



STERLING DEEPIKA

Director of upcoming movie 'Pathaan', Siddharth Anand, dubs Deepika Padukone as a bonafide action star

LEISURE P2



PERU PROTESTS INTENSIFY

Dozens of Peruvians were injured as police clash with protesters during anti-government demonstrations

INTERNATIONAL P10



INDIA FACE NZ TODAY

India lock horns with New Zealand in a must-win men's hockey World Cup crossover match at Kalinga Stadium

SPORTS P12

SHORT TAKES

Chris Hipkins to be next New Zealand PM



Wellington: Education Minister Chris Hipkins is set to become New Zealand's next Prime Minister after he was the only candidate to enter the contest Saturday to replace Jacinda Ardern. Hipkins, 44, must still get an endorsement Sunday from his Labour Party colleagues in Parliament but that is just a formality now. Ardern shocked the nation of 5 million people Thursday when she announced she was resigning after five-and-a-half years in the top role. **P-10**

Twin blasts leave 9 injured in Jammu

Jammu: Just two days before Congress leader Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Yatra is scheduled to reach Jammu, two back-to-back explosions rocked a busy locality on the outskirts of the city Saturday, leaving nine people injured, officials said. Police suspect that IEDs were used to carry out the twin explosions in an SUV parked in a repair shop and in a vehicle at a nearby junkyard at Transport Nagar area of Narwal. **P-7**

Sunak fined for seatbelt 'error'

London: The local police force where Rishi Sunak filmed a social media video in a moving car without a seatbelt Friday fined the British Prime Minister for the legal breach. Lancashire Police, which had been "looking into" the matter, confirmed it had issued a fixed penalty notice to Sunak, which involves a 100 pounds fine for not wearing a seatbelt in a moving car.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



What a weak PM the UK has! He was fined for not wearing a seatbelt

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	30.7°C	30.0°C
TEMP MIN	17.5°C	17.0°C
Humidity	58%	64%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Foggy weather mainly	



LIFTING THE MOOD: Girls taking a selfie during the First Flower Show organised on the premises of National Law University in Cuttack, Saturday **PHOTO: RAJKISHORE MOHANTY**

Drinking water projects worth ₹1,287cr get nod

If things go as per plan, people of nine blocks in Malkangiri, Nayagarh and Jajpur districts will get piped drinking water within 24 months

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 21: The state Cabinet led by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Saturday approved three tenders worth ₹1287.86 crore for execution of nine mega piped water supply projects in Malkangiri, Nayagarh and Jajpur districts. Briefing mediapersons about the Cabinet decisions, Development Commissioner PK Jena said supply of safe drinking water to the people living in rural areas is one of the priority areas of the state government.

Accordingly, the government has taken the decision of executing nine mega piped water supply projects to provide safe drinking water in the three districts by utilising funds under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), he said. The Cabinet has approved the tender amounting to ₹639.26 crore for execution of four projects in Malkangiri district, where 3.13 lakh people of 453 villages under 61 gram panchayats (GPs) in four blocks will be benefited.

Similarly, the Cabinet has taken a decision for execution of three mega piped water supply projects in Nayagarh district with a cost of ₹393.93 crore. These projects will provide safe drinking water to 1.94 lakh people of 619 villages under 42 GPs of three blocks in the district, Jena said. Another

MAJOR TAKEAWAYS

- Govt will execute nine mega piped water supply projects to provide safe drinking water in the three districts by utilising funds under Jal Jeevan Mission**
- ₹639.26 crore** has been approved for execution of four water supply projects in Malkangiri district to benefit 3.13 lakh people
- ₹254.66 crore** has been approved for execution of two water supply projects in Jajpur district that would benefit around 2.50 lakh people
- Nayagarh district gets three mega piped water projects worth ₹393.93 crore that would benefit 1.94 lakh people**

15,711 teaching and non-teaching employees of aided non-govt colleges will get enhanced grant-in aid

tender of ₹254.66 crore has been approved by the government for execution of two water supply projects in Jajpur district. Around 2.50 lakh people of 250 villages under 49 GPs in two blocks of the district will be benefited, he said. A target has been set to complete the work of all the potable water projects within 24 months. Further, the government has also taken a decision to construct a high-level bridge over Subarnarekha river in Balasore district under State Plan in 2022-23. The bridge project involving an expenditure of ₹101.66 crore is set to be completed within three years.

