society members, aimed at suppressing the freedom of expression and informed discussion on critical issues related to peace and governance, is of deep concern

ANURAG SRIVASTAVA | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON

We are all proud of the glorious history of the tribals. No one can forget the martyrdom of the hundreds of tribals who gathered at Mangarh Dham under the leadership of Govind Guru

ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER

We are proud that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been reciting Tamil poems in different parts of the world

JP NADDA | BJP PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Nepal FM arrives in India

New Delhi: Nepal's Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali arrived here on Thursday on a three-day visit during which he will co-chair the India-Nepal Joint Commission meeting with his Indian counterpart S Jaishankar, and is expected to discuss COVID-19-related cooperation while reviewing the entire gamut of bilateral relations. Gyawali is the senior-most political leader from Nepal to visit India after Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli triggered a border row last year by publishing a new political map that showed the three Indian territories -- Limpiyadhura, Kalapani and Lipulekh -- as part of Nepal.

Shripad Naik's health improving

Panaji: The vital parameters of Union Minister of State for Defence Shripad Naik, who was hospitalised earlier this week following a road mishap, are stable, an official statement said Thursday. "Union Minister of state for Defence Shripad Naik is much better than yesterday and his general condition is improving. All his vital parameters are stable. His blood pressure is normal. He still continues to be on high flow nasal cannula oxygenation and is maintaining O2 saturation of 98 per cent," a spokesperson said Thursday.

JNU reopens

New Delhi: The Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) will allow entry of fourth year PhD and MSc and MCA students in its fifth and sixth phase of reopening, from Friday and February 1, officials said. "PhD students (fourth year only) from all science schools, special centres, other centres (both day scholars and hostlers) who requires access to the laboratory are allowed to enter into the campus from Friday," read a circular issued by JNU registrar Pramod Kumar.

Buffalo kills man

Guwahati: An irate mob Thursday set a forest department office on fire after a wild buffalo killed a young man in Biswanath district in northern Assam bordering Arunachal Pradesh, officials said. According to the police, hundreds of locals, including women, turned violent after Jayanta Das, a villager, was killed by a wild buffalo at Muttackgaon in Biswanath district.

PM to launch vaccination drive Jan 16



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 14: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch India's COVID-19 vaccination drive on January 16 via video conferencing and adequate doses of the two made-in-India vaccines have been delivered to all states and Union Territories, the government said Thursday.

This will be the world's largest vaccination programme covering the entire length and breadth of the country and all preparations are in place to initiate the programme on the principles of 'Jan Bhagidari', the Prime Minister's Office said in a statement.

Prime Minister Modi will launch the pan-India rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination drive on January 16 at 10:30 AM via video conferencing, the PMO said. A total of 3,006 session sites across all states and UTs will be virtually connected during the launch and around 100 beneficiaries will be vaccinated at each session site on the first day, the statement said. Separately, sources said Modi is likely to interact via video link with some healthcare workers from across the country who will be receiving the shots on the first day. Officials at New Delhi's AIIMS and Safdarjung hospitals, which are among the shortlisted facilities, said they are "ready for a two-way communication". The PMO statement said the vaccination programme is based on principles of priority groups to be vaccinated first. Healthcare workers, both in the government and private sectors, including Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) workers, will receive the vaccine during this phase. The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) had earlier this month approved Oxford COVID-

19 vaccine Covishield, manufactured by the Serum Institute, and indigenously developed Covaxin of Bharat Biotech for restricted emergency use in the country, paving the way for a massive inoculation drive.

Adequate doses of both Covishield and Covaxin have already been delivered to all states/UTs with the active support of the Ministry of Civil Aviation. These have been further delivered by the State/UT governments to the districts, the PMO said.

The vaccination programme will use Co-WIN, an online digital platform developed by the Union Health Ministry, which will facilitate real-time information of vaccine stocks, storage temperature and individualised tracking of beneficiaries for COVID-19 vaccine. This digital platform will assist programme managers across all levels while conducting vaccination sessions, the PMO said. A dedicated 24x7 call centre - 1075 - has also been established for addressing the queries related to the COVID-19 pandemic, vaccine rollout and the Co-WIN software.

Earlier in the day, the health ministry said, "The massive countrywide COVID-19 vaccination drive will be rolled out by Prime Minister from January 16.... Therefore, it has been decided by the Ministry of Health in consultation with the office of the President of India to reschedule the Polio vaccination day, also known as the National Immunisation Day (NID) or 'Polio Ravivar' to 31st January." The full initial procurement of 1.65 crore doses of COVID-19 vaccines -- Covishield and Covaxin -- has been allocated to all states and UTs in proportion to their healthcare workers database.

9th round of govt-farmers talks today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 14: The government's ninth round of negotiations with protesting farmer unions will take place as scheduled on Friday and the Centre is hopeful of positive discussions, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said on Thursday.

"The government is ready to hold talks with farmers' leaders with an open mind," Tomar told reporters here. Clearing the confusion over the fate of the ninth round of talks, which was the only outcome in the last meeting on January 8, in the wake of the Supreme Court on January 11 appointing a four-member panel to resolve the impasse and a key member of the proposed committee subsequently recusing himself, Tomar said the talks between the government and the union representatives will take place as scheduled for 12 pm on January 15. The farmer unions have been maintaining that they



were ready to attend the scheduled talks with the government, even as they have said they do not want to appear before the court-appointed panel and have also questioned its composition. The apex court had on Tuesday stayed the implementation of the three central laws till further orders and announced the formation of a committee to hear the grievances of the farmers and the opinion of the government.

Thousands of farmers, mainly from Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh, have been camping at the border of Delhi for several weeks, demanding the repeal of the laws they say will lead to the weakening of the minimum support price (MSP) system. The three contentious laws are the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020, the Essential Commodities

TAKE A CHILL PILL



Tourists take selfies in the back drop of a frozen waterfall at Tangmarg, in Baramulla district of north Kashmir PTI PHOTO

No R-Day chief guest this year: MEA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 14: The Ministry of External Affairs on Thursday announced that there will be no foreign leader as the chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations due to the global situation arising out of the coronavirus pandemic. It will be for the first time in over five decades that India will not have a chief guest at the Republic Day parade.

"Due to the global COVID 19 sit-



uation, it has been decided that this year there will not be a foreign head of state or head of government as the chief guest for our Republic Day event," MEA Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava

said at a media briefing. The decision was taken after British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's last-minute decision to cancel his visit due to the spread of a mutant strain of the coronavirus in the UK.

India had invited Johnson as the Republic Day chief guest and he accepted India's invitation, calling it "a great honour". However, earlier this month, Johnson cancelled his India visit due to the pandemic that has escalated in the UK following the mutant variant.

‘Over 270 terrorists currently active in J&K’

There were 421 active terrorists in J&K in 2019 and over 300 in 2020. A total of 225 terrorists were killed in 2020. As many as 160 terrorists were killed in 2019 and 257 in 2018, they said



AGENCIES

Jammu, Jan 14: More than 270 terrorists are currently active in Jammu and Kashmir, which is less than the 2019 and 2020 figures, official sources have said.

The Union Territory has seen a decrease in terrorist incidents, infiltration and civilian killings in 2020, while security forces carried out more than 100 "successful" counter-terrorism operations killing 225 ter-

rorists, they said. There are over 270 terrorists active in Jammu and Kashmir currently, of whom 205 are in Kashmir Valley, they said.

There were 421 active terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir in 2019 and over 300 in 2020. A total of 225 terrorists were killed in 2020. As many as 160 terrorists were killed in 2019 and 257 in 2018, they said.

In 2020, terrorists activities were also witnessed in so-far peaceful areas south of the Pir

Panjal range in Jammu region, including Kistwar-Doda and Poonch, they said. Jammu and Kashmir Police chief Dilbag Singh had earlier said that "As many as 635 OGWs were arrested (in 2020) and 56 out of them were booked under the Public Safety Act (PSA)."

Singh had said that all the terror organisations are leaderless now and those militants who are recruited as leaders of any group by Pakistan-based handlers are caught or killed.

IS BIHAR ENTERING A PHASE OF JUNGLE RAJ 2.0?

