



SPIRITUAL JACQUELINE
Jacqueline is going through a tough time. She has now reportedly turned to a spiritual path to regain positivity in life **LEISURE P2**



MASSIVE CYBERATTACK
A huge cyberattack left a number of Ukrainian government websites temporarily unavailable **INTERNATIONAL P10**



INDIA LOSE SERIES
South Africa seal the three-match Test series 2-1 after a comfortable seven-wicket win in the Cape Town game **SPORTS P12**

CDS' CHOPPER CRASH DUE TO PILOT ERROR

NEW DELHI: The IAF chopper crash December 8 that killed Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat and 13 others was due to an unexpected change in weather that led to spatial disorientation of the pilot, stated preliminary findings submitted by the tri-services court of inquiry. "The tri-services court of inquiry into the Mi-17 V5 accident December 8, 2021, has submitted its preliminary findings," the IAF's statement said Friday. "The accident was a result of entry into clouds due to unexpected change in weather conditions in the valley. This led to spatial disorientation of the pilot resulting in Controlled Flight into Terrain," it stated. **P7**



BISHOP ACQUITTED IN NUN RAPE CASE

KOTTAYAM: A court in Kerala Friday acquitted Roman Catholic Bishop Franco Mulakkal of the charges of raping a nun in a convent in the southern state. As the prosecution failed to produce evidence against the accused, the Additional District and Sessions Court I, Kottayam, acquitted the Bishop. Mulakkal, 57, was accused of raping the nun multiple times during his visit to a convent in this district when he was the Bishop of the Jalandhar diocese of the Roman Catholic church. A visibly relieved and emotional Mulakkal, who arrived in the court to hear the verdict, burst into tears, hugged his followers and lawyers, sharing his joy over the verdict. **P8**



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No. 1 Djokovic double faulted

AGENCIES

Melbourne, Jan 14: Novak Djokovic faces deportation again after the Australian government revoked his visa for a second time, the latest twist in the ongoing saga over whether the No 1-ranked tennis player will be allowed to compete in the Australian Open despite being unvaccinated for Covid-19.

Immigration Minister Alex Hawke said Friday he used his ministerial discretion to cancel the 34-year-old Serb's visa on public interest grounds — just three days before play begins at the Australian Open, where Djokovic has won a record nine of his 20 Grand Slam titles. Djokovic's lawyers were expected to appeal at the Federal Circuit and Family Court, which they already successfully did last week on procedural grounds after his visa was first canceled when he landed at a Melbourne airport.

Deportation from Australia can lead to a three-year ban on returning to the country, although that may be waived, depending on the circumstances.

Hawke said he cancelled the visa on "health and good order grounds, on the basis that it was in the public interest to do so."

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I too want to switch the party but not getting a clearance from CBI, I-T, ED,...

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	61223.03	↓ 12.27
NIFTY	18255.80	↓ 2.00
DOLLAR	74.44	↑ ₹0.20
EURO	84.86	↑ ₹0.16
GOLD	₹47,896	↑ ₹160
SILVER	₹61,778	↓ ₹142

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	24.4°C	24.0°C
TEMP MIN	17.6°C	16.6°C
Humidity	96%	98%
Rainfall	TRACE	NIL

Forecast: Light rain very likely



ACT OF VALOUR: A member of a Bomb Disposal Squad attempts to defuse an IED bomb found inside a bag at Ghazipur flower market in New Delhi, Friday (Report P9) **P11 PHOTO**

Cops cane protesters



Police resort to lathicharge on protesters at Dhinkia village, Friday **OP PHOTO**

Kujanaga, Jan 14: Tension prevailed at Dhinkia village under Ersama block in Jagatsinghpur district Friday as hundreds of residents including women and children staged protests against a proposed JSW Steel project. Police resorted to lathicharge to disperse the protesters. Many villagers, including women, were injured in the lathicharge. The scuffle between Dhinkia villagers and the police took place when the latter tried to stop the former at the entry point of the village from taking out a rally against the project.

The police barged into Dhinkia and charged the protesters with batons sparing none, not even women and children forcing them to run helter-skelter. Police arrested some leaders such as Debendra Swain, Muralidhar Sahu, Narendra Mohanty and Tirtha Mallick. Fifteen platoons of police along with ASP Nimai Charan Sethi have been deployed in the area. Police had allegedly damaged three gates for the village. Since no government ambulance reached the village a private ambulance was hired to help the injured reach hospital. Tension prevailed in the area while policemen patrolled. It is said that the police will conduct a flag march and set up a camp at Dhinkia village. The eviction drive was carried out without consultation with betel farmers who are likely to be affected due to the proposed project, locals alleged. Demolition of betel plantations was arbitrary and part of the local administration's foul plan to speed up land acquisition, they added. "The only source of our livelihood was destroyed. It has now become impossible for us to eke out our livings. We have been rendered helpless," a betel farmer of Dhinkia village said.

Tension earlier also prevailed in Dhinkia following a violent scuffle between the residents and local police December 20, 2021. Dhinkia villagers had then vehemently opposed the local administration's decision to demarcate its boundary. They were irked over the arrest of two villagers who were leading the people against the project.

Budget Session of Parl begins Jan 31

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 14: The Budget Session of the Parliament will commence January 31 with the address of the President to both the Houses, and conclude April 8, sources said Friday citing recommendation of the Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs.

The Union Budget will be presented February 1. The Economic Survey is likely to be tabled January 31. The first part of the session would conclude February 11. After a month-long recess, the part two of the session would begin from March 14 and conclude April 8.

STATE SECOND IN CALAMITY DEATHS

■ 223 people died due to extreme weather events in Odisha in 2021, according to an IMD report. The state followed Maharashtra which reported 350 deaths

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 14: India saw 1,750 deaths due to extreme weather events in 2021, with Maharashtra being the worst-affected state with 350 fatalities, followed by Odisha and Madhya Pradesh, the India Meteorological Department said Friday. The Met Department said 223 people died due to extreme weather events in Odisha. Thunderstorms and lightning reportedly claimed 787 lives in India last year, while 759 people died in heavy rainfall and flood-related incidents, it said. Cyclonic storms claimed 172 lives and 32 others died due to other extreme weather events, according to the IMD's annual climate statement.

Heavy rainfall and flood related incidents claimed 215 lives in Maharashtra, 143 in Uttarakhand, 55 in Himachal Pradesh, 53 in Kerala and 46 in Andhra Pradesh, according to the report. Thunderstorms and lightning claimed 213 lives in Odisha, 156 in Madhya Pradesh, 89 in Bihar, 76

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2021 fifth warmest year since 1901

NEW DELHI: The year 2021 was the fifth warmest in India since 1901, with the country recording its annual mean surface air temperature at 0.44 degree Celsius above normal, the India Meteorological Department said Friday. "The year 2021 was the fifth warmest year after 2016, 2009, 2017 and 2010 since 1901. The annual mean air temperature for the country was recorded at 0.44 degree Celsius above normal," the Met department's annual climate statement stated. "The winter (January to February) and post-monsoon (October to December) seasons with all India mean temperature anomalies of 0.78 degree Celsius and 0.42 degree Celsius respectively mainly contributed to this warming," it said. In 2016, the annual mean surface air temperature for the country was 0.710 degree Celsius above normal. It was 0.550 degree Celsius and 0.541 degree Celsius above the average temperature in 2009 and 2017, respectively. In 2010, the mean annual air temperature stood 0.539 degree Celsius above normal, it said.

In Maharashtra, 58 in West Bengal, 54 in Jharkhand, 49 in Uttar Pradesh and 48 in Rajasthan. The Met Department said 223 people died due to extreme weather events in Odisha, 191 in Madhya Pradesh, 147 in Uttarakhand, 102 in Bihar, 98 in Uttar Pradesh, 92 in Gujarat and 86 in West Bengal. Sixty-seven died in Kerala, 62

in Rajasthan, 59 in Himachal Pradesh, 57 in Jharkhand, 50 in Andhra Pradesh, 45 in Karnataka, 34 in Tamil Nadu, 32 in Jammu and Kashmir, 25 in Telangana and 14 in Assam. Of the seven deaths recorded in Delhi due to extreme weather events, four occurred because of heavy rainfall and flooding, the IMD data showed.

Containment zones up as Covid surges

■ Odisha logs 10,273 new Covid-19 cases and four more deaths, while containment zones in Bhubaneswar rise to 160, the most ever since the outbreak of the disease

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: Amid rising cases of Covid-19 in the state capital, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) declared 11 more residential areas as containment zones. While six micro containment zones have come up under South-

East Zone in Unit 9, Satya Nagar, Laxmi Sagara, Sriram Nagar; four areas have been demarcated as micro containment zones in Naharkanta, Maitree Vihar, and Patia under North Zone. Moreover, the regional office of a bank has been declared micro containment zone in IRC Village, Nayapalli.

With this, the total containment zones in the state capital have reached about 160. Bhubaneswar now has the most number of containment zones in the state ever since the outbreak of Covid-19. The civic body has increased enforcement squads under its jurisdiction to check the spread of virus.

Odisha Friday recorded 10,273 new Covid-19 cases, 214 more than the previous day, with the tally ris-



ing to 11,11,879, a health department bulletin said.

The death toll mounted to 8,476 as four more persons succumbed to the disease, the highest single-day COVID fatalities in more than two months, it said. The daily test positivity rate (TPR) rose to 13.57 per cent from 12.41 per cent the previous day, the bulletin said. At least 1,065 children were among

the newly-infected patients. Khurda district, which comprises the state capital Bhubaneswar, reported one-third of the fresh infections as 3,496 people were afflicted with the disease. There were 1,049 new cases in Sundargarh, 844 in Cuttack, 529 in Sambalpur and 457 in Balasore. Health Services Director Bijay Mohapatra stressed on the need to avoid overcrowding in hospitals and urged people with minor symptoms to avail telemedicine services instead of visiting the outpatient departments in health facilities. "Surgeries that were scheduled in advance can be done later, but emergency procedures can't be stopped," he told reporters.

RISHI SUNAK: RULE INDICA RULE

■ It's said that history repeats itself, but in case of Britain it is likely to come full circle as the Indian-origin Chancellor is the frontrunner to take charge from 'partygate' troubled Johnson. Will Britannica be ruled by Indica?

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, Jan 14: As Boris Johnson's 'partygate' troubles mount and members of his own Conservative Party demand he step down as the British Prime

Minister, one name is doing the rounds as a frontrunner to take charge — his Indian-origin Chancellor and Downing Street neighbour Rishi Sunak.

The UK-born son of a pharmacist mother and a National Health Service (NHS) general practitioner (GP) father is an Oxford University and Stanford graduate. He is married to Akshata Murty, the daughter of Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy, and the couple has two young daughters Krishna and Anoushka. The MP for Richmond in Yorkshire first entered the UK Parliament in 2015 and has quickly risen up the Tory party ranks as a staunch Brexiteer, who had backed Johnson's strategy to leave the EU. "From working in my mum's

tiny chemist shop to my experience building large businesses, I have seen how we should support free enterprise and innovation to ensure Britain has a stronger future," Sunak had said during the Brexit referendum.

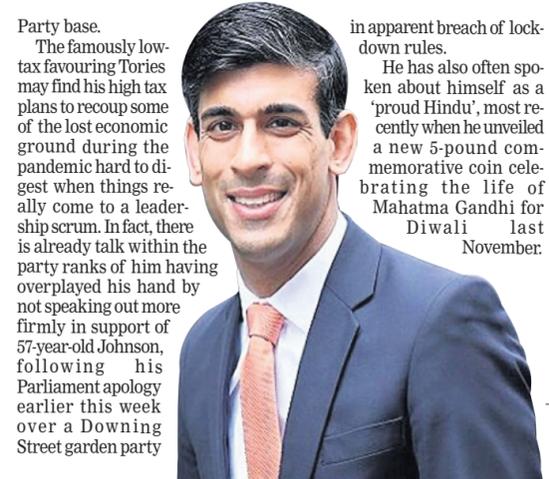
He co-founded a 1-billion-pound global investment firm and specialised in investing in small British businesses before his entry into politics. As the first Chancellor of the Exchequer of Indian heritage, Sunak made history in February 2020 when he was appointed to the most important UK Cabinet post. If the Tory party murmurings and bookie betting odds are anything to go by, then the 41-year-old may well be in line to make history as Britain's first Indian-origin Prime Minister.

"No, definitely not. Seeing what the Prime Minister has to deal with, this is a job hard enough for me to do," Sunak said back in October 2020, when asked if he had prime ministerial ambitions. But a lot has happened since, with Sunak leading the charge for the country's economic fightback against the Covid-19 pandemic.

Many of the schemes he put in place as finance minister, including the furlough-based Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and Covid support grants for struggling businesses over the course of several lockdowns have proved largely popular. However, proposed tax hikes coming up from this April and consistently rising energy and cost of living costs have proved less popular within the Conservative

Party base. The famously low-tax favouring Tories may find his high tax plans to recoup some of the lost economic ground during the pandemic hard to digest when things really come to a leadership scrum. In fact, there is already talk within the party ranks of him having overplayed his hand by not speaking out more firmly in support of 57-year-old Johnson, following his Parliament apology earlier this week over a Downing Street garden party

in apparent breach of lockdown rules. He has also often spoken about himself as a 'proud Hindu', most recently when he unveiled a new 5-pound commemorative coin celebrating the life of Mahatma Gandhi for Diwali last November.



leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You will be keen on carefully protecting your private affairs, particularly your relationships. Ganesha predicts exciting things for you today. You also make a final attempt at completing some work that you have been postponing.

TAURUS
Today you are likely to remain in an uncertain, indecisive frame of mind. You could, early in the morning, have an irresistible urge to take a holiday and go off on a long vacation with your friends and family members.

GEMINI
It is not too bright a day for reaping the rewards of your hard work. A deeply buried desire as well as your sentimental nature will be the cause for some mood swings today. You will be subject to mental stress on account of this. You need to improve your viewpoint on certain matters, says Ganesha.

CANCER
In order to protect the feelings and sentiments of those dear to you, you may tend to hide your emotions under the garb of a calm demeanour, predicts Ganesha. In the afternoon, you may set out on a short trip out of town. In the evening, you may spend a handsome sum of money to make yourself look better.

LEO
Lady Luck and the goddess of wealth both seem to favour you on this very unique and dynamic day, says Ganesha. So, it should come as no surprise when you gain both — money and power — on the business front. The latter half of the day might find you splurging a bit on jewellery for your sweetheart.

VIRGO
There are chances that today, you will turn to your family for happiness, predicts Ganesha. Of course, you may have to spend a small fortune to please them. Later in the day, you may pen the first chapter of a long-term platonic relationship.

LIBRA
Today promises to be a joy ride for your hidden corpulent side. Relish what you eat, as today you shall take a keen interest in the same. Career wise, you may find yourself standing at crossroads. But the good part about that is there are many paths to choose from. The latter half of the day promises to bring some monetary gain.

SCORPIO
The company of like-minded people will keep you in cheery spirit throughout the day. The day promises to be lively and vibrant as you will engage in one activity after another. But Ganesha warns that being over enthusiastic may be detrimental to your health.

SAGITTARIUS
You are inclined to be over-protective of your personal belongings. Sensational love affairs are plotting to hold you ransom. All the work you have been pushing off to do later will be completed reasonably on time. Ganesha sees a rather hopeful day in store for you.

CAPRICORN
It's a day of great expectations! You will expect a lot from people around you, even yourself, and the result may not be as expected, foresees Ganesha. The need for careful planning and smart execution of ideas will be pressing, and this should explain why you'll be thrifty in dealing with money matters later in the day.

AQUARIUS
Straighten your tie and pull in your tummy, it's time to make an impression! And that's not all; you need to be sharp as important decisions await you. Haste will not do, as these decisions may have a long-term impact, cautions Ganesha.

PISCES
You will be full of energy and enthusiasm today, a fact which owes nothing to the revitalising pills you have added to your diet. You will have a great time making new acquaintances and splurging on someone you think is special, and this too should probably not have anything to do with aforementioned pills.



INDIAN-BORN SINGAPOREAN ANJANA JOINS KILLING EVE CAST

Indian-born Singaporean actress Anjana Vasan, whom many will remember from *Spider-Man: Far From Home*, has been newly cast in Season 4 of the BBC America action thriller series *Killing Eve*. Season 4 will debut February 27.

BRITNEY HITS BACK AT JAMIE AFTER HER ABC INTERVIEW

Britney Spears has responded to her sister (and *Steel Magnolias* star) Jamie Lynn Spears's recent *ABC News* interview, in which she spoke about their relationship and defended her role in the pop star's 13-year conservatorship.



Jacqueline turns to spirituality

Mumbai: Ever since her name cropped up in the multi-crore extortion racket involving conman Suresh Chandrasekhar, actress Jacqueline Fernandez has been going through a tough time. From getting interrogated multiple times by the Enforcement Directorate to her alleged relationship with conman Suresh, Jacqueline has been dealing with many issues currently. And amid all this, the gorgeous actress has now reportedly turned to a spiritual path to regain positivity in life.

According to a report published in a leading news portal, a source has revealed that the actress is reading spiritual books that talk about forgiveness and healing. A source has said, "Jacqueline has always been spiritually inclined. She believes in affirmations and journaling. She has been doing it for quite some time now. The actress is also doing a lot of meditation and breathing exercises. She is going through a tough time. And she is also reading a lot of Louise L Hay's books, which talk about forgiveness and healing."

Meanwhile, a few days ago, a picture had gone viral on the internet where Jacqueline and Suresh were snapped in a mushy moment with the actress showing off a love bite on her neck. Earlier also, several loved-up pictures of Jacqueline and Suresh got leaked on the internet. Reacting to all such intimate pictures of her with the conman, Jacqueline even urged everyone not to circulate her private picture and hamper her personal space.

AGENCIES



Biopic on comedian Kapil Sharma announced

Mumbai: Popular comic and TV show host Kapil Sharma's life story is set to be told on the big screen with an upcoming biographical drama movie, a producer announced Friday. Titled *Funkaar*, the film will be helmed by *Fukrey* fame director Mrighdeep Singh Lamba. Mahaveer Jain will produce the movie under the banner Lyca Productions.

"Looking forward to bringing to the audience the story of India's most beloved Funkaar: Kapil Sharma," Lamba said in a statement.

Jain, who earlier backed Rajinikanth's *2.0* as well as upcoming films like Akshay Kumar-starrer *Ram Setu*, said the team is excited to present Sharma's life story to the world.