Gangrape victim waits for 12 hrs for med test

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Keonjhar, Jan 21: A gangrape survivor in Keonjhar district alleged that she had to wait in a police van for 12 hours for her medical examination.

The incident took place in Anandapur sub-division of the district after a case of gangrape was registered at Soso police station Thursday. The 37-year-old woman was taken in a police van to Anandapur sub-divisional hospital Thursday morning where doctors refused to undertake her medical examination as the place of occurrence of the crime was under Salania Community Health Centre (CHC) area.

The police personnel accompanying the woman then took her to Salania CHC. She was made to sit in the police van as there was no lady doctor at Salania CHC to conduct medical examination. The police again brought back the woman to Anandapur sub-divisional hospital where the doctors at about 9:30pm of Thursday conducted her preliminary examination.

"I was told that the full medical examination could not be conducted during the night time. Therefore, I was told to come Friday," the survivor said.

"However, the woman finally got her complete medical examination done Friday," police said. "The doctors referred us to Anandapur government hospital as there was no lady doctor there. We also go through unavoidable problems. It's not that we intentionally delayed the medical ex-



The incident took place in Anandapur sub-division of the district after a case of gangrape was registered at Soso PS

amination," said Soso police station inspector-in-charge (IIC) Pradip Kumar Sethi.

The woman's relatives alleged that the police brought the gangrape survivor to Soso police station from Anandapur Sub-divisional hospital, a distance of 40 km at 9am Thursday. However, finally the doctor attended to her at 9:30pm. When contacted, Keonjhar, Chief District Medical Officer Kishore Chandra Prusty's office said he was on leave. All other senior health department officials refused to comment on the issue.

The gangrape incident took place January 18 (Wednesday) when the survivor was returning from her relative's house along with her cousin. Three youths allegedly forcibly lifted the woman after assaulting her cousin.

The miscreants took turn and raped her at Gohirabai area, the woman said in her FIR.

The survivor has lodged a complaint at Soso police station and investigation was on. No one was arrested till Friday night, police said.

Jumbos trample 2 to death in Dhenkanal

POST NEWS NETWORK

Parjang, Jan 21: Two persons were killed Saturday in separate incidents of elephant attacks in this area under Dihadol forest section of Dhenkanal forest division and district.

The deceased were identified as Alekh Nayak, 65, of Khalapala village and Bari Nayak, 70, a woman, of Parjang area. The twin incidents have spread panic among the locals in the respective areas.

According to available reports, Alekh died when he was out to attend nature's call to a nearby ground. The elderly man came face-to-face with a tusker which attacked and left him dead on the spot. Similarly, Bari had gone to answer nature's call to an open ground behind a farmhouse at Gandaitala in Parjang area.

There a tusker attacked her and trampled her to death. On being informed, forest officials reached the spot and launched an investigation. They started tracking the movement of the animal and sent the bodies for post-mortem to Parjang community health centre.

On being informed, zilla parishad member Nirakar Pradhan of zone 2 met and consoled the bereaved families. He alleged that negligence of the Forest department is responsible for the deaths as elephant attacks are taking place frequently. He urged people to remain cautious about the elephants and their entry into human habitats.

WFI ASST SECRETARY TOMAR SUSPENDED

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 21: The Sports Ministry Saturday suspended Wrestling Federation of India's (WFI) assistant secretary Vinod Tomar, a fallout of the grapplers' allegations of sexual harassment and corruption against the sports body's chief, Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh.