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Patna, Jan 14: While the police in Patna are facing criticism over the sensational murder of an Indigo state head, a section of people in Bihar are apprehensive that they might be entering into a phase of 'Jungle Raj 2.0'.

Indigo airlines station manager, Rupesh Kumar Singh (40), was allegedly shot dead by criminals near the Shastri Nagar police station area in Patna Tuesday.

The murder of the Indigo state head brings back the fearful memories of Airtel GM's murder at Bahadurpur Gumti in Patna in 2005, the kidnapping of Bharat Singh and a series of criminal acts which took place during the Lalu Prasad-Rabri Devi regime between 1990 and 2005. The high crime rate

during that period even led to the downfall of the RJD in 2005.

Now, the Nitish Kumar government is facing similar criticism over the growing crime graph in the state ever since he returned as Bihar Chief Minister for a seventh time in November 2020.

In a bid to bring down the crime graph, the Nitish Kumar government had started operation 'Ganga Snaan' during 2005-2007 when several notorious criminals were silently eliminated by the police or were put behind bars. On may recall the famous encounter of dreaded gangster Amresh Singh in Khagaria, or the killing of gangster Guddu Sharma in an encounter in Delhi. Many of Bihar's most notorious gangsters, such as Surajbhan Singh, Anant Singh and Mohamad Sahabuddin, were put behind bars



during that period.

It was a secret operation carried out by the Bihar police and the STF to eliminate the criminals, when the government had given a free hand to the police. Hence, there are

no official records of the encounters that took place during that period.

Sources say that due to the impact of the operation, Nitish Kumar managed to attain the image of 'Sushashan Babu' in Bihar.

Now the question is whether the Nitish Kumar government would again adopt a similar modus operandi to check the rising crime graph in the state.

The Chief Minister, who also holds the home portfolio, is under immense pressure following the murder of Rupesh Singh. The leaders of his alliance partner BJP in particular are making aggressive statements to corner the CM.

Janardan Sigrwal, BJP MP from Maharajganj, said: "Killers of Rupesh Singh should be hanged at the busy chowks of the city in broad daylight. If any amendment is required to do this, the government should proceed with it. Criminals cannot allowed to be let off. In the case of Rupesh Singh, Patna police have to expose the planner."

Earlier, Nitin Naveen, BJP MLA

from Bankipur, had asked the Bihar government to endorse the Uttar Pradesh model of encounter.

Union Minister RK Singh said that the Bihar government should suspend callous police officers who have failed to control law and order in Patna.

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav has already said that Nitish Kumar has failed to control the law and order situation in Bihar and should resign from his post or give the home portfolio to some other minister.

Meanwhile, the Bihar police have claimed that they have got some leads in the Indigo case and the criminals will be apprehended very soon.

Rupesh Singh was killed on Tuesday night when he was returning from the airport after receiving Covid-19 vaccines.



Samples taken from poultry markets have tested negative with respect to Bird Flu. Have directed to open the poultry market & withdraw the orders to restrict trade & import of chicken stocks
ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CM

BUDGET SESSION OF PAR FROM JAN 29

The Budget session of Parliament will begin January 29 with the address of President Ram Nath Kovind to the joint sitting of both the Houses and the Union Budget will be presented February 1



of the day quote

Hence, the farmers don't think anything will come out of discussions with the committee. And I agree with them. It would have been better if independent -- in a true sense independent -- persons had been appointed

SHARAD PAWAR | NCP CHIEF

Uttar Pradesh chief minister has no control over law and order, he only issues statements and announcements. Even then the Rajbhawan has a role of a mute spectator. Why?

AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY PRESIDENT

If the BJP MLAs have any objection they can go to Delhi, meet our national leaders and give them all the information and complaints they have. I won't object to that but I ask them not to damage the party's reputation by talking ill

B S YEDURIAPPA | KARNATAKA CM

SHORT TAKES

MP hooch tragedy: Toll reaches 24

Bhopal/Morena: With the death of four more people, the toll in the hooch tragedy in Madhya Pradesh's Morena district has gone up to 24, a senior police official said on Thursday. Besides, 15 people are currently undergoing treatment in different government hospitals in Morena and Gwalior after consuming spurious liquor, Deputy Inspector General, Chambal Range, Rajesh Hingankar told PTI.

Naxals kill husband of village sarpanch

Rajnandgaon: A group of Naxals allegedly killed the husband of a village sarpanch on suspicion of being a police informer in Chhattisgarh's Rajnandgaon district, police said on Thursday. The incident took place on Wednesday night in Pardoni village under Manpur police station limits, a Naxal-affected area located around 170 km from the state capital Raipur. The 47-year-old victim, husband of Pardoni village's sarpanch (panchayat head), was beaten to death by ultras, Additional Superintendent of Police Jaiprakash Barhai said.

Drugs seized

Shimla: More than 400 kilograms of drugs worth over ₹4 crore in the international market has been seized in Himachal Pradesh's Kullu district, Director General of Police Sanjay Kundu said on Thursday. In an official statement, he said that the seizure of over 122 kg of charas, a form of cannabis, and 295 kg of ganja (marijuana) is one of the biggest in the state. According to police three people were arrested.

'Befitting reply if any superpower hurts national pride'

INDIAN ARMED FORCES CELEBRATE VETERANS DAY JANUARY 14 EVERY YEAR



Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with Chief of Defence Staff Bipin Rawat during the 5th Armed Forces Veterans Day, in Bangalore

PTI PHOTO

AGENCIES

Bangalore, Jan 14: India does not want a war but its soldiers are capable of giving befitting reply if any 'superpower' hurts the country's pride, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said Thursday amid the eight-month-old border standoff with China.

"We don't want war and we are in favour of protecting everyone's security but I want to say this in clear terms that if any superpower wants to hurt our pride then our soldiers are capable of giving them a befitting reply," Singh said.

The Defence Minister underlined that India never wanted conflict with any nation and preferred to maintain peace and friendly ties with its neighbours. "It always wanted peace and friendly ties with its neighbours because it's in our blood and culture," he said at the fifth Armed Forces Veterans' Day at the Headquarters Training Command of the Indian Air Force in Bengaluru. Referring to the stand-off with China, he said the Indian soldiers displayed exemplary courage and patience and if that can be narrated then every Indian will feel proud. "I can tell you that things that had never happened in past took place this time." "No one can imagine that the Indian Forces car-

ried out such charismatic works but I don't want to get into those details," he said. The Union Minister called upon the veterans to play a significant role of sharing their experiences with the society and inspire youth to get into the defence services. Speaking about the issues challenging the veterans, Singh said after retirement income reduces while responsibilities increase. "I know that the government has done much for you but I believe that much more needs to be done," he pointed out.

Singh said that under the Ex-servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS), the government has given powers to the local formation commanders to include private hospitals too enabling them to nominate any private hospital. Further, he recalled that Prime Minister Narendra Modi cleared the long pending demand of One Rank One Pension soon after coming to power in 2014. Prior to addressing the veterans, Singh along with Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat, placed wreaths and paid homage at the War Memorial as part of Veterans' Day celebration. After the event, Singh and General Rawat interacted with the veterans. Next of kin, veterans and representatives of various ex-servicemen organisations were also present on the occasion.

Plastic pens covered under plastic waste management rules, says NGT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 14: The National Green Tribunal has held that plastic pens are covered under Plastic Waste Management Rules and directed the environment ministry to finalise the Extended Producers Responsibility (EPR) regime for management of waste.

A bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel also asked the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to coordinate with the state PCBs and State Level Monitoring Committees on EPR. "Even though pen is not specifically mentioned under the rules, the same is certainly covered by definition of 'plastic' under Rule 3(o) of the Plastic Waste Management Rule, 2016. Thus, pen is also covered by the statutory framework," the bench said.

The tribunal was hearing a plea filed by Avani Mishra against unchecked use of plastic pens hav-



ing adverse impact on the environment. The EPR liability is not being duly enforced, the plea alleged and suggested that policy of 'buy back' be introduced.

The applicant submitted that 27 lakh pens are produced per day and it is not possible for the Local Bodies to collect and treat the waste as contemplated under the rules.