"Billions of people get their daily dose of dopamine, courtesy Kapil Sharma. We all need love, life and laughter. We are proud to present comedy super star Kapil Sharma's untold

story on the big screen, in a big way," he said.

Sharma, who hails from Amritsar, rose to fame after winning the comedy reality television show *The Great Indian Laughter Challenge* in 2007.

The 40-year-old comedian continued performing acts for reality shows till he launched his own show *Comedy Nights with Kapil*, under his banner K9 Productions in 2013, that propelled him to further popularity.

Sharma currently hosts *The Kapil Sharma Show*. He also forayed into film acting with Abbas Mustan-directed comedy *Kis Kisiko Pyaar Karoon* in 2015 and later starred in historical-drama *Firangi*.

He is awaiting the release of his debut comedy special *Kapil Sharma: I'm Not Done Yet*, which will premiere on Netflix January 28. AGENCIES

Farhan and Shibani to tie knot February 21



Mumbai: Farhan Akhtar is all set to tie the sacred knot with long time girlfriend Shibani Dandekar. They have been dating each other for almost 4 years now, dishing major relationship goals. They are all set to take their relationship to the next level.

Now buzz is that the couple is looking forward to registering their marriage February 21, this year. Pinkvilla quoted a source as saying, "Wedding was on cards for the two of them, as

they have been in love for the longest time now. They have been discussing wedding plans for a while now and have finally decided to take things to the next level. On February 21, their relationship will take a new turn, as they will take the formal vows to be partners for life."

Farhan and Shibani are often seen painting the town red be it with their public appearance or social media PDA.

Meanwhile, on the work front, Farhan is currently prepping for his directorial, *See Le Zara*, which will be starring Katrina Kaif, Priyanka Chopra, and Alia Bhatt. Reportedly, the movie is slated to go on floors in the second half of 2022, and the makers are planning to release it next year. IANS

Nandita gets nostalgic as Azhagi clocks 20 years

Chennai: Actress Nandita Das, who won the admiration and hearts of Tamil audiences with her brilliant performance in the critically-acclaimed Tamil hit film *Azhagi*, has recalled sweet memories of working on the film on the occasion of it completing 20 years.

Taking to social media, Nandita Das said, "Technically my only 'hit' film!! *Azhagi* turns 20 today! Thank you Thangar Bachan, Parthiban, Devayani, Sayaji Shinde and everyone in the team who made the experience so memorable for me. And the film, for the audiences. Special thanks to Ilayaraja for unforgettable songs. Reliving the memories through these photos. Happy Pongal!!" The film, which won the National Award for Best Picture, was directed by Thangar Bachan and featured Parthiban and Devayani in the lead along with Nandita Das.

Only recently, director Thangar Bachan had penned an emotional post in which he had disclosed that the heart-moving tale of the prime characters in the film, Shanmugan and Dhanalakshmi, had first appeared as a short story called *Kalvettu*. He said that the story was so touching that after 15 years, he made it into a film. AGENCIES



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

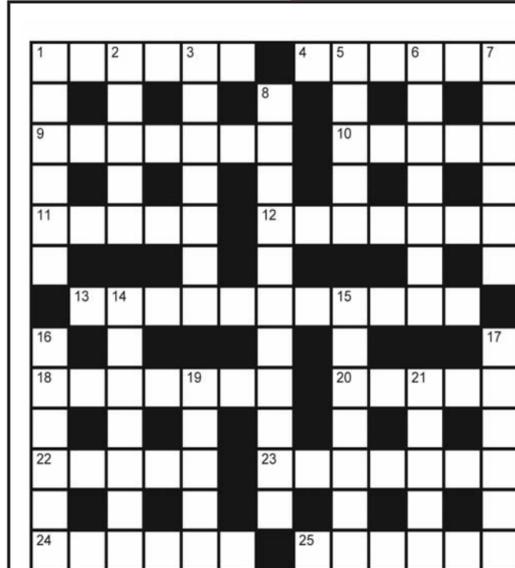


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD

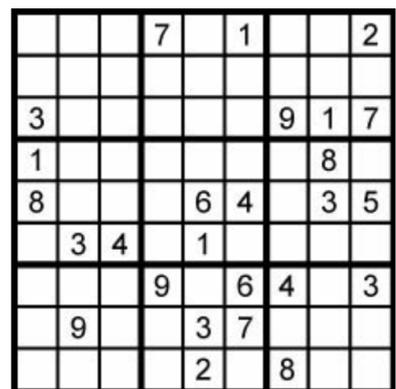


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- Across**
- 1 "O tempora! O mores!" orator
 - 4 Arctic plain
 - 9 Custodian
 - 10 Follow
 - 11 Kind of cabinet
 - 12 Bit-by-bit
 - 13 Deliberate
 - 18 Elucidate
 - 20 Coquette
 - 22 Tree branch
 - 23 Invalidated
 - 24 Avaricious
 - 25 "That's a lie!"
 - Down**
 - 1 Sweet-talk
 - 2 Religious law
 - 3 Entourage
 - 5 Extreme
 - 6 Stoker's bat
 - 7 Acid neutralizer
 - 8 Like some close calls
 - 14 Jovian planet
 - 15 Polygonal shape
 - 16 Sleep partner (3,3)
 - 17 Be a busybody
 - 19 Orchard pest
 - 21 Hitching post?

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Puri Covid care centre reopens for servitors

Puri, Jan 14: The district administration has reopened the special Covid care centre at Nilachal Bhakta Niwas for servitors and officials of Srimandir.

Two doctors and staff have been posted to render services. The precaution dose is given to eligible servitors to protect them from Covid infection. The servitors are being provided face masks and sanitiser to ensure their

good health, said an official.

Although the temple was closed for the devotees, regular rituals were conducted by servitors during the first two waves of the pandemic despite scores of servitors and temple officials being infected with the virus.

A host of servitors got infected with Covid which threatened imminent breach in rituals of the deities. Keeping this in view, the administration has set up a health-

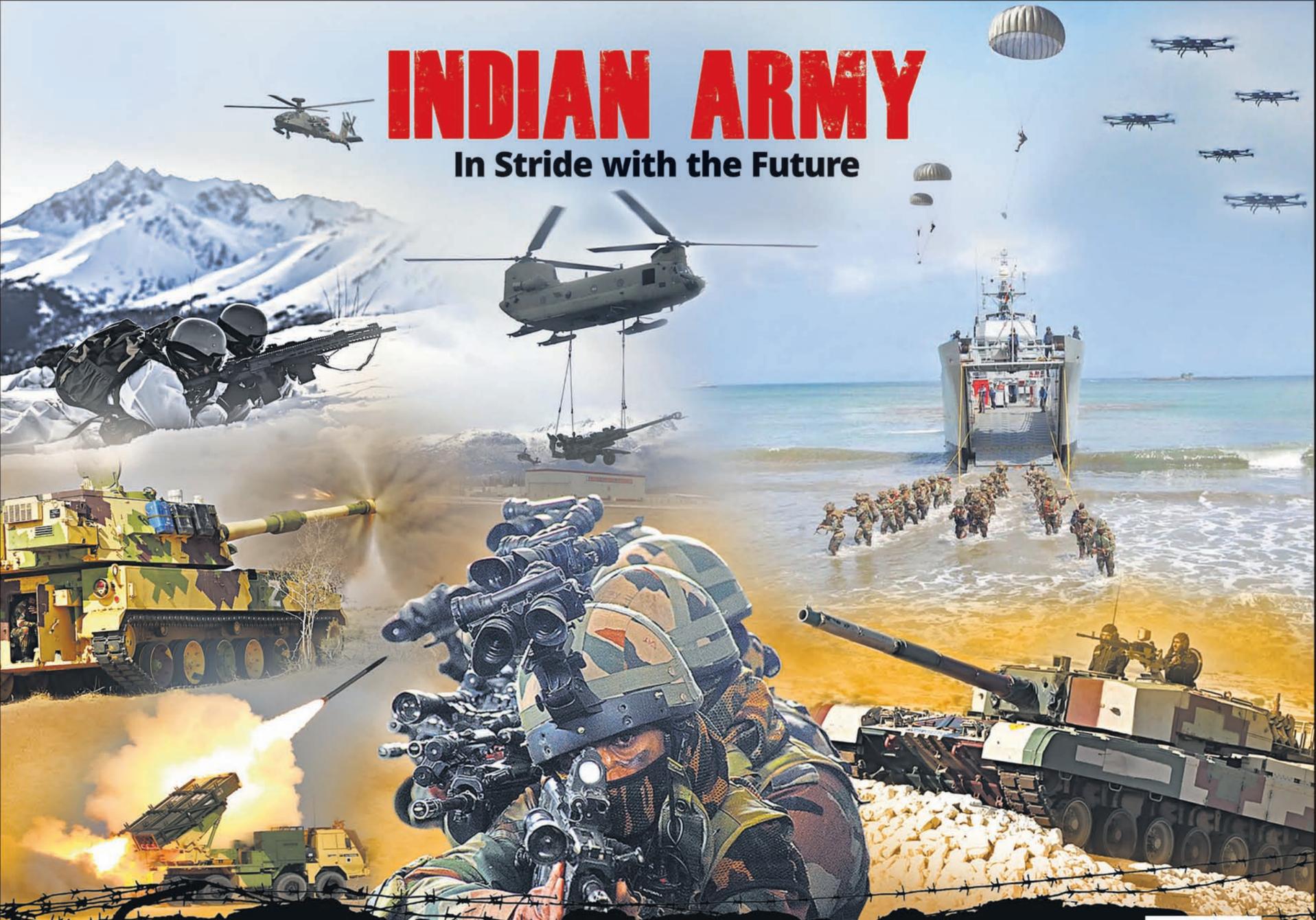
care facility for treatment of Covid positive servitors.

Regular RT-PCR tests of servitors were conducted at regular intervals and vaccination was carried out on priority basis. Servitors Raghunath Guru and Ipsit Pratihari have demanded the administration to lower the minimum age limit for precaution dose of vaccine so that most of the servitors will be able to take the dose.

AGENCIES

INDIAN ARMY

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who sacrificed their lives while serving the Nation.
India will never forget our valiant heroes.**

OUR FALLEN HEROES IN THE YEAR 2021

RANK	NAME	ARMS/SERVICES	RANK	NAME	ARMS/SERVICES	RANK	NAME	ARMS/SERVICES
NAIB SUBEDAR	NAVINDER, SM	INFANTRY	SEPOY	VIKESH KUMAR SAH	INFANTRY	SEPOY	VAISAKH H	MECHANISED INFANTRY
NAIK	NISHANT SHARMA	MECHANISED INFANTRY	HAVILDAR	KASHIRAY BAMMANALLI	ENGINEERS	SUBEDAR	EBENEZAR AMADALA	ARTILLERY
SEPOY	LAXMAN	INFANTRY	NAIB SUBEDAR	SREEJITH M, SM	INFANTRY	HAVILDAR	DEB KUMAR BHATTACHARJEE	ARTILLERY
LANCE DAFADAR	DEEPAK KUMAR	ARMOURED	SEPOY	MARUPROLU JASWANTH KUMAR REDDY	INFANTRY	HAVILDAR	AJIT KUMAR SHUKLA	ARTILLERY
HAVILDAR	NIRMAL SINGH	INFANTRY	NAIK	GURJANT SINGH	INFANTRY	SUBEDAR	AJAY SINGH	INFANTRY
BATTERY HAVILDAR MAJOR	KULDEEP SINGH	ARTILLERY	SUBEDAR	KRUSHNA CHANDRA PANDA	INFANTRY	RIFLEMAN	YOGAMBAR SINGH	INFANTRY
HAVILDAR	PINKU KUMAR	INFANTRY	SEPOY	BOOPATHI S	ARMY SERVICE CORPS	RIFLEMAN	VIKRAM SINGH NEGI	INFANTRY
LIEUTENANT COLONEL	RISHUBH SHARMA	ARMY AVIATION	SUBEDAR	RAM SINGH	INFANTRY	HAVILDAR	HARENDRA SINGH RAWAT	INFANTRY
RIFLEMAN	PRADEEP KUMAR	INFANTRY	LANCE DAFADAR	JOGINDER SINGH	ARMOURED	SEPOY	HIMANSHU	INFANTRY
GUNNER	SAYAN GHOSH	ARTILLERY	SIGNALMAN	BEEPRIN BICHHWALIA	SIGNALS	SEPOY	BRLJESH RAUTELA	INFANTRY
NAIK	K DEVENDRAN	ENGINEERS	COLONEL	ASHWANI KUMAR	INFANTRY	HAVILDAR	RANJEET KUMAR	ARMY ORDNANCE CORPS
NAIK	UTTAM KUMAR SINGH	SIGNALS	HAVILDAR	SUDHEESH KUMAR S	ENGINEERS	NAIK	DEVA ANAND A	ARMY ORDNANCE CORPS
NAIK	PANDRANKI CHANDRA RAO	EME	NAIK	RAMARAO VANJARAPU	ENGINEERS	SEPOY	KAMAL DEV VAIDYA	INFANTRY
SUBEDAR	DOIPHODE LAXMAN SANTU	SIGNALS	SEPOY	PRABHJOT SINGH	INFANTRY	HAVILDAR	KAILASH CHAND GURJAR	MECHANISED INFANTRY
NAIK	MANISH KUMAR	SIGNALS	SEPOY	JAGRAJ SINGH	INFANTRY	SEPOY	LOVEPREET SINGH	INFANTRY
HAVILDAR	HAOBIJAM PREMANANDA SINGH	ARTILLERY	HAVILDAR	MOHD SALEEM AKHOON	INFANTRY	LIEUTENANT COLONEL	ABHEET SINGH BATH	ARMY AVIATION
NAIK	BADAL SINGH CHANDEL	INFANTRY	NAIB SUBEDAR	SUDHAKER SINGH	ARTILLERY	CAPTAIN	JAYANT JOSHI	ARMY AVIATION
HAVILDAR	GANESH YADAV	ARTILLERY	HAVILDAR	BHAODURIA KULDIP SURESH	MECHANISED INFANTRY	HAVILDAR	RAKESH KUMAR	INFANTRY
LANCE DAFADAR	VIKRAM SINGH	ARMOURED	SUBEDAR	RAM SHANKER	ENGINEERS	HAVILDAR	GURNINDER SINGH	INFANTRY
NAIB SUBEDAR	PARWINDER SINGH	INFANTRY	SUBEDAR	VIRENDRA KUMAR	ARTILLERY	SOWAR	SHANAVAS A	ARMOURED
SEPOY	PARABJEET SINGH	INFANTRY	SEPOY	RAVLCHANDRAN R	INFANTRY	SUBEDAR	DAMBAR CHAND	INFANTRY
SEPOY	AMARDEEP SINGH	INFANTRY	NAIK	RATHOD JASHAVANTSINH JAVANSING	ARMY SERVICE CORPS	NAIB SUBEDAR	JAIPAL SINGH CHAHAR	INFANTRY
SEPOY	PARGHAT SINGH	INFANTRY	SEPOY	KARN VEER SINGH	INFANTRY	HAVILDAR	RAJESH KUMAR	ARMY ORDNANCE CORPS
NAIB SUBEDAR	NITUL GOGOI	INFANTRY	NAIB SUBEDAR	JASWINDER SINGH, SM	MECHANISED INFANTRY	GUNNER	VISHAL KUMAR	ARTILLERY
SEPOY	POLUKANTI SIVAGANGADHAR	EME	NAIK	MANDEEP SINGH	INFANTRY	COLONEL	VIPLAV TRIPATHI	INFANTRY
SEPOY	SASANKHA SEKHAR SAMAL	EME	NAIK	GAJJAN SINGH	INFANTRY	MAJOR	PANKAJ KUMAR PANDAY	INFANTRY
NAIB SUBEDAR	VIJAY KUMAR SHARMA	EME	SEPOY	SARAJ SINGH	INFANTRY	MAJOR	MAYANK VISHNOI, SM	INFANTRY
NAIK	ABHILASH KUMAR S	EME						

IPS Arun Bothra tests Covid +ve

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: Senior IPS officer and Chairman cum Managing Director of Odisha State Road Transport Corporation (OSRTC) Arun Bothra has tested positive for Covid-19 and was hospitalised Friday.

Bothra said in a tweet, "Escaped Covid for almost two years. Got me finally. Tested positive yesterday and hospitalised. Fine otherwise."

At present, the state is witnessing a massive surge in the number of Covid cases. The number of fresh infections in the state crossed the 10,000 mark Thursday.

Court complex sealed

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Jan 14: The Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) has sealed the Civil Court complex here and declared it as a micro-containment zone a few hours after some employees of the court tested positive for Covid-19.

At least 39 persons in the court complex that comprises sub-divisional judicial magistrate court, district sessions judge court and Cuttack bar association have tested Covid positive, sources said.

The CMC has formed a special team to take care of the containment measures. "While Sanjibita Ray is in-charge of overall supervision, Satyabrata Satapathy will look after sanitisation in the court complex. Smrutiranjana Samal will ensure proper testing and tracking while Deepimayee Jena along with Madhusudan Das will see the health requirements," said a CMC order.

State, WFP to help farmers adapt to climate variability

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the state government have joined hands to improve the food security of small and marginal farmers by strengthening their resilience to climate change.

An agreement was signed by Agriculture Director Muthu Kumar and WFP Country Director Bishow Parajuli at a virtual programme Thursday, the UN agency said in a release.

In a pilot initiative, advisories will be provided to small farmers of the state, which is particularly prone to cyclones, to help them adapt to the impacts of the climate crisis.

Small farmers, who constitute 90 per cent of the peasant community in Odisha, will be able to select the right agriculture and livelihood options to improve their food security and incomes, it said.

"The impact of climate change disproportionately affects the livelihoods and food security of small and marginal farmers. The WFP and the Department of Agriculture will collaborate on strengthening adaptation to climate variability and management of food systems by building capacity and reducing inequalities in the process," Parajuli said.

The WFP and the Agriculture Department will develop toolkits, modules, and guidelines during the project to provide services to small farmers.

It will help the farming communities in the state make informed decisions for a transformation towards a more productive and resilient agricultural system.

"The partnership will contribute to inclusive growth and resilience in agriculture, thus contributing to improved food security," Kumar added.

CLASSIFIED

LOST

Myself Amit Agrawal, S/o. Baijnath Agrawal, Charampa, Bhadrak. I have lost my land Sale Deed No. 1347. If any one found please contact: 9437031923.