It has decided to suspend Tomar, "with immediate effect, to ensure proper functioning of WFI".

The ministry said it has also directed the WFI to suspend "all ongoing activities with immediate effect", including the Ranking Tournament in Gonda, UP, Sharan's stronghold.

This comes a day after Sports Minister Anurag Thakur announced the formation of an oversight committee to probe the charges levelled by some of the country's top wrestlers, including Vinesh Phogat, Bajrang Punia, Sakshi Malik and Ravi Dahiya, against Sharan and his body. Regarding Tomar, the ministry said in a letter, which is in possession of the PTI, that his presence will be "detrimental to the development of this high-priority discipline".

"The Ministry has taken note of the reports about the functioning of the WFI, including the role of Shri Vinod Tomar and, has the reasons to believe that his continued presence will be detrimental to the development of this high-priority discipline," the ministry said in the letter.

Rare dinosaur nests, eggs found in Narmada valley

A study of nests and eggs reveals details about the lives of the long-necked sauropods that walked the region more than 66 million years ago

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, Jan 21: Paleontologists have reported a rare discovery of closely located dinosaur nests and 256 eggs of the herbivorous titanosaurs in the Narmada valley in Madhya Pradesh. Researchers from the Delhi University and Indian Institute of Science Education and Research in Mohanpur-Kolkata and Bhopal



Fossilised femur bone and eggs of titanosaurs found in Lower Narmada Valley in MP on display at India International Science Festival in Bhopal **PTI PHOTO**

- The eggs were found from the estuary formed at a place where the Tethys Sea merged with the Narmada when Seychelles had broken away from the Indian plate
- The separation of Seychelles had led to the incursion of the Tethys Sea 400 kms inside the Narmada Valley
- The eggs, which ranged between 15 cm and 17 cm in diameter, likely belonged to a number of titanosaurs species

have also reported discovery of ovum-in-ovo or multi-shell eggs in Bagh and Kukshi areas in Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh. The findings were published in PLoS One research journal this week by Harsha Dhiman, Vishal

Verma, and Guntupalli Prasad, among others. A study of the nests and eggs has revealed intimate details about the lives of the long-necked sauropods that walked the region more than 66 million years ago.

Sea 400 kms inside the Narmada Valley," Verma, who works in the Higher Secondary School, Bakaner, Dhar district, told PTI here.

He said the nests found in the Narmada valley were close to each other. Generally the nests are located at some distance from each other. Verma, considered the driving force behind a series of discoveries of dinosaur fossils in Narmada, said the reason behind multi-shell eggs could be the inability of the mother to find favourable conditions for laying eggs.

"In such conditions, the eggs remain in the oviduct and the shell formation begins again. There could also have been instances of a dinosaur dying before laying eggs," Verma said. **Continued on P4**

MOONWALKER ALDRIN TIES KNOT ON 93RD BIRTHDAY

AGENCIES

Los Angeles, Jan 21: Buzz Aldrin, one of the three American astronauts who set foot on the moon in the 1969 Apollo 11 mission, got married to his longtime love on his 93rd birthday. Taking to Twitter, Aldrin posted pictures with his wife Anca Faur and said that they tied the knot in a small ceremony in Los Angeles, California.

In his recent share in the micro-blogging site, he gave a peek inside a happy moment of his life. He shared a tweet to announce his wedding with Anca Faur and that too on his 93rd birthday. "On my 93rd birthday & the day I will also be honored by Living



AGE JUST A NUMBER Legends of Aviation I am pleased to announce that my longtime love Dr. Anca Faur & I have tied the knot. We were joined in holy matrimony in a small private ceremony in Los Angeles & are as excited as eloping teenagers," the moonwalker wrote in his tweet. Alongside, he also shared two images.

leisure



SILENT COMEDY IS MAKING COMEBACK: TAPE FACE ON INDIA TOUR

Sam Wills, a New Zealand-origin prop comedian is visiting India for the first time. Wills, who goes by the name Tape Face, "can't wait" to be in the country, as he shares, "I've been looking forward to coming to India for some time, and to finally get the opportunity it's fantastic."