"The cost of refill is high which encourages purchase of fresh pens and consumerism instead of going for refills to avoid waste. The waste

Rahul slams Centre at jallikattu event

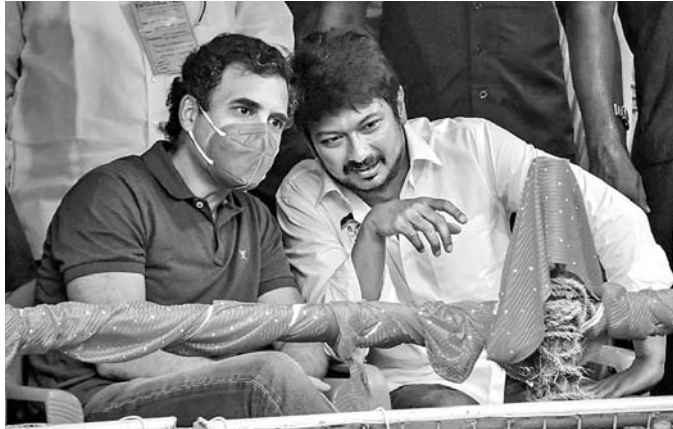
THE BJP RIDICULED RAHUL GANDHI FOR HIS 'HYPOCRISY' BY WITNESSING JALLIKATTU AND PRAISING THE SPORT, REMINDING THAT THE CONGRESS-LED UPA HAD BANNED IT IN 2011

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Madurai, Jan 14: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Thursday watched the bull taming sport jallikattu here, noting the animals were not getting injured as was being made out and said his visit was a message to the Centre that wants to 'suppress' the Tamil culture.

Sharpening his attack against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the NDA government over the three contentious farm laws which have put farmers, mainly from Punjab and Haryana on the warpath, he accused the government of "conspiring to destroy" peasants to benefit a select few businessmen.

The former party president was joined by DMK Youth Wing Secretary Udhayanidhi Stalin on the dais. Jallikattu is held in the state, especially with much vigour in this district, coinciding with the Tamil harvest festival Pongal which heralds the auspicious Tamil month Thai. "One of the main reasons I came is, today the government in



Delhi is under the impression that they can destroy the cultures of this country. They believe that they can suppress the emotions of Tamil people, they believe they can crush the language of the Tamil people, they can suppress the spirit of the Tamil people."

"I came to give them a message that nobody can suppress the Tamil spirit," he told reporters at the air-

port here before returning to Delhi.

After witnessing jallikattu he got a sense of why Tamil people appreciate it, Gandhi said. "There was a sense. Many people had mentioned to me that jallikattu is harmful to the bulls. I witnessed it today and I must say that the way it was done there was absolutely no chance of the bull getting injured." The Tamil spirit cannot be crushed, he

POND OF NECTAR



A devotee takes a holy dip in the sacred sarovar on the occasion of Makar Sankranti, at Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) in Amritsar

PTI PHOTO

Google pulls down fake loan apps

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 14: Alarmed at the growing harmful financial services products on its Play Store in India, Google Thursday said it has reviewed hundreds of personal loan apps in India and pulled down several of them found to be violating its app policies.

The company said it has asked the developers of the remaining identified apps to demonstrate that they comply with applicable local laws and regulations in India. "We have reviewed hundreds of personal loan apps in India, based on flags submitted by users and government agencies," said Suzanne Frey, Vice President, Product, Android Security and Privacy. "Apps that fail to do so will be removed without further notice. In addition, we

will continue to assist the law enforcement agencies in their investigation of this issue," Frey said in a statement. There has been a surge in personal loan apps in India in the recent months, putting data of millions of users at risk. Google said that to help further ensure that users are making sound

choices, "we only allow personal loan apps with full repayment required in greater than or equal to 60 days from the date the loan is issued".

The tech giant stressed that transparency of information around the features, fees, risks, and benefits of personal loans will help people

make informed decisions about their financial needs, thereby reducing the risk of being exposed to deceptive financial products and services.

said, adding he was 'completely against the idea of one particular idea, language and notion. However, the BJP lashed out at the Congress leader over his visit to the temple town today. Party national general secretary and Tamil Nadu in-charge, C T Ravi accused Gandhi of 'insulting Tamil 'makka' (people) on jallikattu with his hypocrisy."

Taking a dig at Rahul's visit to Avaniyapuram, Ravi made a reference to the UPA government banning the sport by adding bulls in the list of performing animals.

"Dear @RahulGandhi, Your Govt in 2011 labelled #Jallikattu as cruel & barbaric. Your Party manifesto supported ban on Jallikattu. Today, you are in Tamil Nadu to watch this traditional sport live. Aren't you insulting lovely Tamil Makka with your hypocrisy? Happy Pongal," Ravi said in a tweet. Hitting out at the Centre on the contentious farm laws, Gandhi alleged that the government was "conspiring to destroy" the ryots and asserted that his party will stand with them.

Woman dies after being 'pushed' out of train by husband

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 14: A 26-year-old woman has died after her husband allegedly pushed her out of a running local train while they were standing at its door in Mumbai, a police official said on Thursday.

The incident took place on Monday afternoon between Chembur and Govandi railway stations following which the woman's husband was arrested, he said. The 31-year-old accused and the victim, both labourers and residents of Mankhurd area, got married two months back.

On Monday, they were travelling in a local train along with the victim's seven-year-old daughter from her previous marriage, the Government Railway Police (GRP) official said. As the woman leaned out of the moving train, her husband held her at the doorway, and then allegedly released her from his grip, following which she fell on the tracks, the official said.

Later, when the train stopped at Govandi station, a woman commuter in the coach, who had been watching the couple, got down and alerted the railway police about the incident. The police caught the man at the station and then took him to the incident spot, where they found his wife lying injured and unconscious, the official said.

Anti-polio drive rescheduled to January 31



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 14: The National Polio immunisation programme, as part of which children in the age group of 0-5 years are administered polio drops, has been rescheduled to January 31.

The National Immunisation Day (NID), commonly known as Pulse Polio Immunisation programme, was earlier scheduled for January 17 across India.

"The massive countrywide COVID-19 vaccination drive will be rolled out by Prime Minister from January 16. This would be the world's largest immunisation exercise. Therefore, it has been decided by the Ministry of Health in consultation with the office of the President of India to reschedule the Polio vaccination day, also known as the National Immunisation Day (NID) or 'Polio Ravivar' to 31st January," the Union Health Ministry said.

The President will launch the Polio National Immunisation Day on 30th January by administering Polio drops to some children at the Rashtrapati Bhawan at 11:45 am, the ministry said in a statement.

Depression, stress may reduce efficacy of vaccines: Scientists

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 14: Depression, stress and loneliness can weaken the body's immune system, and lower the effectiveness of certain vaccines, including the new COVID-19 preventives that are in development and the early stages of global distribution, scientists say.

According to a report accepted for publication in the journal Perspectives on Psychological Science, simple interventions, including exercise and getting a good night's sleep in the 24 hours before vaccination, may maximise the vaccine's initial effectiveness. The re-

searchers noted that even though rigorous testing has shown that the COVID-19 vaccines approved for distribution in the US are highly effective at producing a robust immune response, not everyone will immediately gain their full benefit.

Environmental factors, such as an individual's genetics and physical and mental health, can weaken the body's immune system, slowing the response to a vaccine, they said. "In addition to the physical toll of COVID-19, the pandemic has an equally troubling mental health component, causing anxiety and depression, among many other related problems," said Annelise



Madison, a researcher at The Ohio State University in the US. "Emotional stressors like these can affect a person's immune system, im-

pairing their ability to ward off infections," said Madison, lead author on the paper. The report sheds light on vaccine efficacy and how health behaviours and emotional stressors can alter the body's ability to develop an immune response.

Vaccines work by challenging the immune system. Within hours of a vaccination, there is an innate, general immune response on the cellular level as the body begins to recognise a potential biological threat.

This frontline response by the immune system is eventually aided by the production of antibodies, which target specific pathogens. It is the continued production of an-

tibodies that helps to determine how effective a vaccine is at conferring long-term protection.

"In our research, we focus most heavily on the antibody response, though it is just one facet of the adaptive immune system's response," said Janice Kiecolt-Glaser, director of the Institute for Behavioral Medicine Research at The Ohio State University, and senior author on the paper. According to the researchers, most COVID-19 vaccines already in circulation are approximately 95 per cent effective.