Decoding the legal bar in decades old Kotia dispute

KULDEEP SINGH, OP

New Delhi, Jan 14: In 2020-21, Andhra Pradesh issued a notification to hold local body elections in the state which ignited a fresh spark in the decades old border dispute with Odisha over Kotia group of villages.

The Kotia group of villages, according to Odisha, are under the administrative control of Koraput district. The villages are part of Pottangi Assembly and Koraput Lok Sabha constituencies. In March 2020, Andhra issued a notification for holding local body elections in Kotia group of villages as the state claimed they are part of Salur Assembly and Araku Parliamentary constituency in AP.

In order to stop alleged trespassing by Andhra Pradesh, Odisha in 2021 moved Supreme Court seeking contempt action against Andhra Pradesh for issuing notification for holding elections in three villages of Kotia panchayat.

Odisha argued in the Supreme Court that Andhra violated the Supreme Court judgement dated March 30, 2006 in which the SC had asked both the states to maintain status quo.

However, Andhra Pradesh refuted Odisha's claim and termed the petition grossly misconceived. Andhra submitted that the apex court hadn't passed any order in 2006. It had only recorded the statements of both the states after it dismissed the original suit filed by Odisha on the ground that it was not maintainable under Article 131.

While the contempt petition is pending in the apex court, Odisha has recently filed a fresh suit in the SC under Article 131 over Kotia dispute.



Bone of contention

Odisha had filed the first original suit under Article 131 in the apex court in 1968 against Andhra Pradesh over Kotia dispute. Odisha relied upon several pre-Independence era treaties and notifications to press their claim over the disputed territory.

The notification no. 251/1920 and notification no. 257/1920 passed by the Governor-in-Council, Madras Presidency, mandated that the disputed villages fall under the Potangi Taluk of Koraput district of Orissa, Odisha submitted in the court.

However, the apex court dismissed the suit in 2006 saying that it is not maintainable under Article 131 in view of the bar contained in proviso of the Article.

Significantly, Article 131 grants original jurisdiction to the Supreme Court in any dispute between Union and a state or between two or more states. But there is a proviso which reads as, "The jurisdiction shall not extend to a dispute arising out of any treaty, agreement, covenant, engagement, sanad or any other similar instrument which, having been entered into or executed before the commencement of this

Constitution".

The apex court non-suited Odisha on the ground that since the claim of the state is based on notifications, which essentially are in the nature of instruments.

In order to get the border dispute resolved, Odisha filed another original suit in January this year wherein it pleaded the apex court to strike down or read down the Article 131 of the Constitution.

"Indeed the proviso to Article 131 of the Constitution of India misconstrued to render Odisha remediless. Therefore the proviso to the Article 131 is liable to be struck down or read down in the manner by which judicial remedy is provided to the plaintiff for adjudication of the disputed encompassed," Odisha submitted in the fresh original suit.

Odisha contended in the fresh suit that the cause of action arose within the jurisdiction of Supreme Court only to try the present suit under Article 131 of Constitution of India after either declaring the proviso to the said Article unconstitutional or reading down. The suit is yet to be taken up for hearing by the Supreme Court.

Mains postponement: OCS aspirants hold protests



Candidates are holding a demonstration at Master Canteen Square, Friday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: Odisha Public Service Commission (OPSC) aspirants continued their protests Friday demanding postponement of the Odisha Civil Services (OCS) Mains Exam-2020 as Covid-19 cases continues to surge in the state. The candidates Friday protested near Master Canteen Square demanding cancellation of the exam.

The exams are scheduled to be conducted from January 20 to February 6. Earlier, the aspirants wrote a letter to the Chief Minister, citing instances of postponement of various academic and recruitment exams in the recent past due to the third wave. The candidates

also pointed out in the letter that a large number of persons appearing for the Civil Service Mains examinations had tested positive for coronavirus after attending some papers.

Some candidates had also written to special relief commissioner (SRC) demanding postponement of the examination. "If any candidate gets infected during the exam, he or she may be mentally and physically unfit to attend the other papers which will upset his or her career," a candidate said.

They said all hostels are ordered to be vacant in Cuttack and Bhubaneswar. Candidates living in Koraput, Malkanagiri and Nuapada cannot come over to attend their exams.

4 automobile firm staff held for ₹31L fraud

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: Laxmisagar police Friday claimed to have arrested four employees of an automobile agency for allegedly misappropriating Rs 31 lakh.

The accused were identified as Deepak Ranjan Rout of Cuttack's Banki, Ganeswar Pradhan of Nuasahi in Nayagarh, Jagadish Achary of Sriramanagar in Old Town area here and Santosh Kumar Behera of Banki in Cuttack.

According to sources, Tarini Motors Private Limited general manager Muhammad Sadik had approached the Laxmisagar police January 12 alleging Deepak, Ganeswar, Jagadish and Santosh, who had been working at the accounts section of the agency, of misappropriating Rs 31 lakh by forging the company's cash book January 10, 2022.

"A case (11/2022) was registered under Sections 408 (criminal breach of trust), 420 (cheating) and 34 (acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention) of the IPC. During investigation, we learnt that the four managed to embezzle around Rs 31 lakh of the company," a Laxmisagar police official said.

COMMONWEALTH GAMES 2022

Queen's Baton arrives in City; Puri tour today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: The Queen's Baton for the Commonwealth Games 2022 arrived in the capital city Friday.

Odisha Hockey Promotion Council chairman Dilip Tirkey, officials of the sports and youth services department and office bearers of Odisha Olympic Association received the baton at Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA).

Eminent sportspersons from Odisha such as Anuradha Biswal and Shradhanjali Samantray were present at the airport to receive the baton.

The baton will tour Puri and Konark Saturday before returning to Bhubaneswar for the symbolic relay at Kalinga Stadium. Eminent sportspersons from the state are scheduled to participate in the event, sources said.

"It is a historic occasion for us. It is a great honour for our state to receive the Queen's Baton prior to the commencement of the Commonwealth Games 2022. All arrangements are in place for the baton relay," said Tirkey.



The Queen's Baton Relay is a tradition that celebrates, connects and excites communities from across the Commonwealth during the build-up to the Commonwealth Games. The relay began at Buckingham Palace October 7 last year. Queen Elizabeth II had placed her message into the baton signifying the start of the 294-day relay to 72 nations and territories of the Commonwealth.

The Queen's Baton relay will be conducted with strict adherence to the Covid-19 protocols. The baton will leave for Singapore January 16. It will arrive back in England in July, 2022. The games are expected to take place from July 28 to August 8.

OPF seeks affidavit by parties for change in state edu

POST NEWS NETWORK

PANCHAYAT ELECTIONS

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: The Odisha Parents' Federation (OPF) Friday demanded all state political parties and their candidates for panchayat election to include and put forth an affidavit before their voters for a change in the state's education system.

Federation chairman Basudev Bhatt said, "We demand from all state parties including BJP, BJD, Congress, CPI-M, CPI, AAP, NCP,

RJD, Forward Bloc, and Samajwadi Party among others including independent candidates to include and give a public affidavit before their voters for a change in the education system in Odisha."

"The candidates must include our demands in their affidavit that includes implementation of

25 per cent reservation for economically and socially disadvantaged students in private schools in their gram panchayats and constituencies, re-opening of closed and merger of schools due to fewer students in their constituencies, taking responsibility of health services of parents and students in the GP, and take appropriate steps in their areas to use NCERT and SCERT books in private schools to stop violation," he added.



The pontiff of Radhaballav mutt in Puri prepares 'Makara Chaula' for offerings before Lord Jagannath, Friday

OP PHOTO

Odia film 'Adieu Godard' bags 3 int'l awards

THE FILM WON THE BEST DIRECTOR (AMARTYA BHATTACHARYYA), BEST ACTOR (CHOUDHURY BIKASH DAS) AND BEST SCREENPLAY (AMARTYA BHATTACHARYYA) IN THE FEATURE FILM CATEGORY FOR THE JANUARY 2022 EDITION



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: Odia feature film 'Adieu Godard', written and directed by National Award winning director Amartya Bhattacharyya and produced under

the banner of Swastik Arthouse, has won three international awards at the just concluded Sipontum Arthouse International Film Festival (SAIFF) in Italy.

The film won the best director (Amartya Bhattacharyya), best actor

(Choudhury Bikash Das) and best screenplay (Amartya Bhattacharyya) in the feature film category for the January 2022 edition.

This is certainly a matter of great happiness and pride for Odia film lovers and more so because Das as an actor and Bhattacharyya as a director have created some memorable cinematic moments since their first collaboration in Khyanikaa, sources said.

"This is wonderful news and I am very happy for the award. The film is an honest attempt to bring something special for the audience and I am glad that it is getting due recognition. Thanks to Amartya and the entire team of Adieu Godard for this special moment," Das said.

Expressing happiness, Bhattacharyya said, "I am very much happy that Bikash Das has won the best actor award. This international recognition was long due for a talent of his calibre. I think all of us who make Odia films have somehow failed to do justice to some outstanding talents that Odisha has. This recognition is just the beginning. I congratulate each and every talent who has been a part of this film."

Producer and actor Swastik Choudhury said, "It is immensely satisfying to see someone of the stature of Bikash Das getting international recognition. Performers like him need to be seen and watched more by the international audience."

Crackdown on kite string



Cuttack: The Commissionerate Police Friday seized at least 60 kites and banned glass-laced strings from several places of Cuttack city. The police also detained five minors for flying kites with glass-coated strings on the occasion of Makar Sankranti. A 31-year-old biker had died after his throat was slit by a kite string in Purbazar area of Jagatpur December 26 last year.

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SHORT TAKES

Koraput tops list of aspiring dists

Koraput: Koraput district has topped the list of country's top five aspiring districts. The district has fared well in the education front. This was tweeted by officials of the district administration, Friday. The district administration in the tweet was all praise for the employees and people who have contributed immensely for this achievement. It said that the feat wouldn't have been possible without the cooperation of all. The list of aspiring districts was published by NITI Aayog in November 2021. The second in the list is Yadgiri district of Karnataka followed by Barpeta in Assam and Jaisalmer in Rajasthan.

Huge quantity of explosives seized in Malkangiri

Malkangiri: A huge quantity of explosives, suspected to be left behind by Maoists, was found Friday in Malkangiri district, informed the police. During a combing operation in Swabhiman Anchal at the Odisha-Andhra Pradesh border, personnel of the Special Operation Group (SOG) and District Voluntary Force (DVF) detected the dump of explosive materials, they informed. The explosives were found in a forest near Maribeda and Nademanjari villages in Jodamba police station area, Malkangiri SP Nitesh Wadhwan said. Among the materials found were four tiffin bombs, 20 web belts, 19 jungle caps, Maoist literature and a large amount of medicines. It is suspected that Maoists fled the area, leaving behind the explosives, due to combing operations, the officer said. This is the third seizure of items belonging to Maoists from the area in the last one month, Wadhwan informed. Notably, Swabhiman Anchal, once known as a cut-off area has two BSF camps.

Covid-19 threat: VIMSAR postpones MBBS exams



POST NEWS NETWORK

Burla, Jan 14: The authorities of the Veer Surendra Sai Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR) here postponed Friday the MBBS exams in view of the rising cases of Covid-19 within its campus as well as in the state. The exams were scheduled to begin Saturday. "VIMSAR officials took the de-

cision to defer the pre-scheduled exams taking into account the recent spike in Covid-19 cases in the state and for the safety of students," the dean of the VIMSAR said.

"The institute has released a detailed circular regarding postponement of MBBS exams which were scheduled to be held from Saturday. The exams have been postponed till future notice," the dean added.

More than 30 students of the VIMSAR had tested positive for coronavirus a couple of days back following which the Sambalpur district administration declared its hostels and staff quarters as Containment Zones.

Meanwhile, aspirants of Odisha Public Service Commission (OPSC) have urged Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to postpone the Odisha Civil Services (OCS) Main Exam-2020 in view of the Covid-19 situation.



Abiding by Covid guidelines, people of Telugu community observe Pongal festival in Berhampur, Friday

OP PHOTO

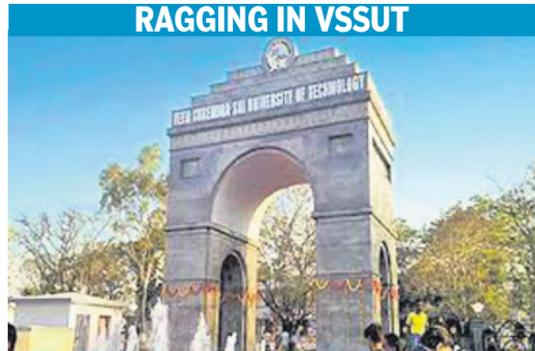
6 students fined, grade points reduced

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Jan 14: The authorities of Veer Surendra Sai University of Technology (VSSUT) in this district have imposed penalty on six senior students who were found involved in a ragging case in December, 2021, apart from reducing one grade point of each student, a report said.

The disciplinary action against the six students - three each from Production Engineering and Electronics and Telecommunication Engineering - has been initiated following the recommendations of the disciplinary committee and subsequent approval of the vice-chancellor.

The authorities have decided to deduct one grade point of the guilty students in the first two subjects to which tests had been conducted for the current 7th semester examination-2021. In addition, a fine of ₹15,000 each has been imposed on all the six guilty persons.



The authorities have decided to reduce one grade point of each student in the first two subjects to which tests had been conducted for the current 7th Semester Examination-2021. In addition, a fine of ₹15,000 each has been imposed on all the six students found guilty

The fines will have to be deposited in the account of Dean, Students' Welfare by January 31, 2022. All the implicated students and their parents have been asked to submit declaration/undertaking in prescribed format in the office by the same date

The penalty will have to be deposited in the account of Dean,

Students' Welfare by January 31, 2022. All the implicated students

Poachers go on a killing spree in reserve forests

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, Jan 14: A large number of wild animals in the reserve forests of Dhenkanal district are falling prey to the rampant illegal poaching and hunting activities incited by the lack of forest officials. The vast forest covers in the district remain unguarded due to lack of employees in the department.

The handful of existing staff is not capable to successfully guard the vast forest covers including core forest areas in the district. Even as sporadic raids are being conducted, hunters manage to give slip to the raiding teams.

Elephants, of all the animals, are being prioritised by the poachers and hunters, giving sleepless nights to the forest officials.

Out of eight forest ranges in the district, ranges like Kapilash, Sadangi and Hindol have become the dens of such thieves. The Kandhara reserve forest bordering Badamba, Cuttack, Athagarh and Narasinghpur under Hindol range are the worst hit areas.

Patrolling has reduced in Kapilash range as the post of ranger has been vacant for several months. As many as 100 hunters have been arrested following raids and over 50 illegal firearms have been seized in a year. Out of them, 40 arrests and 25 firearms were from Kapilash alone.

Apart from this, the Special Task Force (STF) of state Crime Branch



has seized as many as nine firearms and arrested two wildlife criminals from Bhapur forest area during the same period, which ascertained during a detailed probe that illegal firearms were being used for poaching.

STF had raided a place about one-and-half years ago, when poachers had shot down an elephant for its tusk. No criminal has been arrested in this connection so far.

The wildlife criminals have been mainly targeting herbivores like wild boars, deer, barking deer and sambhars. At times, the animals are being trapped and electrocuted as well for hides and meat.

Contacted, Kapilash Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Prakash Chand Gogineni said, "Patrolling has been intensified in the reserve forests of Dhenkanal to curb illegal activities. A watch-tower has also been erected at Kandhara reserve forest."

Armed forest personnel are guarding the areas 24x7. Arrangements are also being made to appoint a permanent ranger in Kapilash range, the DFO informed.

65 years on, issues of Hirakud oustees still unresolved



POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Jan 14: Sixty five years have gone by since the Hirakud dam in Sambalpur district was commissioned. But sadly, many issues like rehabilitation and compensation of the people who were ousted are yet to be resolved, a report said.

According to the reports, the district administration observed the 65th anniversary of the dam Thursday. The report said that despite repeated reminders to the administrative officials, the problems of the misplaced families have not been solved. They continue to live in misery.

Oustees united under the 'Hirakud Jalabandhar Bishapita Kalyan Samiti' have submitted a memorandum to District Collector Dibyajoti Parida in this regard. The collector has assured the oustees that steps will be taken to sort out whatever issues they have.

Oustees alleged that the Supreme Court and the Orissa High Court have given verdicts in their favour regarding their demands, but the government has been denying in reports that the displaced families have unsolved issues.

"Keeping in view the upcoming Panchayat elections, the Odisha government announced a few days back that it will provide land for houses for those displaced. However, we have serious doubts about its implementation," the members of the committee pointed out.

"Announcements for oustees had been made earlier also. We went to the revenue offices with hope, but to no avail," they lamented. They said that the gov-

ernment is generating electricity from the reservoir. Industries and farmlands are getting water from the dam and in the process the government is earning revenue. However, it has no concern for those who have lost their land and homes, they rued.

In 1955-56, the Odisha government had identified 26,501 displaced families for the project. Till now 13,470 of them have not been properly rehabilitated and compensated for their losses, the members of the committee informed.

They stated that after repeated demands, agitations and taking legal recourse, 3,540 people had been provided ₹10,000 each per acre as compensation. However, 5,204 families who lost their wells, trees and temples have not been given compensation, it was alleged.

In 2002, the Odisha government had announced to provide 10 decimals of land to each displaced family. Nearly 25,000 families were identified as displaced. However, till date only 2,000 families have been provided with land, the members informed.

They added that 221 people in Rengali tehsil, 201 in Jamankira tehsil and 25 in Kuchinda tehsil were provided 10 decimals of land. However, the government has claimed in its report that all the ousted families have been given land. In Sundargarh district, over 1,000 displaced families had applied for land, but no step has still been taken. The Water Resources department has handed over 34 non-revenue villages on the fringe of the reservoir to the Revenue department, but no survey has been done for these villages, alleged the committee members.

CDMOs to verify disability certs

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak, Jan 14: The disability certificates of 110 students who have taken admission to the Plus-III course in Bhadrak Autonomous College on the basis of 'disability certificates' will be verified. The district administration has ordered for verification of their disability certificates as it has been alleged that they are fake.

It may be noted that students had staged protests January 10 in front of the collector's office, alleging that about 200 students with poor marks have taken admission by furnishing forged disability certificates while many meritorious students have been deprived of admission in the college.

Bhadrak Town police registered a case January 12 against five people who had issued death threats to some students who had exposed the illegalities in the admission process through an RTI. IIC Umashankar Nayak has registered a case against the five people under sections 506 and 34 of IPC on the complaint of death threats.