BROOKE SHIELDS BRINGS PRETTY BABY DOCUMENTARY TO SUNDANCE

In a powerful Sundance documentary *Pretty Baby*, actress Brooke Shields reveals she was raped by a Hollywood Insider and shared this is the 'first time I've opened up about what happened.'



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

Bo! Are you ambitious today or what! You plan meticulously and perform impeccably. However, you will progress at snail's pace. But don't lose heart, as Ganesh shows his blessings on you, dear one.

TAURUS

Planning your own milestones and celebrating the success of friends is the agenda for the day. Your thoughts will be progressive in business or at work, and any plans you make will make a rock-solid foundation for your future. Social gatherings and parties will beckon with bubbly and bruschetta.

GEMINI

You may come up with a precise understanding of other today, says Ganesh. You will please your sweetheart with both your presence and presents. You will browse through dozens of showrooms for that perfect, and expensive, gift for your beloved. You will also work towards achieving your long-term goals. Ganesh wishes you good luck.

CANCER

Today, you and your soul mate will be rolling in the hay; there will be little time or inclination to do anything else. In fact, you will show such single-minded devotion to the act of rolling as if the future of the world lies in the haystack. Your mind can think of nothing more, and nothing less.

LEO

Try and put on some protective gear today – maybe a suit of armour should do fine, says Ganesh. For, you may find some need for it on this day of mixed fortunes as you miss out the expected and come face-to-face with the unexpected. Manage through the day somehow, since the day's distress will eventually give way to an evening of ecstasy and a night of pleasant surprises, portends Ganesh.

VIRGO

Today, you will be aspire to be a master of your own destiny. You have the ability to see through the façade that people put up to shield their true self. You will choose your company wisely and plan for success. Polish your presentation skills and you may need to work an extra bit to get your ideas approved, says Ganesh.

LIBRA

Ganesh feels the day will be beneficial for you when it comes to transactions with the government. But you already expect that. It is more than likely that public servants will have encouraging and optimistic achievements lined up for their efforts. Your expertise may be put to test and it is your experience that will come in handy.

SCORPIO

Ganesh feels that you may be confronted with vital decisions at work. You will need to trust the opinions of your close friends and peers so that you may take informed decisions. Keep your mind away from negative thoughts and delegate responsibilities accordingly.

SAGITTARIUS

The sage within you will take the lead today. You are likely to prescribe yourself to your own medication for peace of mind. Wise and content that you are today, you will spread the message of love around you. All in all, a peaceful day is in store for you today.

CAPRICORN

People may call you a busy bee, but that you admittedly will be, says Ganesh. Work will demand your undivided attention, but the good thing is you will quickly get done with pending work one by one.

AQUARIUS

Expect the unexpected today! Success, money, love, whatever it is that you'd lost hope of will suddenly come your way! In the evening, you may catch up with reading, research, discussion or other such activity, says Ganesh.

PISCES

Today is a day of mixed fortunes. So, while you may not win a gazillion dollars in the daily lottery, you might just end up winning a return air ticket to Timbuktu. No one has really been there, but it is better than nothing. However, the distress of those lost dollars is likely to be eased by the ecstasy awaiting you in the evening.

Deepika

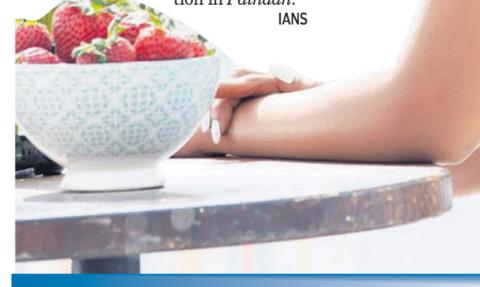
is a bonafide action star: Anand

Mumbai: Actress Deepika Padukone, who plays a spy in the upcoming spy-thriller film *Pathaan*, has been called a bonafide action star by the film's director Siddharth Anand. As one can see from the trailer and the assets that have been released so far, the actress can be seen pulling off the action and sultry bit with equal ease.