However, psychological and behavioural factors can lengthen the amount of time it takes to develop

immunity, and can shorten the duration of immunity, they said. "The thing that excites me is that some of these factors are modifiable. It's possible to do some simple things to maximise the vaccine's initial effectiveness," said Kiecolt-Glaser.

The researchers suggest that, based on prior research, one strategy is to engage in vigorous exercise and get a good night's sleep in the 24 hours before vaccination so that the immune system is operating at peak performance.

This may help ensure that the best and strongest immune response happens as quickly as possible, they said.

of the day quote

The hard truth is that climate change is upon us. Its impacts will intensify and hit vulnerable countries and communities the hardest -- even if we meet the Paris Agreement goals of holding global warming this century to well below 2 degrees and pursuing 1.5 degrees Celsius



INGER ANDERSEN | EXEC DIR, UNEP

Hopefully the vaccines will be distributed at a much heightened level, that the virus will be much more contained, and that people will be ready to get on with their lives



ED BASTIAN | CEO, DELTA AIR LINES

Concerned that few unscrupulous agents are exploiting our citizens and putting them at risk abroad. Recruiting agents must act responsibly or will be held accountable



SANJAY BHATTACHARYYA | SECRETARY, MEA

SHORT TAKES

Pope Francis gets vaccinated

Vatican City: Both Pope Francis and his predecessor, former pope Benedict XVI, have received the coronavirus vaccine, the Vatican said Thursday. "I can confirm that, as part of the Vatican City State vaccination programme to date, the first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine has been administered to Pope Francis and the Pope Emeritus," spokesman Matteo Bruni said. It had already been reported that Francis, 84, had received the jab Wednesday, the first day of the Vatican's vaccination drive, but officials declined to confirm the news.

France opposes foreign takeover

Paris: France's government says it opposes the proposed 16.2 billion-euro (19.6 billion) takeover of French supermarket chain Carrefour by Canadian convenience store group Couche-Tard. Labour Minister Elisabeth Borne said Thursday on radio Europe 1 that she is "opposed to a takeover." That follows similar comments by Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire who explained that the country's "food sovereignty" is at stake. "I'm not in favour of such a deal," Le Maire said on television channel France 5 Wednesday.

Turkey starts vaccination

Ankara: Turkey became the latest country to roll out its Covid-19 vaccination programme, starting with health care workers in hospitals across the country. Thursday's start of the nationwide inoculation program came a day after Turkish authorities gave the go-ahead for the emergency use of the vaccine produced by Chinas Sinovac Biotech Ltd. Turkey's health minister and members of the country's scientific advisory council received the first shots live on television shortly after the regulator's approval.

12 police officials dismissed

Peshawar: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial government in Pakistan has dismissed 12 police officials following an enquiry report that found them guilty of "negligence" in protecting a Hindu temple in the province, which was torched by a mob led by members of a radical Islamist party.



The infections are showing signs of becoming explosive. We must slow the pace as soon as possible

NORIO OHMAGARI | DIR, DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION CENTER, JAPAN

MERKEL'S PARTY PICKS NEW LEADER

Chancellor Angela Merkel's center-right party is choosing a new leader this weekend, a decision that will help shape German voters' choice of her successor at the helm of the European Union's biggest economy after her 16-year tenure



WHO EXPERTS REACH WUHAN TO PROBE COVID-19 ORIGINS

Of the 13-member team, 2 de-boarded the flight to Wuhan after testing positive

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing/Wuhan, Jan 14: Thirteen international experts of the WHO arrived in Wuhan Thursday for the long-awaited probe into the origins of the deadly coronavirus pandemic, while two others did not board the flight from Singapore to the central Chinese city after they tested positive for COVID-19 antibodies.

"The international team of 13 scientists examining the origins of the virus that causes #COVID19 arrived in Wuhan, #China, today. The experts will begin their work immediately during the 2 weeks quarantine protocol for international travellers," the World Health Organisation said in a tweet.

"Two scientists are still in #Singapore completing tests for #COVID19. All team members had multiple negative PCR and antibody tests for COVID-19 in their home countries prior to travelling", it said.

"They were tested again in #Singapore and were all negative for PCR. But two members tested positive for IgM antibodies. They are being retested for both IgM and IgG antibodies", the WHO said.

The two experts failed to clear the screening procedures and were blocked from travelling to China, the



Wall Street Journal reported.

"Chinese officials involved in the screening process blocked the two delegation members from boarding their plane to the central Chinese city of Wuhan after both tested positive for COVID-19 antibodies in blood-based serology tests during transit in Singapore" the report said.

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, Zhao Lijian defended the denial of permission to the two scientists saying that "relevant epidemic and control requirements and regulations will be strictly enforced".

"We will also support and offer convenience to WHO experts' travel to China," he told a media briefing replying to a question about the denial of permission to the two scientists and referred the media to

competent authorities for details.

China requires passengers flying from Singapore to take a nucleic acid test and an IgM antibody test up to two days before boarding China-bound flights.

The 13 WHO experts would go through a 14-day quarantine. They are set to interview people from research institutes, hospitals and the seafood market linked to the initial outbreak.

The WHO team includes virus and other experts from the US, Australia, Germany, Japan, Britain, Russia, the Netherlands, Qatar and Vietnam. The United States and Australia have led the charge in criticising China's handling of the initial stages of the pandemic, accusing Beijing of downplaying its severity and preventing an effective response until too late.

Nepal FM embarks on a three-day visit to India



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, Jan 14: Nepal's Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali Thursday embarked on a three-day visit to India during which he will attend the 6th meeting of Nepal-India Joint Commission and discuss the entire gamut of relations, including COVID-19 cooperation and border disputes, with his Indian counterpart S Jaishankar.

Gyawali is the senior-most political leader from Nepal to visit India after Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli triggered a border row last year by publishing a new political map that showed the three Indian territories - Limpiyadhura, Kalapani and Lipulekh - as part of Nepal. The Joint Commission is the highest mechanism between the two countries to discuss the entire gamut of bilateral relations.

During the meeting, the two countries are scheduled to hold discussions on various issues including bilateral trade, energy, border disputes and COVID-19 assistance. The Joint Commission meeting "will discuss the whole gamut of Nepal-India bilateral relations, including trade, transit, energy, boundary, COVID-19 co-operation, infrastructure, connectivity, investment, agriculture, tourism, culture, among others," the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement earlier.

'Lockdown impact on urban air quality smaller than believed'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, Jan 14: The first Covid-19 lockdowns led to significant changes in urban air pollution levels in global cities such as Delhi and London, but the changes were smaller than expected, a new UK study claimed Thursday.

After developing new corrections for the impact of weather and seasonal trends, such as reduced NO2 emissions from winter to summer, researchers led by the University of Birmingham experts evaluated changes in ambient NO2, O3 and fine particle (PM2.5) concentrations arising from lockdown emission changes in 11 global cities. These cities include Beijing, Wuhan, Milan, Rome, Madrid, London, Paris, Berlin, New York, Los Angeles and Delhi.

The team of international scientists discovered that the beneficial reductions in NO2 due to the lockdowns were smaller than expected, after removing the effects of weather. In parallel, the lockdowns caused

(weather-corrected) concentrations of ozone in cities to increase.

"Rapid, unprecedented reduction in the economic activity provided a unique opportunity to study the impact of interventions on air quality. Emission changes associated with the early lockdown restrictions led to abrupt changes in air pollutant levels but their impacts on air quality were more complex than we thought and smaller than we expected," said Lead-author Zongbo Shi, Professor of Atmospheric Biogeochemistry at the University of Birmingham.

"Weather changes can mask changes in emissions on air quality. Importantly, our study has provided a new framework for assessing air pollution interventions, by separating the effects of weather and season from the effects of emission changes," he said.

NO2 is a key air pollutant from traffic emissions, associated with respiratory problems, while ozone is also harmful to health, and damages crops.



INDONESIAN PLANE CRASH

Aerial search for victims intensify

AGENCIES

Jakarta, Jan 14: An aerial search for victims and wreckage from a crashed Indonesian plane expanded Thursday as divers continued combing the debris-littered seabed looking for the cockpit voice recorder from the lost Sriwijaya Air jet.