The matter came to the fore after some students identified as Diptiman Jena, Gyanaranjan Parida, Satyajit

SCAM IN COLLEGE ADMISSION



Rout and Abinash Ram filed an application in the college under the RTI Act. The complainants have alleged that they were threatened with dire consequences as some ruling party leaders are involved in the scam associated with the admission process.

The controversy came to light January 10 when students staged a demonstration outside the district collectorate office protesting the alleged irregularities in admission.

The students had submitted a memorandum to District Collector Trilochan Majhi demanding an investigation into the 'fake disability certificate' racket which they claimed had been going on for the last four years. They also demanded the arrest of some ex-students who are involved in the act. The RTI re-

vealed that students with 40 per cent marks have got admission by producing fake disabilities (PWD) certificates.

Principal Umakant Samal said that the college has no role in the admission process. He added that it is done through SAMS by checking documents of the students.

Following a directive from the Collector, the college authorities have recommended verification of disability certificates of 110 students to the chief district medical officers (CDMO) of three districts - Bhadrak, Balasore and Mayurbhanj. These students had taken admission in the college by furnishing disability certificates in 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22. The CDMOs have been asked to verify the disability certificates and submit reports.

FESTIVE FERVOUR



Devotees throng Gangasagar Mela in West Bengal, bordering Bhograi area in Balasore, Friday

OP PHOTO

Music director breathes his last

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Jan 14: Eminent Odia music director Saroj Patnaik passed away following a heart attack Thursday night. He was 81. Family members said that Patnaik died in his residence at Badabazar locality in this town. He had been suffering from old age related complications for the last several months.

Patnaik was an engineer by profession. He started his career in the Odia film industry with the movie Abhiman in 1977. He also composed and directed several Odia super-hit movies like Phula Chandana, Abhilash and Hakim Babu. He received the 'Best Music Director' award for Abhilash and Phula Chandana. He worked in the state government's Works and Housing departments.

Omicron cases rising in Mayurbhanj, Nabarangpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada/Nabarangpur, Jan 14: People in Kaptipada, Saraskana and Suliapada blocks of Mayurbhanj and Nabarangpur districts were in a state of panic Friday after the detection of seven Omicron cases.

Three Omicron cases were detected in Mayurbhanj district while four cases were reported from Nabarangpur district. Two of the Covid-infected people are returnees from West Bengal. All the three infected individuals from Mayurbhanj have been admitted to the Baripada Covid hospital, it was learnt. The state Health department has begun contact tracing of Omicron-affected people.

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EAST COAST RAILWAY File No. DRM/Engg/KUR/21-22/E-Tender/94 Dt. 07.01.2022 (1) Tender No. e-Tender-HQ-KUR-250-2021, Dtd. 05.01.2022 DESCRIPTION: CONSTRUCTION OF OFFICE BUILDING OF SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER/WAY/KHURDA ROAD AND SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER/P.WAY/USFD UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF SENIOR DIVISIONAL ENGINEER/HQ/KHURDA ROAD. Approx. Cost of the Work: ₹ 99.37 Lakhs, EMD: ₹ 1,98,700/- (2) Tender No. e-Tender-HQ-KUR-257-2021, Dtd. 05.01.2022 DESCRIPTION: PROPOSED REPAIRS TO SEWER LINE AND DRAIN OF STAFF QUARTERS AT PURI. Approx. Cost of the Work: ₹ 176.11 Lakhs, EMD: ₹ 2,38,100/- Completion Period: 08 (Eight) Months (for Sl. No. 1) & 10 (Ten) Months (for Sl. No. 2). Tender Closing Date and Time: At 1500 Hrs. of 28.01.2022 (for both Tenders). No manual offers sent by Post / Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration. Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-Tender is available in website: https://www.ireps.gov.in Note: The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 10 (Ten) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender. The tenderers/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered on IREPS Portal. Only registered tenderer/ bidder can participate on e-tendering. Divisional Railway Manager (Engg) / PR-21/M/21-22 Khurda Road

FOCUS ECONOMY

SUBMERGED BY COVID



Major economic forecasters like JP Morgan and S&P Global Ratings are painting a rosy picture of emerging markets' growth prospects this year. But there are multiple reasons to believe that the consensus view will soon prove to be unsustainable

The wildfire spread of the Omicron variant adds a new element of uncertainty to the global economy. But when it comes to emerging markets, the consensus view is that these countries' prospects remain bright. JP Morgan Global Research expects their collective GDP to grow by 4.6% this year, faster than its 2015-19 trend. S&P Global Ratings is even more bullish, projecting that emerging economies will expand by 4.8%.

Strikingly, these growth figures are virtually identical to the forecasts for 2022 released by the International Monetary Fund in October 2019 – that is, before the pandemic. It has become a popular trope that COVID changes everything – or, rather, everything except the outlook for emerging markets.

In fact, there are multiple reasons for worrying that this consensus is too rosy.

First, emerging economies are now more heavily indebted. Public-debt-to-GDP ratios were already rising before the onset of the pandemic. But now they have reached alarming heights, at more than 60% of GDP.

While no one doubts the wisdom of borrowing to respond to a public health emergency and economic crisis, these heavy debts pose management problems. Scarce fiscal resources that might otherwise be devoted to health care, education, and infrastructure will have to be diverted to debt service. And the burden will grow heavier as tighter monetary policy by the US Federal Reserve and capital scarcity worldwide put upward pressure on interest rates.

Moreover, public debt is only part of the problem. Since the onset of the pandemic, the debts of households and nonfinancial corporations have risen nearly as rapidly as the debts of public sectors. It is likely that when some of these private debts go bad, the losses will be socialised and end up on government balance sheets.

The second reason to be skeptical of the consensus on emerging markets is that the risk of working in close quarters has spurred accelerated automation

in advanced economies. Because the need for close hand-eye coordination previously frustrated such efforts, the traditional route to higher incomes for emerging markets and developing countries has run through the export of labour-intensive manufactures. Although these industries do not require heavy investments or highly skilled labour, they familiarise workers with factory discipline, enable learning by doing, accustom firms to competing on global markets, and generate foreign exchange.

The fear is that these manufactures will soon be produced by robots and 3D printers in the same high-wage countries where they are sold. This prospect reinforces established concerns about "premature de-industrialisation" in emerging markets.

The global supply chains so important to emerging economies experienced major disruptions because of the pandemic, leading firms to source inputs closer to home. Developed-country governments, for their part, have cited shortages and economic

security concerns as justification for creating incentives for firms to onshore more manufacturing production.

For emerging markets, the negative effects are not unlike those of accelerated automation. Many low- and middle-income countries start with simpler assembly tasks before moving into more sophisticated manufacturing operations. These opportunities will be fewer to the extent that advanced economies do more assembly at home.

Mexico may benefit from efforts by the US firms to shorten their supply chains. Eastern European economies may benefit from an analogous desire on the part of EU countries. But South Asia, Africa, and Latin America may find themselves cut off.

Above all, there is the impact of COVID-19 on human capital formation. Though negative everywhere, the effects are likely to be especially severe in emerging markets. Few emerging markets possess the high-speed broadband needed for effective distance learning. A slower pace of vaccina-

tion will mean continuing school closures and absenteeism. According to an estimate by the World Bank, the share of children in emerging markets and developing countries unable to read and understand a simple text by the age of 10 will increase from 53% to 63% as a result of the pandemic.

The most powerful counterargument is that emerging markets will benefit from a supercharged global economy. Productivity growth in the advanced economies, which had been trending downward for several decades, was strong during the pandemic, especially in the United States. Technological and organisational changes prompted by the pandemic could now sustain that acceleration. Faster growth in developed countries would then create additional demand for emerging-market exports.

At this stage, this argument is purely hypothetical. The recent pickup in advanced-economy productivity growth is entirely attributable to business-cycle factors – most recently to firms using their resources more intensively as economies bounce back from their 2020 lows. In fact, the productivity trend looks much like it did in earlier cyclical recoveries – meaning that there is no evidence of a durable acceleration.

But all is not doom and gloom. In contrast to earlier downturns, central banks and governments in emerging markets have been able to respond in stabilising ways, reflecting their success at building credibility. So far, the bank failures and financial accidents that historically punctuated such episodes have been few and far between. Vaccine production and administration are ramping up. That said, downward revisions of growth forecasts are almost certainly coming.

The writer is Professor of Economics at the University of California, Berkeley, and a former senior policy adviser at the International Monetary Fund.

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In each world, in each being, in each thing, in each atom is the Divine Presence, and it is man's mission to manifest it.

THE MOTHER



Calls for cooling-off period for babus

Calls for a mandatory cooling-off period for babus before joining politics have revived after two senior babus in Uttar Pradesh took voluntary retirement (VRS) and decided to join politics, with an eye on the upcoming Assembly elections in the state.

Hours after the model code of conduct was effected, Asim Arun, the recently named Police Commissioner of Kanpur, sprung a surprise by announcing that he had applied for Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) from the IPS and that the BJP was considering fielding the 1994-batch officer as its candidate from the Kannauj Sadar constituency.

Almost at the same time, the Joint Director of Enforcement Directorate (ED) Rajeshwar Singh has said that his request for VRS has been accepted. It is being hinted that Singh is preparing to jump into the poll fray from the Sahibabad constituency. He joined the ED in 2009 and was absorbed into the ED cadre in 2015. During his stint at ED, he investigated several high-profile cases including the 2G spectrum allocation case, the 2010 Commonwealth Games scam, and cases against prominent politicians such as former Finance Minister P Chidambaram and others.

Last year none other than the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) had directed that a cooling-off period should be mandatorily imposed on all retired government officials before they can take up other jobs in the private sector. Clearly, at the time, the CVC did not envision babus joining politics but now should, given the number of babus who are quitting the civil service to join politics, and often the ruling party which they until recently served.

Babus caught in Centre-Punjab sniping

In the aftermath of the security breach during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Punjab last week, the state government has transferred seven IPS officers, including SSP of Ferozepur Harmandeep Singh Hans, under whose jurisdiction the security lapse happened in which Modi's convoy was stranded on a flyover for 20 minutes. But the public 'bloodletting' continues amid the politicking and sniping between the Centre and the Charanjit Singh Channi government in Punjab.

Punjab Director General of Police Siddhartha Chattopadhyay has been replaced by Viresh Kumar Bhawra for a tenure of two years, barely weeks before the state Assembly elections, and just before the poll code of conduct came into play. In the dizzy pace of events, Chattopadhyay considered by some to be close to Punjab Congress state chief Navjot Sidhu, was removed and Channi has managed to get his guy in.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has constituted a three-member committee led by Sudhir K Saxena, Secretary (Security), Cabinet Secretariat, and comprising of Joint Director of the Intelligence Bureau (IB) Balbir Singh and IG of the Special Protection Group S Suresh to enquire into what the Centre terms as serious lapses in the security arrangements by the Punjab government during Modi's visit.

Meanwhile, Channi who blames the SPG for the incident has formed his inquiry committee under retired High Court judge Mehtab Singh Gill. But it has been put on hold after the Supreme Court stepped in. Further, the MHA is likely to use the SPG Act against Punjab Police officers and has summoned them to Delhi.

In this game of political one-upmanship, some heads will roll – there has to be some accounting after all – and efforts will be made to spin out the controversy for as long as possible for the electoral advantage it offers to the politicians. But equally vital would be to contain the damage swiftly before further harm is done to relations between the border state and the Centre. Not to forget the obvious damage this episode has done to the reputations of the SPG, the MHA, and the IPS.

Storm over, Kerala babu reinstated

The Kerala government has decided to reinstate bureaucrat M Sivasankar, who was suspended for his alleged role in the high-profile gold smuggling case. An order revoking the suspension was issued by the state Chief Secretary VP Joy after Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan approved an official recommendation.

Sivasankar, who was Principal Secretary to Vijayan at the time, was suspended from service in July 2020, after investigators alleged that he was involved in the appointment of the prime accused in the gold smuggling case. It was being said that he had flouted rules in government projects. The case had rocked Kerala's ruling party – CPI(M). He will be back in service now that his suspension is revoked. Sources say that Sivasankar's suspension would have ended in July 2021 but was extended for another six months. He was in jail for 98 days and was later released on bail February 4, 2021. Earlier too, Sivasankar as IT Secretary had been absolved of any wrongdoing about the data transfer of Covid patients by a government committee led by former Law Secretary K Sashidharan Nair.

Clearly, after having got caught in that maelstrom of controversy and given that attempts to nail it on him haven't quite stuck, it looks like he has got a reprieve. But will it hold? No one knows yet. His new posting has not been revealed yet and he has another one year left in his service.

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

WISDOM CORNER

Always be a first-rate version of yourself, instead of a second-rate version of somebody else. JUDY GARLAND

Give me a lever long enough and a fulcrum on which to place it and I shall move the world. ARCHIMEDES

My father said there were two kinds of people in the world: givers and takers. The takers may eat better, but the givers sleep better. MARLO THOMAS

WORDSWORTH

Catbird seat

There really is an American bird called the catbird, a member of a group called the mimic thrushes that also includes the mockingbirds and thrashers, all of them – as their group name suggests – skilled at imitating other birds, animals, and even telephones and other noises. The American species is strictly speaking the grey catbird, which lays the most beautiful turquoise eggs. It's called a catbird because one of its most impressive imitations is the mew of a cat. Catbird seat (as it is usually written) usually appears in the fuller form in the catbird seat, meaning to be in an advantageous or prominent position, one of ease and favour. Its first appearance in print was in a famous short story of that title by James Thurber, published in the New Yorker on November 14, 1942. The phrase is said to derive from the habit of the catbird of sitting on the highest point it can find to deliver its song, thus suggesting an effortless superiority. Subscriber Dan Lufkin confirmed this in an e-mail: "If you lived in catbird country, as I do, you would instantly recognize the catbird seat as the highest point in your yard, from which a catbird – or its cousin, a mockingbird – begins loudly staking its territorial claim at first light, typically about 4:45 a.m. in the nesting season."



Barry Eichengreen

WHILE NO ONE DOUBTS THE WISDOM OF BORROWING TO RESPOND TO A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY AND ECONOMIC CRISIS, THESE HEAVY DEBTS POSE MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS

SPECTRUM FINANCE

Reserve Bank must prevent capital flight

A committee established by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has given four arguments to allow free movement of capital from and to India to foreign countries. The first argument given by the committee is that free movement of capital will increase the availability of capital in the country. It will encourage foreign investors to invest in India. However, this alleged benefit is disproved by RBI's own data that shows that the capital account has been continuously negative in the last 2 years. Free movement of capital is leading to the flight of capital from; not be other way around.

The second argument given by the committee is that free movement of capital will reduce the cost of capital. This too is not correct because the outward flow of capital is reducing the availability of capital in India and, accordingly, the cost of capital in India is rising, not falling. The third argument is that it will make it possible for Indian companies to borrow in foreign countries and diversify their borrowing. This is correct. However, the fact that more capital is going out of the country means that diversifica-

tion is not proving helpful in attracting foreign capital. The fourth argument is that free movement of capital will allow Indian investors to diversify their investment portfolios. At present, Indian investors may be investing in property and share market in India. After free movement of capital the Indian investors can invest in property in New York and in shares in the New York Stock Exchange. This benefit is correct. However, this is only beneficial for the richer section of the society because they alone have the capacity to invest in foreign countries. Outward foreign investment can prove to be beneficial to them but not to India. The arguments given by the committee of the RBI in favour of free movement of capital are certainly not beneficial for the country. Contrary to RBI's harmful policies, the International Monetary Fund has advocated that the developing countries should consider imposing restrictions on free movement of capital to foreign countries in situations such as COVID pandemic. They have referred to the experience of Korea and Peru that have imposed such restrictions with beneficial results.

The policy of the RBI is also against its own recommendations. The committee has said that it is necessary to contain the fiscal deficit along with allowing free movement of capital. We know very well that the fiscal deficit of our country is increasing rapidly since the COVID pandemic. On the one hand, the RBI is saying that free movement of capital should not be allowed if fiscal deficit is not controlled; on the other hand it has increased the limit of the money that an Indian national can remit to the foreign countries for investment under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme despite the increase in the fiscal deficit.

An article in the Journal of Indian Association of Social Science Institutions has given four reasons for the flight of capital from India. First is corruption. The cost of doing business in a country is higher if there is corruption and foreign investors do not want to invest here. Second is increase in government debt. This means that (1) the government will have to borrow more money; (2) the RBI will have to adopt easy money policies to make available the money that is borrowed by

the government; (3) it will lead to inflation and to the devaluation of Indian rupee; (4) reduce the value of the investment that the foreign investors may have made in India leading to loss for them. Third is negative capital account. A negative capital account leads to more outflow. One foreign investor follows the other in taking capital out of India because negative capital account leads to devaluation. Fourth is the adoption of free trade. Reason is that if our economy is not competitive then we will lose our ground in the global market and this will lead to capital flight. I would like to add a fifth reason which is social conflict in the country. The social atmosphere has become so negative that foreign investors may not like to come. The time is at hand for the RBI and the Government of India to reconsider the policy of free movement of capital, which is leading to capital flight and lower rates of growth in the country.