The Boeing 737-500 disappeared Saturday minutes after taking off from Jakarta with 62 people aboard. The other black box containing flight data was recovered Tuesday, and search personnel have also recovered plane parts and human remains from the Java Sea.

The aerial search is being expanded to coastal areas of the Thousand Island chain "because plane debris and victims may be carried away by sea currents," said Rasman, search and rescue mission coordinator for the National Search and Rescue Agency, who uses one name.

Navy officials have said the two black boxes were buried in seabed mud under tons of wreckage between Lancang and Laki islands in the Thousand Island chain north of Jakarta. At least 268 divers were deployed on Thursday, almost double the previous figure.

Rescuers increased to 4,100 personnel, supported by 13 helicopters, 55 ships and 18 raft boats.



■ The Boeing 737-500 disappeared Saturday minutes after taking off from Jakarta with 62 people aboard

■ The aerial search is being expanded to coastal areas of the Thousand Island chain

■ Navy officials have said the two black boxes were buried in seabed mud under tons of wreckage

So far, searchers have sent 141 body bags containing human remains to police identification experts. Families have been providing DNA samples to the disaster victim identification unit, which on Wednesday said it has identified six victims, including a flight attendant and an off-duty pilot.

The 29-year-old flight attendant, Okky Bisma, was buried Thursday.

Relatives and friends carried his coffin to the cemetery in eastern Jakarta, followed by dozens of people, most wearing masks and maintaining social distancing because of the pandemic.

BABIES' DAY OUT



Children use a boat at a flooded area in Obot village, near Shkodra, Albania

REUTERS

UN watchdog confirms another Iranian breach of nuclear deal

AGENCIES

Berlin, Jan 14: The United Nations' atomic watchdog agency confirmed Thursday that Iran has informed it that the country has begun installing equipment for the production of uranium metal, which would be another violation of the landmark nuclear deal with world powers.

Iran maintains its plans to conduct research and development on uranium metal production are part of its "declared aim to design an improved type of fuel," the Vienna-

based International Atomic Energy Agency said.

Uranium metal can also be used for a nuclear bomb, however, and research on its production is specifically prohibited in the so-called Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action signed with world powers in 2015.

The ultimate goal of the deal is to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear bomb, something Iran insists it does not want to do. Iran now has enough enriched uranium to make a bomb, but nowhere near the amount it had before the nuclear deal was signed.

IAEA inspectors visited the Isfahan plant where Iran has said it plans to conduct the research on Jan. 10, and officials were informed by Tehran on Jan. 13 that "modification and installation of the relevant equipment for the mentioned R&D activities have been already started," the agency said.

Iran's ambassador to the IAEA, Kazem Gharibabadi, repeated that in a tweet on Wednesday, adding that "natural uranium will be used to produce uranium metal in the first stage."

World's oldest known cave painting found in Indonesia

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Washington, Jan 14: Archaeologists have discovered the world's oldest known cave painting: a life-sized picture of a wild pig that was made at least 45,500 years ago in Indonesia. The finding described in the journal Science Advances Wednesday provides the earliest evidence of human settlement of the region.

Co-author Maxime Aubert of Australia's Griffith University told AFP it was found on the island of Sulawesi in 2017 by doctoral student Basran Burhan, as part of the survey team was carrying out with Indonesian authorities.

The Leang Tedongnge cave is lo-

cated in a remote valley enclosed by sheer limestone cliffs, about an hour's walk from the nearest road.

It is only accessible during the dry season because of flooding during the wet season -- and members of the isolated Bugis community told the team it had never before been seen by Westerners.

Measuring 136 by 54 centimeters (53 by 21 inches) the Sulawesi warty pig was painted using dark red ochre pigment and has a short crest of upright hair, as well as a pair of horn-like facial warts characteristic of adult males of the species.

There are two hand prints above the pig's hindquarters, and it appears to be facing two other pigs that are only partially preserved, as part



of a narrative scene.

"The pig appears to be observing a fight or social interaction between two other warty pigs," said co-author Adam Brumm.

Humans have hunted Sulawesi

warty pigs for tens of thousands of years, and they are a key feature of the region's prehistoric artwork, particularly during the Ice Age.

Early human migration

Aubert, a dating specialist, iden-

The Leang Tedongnge cave is located in a remote valley enclosed by sheer limestone cliffs, about an hour's walk from the nearest road

tified a calcite deposit that had formed on top of the painting, then used Uranium-series isotope dating to confidently say the deposit was 45,500 years old.

This makes the painting at least that age, "but it could be much older because the dating that we're using only dates the calcite on top of it," he explained.

"The people who made it were fully modern, they were just like us, they had all of the capacity and the tools to do any painting that they liked," he added.

The previously oldest dated rock art painting was found by the same team in Sulawesi. It depicted a group of part-human, part-animal figures hunting mammals, and was found to be at least 43,900 years old.

Cave paintings such as these also help fill in gaps about our understanding of early human migrations. It's known that people reached Australia 65,000 years ago, but they would probably have had to cross the islands of Indonesia, known as "Wallacea."

business

of the day quote

We commit ourselves as an organisation on our 57th Foundation Day to become more efficient, transparent and accountable to the farmers, people of India and our customers. Farmers are our customers and people of India are our customers

PIYUSH GOYAL |
FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS MINISTER

The severe impacts from climate change are worsening, and we must accelerate the urgent systemic changes needed to address it

RAMON LAGUARTA |
CHAIRMAN AND CEO, PEPSICO

The Indian dairy and horticulture ecosystem has been a significant contributor in driving rural prosperity. The amalgamation of the country's diverse produce and an innovative approach to provide a market for this produce has the potential to benefit both the farmer and the consumer

VARSHA JOSHI | CHAIRMAN, NODDB

SHORT TAKES

German eco shrinks 5%

Frankfurt: The German economy, Europe's largest, shrank by 5% in the pandemic year 2020, ending a decade of growth as lockdowns wiped out much business and consumer activity. As dreary as they were, the numbers suggest consumers could be ready to unleash a strong recovery when the lid finally comes off. The statistics office Destatis said Thursday that only the construction sector showed an upturn as industry and services saw deep declines. Agriculture, financial services, real estate and information and communication suffered smaller drops in output.

Palm oil imports jump 18% in Dec

Mumbai: India's palm oil imports in December went up by 18.38% to 7,48,006 tonnes compared to the year-ago month, the Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA) said Thursday. The palm oil imports during December 2019 had stood at 6,31,824 tonnes, SEA said in a statement. Import duty reduction from November 2, 2020, on crude palm oil was reduced to 27.5% from 37.5%, while duty on soft oils remained unchanged at 35%, which encouraged larger import of palm oil, SEA added.

IT cos' revenues to grow up to 9%

Mumbai: Demand for digital technologies and resumption of normal economic activities will drive sales for IT companies, and the sector will post a revenue growth of up to 9 per cent in 2021-22, a report said Thursday. Rating agency Ica gave a "stable" outlook for the sector, whose size is pegged at over \$180 billion by industry lobby Nasscom, including the business process outsourcing business.

SAIL's OFS oversubscribed

New Delhi: The offer for sale (OFS) of Steel Authority of India (SAIL) has been oversubscribed by over four times on the first day of the issue. Taking to Twitter, Tuhin Kanta Pandey, Secretary, DIPAM, said that the government has decided to exercise the green shoe option and retail investors will be able to bid Friday.



India is not just the 5th largest Wikipedia source of traffic for us, it is a country of hundreds of millions of people who have real clear needs for knowledge, and to themselves have knowledge that should be shared and represented with the world

KATHERINE MAHER | CEO, WIKIMEDIA FOUNDATION

MURDOCH, SHANKAR REUNITE

James Murdoch, son of media baron Rupert Murdoch and Uday Shankar, who headed Star India and Walt Disney Asia Pacific, Thursday announced a new joint venture which will explore technology and media opportunities in the emerging markets



BUDGET 2021

Prioritise spending, boost infra, sell PSUs: Rajan

I keep saying that we are missing the need to repair. There is a lot of repair and relief that is needed in the economy and we don't need to focus so much on stimulus when in fact there are parts of the economy which are hurting deeply and need support

RAGURAM RAJAN |
FORMER RBI GOVERNOR



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 14: Former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Raghuram Rajan says the government should take advantage of the peaks in the Indian equity markets right now and sell stakes in PSUs while prioritising spending to get the economy back on track. The upcoming Budget for the fiscal year beginning April 1 should look to provide "relief to the poorer households and small and medium enterprises," he said.