The writer is a former Professor of Economics at IIM Bangalore, Views expressed are personal.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Ban on rallies

Sir, The Election Commission's decision to ban all political rallies, roadshows and other processions is praiseworthy. The EC has shown awareness of the fact that the upcoming elections are being held in the middle of the third wave of Covid-19 pandemic. The EC has banned physical campaign rallies until January 15. No doubt, rallies are an integral part of election campaign. They provide an opportunity to parties to showcase their popularity, announce their future plans and criticise their rivals. In addition to that, political parties can convince the voters about why they deserve their votes. As per the directions of the EC political parties need to switch to digital mode of campaigning. By ordering a ban on rallies, the EC has sent a clear message to people. The EC has acknowledged the gravity of the situation and has shown awareness about the possibility of a public health emergency. It would be better if the Commission extended the duration of the ban. It is now the responsibility of the EC that the restrictions are implemented properly. Political parties must devise plans to reach out to people without mass gatherings. **Venu GS, KOLLAM, KERALA**

Digital currency

Sir, For a student of political economy, cryptocurrency means a form of government where the real leaders are hidden. The 'fertile' brains of some shady money dealers comprising industry big shots, business leaders and underworld dons have found a new mode of financial transactions which would exist outside the control of governments. This mode of exchange or so called digital currency is known as cryptocurrency. This decentralised system allows transactions to bypass detection in the prevailing economic set-up. In fact, Internet banking or transactions using debit or credit cards – commonly termed as digital economy – also reflect in the system as valid transactions. On the contrary, the newly discovered cryptocurrency operates outside the system amidst a few digitally connected elements. No doubt this system will generate black money. The RBI has also cautioned from about the risks of dealing with Bitcoin. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has, December 17 last, called for united efforts to shape global norms for emerging technologies like cryptocurrencies so that they are used to "empower democracy and not to undermine it. That means the government itself is giving the nod to digital robbery. Cryptocurrencies are banned in China, Egypt, Iraq, Qatar, Oman, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Bangladesh. Now we have to wait for what India decides. **Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR**

national

of the day quote

BJP will secure a landslide victory in the state Assembly polls
KESHAV PRASAD MAURYA
UP DEPUTY CM

The fight is to change this system which has eroded Punjab like termites and is being run by mafias in connivance of mischievous politicians. This system cries for a change & reforms as the glory of Punjab has been annihilated by the nexus of few political leaders and mafia
NAVJOT SINGH SIDHU
CONGRESS LEADER

Imposing a night curfew just for the name's sake has no point
VISHWAJIT RANE
GOA HEALTH MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

EC eases norms

New Delhi: The Election Commission Friday announced reducing the notice period for registration of new political parties in the five poll-going states from 30 days to 7 days, keeping in view difficulties caused by COVID-19-induced curbs. In a statement, the EC explained that under the existing guidelines, a party seeking registration has to submit an application to it within 30 days following the date of its formation.

Naxal arrested

Mumbai/Nagpur: A Naxal with Rs 2 lakh reward on his head was arrested Friday in a joint Gadchiroli police-CRPF operation in Maharashtra, an official said. Karan alias Dulsa Narote is a member of the Naxal 'action team' and was originally with self-styled platoon number 14 of Gatta Dalam of the outlawed movement, he said. "Narote was held in a joint operation by Gadchiroli police and the CRPF from Pomke Gatta area in Etapalli. He is involved in 16 serious offences, comprising six murders, four encounters, two robberies, three involving arson and one kidnapping," said Gadchiroli Superintendent of Police Ankit Goyal.

Three killed

Gurugram: Three brothers have been killed in a road accident after the motorcycle they were riding was hit by an unknown vehicle here in Sector-92, the police said Friday. The deceased individuals have been identified as 30-year-old Sudhir Pandit, 28-year-old Randhir Pandit and 25-year-old Sanjay Pandit -- all from Madhubani district of Bihar.

Over 400 injured during kite-flying

Ahmedabad: At least 451 people sustained injuries in kite-flying accidents during the Uttarayan festivities in Gujarat Friday, an official said. Till late evening, the "108" emergency ambulance service shifted 224 people, mostly commuters on roads, to nearby hospitals after they sustained cuts on their throats and faces due to kite strings hanging in public places, it was stated.

Delhi court junks bail plea

New Delhi: A court here Friday refused to grant bail to engineering student and 'Bulli Bai' app creator Neeraj Bishnoi, who was arrested by the Delhi Police from Assam for creating a platform for defaming women of a particular community. Noting that the accused ran a vilification campaign against the dignity of the women of a particular community containing derogatory material through the app affecting communal harmony of the society, Chief Metropolitan Magistrate of Patiala House Courts, Pankaj Sharma, denied the bail application.



A study group will be formed to explore how to improve forest cover and forest quality, incorporating the lifestyle change needed to combat climate change

BHUPENDER YADAV
UNION MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

MP TO REGULATE ONLINE GAMING

Taking note of the rising incidents of children getting addicted to online games and taking extreme steps, Madhya Pradesh Minister Narottam Mishra has said that the state government will bring in an act to regulate gaming applications on mobile phones



CDS CHOPPER CRASH No foul play: Inquiry report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 14: The IAF chopper crash on December 8 that killed Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Gen Bipin Rawat and 13 others was due to an unexpected change in weather that led to spatial disorientation of the pilot, stated the preliminary findings submitted by the tri-services court of inquiry.

"The tri-services court of inquiry into the Mi-17 V5 accident on December 8, 2021, has submitted its preliminary findings," the Indian Air Force's statement said Friday.

The court of inquiry has ruled out mechanical failure, sabotage or negligence as a cause of the accident, it said. "The accident was a result of entry into clouds due to unexpected change in weather conditions in the valley. This led to spatial disorientation of the pilot resulting in Controlled Flight into Terrain (CFIT)," it stated.

According to US aviation regulator FAA, CFIT is defined as an unintentional collision with terrain - the ground, a mountain, a body of water, or an obstacle - while an aircraft is under positive control. The IAF said that the inquiry team analysed flight data recorder and cockpit voice recorder besides questioning all available witnesses to determine the most probable



The IAF said that the inquiry team analysed flight data recorder and cockpit voice recorder besides questioning all available witnesses to determine the most probable cause of the accident

The court of inquiry has ruled out mechanical failure, sabotage or negligence as a cause of the accident

cause of the accident.

"Based on its (preliminary) findings, the court of inquiry has made certain recommendations which are being reviewed," the IAF mentioned. Gen Rawat, his wife Madhulika, his defence advisor Brigadier LS Lidder, staff officer to the Chief of Defence Staff, Lt Col Harjinder Singh and decorated pilot Group Captain Varun Singh were among 13 others killed in the crash near Coonoor in Tamil Nadu.

The government is yet to appoint a new CDS. The court of in-

quiry into the crash was headed by Air Marshal Manavendra Singh. Air Marshal Singh, currently heading the Bengaluru-headquartered Training Command of the IAF, is known to be one of the best air crash investigators in the country.

Before taking the reins of the Training Command, the Air Marshal was the director general (inspection and safety) at the air headquarters and he developed various protocols for flight safety while serving in the post.

Akhilesh takes a swipe at Yogi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Jan 14: Akhilesh Yadav Friday taunted the BJP for losing "one wicket after the other" and not fathoming the SP strategy as he inducted two ministers and six other MLAs who recently deserted the ruling alliance into his Samajwadi Party.

Apart from the six BJP MLAs - mostly from the Other Backward Classes - a legislator from BJP ally Apna Dal (Sonelal) also joined the SP at a large public meeting in the compound of the party office here, defying Covid norms.

An official said the local administration is investigating the "violation". The Election Commission has banned election meetings till January 15. In apparent deference to the EC order, the meeting was called a "virtual rally" and a "press conference", going by the banner behind the dais.

"The BJP wickets are falling one after the other. Our 'baba' CM doesn't know how to play cricket. Even if he knew, he has dropped the catch," the SP president commented on Yogi Adityanath, the face of the ruling party in the UP polls.

Yadav also mocked the chief minister over his "80 versus 20" remark, suggesting that Adityanath should get himself a math teacher. The CM had recently said 80 per cent of the voters will be on the BJP's side and the remaining 20 per cent against it in next month's



Former UP minister Swami Prasad Maurya and others join the Samajwadi Party in presence of party president Akhilesh Yadav at SP office in Lucknow. Five BJP MLAs and Apna Dal (Sonelal) legislator Amar Singh Chaudhary also joined the SP

The results of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls, which will be declared March 10 along with those of Punjab, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur, is being seen as a crucial indicator for the 2024 general elections

assembly polls, a jibe that many thought alluded to the Muslim proportion of the state's population.

The SP leader said the real proportion of those with the two rivals was just the opposite. And after the entry of Swami Prasad Maurya

and the others in the SP, the BJP would lose even this 20 percent, Yadav said after conferring the party membership to the OBC leader who resigned from the Adityanath cabinet earlier this week.

Maurya too referred to the 80-20 remark. "Now it will be 15 and 85. Eighty-five is ours, there will be divisions in the 15 as well," he said. He also vowed to "finish" the BJP.

Using wrestling terms, the new entrant challenged BJP leaders to try whatever move they wanted. "I will ground you into the earth. I will finish the Bharatiya Janata Party as the time has come to rid Uttar Pradesh of your oppression."

Maurya was the first to desert the BJP, and the move was followed by similar announcement by others.

Plane collision averted in Dubai

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 14: Indian aviation regulator DGCA has asked its UAE counterpart to share the report of the probe into the near collision of two India-bound Emirates passenger jets on January 9 at the Dubai airport.

The planes had come on the same runway during take-off from the airport. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has asked UAE's General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) to share its investigation report on this incident.

DGCA chief Arun Kumar said on Friday: "Both are their registered aircraft and the place of occurrence is their airport and so, as per ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organisation), it will be investigated by them."

"However, we have asked them to share the investigation report as and when available," he mentioned. The two Emirates jets that had a close shave on January 9 were the Dubai-Hyderabad flight (EK-524) and the Dubai-Bengaluru flight (EK-568), sources said.



People hold kites as they pose for a photograph on Makar Sankranti in Bhopal

PTI PHOTO

Docs' open letter: India overdoing testing, medication

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 14: A group of around 35 doctors from across the country have written an open letter to the union health ministry over the unwarranted testing, medication and hospitalisation during the ongoing Covid pandemic and sought urgent intervention for an evidence-based response to the current wave.

"While there continues to be much uncertainty amidst the outbreak of this novel disease, there is now substantive high-quality scientific literature that provides unequivocal guidance on the clinical management of Covid-19. Despite the weight of this evidence

The letter says that the vast majority of Covid patients with asymptomatic and mild symptoms will require little to no medication

and the crushing death toll of the delta wave, we find the mistakes of the 2021 response being repeated in 2022", said the open letter.

The doctors have identified three main issues of unwarranted medication, unwarranted tests and unwarranted hospitalisation.

The letter says that the vast



Healthworkers prepare a ward for Covid patients at Thane Civil Hospital

PTI PHOTO

majority of patients with Covid-19, with asymptomatic and mild symptoms, will require little to no medication. "Most prescriptions we have reviewed in the past two

weeks include several Covid-19 "kits" and cocktails. The prescribing of vitamin combinations, azithromycin, doxycycline, hydroxychloroquine, favipiravir,

and ivermectin for treating Covid-19 is irrational practice. Such wanton use of drugs is not without harm as the Delta wave has shown. Outbreaks of opportunistic fungal infections like mucormycosis in India, and aspergillosis in Brazil were attributed to the widespread abuse of inappropriate medications", said the letter.

Dr Anant Bhan, Yenepoya (deemed to be University), Mangaluru, one of the signatories, said that with almost two years of dealing with the pandemic behind us, it's extremely important that we ensure that evidence based medical and policy decisions are made.

Custody of bride's jewellery for safety is not cruelty: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 14: Taking custody of daughter-in-law's jewellery for safety cannot constitute cruelty under Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code, the Supreme Court has said.

A bench of Justices Indira Banerjee and J K Maheshwari said that failure to control an adult brother, living independently, or giving advice to adjust to sister-in-law to avoid retaliation cannot constitute cruelty to the bride within the meaning of Section 498A of the IPC.

Section 498 A refers to husband or relative of husband of a woman

subjecting her to cruelty. The case was lodged by a woman against her husband and in-laws for subjecting her to cruelty.

The apex court's observations came while hearing an appeal against an order passed by the High Court of Punjab and Haryana dismissing a plea by a man seeking permission to return to the US, where he is employed.

The high court had rejected the man's prayer to leave the country as he was arrayed as an accused along with his elder brother and parents under sections Sections 323 (voluntary causing hurt), 34 (common intention), 406 (criminal breach of trust), 420 (cheating) 498A and 506



(criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code.

"Taking custody of jewellery for safety cannot constitute cru-

elty within the meaning of Section 498A of the IPC. "Failure to control an adult brother, living independently, or giving advice to the

complainant to adjust to avoid vindictive retaliation cannot constitute cruelty on the part of the Appellant within the meaning of Section 498A of the IPC," the apex court bench said in a recent order.

It said the complainant (daughter-in-law) has not given any particulars of the jewellery that had allegedly been taken by her mother-in-law and brother-in-law. There is not a whisper of whether any jewellery is lying with the petitioner, it said.

"There is only a general omnibus allegation that all the accused ruined the life of the complainant by misrepresentation, concealment, etc..." "The Appellant

is not liable for the acts of cruelty, or any other wrongful and/or criminal acts on the part of his parents or brother," the apex court said. The top court said considering the nature of the allegations, it is not understood how and why the petitioner should have been detained in India. "In our considered opinion, the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Kurukshetra, erred in directing the appellant not to leave the country without prior permission of the Court.

It said the allegations in the complaint against the petitioner prima facie do not disclose any offence under Section 498A of the IPC, which contemplates cruelty.

HOME COVID TEST

BMC cracks the whip on 'unreported' cases

The commissioner of Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation issued orders and asked chemists and others to share the data with FDA and BMC's Epidemiology Cell via email every day



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, Jan 14: Taking a serious view of the massive spike in Covid-19 cases in the past fortnight, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has cracked the whip on "unreported" home tests that prevent tracking of infected persons or their contacts, officials said here Friday.

The BMC has ordered all retail manufacturers/distributors of such home testing kits sold to pharmacies, chemists or dispensaries to inform the Food & Drugs Commissioner and the civic body's Epidemiology Cell of the same.

The civic authorities said that all Covid-19 positive tests either through Rapid Antigen Test Kits or Home Test Kits, were expected to be reported to the ICMR by the concerned laboratory or the individuals who are found infected.

However, there are suspected to be instances of persons testing positive on Home Test Kits which have not been brought to the notice of ICMR.

This has resulted in no tracking of such patients and the infection keeps spreading through their contact, making it difficult to contain the spread of the virus, said BMC Commissioner IS Chahal. The BMC has also ordered all

chemists/pharmacies/medical stores/dispensaries to provide details of such Home Test Kits sold to the customers to the FDA and Epidemiology Cell in a prescribed format. The retailers shall also issue a bill to the concerned buyer and maintain a record of such sales.

The FDA Commissioner is entrusted with monitoring the sales and distribution of the Home Test Kits and informing the persons concerned to report the test outcome on a given app.

The Epidemiology Cell will collate the data received through email from the manufacturers/distributors, forward them to the concerned BMC Ward Medical or Health Officers for further actions like monitoring the health of the person/s testing positive and uploading their data on ICMR or app.

The latest BMC orders came as the state remained in the 46K range of daily Covid-19 infections in the ongoing third wave, with the infection spreading at a much faster rate than the two previous waves, despite the vaccination process going on rapidly.

In Maharashtra, Mumbai, Pune, Thane and Nagpur continue to be the worst-hit districts besides the added complications of 1,367 Omicron cases in the state.

Complete projects as per law: HC to Kerala govt



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, Jan 14: Projects of the "magnitude" like that of SilverLine "cannot be hurried" or "completed on war cries", rather they have to be carried out in accordance with the law if they need to have any legitimacy, the Kerala High Court said to the state government.

The remarks by Justice Devan Ramachandran came while hearing several pleas challenging the manner in which the state and the Kerala Rail Development Corporation Ltd (K-Rail) were carrying out land surveys in connection with the LDF government's ambitious semi high speed rail corridor project — SilverLine.

"No project of this magnitude can be completed by war cries, it has to be done as per the law. A project of this nature cannot be hurried. It has to be as per the law, and then only will it have any legitimacy. You have to follow the law to the hilt."

"Such projects cannot be taken forward based on fear by putting up such large poles," the court said and added this was by far the biggest project in the state and hopefully "they (state and Centre) are doing it with their eyes wide open".

The petitioners had opposed putting up of large concrete poles to mark the land surveyed for the SilverLine project saying it was in violation of the Survey and Boundaries Act and these structures were blocking access to various individuals' properties.

The court, December 23 last year, had directed the state and K-Rail to install survey stones of the prescribed standards under the Kerala Survey Rules.

Kerala Bishop acquitted in nun rape case

THE CASE IS SIGNIFICANT AS IT MARKS THE FIRST TIME A CATHOLIC BISHOP WAS ARRESTED AND BOOKED ON CHARGES OF RAPE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN INDIA



Catholic Church, he was accused of raping a nun, who belonged to the Missionaries of Jesus congregation. During his visits between 2014 and 2016 to Kerala, he was accused of raping the 43-year-old nun on 13 occasions. Later, he was removed from the charge of the Jalandhar diocese.

A complaint was filed against him in June 2018 in Kerala and Mulakkal was arrested September 21, 2018 on rape charges.

He secured bail October 16, 2018. The charge sheet names 83 wit-

nesses, including the Cardinal of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, Mar George Alencherry, three bishops, 11 priests and 22 nuns.

Of the 83 witnesses, 39 were called and they were heard.

Franco had approached the Kerala High Court and also the Supreme Court to quash the FIR against him, but both the courts failed to do so and the trial began.

Meanwhile, the former Kottayam SP of Police Harisankar who oversaw the probe said he was supremely confident that the ver-

dict would be against the accused. "This was the least expected as the witnesses did a very clean job. An appeal should be filed," said Harisankar. "This is an extremely unfortunate verdict, it is shocking for us. We had expected a conviction fully. We will appeal. We had a lot of corroborative evidence. All the witnesses in the case were ordinary people," investigating officer S Harisankar, former Kottayam SP, told reporters.

The public prosecutor informed the media that an appeal would be filed. Meanwhile, the acquittal of Bishop Franco Mulakkal here triggered emotional reactions Friday as nuns who support the survivor expressed shock and dismay over the verdict and said they would continue the fight till justice prevailed while the jubilant bishop urged followers to 'praise the lord and be happy'.

A group of nuns of Kuravilangad Convent here, who have been standing with the survivor in her fight, were on the verge of tears when they said they were yet to believe such a verdict came out from the court and they did not know what has happened. Some of his fol-

lowers were even seen crying out of joy knowing the acquittal of the Bishop. The survivor and her supporters stay in the Kuravilangad convent in this south Kerala district.

Sister Anupama, who was the face of the nun's years-long fight for justice, said they would surely challenge the verdict in the higher court and take forward the fight of their hapless colleague.

"We will continue our stay in the convent and take forward our fight till our sister gets justice. Police and prosecution showed justice to us but we did not get the expected justice from the judiciary," the teary-eyed nun told reporters. In a broken voice, she also said the verdict gives them a message that ordinary mortals like them should never break their silence against any injustice and fight a case whatever happened to them in the life.

"Those who are wealthy and influential can do anything in this society. That is what we see around us now. We have never felt anything strange till the time of argument of the case. We believe it was sabotaged after that," she said.

AGENCIES

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 14: A Kerala court Friday acquitted Catholic Bishop Franco Mulakkal in the nun rape case.

Kottayam Additional district court judge G Gopakumar's verdict enabled Franco to walk out free.

The trial extended over 105 days with 39 witnesses being examined and 122 documents produced before the court.

While serving as Bishop of the Jalandhar Diocese of the Roman

Maha CM launches WhatsApp chatbot for 80 services

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 14: Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray Friday virtually launched the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's 'WhatsApp chatbot' for over 80 different services.

The BMC said that through the chatbot, information about more than 80 services and facilities provided by it will be easily available to citizens on their mobiles through WhatsApp number 8999228999.

Speaking on the occasion, Thackeray said that Mumbai is the first municipal corporation in the country to provide more than 80 services to people at their doorstep through Whatsapp chatbot.

"This day is written in golden letters. It can be described as a revolutionary day," he said at the launch.

The Chief Minister said that this initiative has made the work-from-home facility even more efficient.



"As technology is advancing rapidly, we should consider how it can be used for giving more and more services to public...Mumbai is number one municipal corporation in the country," he said.

Thackeray also praised the BMC for its work during the pandemic.

Speaking on the occasion, Aadiya Thackeray, who is also the guardian minister of Mumbai suburban district, said the Mumbai civic body is providing more than 80 services to our citizens and it is the only example in the world.

BJP wants Thackeray to delegate powers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 14: Opposition BJP Friday said Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray should delegate his powers to someone, who can attend daily meetings and visit places instead of him.

Thackeray, 61, had undergone a cervical spine surgery in November. He had remained absent during the entire five-day-long Winter Session of the state legislature held in December last week. However, he has been participating in official meetings, weekly Cabinet meetings and other events through video-conference from his residence.

Talking to reporters in Kolhapur, Maharashtra BJP president Chandrakant Patil said, "People are saying that the Chief Minister has not met people for almost last 70 days. Therefore, Thackeray should delegate his powers to someone who can attend daily meetings and sometimes visit some places in the state."

"He is like our friend, so I wish him a speedy recovery. However, the task of managing and controlling

HARVEST FEST



Residents from Dharavi area prepare traditional dish prepared from the new harvest of rice boiled in milk with jaggery as they celebrate the Tamil harvest festival of Pongal in Mumbai, Friday

PTI PHOTO

Maha Cong accuses NIA of 'weakening' case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 14: As several witnesses in the Malegaon 2008 blast case are turning 'hostile', the Maharashtra Congress accused the National Investigation Agency (NIA) of allegedly 'weakening' the case by not pursuing it with 'honesty and sincerity'.

State Congress working president M Arif Naseem Khan also urged the Maharashtra Anti Terrorism Squad (ATS) - which originally probed the case under the Martyr Hemant Karkare - to take necessary steps to monitor the de-



velopments in the case. Submitting a memorandum to the ATS Chief, Additional Director-General of Police Vineet Agrawal,

Khan said that the witnesses who turned hostile are invoking the names of Bharatiya Janata Party-RSS to "malign the Maharashtra government and ATS" to gain political mileage in the Uttar Pradesh elections next month, and urged the probe agency (ATS) must take note of this.

The September 29, 2008 (Malegaon 2008) bomb blast was allegedly engineered in this minority-dominated Nashik town by Hindu fundamentalists, killing 6 and injuring over 100 others, during Ramadan month when Muslims were breaking their fast.

The Maharashtra Police and then the ATS probed the case and in 2011 it was taken over by the NIA, and the trial is being conducted on a daily basis at the Special NIA Court in Mumbai.

"Of the 223 witnesses examined, 16 have turned hostile, claiming that the ATS tortured them to give evidence against the accused," Khan added.

Among the accused in the sensational Malegaon 2008 case are Sathvi Pragya Singh Thakur, Swami Amritnanda Dev Teerth, Dayanand Pandey, Lt Col Prasad S Purohit, and others.

Issues women face in Kerala cinema

A government panel will examine Hema Commission's report on problems faced by women in the Malayalam film industry

AGENCIES

Kochi, Jan 14: The Left government in Kerala recently formed a three-member panel to study and work out a plan to implement the recommendations of the Justice Hema Commission report which delves deep into the problems faced by women in the Malayalam film industry. The move came over two years after the report was submitted to the government in December, 2019.

February 17, 2017, a prominent woman actor was abducted and sexually assaulted for nearly two hours in a moving car near Kochi. Weeks later, Dileep, a leading actor in the Malayalam film industry, was arrested and arraigned as the eighth accused in the case with charges of abduction, conspiracy, criminal intimidation among oth-



Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan receiving the report of the Hema Commission from Retired Justice K Hema

PHOTO: FACEBOOK

ers. The SIT, which probed the case, argued that Dileep ordered the attack on the woman actor as he nursed a grudge against her.

The incident was significant in throwing a spotlight on the safety of women in the state as well as the issues faced by women in the state's film industry, which is largely seen as a male-dominated space operating without a legal framework. In the aftermath of the sexual assault incident, the Women in Cinema Collective (WCC) was founded with the aim of propelling changes

within the film industry to make it more gender-friendly. The WCC, consisting of female actors, producers, directors and technicians, appealed to the Pinarayi Vijayan government to appoint a panel to investigate the discrimination faced by women in the industry. In July, 2017, a three-member commission was formed by the government headed by Justice K Hema (retired) with former bureaucrat KB Valsalakumari and veteran actress Sharada as members. It was the first time a commission of this

kind was formed anywhere in India to scrutinise the inner workings of a film industry.

The Justice Hema Commission interviewed dozens of members of the Malayalam film fraternity including both male and female actors, producers, directors and technicians to probe the quality of the work environment and the nature of problems they face on a daily basis. According to reports, several women actors recounted to the commission horror stories of the harassment they faced on sets on the condition that their names are kept confidential. Issues of wage-gap on the basis of gender; absence of adequate facilities for women on sets and the lack of a proper forum for grievance redressal were also brought to the forefront.

The Commission submitted a 300-page-long report to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan December 31, 2019, accompanied by a large set of documents, screenshots and audio clips that substantiate the findings of the report. While the report was not made public, the Commission was learnt to confirm the existence of a 'casting couch' within the industry.

of the day quote

My young friends, with your power, make the UP polls, an election of issues such as employment and education

PRIYANKA GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

The people of the state consider Samajwadi Party (SP) as an alternative to the BJP and this time, they will wipe it out in the assembly polls and form the SP's government

AKHILESH YADAV | SP CHIEF

Instead of horror and panic, there is a need for hope and precaution to combat the COVID-19 pandemic

MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI | UNION MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

3 electrocuted

Patna: Three personnel of Sashstra Seema Bal (SSB) died of electrocution Friday in Bihar's Supaul district, officials said. Besides, nine other personnel of the border guarding force were also injured.

Four dead

Vijayawada: Four people were killed and 10 others injured in a road accident in Andhra Pradesh's West Godavari district Friday, police said. The accident occurred on national highway in Tadepalligudem when a truck carrying fish lost control and overturned.

Eight arrested

Amaravati: Police in Andhra Pradesh's Guntur district have arrested eight persons in connection with the murder of Telugu Desam Party (TDP) leader Thota Chandraiah. Guntur district Superintendent of Police Vishal Guni announced the arrests of the accused Friday.

Doctor ends life

Bangalore: The Karnataka Railway Police have arrested a person in connection with the suicide case of a doctor, who was blackmailed over his videos, the police said Friday. The Railway police stumbled upon the crime while investigating the case of the doctor, who committed suicide recently by coming under the train near Kengeri in Bangalore.

Minister booked

Muzaffarnagar: Uttar Pradesh minister Kapil Dev Agarwal, has been booked by the Muzaffarnagar police for allegedly violating model code of conduct and Covid protocol. An FIR has been registered at the Nagar Kotwali police station here on the basis of a video that went viral. In the clip, the minister and around 35-40 of his supporters, are seen holding a meeting.

Seven killed

Davanagere: Seven people were killed after a car they were travelling in rammed into a road divider in Karnataka's Davanagere district Friday. According to Superintendent of Police C.B. Rishyanth, who reached the accident spot, the car driver was drunk and had dozed off while driving near the Kananakatte Toll Gate on National Highway 13.

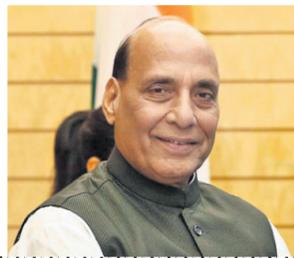


Unemployment is a very deep crisis -- it is the responsibility of the prime minister to resolve it. The country is asking for answers, stop making excuses

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

WELCOME MOVE

The Defence Ministry has set up an online portal to resolve pension-related grievances of ex-servicemen and their dependents, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh announced Friday



TERROR ATTACK AVERTED IN DELHI



Police personnel examine the spot where an IED was found inside a bag, at Ghazipur flower market in New Delhi

The NSG bomb disposal squad with the help of police personnel dug an approximately 8 feet ditch in an open ground where the bag carrying the IED was disposed

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 14: The National Security Guard and the Special Cell of the Delhi Police Friday averted a major terror attack in the Ghazipur Flower Market area of the national capital by defusing a 3-kg Improvised Explosive Device planted in the crowded market.

The IED, which was found concealed in an unattended bag at the Ghazipur Flower Market, triggered panic among the residents of the capital less than a fortnight ahead of January 26, Republic Day.

But how did the police find it? The bag was first spotted by a local vendor, however, he did not pay any heed to it and left. When he returned after sometime, the bag was still there after which he informed a civil defence volunteer in the area who then made a PCR call around 10.16 a.m. The Delhi Fire Service (DFS) was also informed at the same time. A DFS official confirmed to IANS that they received a call around 10.20 a.m. about an unattended bag at the Ghazipur Flower Market after which one fire engine was rushed to the spot.

With suspicions mounting the Delhi Police alerted the anti-terror force -- NSG -- about the suspicious object around 11 a.m. which sent its bomb disposal squad equipped with a bomb disposal container called Total Containment Vessel (TVC).

Yogi eats at Dalit house, draws flak

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Patna, Jan 14: The Bharatiya Janata Party may be part of the government in Bihar but its alliance partners are not letting go of any issue to criticise its leaders and policies.

Friday, Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) founder Jitan Ram Manjhi slammed Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath after the latter uploaded a photograph on social media of eating food in the house of a Dalit family in Gorakhpur.

Manjhi without taking the name of Yogi Adityanath, said people eating food in the house of a Dalit family are snatching our morsel of food. "When elections come, many leaders of different political parties will go to the houses of Dalits and tribal families to eat food. They are re-

CONTAINMENT VESSEL (TVC).

The NSG is a world class federal contingency force which deals with anti-terrorist activities in all its manifestations. The Delhi Police deployed its anti-terror unit, the Special Cell, to deal with the situation. Over 30 policemen, wearing a green jacket having 'Special Cell' printed on it, swarmed the entire area. The police cordoned off the area for the safety and security of the people. Heavy police presence in and around the area made things look very serious at that time. The NSG personnel, wearing the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) suit or bomb suit, were also at the spot.

Then the NSG bomb disposal squad with the help of the police personnel dug an approximately 8 feet ditch in an open ground where the bag carrying the IED was dumped. At sharp 1.30 p.m. a loud thud was heard after which everybody heaved a sigh of relief. The NSG conducted a controlled explosion of the recovered IED in that ditch, saving several lives that could have been snuffed out if the bomb had not been found and defused in time. National Security Guard Director General MA Ganapathy said that the explosives-laden bag contained a mixture of RDX and Ammonium Nitrate. "Prima facie it looks like RDX & Ammonium Nitrate mix weighing around 3 kgs," Ganapathy informed.



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath having lunch with BJP worker Amrit Lal Bharati at the latter's residence in Gorakhpur

sponsible for taking away the development share of Dalits and tribal people of the country," Manjhi said.

Manjhi also attacked the BJP over comparing Samrat Ashoka with Aurangzeb. He said that the BJP leaders reckoned that Samrat

Cong faces tough battle in Goa

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 14: The Congress is facing a tough battle in Goa while trying to be ahead of the BJP as the Trinamool Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party are spoiling the grand old party's game in the state.

The Congress is trying to put up a strong face and has denied any alliance talks with the Trinamool despite speculations in the political circles. Jittered by the Congress stance, the Trinamool has launched an offensive against the Congress.

"The Trinamool has been saying that they are open to alliances, but Congress is not willing to accept and behaving like an emperor," Trinamool leader Mahua Moitra said, adding: "Need of hour in Goa is to defeat BJP - no one should be on their high horse. AITC will not, repeat not, shy away from walking the last mile."

Speculation of an alliance between the two parties was triggered after the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar told reporters that his party is in talks with the Congress and the Trinamool Congress for a pre-poll alliance for the upcoming elections in Goa.

The Trinamool is alleging that the Congress was not been able to form the government in the state in 2017 and could not even retain its flock of MLAs. But, the Congress



BJP TO FIGHT 38 OUT OF 40 SEATS

Panaji: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which currently rules Goa, has decided to contest 38 out of the total 40 Assembly seats in the state, where elections will be held next month, a senior party functionary said Friday. The office-bearer said that in two constituencies - Benaulim and Nuvem - the party will not field any candidate on its symbol. Traditionally, people in Benaulim and Nuvem constituencies vote for non-BJP candidates. These two are Christian-dominated seats. Currently, Benaulim is represented by Churchill Alemao, who after getting elected on the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) ticket, shifted to the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress (TMC) last month, while Nuvem constituency is represented by Wilfred D'Sa, who had won the last election as a Congress candidate, but later joined the ruling BJP.

has not accepted the open offer and party General Secretary K.C. Venugopal has said that there are no talks with the Trinamool. Congress senior observer P. Chidambaram too has ruled out such a possibility.

The Congress' Election plank for Goa will consist of the following central themes - economy, employment, education, environment,

ethos of Goa," Chidambaram has said. The Congress has got some solace with the former Ports Minister in the BJP-led government, Michael Lobo joining the party.

The party has released two lists for the polls, but had witnessed defection of MLAs and discontent in the party over the delay in the announcement of tickets as many aspirants are getting restless.



A man attempts to tame a bull during Avaniyapuram jallikattu as part of Pongal celebrations in Madurai

Major rise in bail pleas due to liquor law: Patna HC to SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 14: The Patna High Court has told the Supreme Court that there is "phenomenal increase" in filing of bail applications due to the enforcement of prohibition in the state and roughly 25 per cent of regular bail pleas are being filed under the Bihar Prohibition and Excise Act alone.

The high court said it is working with less than half of its sanctioned strength and the increase in filing of bail applications is causing delay in disposal of regular bail pleas. It informed the apex court that at present 39,622 bail applications, which include 21,671 anticipatory and 17,951 regular bail applications, are pending be-

fore the assigned benches. Further, 36,416 fresh bail applications, including 20,498 anticipatory and 15,918 regular bail applications, are yet to be taken up.

January 11, a bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) N V Ramana had in another matter dismissed a batch of petitions of Bihar government challenging grant of anticipatory and regular bails to accused under the state's stringent liquor law, saying these matters have choked the courts.

A bench of Justices Ajay Rastogi and Abhay S Oka, expressed serious concern over the delay in pendency of bail applications before the high court and the long incarceration of undertrial prisoners due to delay in hearing of their bail applications.

Do-or-die poll battle on cards in Uttarakhand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dehradun, Jan 14: With the ruling BJP fiercely defending its throne and the opposition Congress desperate to avenge its 2017 humiliation, a do-or-die battle is on the cards on February 14, when the two parties grapple with each other yet again in the Uttarakhand Assembly polls.

The largely bipolar politics of the state involving the two national parties, which have been alternately in power, has got a new twist this time with Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) also in the fray, offering itself as an alternative to the Congress and the BJP.

While the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has set itself a target of winning more than 60 of the 70

Assembly seats in the state, poll observers feel it is unrealistic on the part of the saffron party, which is totally ignoring the anti-incumbency factor.

According to poll commentator JS Rawat, repeating its tally of 57 seats in the last Assembly polls could be a tall order for the BJP. Even the Modi factor, which was behind the party's comprehensive win in the last polls, is not as strong as it was in 2017, he said.

The rollback of three contentious agriculture laws may have done some damage control, but the farmers in some of the seats in the Kumaon belt, including Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami's Khatima constituency, have been able to keep the issue alive to a great extent, he added.



Giving three chief ministers to the state within five years and bringing about political instability despite a big mandate is another factor that may eclipse the BJP's chances. However, insiders in the saffron party said the move is going

to work in its favour as it has offset the impact of anti-incumbency that might have been there against the former chief ministers.

Citing an example, they said there was discontent among the priest community against

Trivendra Singh Rawat as he had set up the Chardham Devasthanam Board, but his removal as chief minister and the subsequent withdrawal of the Act that had led to the creation of the board have lured them back to the BJP.

State BJP spokesperson Shadab Shams expressed confidence that the jinx of the party in power losing at the hustings every five years will be broken this time in Uttarakhand. "We did it in the 2019 general election, in which we retained all the five Lok Sabha seats in the state, and we will do it again. It is not such a big deal," he said.

Apart from the Modi magic, which the party feels is intact, another factor that will work in its favour is the "double-engine" government due to which the hill state

Train accident: Toll goes up

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, Jan 14: The death count in the Guwahati-Bikaner Express train accident in north Bengal climbed to nine and the officials said tracks have been cleared for traffic. Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw arrived at the spot Friday.

Twelve coaches of the Guwahati-Bikaner Express derailed in the Domohani area of West Bengal's Jalpaiguri district on Thursday evening. "This is a tragic incident. It is very unfortunate. A statutory enquiry has already been ordered. The Hon'ble Prime Minister has been concerned about the death and the injured passengers and I am continuously in touch with the Prime Minister. I am also in touch with the ground situation and today I have come to find out the root cause of the accident. Once it is detected we will try to solve it so that there is no such accident for similar reasons," Vaishnaw said after reaching the accident spot.

Nine persons died and another 36 persons were injured in the accident. According to sources in the Railways, the condition of 15 persons is serious.

"The injured people have been sent to Jalpaiguri Super Speciality Hospital and North Bengal Medical College," a senior official of North Frontier Railways said.

India, Japan maritime drill in Bay of Bengal

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 14: The navies of India and Japan carried out maritime exercises in the Bay of Bengal to enhance defence cooperation between the two countries.

Indian Naval Ships Shivalik and Kadmat undertook a Maritime Partnership Exercise with Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF) Ships Uruga and Hirado in the Bay of Bengal on Thursday (January 13).