And then move on to getting the economy back on track.

"It (the government) has to prioritise spending which means focus on what is essential" such as relief to poor households and small businesses, he told ET Now.

He did not elaborate. Also, the government must look to boost spending on infrastructure as it is "one of the best ways" of getting the economy back on track, he said, according to a transcript of the interview provided by the channel.

And since states do most of such spending, they should get the money, he said.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will February 1 present the budget for the 2021-22 fiscal year that is expected to set course for economic pick-up after the COVID-19 carnage.

Rajan said the resources needed for boosting spending can be found

from selling public sector units (PSUs).

A "greater source of reducing the deficit may be in selling assets," he said.

Targets from disinvestment have not been achieved.

"Nothing really has been privatised. What you have really done is share sales," he said. "Where are the share sale sales? You should be selling shares from every rooftop if you are in a tight constraint. Why are we not doing that? What is holding them back?" he asked.

While some progress may have been made in recent months, "I would want to take advantage of the high prices (in the stock market) if I could," he said. "So more infrastructure financed by share sales and so on and getting the infrastructure spending out through the states may be easier than getting it all done by the Centre. Those are things to consider as we go forward."

On reforms, he said, they were important "but we have to do them in a way that does not prompt a reaction which means much more thought going into them, much more consultation and much less of my way or the highway."

The comments come amidst a farmers' agitation against three new farm laws which critics and opposition parties claim were pushed through without much consultation.

Wholesale inflation eases to 1.22pc in Dec

The data showed onion prices contracted by 54.69% in December, as against a decline of 7.58% in November

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 14: The wholesale price-based inflation moderated to 1.22 per cent in December as prices of kitchen staples onion and potato eased, as per a government data released Thursday.

The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation was 1.55 per cent in November 2020, and 2.76 per cent in December 2019.

"The rate of inflation based on WPI Food Index decreased from 4.27 per cent in November 2020, to 0.92 per cent in December 2020," as per the data released by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade.

The rate of price rise on whole-sale basis in the vegetables basket declined to (-) 13.2 per cent in



December, as against 12.24 per cent inflation in the preceding month.

The data showed onion prices contracted by 54.69 per cent in December, as against a decline of 7.58 per cent in November. The inflation in potato eased to 37.75 per cent in December from 115.12 per cent in November.

According to the data, rate of inflation in cereals, paddy, wheat

and pulses, also eased in December over the previous month. The wholesale prices of fruits were however higher in December compared to November.

While inflation in food prices eased, the rate of price rise in manufactured goods rose to 4.24 per cent in December. It was 2.97 per cent in November. Manufactured products, include food products,

beverages, textiles, chemicals, pharmaceuticals and cement.

The WPI-based inflation in fuel and power segment too increased marginally during the month under review.

It is to be noted that retail inflation too had dropped sharply to 4.59 per cent in December, mainly due to declining food prices.

Commenting on the data, Aditi Nayar, Principal Economist, ICRA Limited said WPI inflation recorded a pull-back in December 2020, driven by a disinflation in primary food items and lower inflation for primary non-food articles, even as core inflation spiked to a 24-month high of 4.2%, injecting concern regarding the trajectory of the WPI going forward.

Jio tops 4G download speed in Dec, 2020



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: Private telecom service provider Reliance Jio topped in average 4G download speed in Odisha with 37.4 Mbps speed in December, 2020, as per the data published by TRAI on its MySpeed portal.

Bharti Airtel in second position in 4G download speed in the State with 5.6 Mbps and Vodafone provided 5.4 Mbps average of 4G download speed.

Meanwhile, in terms of average 4G upload speed in Odisha, Vodafone topped with 6.7 Mbps followed by Reliance Jio with 5.2 Mbps and Airtel with 2.8 Mbps average 4G upload speed according to data published by TRAI.

Also, Reliance Jio topped the 4G download speed chart in the country with average download speed of 20.2 megabit per second (Mbps) in December 2020.

PV sales in India at ten-year low: SIAM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 14: Passenger vehicle (PV) wholesales in India slipped to a ten-year low in the April-December this fiscal, and the industry will have to work hard to regain better volumes and business health, industry body SIAM said Thursday.

While releasing the wholesale numbers for December and the third quarter (October-December) of the current fiscal, the industry body said high levels of uncertainty remain in the industry due to COVID-19 situation and shortage of critical components like semi-conductors.

SIAM noted that sales improvement in December and the third quarter did not convey the actual picture of the auto industry, which continues to face severe headwinds.

As per the latest data by Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), domestic passenger vehicle (PV) wholesales increased 13.59 per cent to 2,52,998



COVID IMPACT

SIAM noted that sales improvement in December and the third quarter did not convey the actual picture of the auto industry

According to the latest data by SIAM, domestic PV wholesales increased 13.59% to 2,52,998 units last month as compared to 2,22,728 in December 2019

units last month as compared to 2,22,728 in December 2019. Similarly, in the October-December quarter this fiscal, PV sales rose 14.44 per

AM/NS performs ground-breaking ceremony in Paradip

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: Arcelor Mittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India), an integrated flat carbon steel manufacturing company, recently concluded the Bhoomi Puja (ground-breaking) ceremony for the construction of a township at Chakradharpur village in Paradip, Odisha. The puja was performed in the presence of Project Affected People (PAP) and distinguished members of the locality along with company officials.

Mithilesh Thakur, VP, Head-Land Matters & Boundary Management of Odisha Asset, AM/NS Indiaperformed the rituals for the BhoomiPuja.

PFC TO OPEN ₹5K cr BOND ISSUE TODAY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: Power Finance Corporation Limited (PFC), one of the leading financial institutions in India, focused on the power sector will open its ₹5,000 crore public issue of secured, redeemable non-convertible debentures January 15, 2021.

The company official announced it during a virtual press conference, Thursday.

The base Issue size is ₹500 crore with an option to retain oversubscription of up to ₹4,500 crore aggregating up to 5,000 crore which is within the shelf limit of ₹10,000 crore. The NCDs are of face value

of ₹1,000 each. The tranche issue is scheduled to close on January 29, 2021 with an option of early closure or extension as decided by PFC's Board of Directors or a duly constituted committee thereof.

The tranche issue offers options for tenures of 3, 5, 10 and 15 years. The 3-year tenure NCD in Series I will offer a fixed coupon rate of 4.65% p.a to 4.80% p.a., while the 5 year tenure NCD in Series II will offer fixed coupon rate of 5.65% p.a. to 5.80% p.a. depending on the category of investors. The 10-year tenure NCDs offers options of both fixed and floating rates of interest. The fixed coupon rate is 6.63% p.a. to 7.00% p.a.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 14: Around 64 per cent of seniors, aged 50 and above, want to continue working post-retirement for financial independence, mental peace, and to maintain a healthy lifestyle, according to a survey.

Antara, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Max India Ltd, has surveyed to bring out insights on the lives, aspirations, preferences, opinions, and consumer behaviour traits of middle and upper-middle-class senior citizens in urban India.

The survey focussed on the metros in North, the West, and South India covering over 2,000 seniors aged 50 and above, Antara said in a statement.

Over 60pc seniors want to work post-retirement: Survey



"Seniors in India have traditionally been a dependent demographic, post investing their life's earnings on their kids, a stable home, etc. They often depend on the Indian joint family milieu to support them. According to the survey findings, this trend is changing," Antara said.

As per the survey, nearly 27 per cent of seniors expressed a desire to work till the age of 70-75 and 37

per cent of seniors till their last moment. In addition to financial stability and independence, 57 per cent of seniors want to continue working beyond the retirement age for mental satisfaction.

For around 65 per cent of seniors, leisure travel is topped as a lifestyle spending preference.