Both JMSDF ships are part of Minesweeper Division One and are on deployment to the Indian Ocean Region with Captain Noguchi Yasushi, Commander Minesweeper Division One embarked onboard JS Uruga.

The exercise was aimed at strengthening bilateral relations, promoting defence cooperation, enhancing mutual understanding and interoperability between the two navies and sharing best practices.

The maritime partnership exercise included a wide range of maritime operations, flying operations, replenishment approaches and tactical manoeuvres.

"The entire exercise was planned and conducted in a non contact mode, thereby adhering to Covid safety norms," Indian Navy said.

Last year India and Japan Maritime Bilateral Exercise, JIMEX, between the Indian Navy (IN) and the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF) was held in Arabian Sea from October 6 to October 8.

JIMEX series of exercises commenced in January 2012 with special focus on maritime security cooperation. The last edition of JIMEX was conducted in September 2020.

has seen "unprecedented" development in terms of road, rail and air connectivity, despite prolonged Covid lockdowns, Shams said, in a reference to the BJP being in power both at the Centre and in the state.

Routed at the hands of the BJP in the last Assembly polls and deserted by party heavyweights, a resurgent Congress on the other hand faces the uphill task of avenging its ignominious defeat in 2017.

Former chief minister Harish Rawat, who had lost from both the seats he had contested in 2017, is spearheading the party's poll campaign in the state. But the Congress had no other option as it has no bigger face than Harish Rawat, whose stature among the state party leaders remains unparalleled.



The US will allow Lebanon to import natural gas and electricity from Egypt and Jordan through Syria

THREATENED BIRD SPECIES

An iconic Australian bird species is facing extinction within 20 years without urgent conservation action, scientists have warned in a new study



of the day quote

I believe that it is absolutely essential that the Malian government present an acceptable calendar from the point of view of the elections.

ANTONIO GUTERRES | UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

At least 108 civilians have reportedly been killed and 75 others injured since the year began as a result of air strikes allegedly carried out by the Ethiopian air force

LIZ THROSELL | UN HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE (OHCHR) SPOKESPERSON

If the Sadrists get their national majority government ... those who oppose them will view this as splitting the Shi'ites and threatening their power

AHMED YOUNIS | IRAQI POLITICIAN

An Afghan tradition where girls are raised as boys

Kabul, Jan 14: In Afghanistan's heavily patriarchal, male-dominated society, where women and girls are usually relegated to the home, bacha posh, Dari for "dressed as a boy," is the one tradition allowing girls access to the freer male world.

It is unclear how the practice is viewed by Afghanistan's new rulers, the Taliban, who seized power in mid-August and have made no public statements on the issue.



children eventually reverting to female roles, the Taliban might not deal with the issue at all, said Thomas Barfield, a professor of anthropology at Boston University who has written several books on Afghanistan.

another deeply patriarchal society, although it is limited to adults. Under Albania's "sworn virgin" tradition, a woman would take an oath of celibacy and declare herself a man, after which she could inherit property, work and sit on a village council — all of which would have been out of bounds for a woman.

INDIA GRANTS FINANCIAL HELP TO SRI LANKA

Colombo, Jan 14: India has announced a \$900 million loan to Sri Lanka to build up its depleted foreign reserves and for food imports, amidst a shortage of almost all essential commodities in the island nation.

Lanka is currently experiencing a shortage of almost all essentials due to a shortage of dollars to pay for the imports

On Wednesday, the governor of the Central Bank Ajith Nivard Cabraal said that the island nation is negotiating a \$1 billion loan from India to import goods from the country.

Cyberattack in Ukraine targets govt websites



A warning message in Ukrainian, Russian and Polish, appeared on the official website of the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry

Kyiv, Jan 14: A huge cyberattack left a number of Ukrainian government websites temporarily unavailable Friday, officials said.

"Be afraid," warned a message on the defaced Foreign Ministry website, a day after talks between the West and Moscow aimed at preventing a Russian invasion hit an impasse

Russia prepping pretext for Ukraine invasion: US

The Biden administration has determined a Russian effort is underway to create a pretext for its troops to potentially further invade Ukraine, and Moscow has already prepositioned operatives to conduct "a false-flag operation" in eastern Ukraine, a US official said Friday.

Johnson faces fresh 'partygate' allegations

Opposition is keeping up the pressure on Johnson, with Liberal Democrat Leader Ed Davey demanding his immediate resignation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, Jan 14: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson Friday faced mounting leadership pressure amid further allegations of parties held at his Downing Street office-residence by staff, categorised as a "partygate" scandal due to the apparent serial breaches of lockdown rules in place at the time.

responsibility for things we did not get right," the spokesperson said. It is understood that a call from the Prime Minister's office was made to the Palace Friday.

SHORT TAKES

Suu Kyi faces 5 new corruption charges

Bangkok: Myanmar's military-installed government has filed five new corruption charges against ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi in connection with granting permits to rent and buy a helicopter, a legal official said Friday.

Imran launches first-ever NSP

Islamabad: Prime Minister Imran Khan Friday launched Pakistan's first-ever National Security Policy (NSP) based on a citizen-centric framework and focusing more on boosting the country's flagging economy and its standing in the world.

Fire at Kuwait refinery kills two

Dubai: A fire erupted in Kuwait during maintenance work at a major oil refinery Friday, killing two workers and critically injuring five others, the Kuwait National Petroleum Company said.

Indian-American man jailed

San Francisco: Indian-American Saurabh Chawla, who bought stolen Apple products from school employees in the US and sold those on eBay and Amazon, has been sentenced to 66 months in prison.

Quake hits Indonesia

Jakarta: An earthquake measuring 6.7 on the Richter scale hit Indonesia Friday, but there was no tsunami alert issued. The US Geological Survey said that an earthquake with a magnitude of 6.6 jolted 88 km SW of Labuan, Indonesia at 9.05 a.m.

N Korea fires fresh missiles in response to US sanctions

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Seoul, Jan 14: North Korea fired two suspected ballistic missiles eastward Friday, after Pyongyang publicly warned earlier in the day of a "stronger and certain" response to the new US sanctions, South Korea's military said.

were launched from Uiju in North Pyongan Province, a northwestern region bordering China, and that they flew around 430 km at an altitude of 36 km, reports Yonhap News Agency.



The North's latest firing marks its third show of force this year. The North fired what it claimed to be hypersonic missiles January 5 and Tuesday.

Washington slapped the sanctions on six North Koreans involved in the regime's weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs Wednesday.

Libya's disarray: Militants' bodies left to rot for yrs

Stored in a dusty corner of a compound southeast of Misrata, the 742 bodies were gathered by the internationally recognised government in 2016 from battlefields and informal graves, but there was no agreement on how or where they should be buried

killed in battle years ago are rotting in food freezers outside a Libyan city while authorities work out what to do with them, a grim reminder of the disarray a failed election was meant to address.



Food refrigerated containers, that hold corpses of alleged Islamic State fighters, are pictured in Kararim, near Misrata, Libya

even those fighters identified by documents or former comrades remain uncollected by foreign states or family members, leaving it up to the Tripoli government to dispose of them.

The police unit running the compound says the interim government has assigned a budget to bury the bodies soon. Neither a date nor a location have been announced.

Power cuts for long periods make the situation, bad smell from the bodies, worse

SALAH AHMED | POLICE UNIT PERSONNEL



“We have delivered all round stellar performance this quarter with a revenue growth of 7.6 per cent in constant currency quarter-on-quarter, the highest recorded in the last 46 quarters”
C VIJAYAKUMAR | CEO AND MD, HCL TECHNOLOGIES

MUSK'S NEW TWEET PUMPS DOGECOIN

Meme-based cryptocurrency dogecoin jumped Friday after Tesla Inc chief Elon Musk said the electric carmaker will accept it as payment for merchandise. “Tesla merch buyable with Dogecoin,” Musk tweeted. Dogecoin, popular among retail investors, raced up 18% to above \$0.2 after Friday's tweet



of the day quote

The House of Masaba has already established a strong foothold among the youth with a robust digital-first strategy and the tie-up with ABRFL will strengthen this position, making the brand future-ready

MASABA GUPTA | FOUNDER, HOUSE OF MASABA

The strengthening and expansion of our network in El Salvador clearly underscore the market's importance for Hero MotoCorp

SANJAY BHAN | HEAD (GLOBAL BUSINESS), HERO MOTOCORP

The economic impact of the pandemic on the income of people in India must not be underestimated. To stimulate demand, it is important that money is increased in the hands of people and products remain affordable

PREET DHUPAR | CFO, IKEA INDIA

SHORT TAKES

Davos Agenda summit Jan 17

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the online Davos Agenda summit of the World Economic Forum on the first day of the five-day event beginning January 17, joining a host of other global leaders who will share their visions for 2022 on 'The State of the World'. While the WEF had to defer its physical annual meeting in the Swiss ski resort town Davos due to the coronavirus pandemic, it will host the 'Davos Agenda' summit digitally for the second consecutive year in the previously scheduled week for the event.

TCS to sell shares worth ₹12,993cr

New Delhi: Tata Consultancy Services promoters - Tata Sons and Tata Investment Corporation Ltd (TICL) - intend to participate in the IT services major's ₹18,000 crore buyback offer by tendering shares worth about ₹12,993.2 crore. On Wednesday, the TCS board approved an up to ₹18,000 crore buyback offer entailing 4 crore shares at ₹4,500 apiece. According to a postal ballot notice by the company, Tata Sons and TICL intend to participate in the buyback offer. Tata Sons, which holds about 266.91 crore shares, intends to tender 2.88 crore shares, while TICL intends to tender 11,055 shares, it added.

PV sales slide 13% in Dec

New Delhi: Passenger vehicle dispatches from factories to dealers declined 13 per cent to the lowest level in five years in December last year as the industry continued to face production issues due to semiconductor shortage, auto industry body SIAM said Friday. Passenger vehicle dispatches last month stood at 2,19,421 units compared to 2,52,998 units in December 2020. As per the latest data from the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), two-wheeler wholesales also fell 11 per cent to 10,06,062 units in December 2021.

Hero to invest ₹420cr in Ather

New Delhi: The country's largest two-wheeler maker Hero MotoCorp Friday said its board has approved to further invest up to ₹420 crore in electric two-wheeler company Ather Energy. The company's board has approved the investment in one or more tranches, Hero MotoCorp said. Prior to the proposed investment, the company's shareholding in Ather Energy stood at 34.8 per cent.

HIGHEST-EVER MONTHLY FIGURE

Exports up 38.91% to \$37.81bn in Dec

Commenting on the numbers, Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) President A Sakthivel said that looking at the current trend, India will achieve the \$400-billion merchandise exports target for the fiscal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 14: The country's exports in December 2021 surged 38.91 per cent on an annual basis to \$37.81 billion, the highest-ever monthly figure, due to healthy performance by sectors such as engineering, textiles and chemicals, even as the trade deficit widened to \$21.68 billion during the month, government data showed Friday.

Imports in December 2021 also increased 38.55 per cent to \$59.48 billion, on account of an increase in petroleum and crude oil imports, which soared 67.89 per cent to \$16.16 billion. Gold imports expanded by 5.43 per cent to \$4.72 billion.

During April-December 2021-22, exports rose 49.66 per cent to \$301.38 billion. Imports during the period surged 68.91 per cent to \$443.82 billion, leaving a trade



TRADE DEFICIT WIDENED TO \$21.68 BILLION
IMPORTS ALSO INCREASED 38.55% TO \$59.48 BILLION
SERVICES EXPORT WAS \$20.07 BILLION, AN INCREASE OF 5.26% YOY
EXPORTS OF ENGINEERING GOODS GREW 38.41% TO \$9.8 BILLION

deficit of \$142.44 billion, the data showed. The trade deficit in December 2020 was \$15.72 billion.

Merchandise exports in December 2021 were \$37.81 billion, as compared to \$27.22 billion in December 2020, exhibiting a positive growth of 38.91 per cent. As compared to December 2019, exports in December 2021 exhibited a positive growth of 39.47 per cent, the commerce ministry said in a statement.

In December 2021, exports of engineering goods grew 38.41 per cent to \$9.8 billion, followed by petro-

leum products (151 per cent to \$5.88 billion), gems and jewellery (16.4 per cent to about \$3 billion), chemicals (26.86 per cent to \$2.66 billion) and ready-made garments of all textiles (22.63 per cent to \$1.46 billion).

The data also stated that the estimated value of services export for December 2021 was \$20.07 billion, an increase of 5.26 per cent over the same month of 2020. The imports also rose by 15.76 per cent to \$12.87 billion.

DESPITE DIFFERENCES INDIA-CHINA TRADE TOUCH RECORD HIGH

Beijing: The India-China bilateral trade touched a record high of over \$125 billion in 2021, crossing the \$100 billion-mark in a year when the relations hit a new low due to the prolonged standoff by the militaries in eastern Ladakh, while India's trade deficit too mounted to over \$69 billion, according to official data released Friday. The total trade between China and India in 2021 stood at \$125.66 billion, up 43.3 per cent from 2020, state-run Global Times reported, quoting data from the General Administration of Customs. China's exports to India from January to December rose 46.2 per cent to \$97.52 billion, while India's exports to China grew by 34.2 per cent to \$28.14 billion. The trade deficit for India grew to USD 69.38 billion in 2021. India has been highlighting its concerns over the growing trade deficit with China for over a decade and calling on Beijing to open its markets for India's IT and pharmaceutical products. Observers say much of China's exports increase this year to India was attributed to the import of medical products and raw materials for India's burgeoning pharmaceutical industry due to the massive second wave of Covid-19 and recurring bouts of the virus in the country.



SAFETY CONCERNS

6 airbags must for cars carrying 8 passengers

According to latest government data, total 1,16,496 road accidents occurred on national highways, including expressways, in 2020, causing 47,984 deaths

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 14: The Centre will make it mandatory for carmakers to provide a minimum of six airbags in motor vehicles that can carry up to 8 passengers for enhanced safety of occupants, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said Friday.

In a series of tweets, the Road Transport and Highways Minister said his ministry had already mandated the implementation of fitment of the driver airbag with effect from July 1, 2019 and front co-passenger airbag with effect from January 1, 2022.

“In order to enhance the safety of the occupants in motor vehicles carrying up to 8 passengers, I have now approved a Draft GSR Notification to make a minimum of 6 Airbags compulsory,” Gadkari said. GSR here stands for General Statutory Rules.

He further said that to minimise the impact of frontal and lateral collisions on the occupants seated in both front and rear compartments, it has been decided that 4 additional airbags be mandated in the



M1 vehicle category.

Two side torso airbags and two side curtain airbags covering all outboard passengers. This is a crucial step to make motor vehicles in India safer than ever, he said. According to Gadkari, this will ultimately ensure the safety of passengers across all segments, irrespective of the cost variant of the vehicle

His remarks had come against the backdrop of the automobile industry raising concerns that high taxation and stricter safety and emission norms for vehicles have made their products expensive. “Mostly, lower middle-class people buy small economy cars and if their car won't have airbags and when accidents happen, then it may result in deaths. So, I appeal to all car manufacturers to provide a minimum of six airbags across all variants and segments of the vehicle,” he had said.

The minister had acknowledged that additional airbags in small cars will increase their cost by at least ₹3,000-4,000.

New norms for bank investments

The new bank portfolio classification norms will come into effect from April 1, 2023

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 14: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Friday proposed new norms for the classification and valuation of the investment portfolio of banks, with a view to align them with the global prudential framework and accounting standards.

According to the proposed norms, the investment portfolio of banks will be divided into three categories — held-to-maturity (HTM), available for sale (AFS), and fair value through profit and loss account (FVTPL). Within FVTPL, held-for-trading (HFT) shall be a sub-category aligned with the specifications of “Trading Book” as per the Basel-III framework.

The new norms propose to bridge the gap between the existing guide-



lines and global standards and practices with regards to classification, valuation and operations of the investment portfolio of commercial banks

The extant instructions pertaining to the prudential norms on the classification and valuation of the investment portfolio are largely based on the Report of

Wholesale inflation spikes by over 13%; food prices plunge

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 14: The wholesale price-based inflation bucked the 4-month rising trend in December 2021, and eased to 13.56 per cent, even though food prices hardened, and experts believe the RBI is expected to hold rates steady in its monetary policy next month.

Inflation in food articles, however, spiked to a 23-month high at 9.56 per cent in December, against 4.88 per cent in November. Vegetable price rise rate jumped to 31.56 per cent, against 3.91 per cent in the previous month. In the food articles category, pulses, wheat, cereals and paddy all witnessed a month-on-month price rise, while potato, onion, fruits and egg, meat and fish saw some softening.

“The high rate of inflation in December 2021 is primarily due to rise in prices of mineral oils, basic metals, crude petroleum & natural gas, chemicals and chemical products, food products, textile and paper and paper products etc as compared to the corresponding month of the previous year,” the Commerce and Industry Ministry said in a statement.

Inflation in manufactured items was lower at 10.62 per cent in December, against 11.92 per cent in



WPI inflation has remained in double digits for the ninth consecutive month beginning April. Inflation in November was 14.23 per cent, while in December 2020 it was 1.95 per cent

the previous month. In fuel and power basket the rate of price rise was 32.30 per cent in December, against 39.81 per cent in November.

Data released earlier this week showed, retail inflation based on Consumer Price Index (Combined) rose to 5.59 per cent in December, from 4.91 per cent a month ago as food prices inched up.

ICRA Chief Economist Aditi Nayar, said the food inflation has spiked from the marginal 0.1 per cent in October 2021, to an unpleasant 23-month high of 9.6 per cent in December 2021, reflecting the unfavourable base particularly for vegetables.

MEIL, Adani's gas arm top bidders of CGD licences

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 14: Megha Engineering and Infrastructures Ltd (MEIL) walked away with the most 15 licences to retail CNG to automobiles and piped cooking gas to households in the latest city gas bidding round, while a joint venture of billionaire Gautam Adani's gas arm and Total of France got 14 licences.

According to the results of the bid opening for the 11th round of city gas distribution (CGD) bidding, Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) stands to get nine licences and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd 6.

While Assam Gas Company is winning three licences, Dinesh Engineers Ltd is set to bag licences for four geographical areas (GAs). Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL), GAIL Gas Ltd, Think Gas Distribution Pvt Ltd, IRM Energy Pvt Ltd, Indraprastha Gas Ltd and Sholagasco Pvt Ltd are to get one licence each.