"As India, a young nation, grows older; its senior population is evolving. No more are the Indian elderly a docile cohort, thinking of everybody but themselves. Their needs and aspirations have come a long way. They now want to be active contributors in the economy, want to lead a life with dignity, and become more 'Atmanirbhar'," said Rajit Mehta, Managing Director and CEO, Antara.

PRIVACY POLICY UPDATE

Open to answering any queries from govt: WhatsApp

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 14: Under fire over its recent privacy policy update, WhatsApp Thursday said it is open to answering any questions from the government on the issue and is aware that the company will have to "compete" for users' trust with rivals such as Signal.

In an interview to PTI, WhatsApp Global Head Will Cathcart said the Facebook-owned company remains committed to privacy and security of users across India and will continue to explain to users that their messages are end-to-end encrypted.

Rival messaging platforms such as Signal and Telegram saw phenomenal rise in downloads soon after WhatsApp sought users' consent to its updated privacy policy that seeks to share some data with Facebook.

"We know we have to compete

for users' trust when it comes to privacy and that's very good for the world. People should have choices in how they communicate and feel confident that no one else can see their chats," Cathcart said.

Asked if WhatsApp had seen an exodus of users to rival apps like Signal and Telegram, Cathcart answered in negative.

"No. We're grateful that people continue to use and trust WhatsApp to communicate... We think competition on privacy is good because it will help make apps even more private and secure in the future, he added.

The comments come in the backdrop of a raging debate over WhatsApp's controversial update in its terms of service and privacy policy around how it processes user data and partners with Facebook to offer integrations across the social media giant's products.



Asked if the government has sought clarification on the matter, Cathcart said: "We remain available to answer any questions and to explain our continued commitment to the privacy and security of users across India."

According to sources, the gov-

ernment is examining and evaluating the recent privacy policy update announced by WhatsApp and discussions are on within the IT Ministry over the implications of the recent move by the messaging platform.

In past years, WhatsApp has

The government is examining and evaluating the recent privacy policy update announced by WhatsApp and discussions are on within the IT Ministry over the implications of the recent move

drawn flak from the government over misuse of the platform for the spread of misinformation. Since then, the Facebook-owned company has taken a number of steps to curb the spread of hate messages.

Cathcart also noted that WhatsApp will also continue to explain to people and its partners

how the platform protects the privacy and security of people's personal messages.

He asserted that neither WhatsApp nor Facebook can read users' messages or hear their calls with others on the messaging platform.

WhatsApp had informed users about the changes in its terms of service and public policy, through an in-app notification last week. Users have till February 8 to agree to the new terms in order to continue using the platform.

This led to a user backlash and triggered memes on the internet over WhatsApp's alleged sharing of user information with Facebook. Many users have also started shifting to rival platforms, and apps like Telegram and Signal have seen millions of downloads globally in the immediate aftermath of the event.



Wounded India face Australia in the series decider as the hosts' pride is on the line at the Gabba

RESOLVE VS PRIDE

INDIA

Ajinkya Rahane (C), Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara, Mayank Agarwal, Prithvi Shaw, Wriddhiman Saha (wk), Rishabh Pant (wk), Ravichandran Ashwin, Navdeep Saini, Mohammed Siraj, Shardul Thakur, Jasprit Bumrah, T Natarajan and Washington Sundar

AUSTRALIA XI

Tim Paine (C), David Warner, Marcus Harris, Marnus Labuschagne, Steve Smith, Matthew Wade, Cameron Green, Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc, Nathan Lyon and Josh Hazlewood

PITCH AND CONDITIONS

The Gabba wicket is known for its pace and carry although there are a few uncertainties due to the lack of cricket this season and the later start to the game (there have only been two January Tests at the ground). The forecast for the opening day is good but there's a chance of storms Saturday then showers over the rest of the game.

4 NO. OF WICKETS NATHAN LYON NEED TO REACH 400-WICKET MARK IN TESTS; THIS WILL BE HIS 100TH MATCH IN THE LONGEST FORMAT OF THE GAME

6 NO. OF TESTS INDIA HAVE PLAYED AT THE GABBA, LOSING FIVE AND DRAWING ONE (IN 2003)

THIS IS THE FIRST DECIDING TEST OF A SERIES IN AUSTRALIA (WITH THE SCORELINE LEVEL) SINCE THE PERTH TEST AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA IN 2012 WHEN THE TEAMS WERE LOCKED AT 0-0

PAINE QUASHES REPORTS OF BIO-BUBBLE ISSUES

BRISBANE: Australian skipper Tim Paine admitted that life inside a bio-bubble could be challenging for the Indian team in an alien land without family but his own players, including Steve Smith, have also endured similar difficulties since the IPL in the UAE.

The Indian and Australian teams are once again in a hard quarantine after new cases of UK mutant strain were found in the Queensland capital. The organisers have provided only basic facilities to the players.

However, Indian batting coach Vikram Rathour said that one doesn't need 'house-keeping services' to keep the motivation going before an important Test match.

Paine's teammate Mitchell Starc's wife and Southern Stars international Alyssa Healy had mocked the Indian team for the alleged complaints about Brisbane quarantine.

"I haven't seen those comments and frankly speaking never read any comments from the Indian players. It's been challenging for everyone and more so for them, to be in a different country and more away from their families," Paine said.

"I know the difficulties they must be going through and I know Steve Smith and Pat Cummins are in the same shoes as them. It is difficult but haven't heard anything directly from Indian players," the home team captain said.

For Rathour, the problems in the hotel didn't for once affect their focus on the Test match ahead. "We are playing Australia in Australia against one of the best attacks in the world. So I think motivation is there. You don't need housekeeping or room service to motivate yourself," the former Punjab captain said.

"Of course, these were concerns which were passed on to BCCI, I think the BCCI is in touch with CA to deal with all these things. As far as team is concerned, we are focussed on the game and we are looking forward towards this game."

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Brisbane, Jan 14: After denting the ego of mighty Australians with their bruised and battered bodies in a Sydney epic, Ajinkya Rahane's wounded India will take no prisoners in a 'winners take all' fourth Test, starting Friday on the liveliest of tracks in the series.

The home team were tipped to win the series 4-0 before the start of the series. However, it all vanished after the Indians levelled the series at MCG after losing the first one at Adelaide, where they hit their historic low - being bowled out for their lowest Test total of 36 in the second innings.

Not just the Indians, but the entire cricket fraternity heaped praise on the visitors for their fighting spirit. Their praise even went a level up when an injury-hit India managed to draw the Sydney Test, courtesy the heroics of injured Hanuma Vihari and Ravichandran Ashwin, counterattacking Rishabh Pant and dependable Cheteshwar Pujara.

With the series came down to the wire, it's now raised question on Australian pride, considering they are playing a full strength team and yet to seal the series. So the Gabba will be test between the steely resolve of the Indian side, who are missing the services of their regular skipper Virat Kohli, senior pacers - Ishant Sharma, Mohammed Shami and Umesh Yadav, ever-active Ravindra Jadeja, last match's hero Vihari and KL Rahul.

Not only that, but the visitors are still unsure of the fitness of Jasprit Bumrah, Ravichandran Ashwin and Mayank Agarwal. With all the fuss going around the team combination for India, who had named their playing XI on the eve of last three matches, they haven't made a call on their final XI yet.

Australia need a win to regain Border-Gavaskar Trophy but a draw will be enough for India to retain it for another couple of years.

There are times when the human body responds differently to the adrenaline rush and the likes of Ashwin, Rishabh Pant



and Vihari have given their million fans a reason to believe in their gumption that was on display in Sydney.

Bumrah played with an abdominal strain and didn't want to come out even though the experience was painful and Jadeja with a broken thumb was ready to do what Malcolm Marshall did with a fractured wrist three decades back.

They battled against everybody - the racist ones in the galleries, the abusive

one behind the stumps and those lethal ones with the shiny red nut that broke a few bones but could not shake the steely resolve of the Indians.

The new India that Kohli so raved about is now ready to battle a whole new set of adversities at a venue where Australia haven't lost a Test since 1988.