An official of the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) said the bids have been opened and the preliminary winners decided but a formal announcement will be made in the next few days after the documents submitted by the bidders are verified.

Bids for 61 out of the 65 GAs offered in the 11th round were received at the close of bidding last month. IOC had bid for 53 out of 61 GAs while Adani Total Gas Ltd had bid for 52 GAs.

The 65 GAs offered in the 11th bid round are spread over 215 districts in 19 states and one Union territory covering 26 per cent of India's population and 33 per cent of its area.

FRESH START

HCL Tech acquires Starschema

New Delhi: IT services major HCL Technologies Friday said it will acquire Hungarian firm Starschema for \$42.5 million (about ₹315 crore). HCL Technologies has signed a definitive pact for the acquisition of Budapest-based Starschema, which provides data engineering services, according to a regulatory filing. The strategic acquisition will bolster HCL Technologies' capability in digital engineering -- driven by data engineering -- and increase its presence in Central and Eastern Europe, it added. The acquisition combines Starschema's high-value capabilities and data-focused expertise with HCL Technologies' existing presence in industry segments undergoing data-driven transformation.

Shiprocket acquires Rocketbox

New Delhi: Tech-enabled logistics and fulfilment company Shiprocket Friday said it has acquired Rocketbox, a B2B logistics aggregator platform, for an undisclosed amount. The Rocketbox founders will join the Shiprocket leadership team, and continue to build the cargo product as part of this deal, a statement said. “Rocketbox, which is now Rocketbox by Shiprocket, and Shiprocket complement each other to address the pain points and technical complexities that merchants/brands face while reducing the costs of LTL cargo shipping,” it added. This product aims to improve the service quality through dedicated customer support, transparent SLAs, and ease out booking of bulk shipments.



Industry leaders confident about economic recovery

FINANCE MINISTER NIRMALA SITHARAMAN IS SCHEDULED TO PRESENT THE UNION BUDGET IN PARLIAMENT FEBRUARY 1

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 14: Optimism and confidence are ruling high amongst Indian businesses as a significant percentage of industry leaders are positive about India's economic growth and expansion, despite the surge in Covid-19 cases,



says a survey.

According to the pre-budget survey by Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India LLP (DTTILLP), that collated a total of 163 responses from 10 industries, more than 75 per cent respondents were positive about

India's economic growth and expansion.

The survey further noted that about 91 per cent respondents (compared with 58 per cent last year) believe that the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative, coupled with monetary

“The Indian economy will continue to witness the growth momentum if the government is able to sustain the efforts on implementation of reforms such as asset monetisation for the infrastructure growth, and PLI schemes”
SANJAY KUMAR | PARTNER, DELOITTE TOUCHE TOHMATSU

policy actions by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) did contribute to bringing the economy back on track. They (industry leaders) expect the Union Budget FY 2022-23 to build on to this momentum, DTTILLP said in a release.

Further, about 55 per cent business leaders believe that provid-

ing extra tax incentives to long-term investors for infrastructure investment can help promote growth in the country.

Adding to this, 45 per cent respondents believe that the budget should focus on announcing incentives for increased R&D spending. This would be beneficial for sectors such as life sciences, automobile, capital goods, technology, and telecommunication.

Enhancing export competitiveness, putting in place competitive import tariffs, and reducing administrative inefficiencies are some other expectations that industry leaders conveyed through the Deloitte survey.

Commenting on the survey findings, Sanjay Kumar, Partner, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India LLP, said, the economy has wit-

nessed a steady recovery during 2021-22. Moreover, most of the business leaders anticipate that the increasing startup activity, coupled with the government's stimulus packages and policies, will push the ease of doing business in India, resulting in a quick economic revival, Kumar added.

As per the survey, about 59 per cent respondents believe that India provides a favourable atmosphere to run a business. Encouraging digitalisation, simplifying tax regimes, and improving land and labour laws would help enhance the ease of doing business in India, it said.

DTTILLP said the survey aimed to analyse the industry's expectations from the upcoming budget, with the standpoint of economic growth, the ease of doing business, and self-reliance.

PROTEAS WEAR 'CAPE OF GLORY'

SOUTH AFRICA DENY INDIA THEIR FIRST-EVER SERIES WIN IN THE RAINBOW NATION YET AGAIN WITH A COMFORTABLE SEVEN-WICKET VICTORY IN THE SERIES-DECIDING THIRD AND FINAL TEST



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cape Town, Jan 14: A South African team going through one of its toughest transition phases embarrassed a star-studded Indian team with a clinical seven-wicket victory in the third Test to clinch a memorable 2-1 series triumph here Friday.

The target of 212 wasn't a tough ask and starting the day at 101/2, young pretender Keegan Petersen (82, 113b, 10x4) along with Rassie van der Dussen (41 n o, 95b, 3x4) added 54 runs for the third wicket to seal the match before Temba Bavuma (32 n o, 58b, 5x4) helped in putting the final touches.

Petersen walked away with both the player of the match as well as player of the series honours.

Sunil Gavaskar termed it as a 'Nightmare for India' as they were not even close to competing in the last two Tests and Dean Elgar's ear to ear grin and the bear hugs that he shared with his teammates said it all.

It was especially sweet for the hosts who lost premier pacer Anrich Nortje to injury before the series and were then hit by Quinton de Kock's sudden mid-series retirement.

The Indian team, meanwhile, lost it in their mind after the contentious DRS review of Elgar that went wrong Thursday and their focus on using stump microphone more to take digs at broadcaster Supersport instead of focussing on getting Petersen out spelt their doom.

With this series defeat, India's record of never having won a Test series in the Rainbow Nation for three decades, remained intact. MS Dhoni is the only India captain to have managed a drawn series back in 2010.

It was one of the strongest Indian teams on paper against one of the weakest South African teams on paper. However, the operative word here was 'on paper' as Elgar's unheralded bunch showed a lot of character in punching above their weight and also getting heavily rewarded for their relentless efforts.

The mindless chatter and incessant sledging didn't bother the likes of Petersen and Van der Dussen as they went about their job in a thoroughly professional manner.

India's batters were far too dependant on bowlers to bail them out for the past few years but this series showed that this attack is human too even though they put

CAPTAINCY & CHANGES

In any case, Kohli's personal relationship with the BCCI brass is at its lowest ebb, and this loss might just have consequences.

To be fair, Kohli didn't lead the side badly in the two Tests that he led but being good isn't enough if it's not winning the side the series. He is the only captain who has now lost two Test series in South Africa.

But a lot has got to do with how India have persisted with two completely out of sorts middle-order players. Pujara and Rahane are no longer bringing any value to the team and they are unlikely to retain their places in the time to come. Yes, the transition phase ought to start and it better be soon.

Lost in chatter

It needs to be put as it is. India did not lose the Test because of one DRS that went wrong but for the consistent poor batting throughout the series save the first innings of the first Test.

The scores of 202, 223 and 198 is the reason India lost and the second innings effort at both Wanderers and Newlands showed that Indian bowlers could only do as much.

The heavy duty tirade against the host broadcasters Supersport with their customised diatribe did not look good in the face of a dismal performance.

The skipper himself led the attack and it seemed like a forceful way of trying to put the blame squarely on technology that 'may or may not have gone wrong'.

The die-hard Kohli fans believe that the Indian skipper needs a narrative to spur him on and his favourite script is 'he and his team against the entire world' as his deputy for the series KL Rahul would have fans believe on the stump-mic. It's far from truth but it works well for him to push the envelope.

Van der Dussen was subjected to intense sledging on the fourth morning and so was Petersen but they remained unfazed.

But Kohli losing his counsel and blowing his top was also a projection of a man who is under immense pressure and a Test defeat against a much lower-ranked side which had been grappling with all kinds of socio-political issues over the past few years, isn't going to go down well with the BCCI.

ditions with the semi-new ball and they did their bit with all sincerity. Petersen was beaten time and again but, in between, scored his runs to keep the scoreboard ticking.

Their strategy was to see off the first spell and capitalise when Umesh Yadav, who is known to bowl boundary balls, was brought into the attack.

Bumrah, in his second spell, did get one to straighten but Cheteshwar Pujara, enduring a poor series with the bat, dropped a crucial regulation slip catch with the batter on 59.

If one remembers, it was Ross Taylor, who had got a 'life' when Pujara dropped a sitter during World Test Championship final and the bowler at the receiving was again, Bumrah.

It was Shardul Thakur who finally had the young man played on but by then Petersen had ensured a series win for his team.

Brief scores: India 223 & 198 lost to South Africa 210 & 212/3 (Keegan Petersen 82, Rassie van der Dussen 41 n o, Temba Bavuma 32 n o) by 7 wickets.



Rassie van der Dussen (L) and Temba Bavuma congratulate each other after the victory over India in Cape Town, Friday

their best foot forward, which wasn't complemented at all by the willow wielders.

The only hope for India was the first spell from Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami in sultry con-

How they reacted...

Virat Kohli

Batters' poor show: The batting has to be looked into, no running away from that. Having collapses every now and then not a good thing. No excuses there. It's really disappointing for sure. We know how far we've come as a team. That people expect us to beat South Africa in South Africa is testimony to how far we've come. We haven't done it, that's the reality, accept it and come back as better cricketers

Praising opposition: We had a great first game but South Africa did amazingly well. In both Tests they won, they were clinical with the ball in crunch moments. Lapse of concentration cost us key moments and they seized those moments; South Africa were absolutely deserving winners in the end

Immediate attention: Have had a few collapses that have cost us important moments and Test matches. It's batting; can't pin-point any other aspect. People talk about pace and bounce, considering their heights, they were able to get much more off the wickets in all three Tests. They applied pressure long enough for us to make mistakes. It's the understanding of conditions for them which they know very well.

Controversial DRS: I have no comment to make on either. We understood what happened on the field and people on the outside don't know exact details of what goes on, on the field. For me to try and justify what we did on the field and say we got carried away is all. If we had gotten charged up and picked up three wickets there, that would have been probably the moment that changed the game

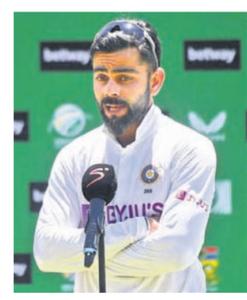
Dean Elgar

A proud skipper: I think it will sink in a day or two, maybe this evening. Couldn't be prouder of the group. The guys responded brilliantly. After the first loss, had a lot of hope knowing we can still win this. I asked the players to respond in a better nature, better way and they responded brilliantly. Challenging your players within the group, need character to stand up.

Praising bowlers: The way our bowling unit delivered throughout the series is brilliant. I threw down the challenge after the first game and the guys responded brilliantly. It's unreal to see how a group that doesn't have the repertoire or names can gel together as one. I've got an old-school mentality with new-school twist. Laid down challenges to senior players as well, great to see them take it on board and deliver

Formers slam Kohli

Virat Kohli's outburst against a controversial DRS decision during the third Test was levelled as 'immature' and 'exaggerated' reaction, with the former players saying the India skipper will never be a role model for youngsters...



Gautam Gambhir: This is really bad. What Kohli did, going near the stump mic and reacting in that manner, that is really immature. This is not what you expect from an international captain, from an Indian captain.

Then technology isn't in your hand. Then you have reacted in the same manner when there was a caught-behind appeal on the leg-side, neither did Dean Elgar react in that manner. During that Mayank Agarwal appeal, it looked out from the naked eye, but Elgar did not react in that manner.

No matter what you say, stuff like he plays with his heart on his sleeve, this reaction was an exaggerated one and you can't be a role model in this manner. No budding cricketers would want to see this kind of a reaction, especially from the Indian captain.

No matter the result in this Test match, this is not what you expect from a Test captain who has led the team for so long. I hope Rahul Dravid has a word with him, because the type of captain Dravid was, he would have never reacted in this manner.

Shane Warne: That's going on to smash half way up middle though, there is no way that's going over, even Erasmus shook his head.

Michael Vaughan: I think that is disgraceful from the Indians personally. Decisions go with you, they go against you, that didn't go the way they think it should have gone. Virat Kohli is a legend of the game, but that's not the way to act, that is not the way to act in a game of Test match cricket. The ICC have to stamp this down, they have to stamp down on the Indian side.

Daryll Cullinan: This is the typical Virat's untouchable, he behaves the way he wants to behave. The rest of the cricket world just bows down to Virat. The powerhouse is India. I hate to say this but it's been going on for years. It's just the big suck up towards India and anybody who plays for India. They are untouchable, so everyone will laugh it off. I love Virat Kohli, I love his cricket, I love the way he plays. But there has to be a line drawn somewhere to say 'hang on, you must be severely punished'.

India begin campaign against SA at U-19 WC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Georgetown (Guyana), Jan 14: Record four-time champions India will be aiming to maintain their enviable record and unearth a plethora of talent along the way when they begin their U-19 World Cup campaign against South Africa here Saturday.

Expectations will be high from the likes of Harnoor Singh, Rajvardhan Hangargekar, skipper Yash Dhull and Ravi Kumar, who have already shown glimpses of their potential in tournaments leading into the World Cup.

India flew into the Caribbean straight after their Asia Cup triumph and tuned up for the ICC event with wins over hosts West Indies and Australia in the warm-up games. India have been the most successful team in the tournament's history and getting into the final of the last three editions is a testimony to their remarkable consistency.

No player from the 2020 batch, which finished runners-up to first-time champions Bangladesh, has gone on to play for India and only time will tell if someone from the class of 2022 reaches the highest level.

The current batch doesn't possess prodigies like Prithvi Shaw and Shubman Gill (2018 pass outs) but some of the players have already attracted attention. Jalandhar-born left-hand opener Harnoor is expected to score a bagful of runs in the tour-

nament, much like what Yashasvi Jaiswal did in the previous edition.

The 18-year-old was India's leading run-getter in the Asia Cup with 251 runs in five games and struck an unbeaten 100 against Australia in the team's final warm-up game January 11. Right-arm pacer Hangargekar, who has played senior cricket for Maharashtra, is another player to watch out for: He impressed with his raw pace in the Asia Cup, picking up eight wickets, and is also a handy batter down the order.

Left-arm pacer Ravi Kumar will also be expected to provide timely breakthroughs and he will be high on confidence following a four-wicket haul against the Australians.

Skipper Dhull, who is a highly rated batter in Delhi cricket circles, did not do anything noticeable in the Asia Cup but his back-to-back fifties in the warm-up games show he is in good touch. All-rounder Raj Bawa, who bowls right-arm medium pace and bats left-handed, will also play a crucial role for the team.

The squad: Yash Dhull (C), Harnoor Singh, Angkrish Raghuvanshi, SK Rasheed (vc), Nishant Sindhu, Siddarth Yadav, Aneeshwar Gautam, Dinesh Bana, Aaradhya Yadav, Raj Anand Bawa, Manav Parakh, Kaushal Tambe, Rajvardhan Hangargekar, Vasu Vats, Vicky Ostwal, Ravi Kumar, Garv Sangwan.

Sindhu, Sen in India Open semis

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New Delhi, Jan 14: Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu and World Championship bronze medalist Lakshya Sen registered contrasting wins to advance to the women's and men's singles semifinals, respectively, at the Yonex-Sunrise India Open badminton here Friday.

Top seed Sindhu, a former world champion, got the better of compatriot Ashmita Chaliha 21-7, 21-18 in 36 minutes, while Sen rallied his way to a hard-fought 14-21, 21-9, 21-14 victory over HS Prannoy in another all-Indian quarterfinals.

The 26-year-old from Hyderabad set up a women's singles last-four clash with Thailand's sixth seed Supanida Katethong, who entered the semifinals after the third seeded Yeo Jia Min of Singapore pulled out of the tournament due to 'high fever'.

Sen, seeded third, will square off against either Malaysia's Ng Tze Yong or Ireland's Nhat Nguyen in the semifinals.

In the other women's semifinal, Aakarshi Kashyap will face second seeded Thai Busanan Ongbamrungphan after the Indian notched up a 21-12, 21-15 win over compatriot Malvika Bansod Friday. Busanan trounced USA's Lauren Lam 21-12, 21-8 in another last-eight clash.

The last time Sindhu was up against Chaliha, at the 83rd Yonex-Sunrise Senior National Championship in 2019, the young-



ster from Assam had produced a spirited performance.

In the men's singles, Sen and Prannoy engaged in a battle of supremacy with the former dominating the proceedings initially to secure a 6-2 lead.

Prannoy, who had reached the quarterfinals at the last world championships, got his act together in time to turn the tables at 12-10 and then zoomed from 15-14 to pocket the opening game.

Sen roared back into the con-

test in the second game as he ran up a huge 12-5 lead and didn't look back from that point, as Prannoy crumbled.

In the decider, Prannoy took the initiative early, opening up a 6-1 advantage but he couldn't sustain it as Sen moved to 11-9 at the interval and then pocketed nine of the next 11 points to seal the match in his favour.

The men's doubles pair of Ishaan Bhatnagar and Sai Pratheek K cut a sorry figure against Malaysian

third seeds Ong Yew Sin and Teo Ee Yi, losing 7-21, 7-21 in just 19 minutes.

In the mixed doubles, the Indian pairing of Venkat Gaurav Prasad and Juhi Dewangan, seeded 8th, were no match for Malaysian combination of Chen Tang Jie and Peck Yen Wei, going down 10-21, 13-21 in just 23 minutes.

Another Indian pair of Nithin HV and Ashwini Bhat K lost 15-21, 19-21 to Singapore's Hee Yong Kai Terry and Tan Wei Han to bow out of the USD 400,000 event.

10-man Gunners keep Reds at bay in League Cup tie

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, Jan 14: If Granit Xhaka getting sent off came as no real surprise, Arsenal holding out with 10 men at Anfield certainly was a shock.

Liverpool failed to take advantage of Xhaka's 24th-minute red card for a chest-high lunge on Diogo Jota and was held to a 0-0 draw by Arsenal in the first leg of the English League Cup semifinals Thursday.

With star forwards Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane at the African Cup of Nations, Liverpool lacked a cutting edge up front against an already-depleted Arsenal team that lost two more players — Cedric Soares and Bukayo Saka — to injury during the game.

Xhaka's second red card of the season came when he was chasing back after Jota, who was attempting to run onto a long ball by Andrew Robertson, when he stuck out his left leg and smashed it into the chest of the Portugal international.

Jota would have been through on goal and the referee went straight to his back pocket to show the red card.

Takumi Minamino wasted the biggest chance for Liverpool, slicing his shot over the crossbar with the goal at his mercy in the 89th minute after Ramsdale flapped at a cross from the right.