There won't be a Jadeja and Bumrah and on one of the most difficult tracks, it couldn't have gotten more worse for

PRE-MATCH STATEMENTS

TIM PAINE

Gavaskar's comments on his captaincy: I had (heard of Gavaskar's comments), but I am not going to go into it and get my back and forth with Sunny Gavaskar. I think I am not going to win that. He is entitled to his opinion. It doesn't affect us one iota. It is adding to the Test match, which is great. So Sunny can keep saying what he wants to say at the end of the day, it is absolutely nothing to do with it.

Preferring his way: Throughout my career, I have done a pretty good job of being relaxed 99 per cent of the time. That's when I have played my best cricket. Other day, I thought I got caught up in the moment. What I have been good at it is able to step back and have a look around the crowd and realise you are captaining your country in a Test match, something I have always dreamt of. Obviously, I am going to compete very hard and I am going to win as much as anyone and I would like to competitive.

Planning on banter: I will be myself. Don't know how many Tests I have played but I have gone about in a pretty consistent fashion. Other day, it was a blip on the radar. I have

copped it on the chin and look to come out and play competitive cricket, as I always do. There is a bit of banter that I always do but be aware of the stump mic and be a bit more respectful of the umpires, officials and players.

VIKRAM RATHOUR

Major changes on cards: Injuries are still being monitored. Our medical staff is working with the players. I wouldn't be in a position to comment how it stands at the moment. We would like to give them as much time as they can and only tomorrow (Friday) morning you will know, which XI is going to play. With or without injuries, the XI that India will put up will be the best XI on the ground and all of them deserve to be there. All of them deserve the opportunity to play Test cricket and if they play to their potential, I don't see why won't do well.

Preparations: I think we are (prepared for Brisbane bounce). On this tour we have got a lot of time to prepare. We came early, we had a lot of practice sessions here. You expect more bounce and pace; having played well and having played well for so many days now, yes the belief is there that the boys will be able to handle it and handle it pretty well I am sure.

GAUTAM GAMBHIR: You got to look after him (Bumrah) as well, because he is going to be the leader of the attack for a very long time, so him being fit is very important. So when India plays England in the 4-Test series. I know, yes, Shami is unfit, Ishant is unfit, Umesh is unfit but you can't afford to play Bumrah in all the 4 Tests, it will be very unfair on him.



MUTTHIAH MURALITHARAN: Ashwin has a chance (to reach 800-wicket mark in Tests) because he is a great bowler. Other than that, I don't think any younger bowler coming in will go to 800. Maybe Nathan Lyon is not good enough to reach it. He is close to 400 (396) but he has had to play many, many matches to get there.



Odisha suffer 3rd successive defeat

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: Odisha suffered their third successive defeat in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 tournament as they were handed an eight-wicket hammering by Tamil Nadu in their third Elite Group B match in Kolkata, Thursday.

Odisha won the toss and opted to bat first. They could post only 132/9 as none of their batsmen could capitalise on their starts. Credit goes to Suryakant Pradhan, whose 10-ball 23-run cameo allowed Odisha go past 130-run mark.

Rajesh Dhuper (22) and Subhanshu Senapati (20), who was replaced by Biplab Samantray as new skipper Wednesday, also contributed. Murugan Ashwin (3/16) was pick of the TN bowlers.

In reply, Narayan Jagadeesan (61) led the run chase as TN completed the chase in 15.1 overs. He was ably supported by C Hari Nishanth (29) and Arun Karthik (28 n o). Ankit Yadav (1/17) and Pappu Roy (1/32) got the wickets for Odisha.

Panthers triumph



Cuttack: Odisha Panthers claimed the inaugural MGM Odisha T20 Cricket League title beating Odisha Lions by six wickets in the final at the Barabati Stadium here, Wednesday. Batting first, Lions scored 113/9. Naattam Bhanja (38) was the top scorer, while Pradeep K Pradhan (2/9) was the star with the ball for Panthers. In reply, Abhishek K Yadav (41 n o) led the run chase, with the help of Nishikanta Rout (31) and Subham Nayak (29 n o), to guide Panthers past the target with five balls to spare.

BRIEF SCORES: Odisha 132/9 (Suryakant Pradhan 23; Murugan Ashwin 3/16) lost to Tamil Nadu 136/2 (Narayan Jagadeesan 61; Ankit Yadav 1/17) by 8 wickets.

Gaurs thrash Jamshedpur

AGENCIES

Goa, Jan 14: Jorge Ortiz scored twice as FC Goa outclassed Jamshedpur FC 3-0 in their Indian Super League (ISL) clash at the Fatorda Stadium here, Thursday.

Ortiz scored the opening goal of the night in the 19th minute and then scored again to double his side's lead in the 52nd minute. Ivan Gonzalez then hammered the final nail in the Men of Steel's coffin in the 89th minute with a brilliant goal from a solo effort.

The Gaurs remained on the third position in the league table with 18 points from 11 matches while Jamshedpur went down to the seventh position after the defeat. The Men of Steel have 13 points from 11 games and are behind Bengaluru FC on goal difference.

Brandon Fernandes flicked the ball to his right inside the box towards Alberto Noguera who did well to dribble past Ricky Lallawmawma and squared the ball in the middle for Ortiz who found the back of the net.

It could have been 1-1 six minutes later had Nerijus Valskis not missed a sitter: Alex Lima entered the box through the left side and squared



Jorge Ortiz celebrates his second goal against Jamshedpur

the ball in the middle for an unmarked Valskis. The Lithuanian attempted a first time shot on goal but Naveen Kumar parried the ball out.

Goa doubled their advantage seven minutes into the second period and it was Ortiz again. Alberto Noguera found Brandon on his left inside the box who sent a low cross for an unmarked Ortiz who comfortably tapped the ball into the net.

Ortiz missed a sitter four minutes later: Brandon followed a quality through ball inside the box and squared it in the middle for Ortiz who

took a first time shot from a close range but a Jamshedpur defender blocked it to deny Ortiz a hat-trick.

In the 85th, Jamshedpur's night turned more chaotic as Lima picked up his second yellow card for committing a foul on Devendra and was given the marching orders.

It allowed Gaurs to dominate even more and they did it with another goal. Gonzalez made a solo run from his own half and went past Peter Hartley. He exchanged a quick one-two with Noguera on the edge of the box and then scored past Rehenesh.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Shuttlers disappoint

Bangkok: Star India shuttler Saina Nehwal was knocked out of the Yonex Thailand Open Super 1000 event after losing the women's singles second round 23-21, 14-21, 16-21 to Thailand's Busanan Ongbamrungphan here Thursday. In the men's singles, Kidambi Srikanth was forced to give a walkover to his Malaysian opponent Lee Zii Jia after pulling up his right calf muscle. Men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty also suffered a 19-21, 17-21 defeat against Indonesian combination of Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Setiawan. Satwik and his mixed doubles partner Ashwini Ponnappa went down 12-21, 17-21 Chang Tak Ching and Ng Wing Yung.

Contrasting fortunes

London: It has become a familiar pattern for Tottenham under Jose Mourinho this season: take the lead, retreat, invite opponents on, and eventually concede. The same thing happened again Wednesday. Ivan Cavaleiro scored a header of his own in the 74th minute to cancel out Harry Kane's early header and to earn Fulham a 1-1 draw at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium. Tottenham dropped to sixth place because Manchester City beat Brighton 1-0 thanks to Phil Foden's individual goal in the day's other game. City jumped to third instead, and is now four points behind the new leader - fierce rival Manchester United - with a game in hand.

Barca reach Supercopa de Espana final

BARCELONA: Barcelona, without Lionel Messi, reached the Supercopa de Espana final after beating Real Sociedad 3-2 on penalties following a 1-1 draw in Cordoba. It was Frenkie de Jong who continued his strong recent form with the opening goal in the first half. The Dutchman later conceded the penalty that allowed Mikel Oyarzabal to equalise. After a goalless extra-time, German goalie Marc-Andre ter Stegen proved pivotal in the shoot-out, making two saves, before Riqui Puig buried his spot-kick to send Barca through. De Jong hit the post with Barca's first penalty, but Ter Stegen denied Jon Bautista and Oyarzabal, and William Jose hit the post after Ousmane Dembele had scored. Antoine Griezmann skied his effort horribly after Miralem Pjanic and Mikel Merino each scored, but although Januzaj also converted before Puig closed the game.