Talking about his liking towards femme fatale in films, Siddharth said, "There is nothing more cool or sexy than a woman wielding a powerful weapon on screen. As a film-buff, I have always loved women doing sick action sequences and so, when we got Deepika Padukone in *Pathaan*, we wanted to present her in her most badass self - a gorgeous, gun-toting, femme fatale spy that people have never seen before!"

Recollecting a sequence from the film, the director added, "In one of the action sequences of *Pathaan*, Deepika wields the gatling gun and you have to see the sequence to believe how legit she is as a bonafide action superstar! She steals the show in this scene and I'm sure people will cheer the loudest for her every time she does action in *Pathaan*."

IAN S



Parineeti turns 'master scuba diver'!

Mumbai: Actress Parineeti Chopra started scuba diving as a hobby, but it now seems to have become her passion.

After 9 years of rigorous training, rescue sessions, and more than a hundred dives later, Parineeti has achieved the title of 'master scuba diver'.

Parineeti Chopra took to her social media to share this special news.

She wrote: "I'm now a MASTER SCUBA DIVER!!! It is an absolutely surreal feeling! My dream of 9 years has finally come true... All those years of focus, rescue training and hard work have paid off!"

"I'm truly honoured and cannot thank @paditv enough for their constant support, training and help in my journey! You are like family now. Also, thank you Anees and Shameen Adenwala for teaching me everything I know. You are my dive parents forever!"

@scuba-nees



@shameenadenwala".

Parineeti was last seen in *Umchaa* directed by Sooraj Barjatya, written by Abhishek Dixit on the basis of an original story by Sunil Gandhi, and produced jointly by Rajshri Productions, Boundless Media and Mahaveer Jain Films. It stars an ensemble cast of Amitabh Bachchan, Anupam Kher, Boman Irani, Danny Denzongpa, Parineeti Chopra, Neena Gupta and Sarika.

She will next be seen in *Chamkila* alongside Diljit Dosanjh and *Capsule Gill* starring Akshay Kumar.

Kangana mortgaged her properties while making *Emergency*

Mumbai: Actress Kangana Ranaut has wrapped up the acting schedule for *Emergency*. In a post on social media, she hinted about enemies who worked over time to stop her from making the film, and shared that she had to mortgage her properties while making it.

Taking to Instagram, Kangana shared a string of BTS pictures from the sets of the film and mentioned: "As I wrap *Emergency* as an actor today, a tremendously glorious phase of my life comes to its full completion... It may seem I sailed through it comfortably but the truth is far from it".

"From mortgaging all my properties, every single thing that I owned to being diagnosed with dengue during the first schedule and having to film it in spite of alarmingly low blood cell counts, my character as an individual has been severely tested".

IAN S



NATAKA PARIKRAMA: DAY 2



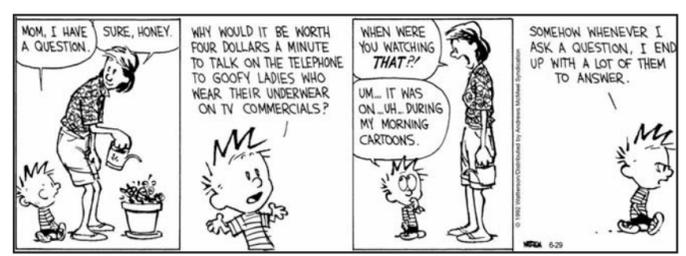
THEATRE TREAT: Members of Uttar Purush, one of the oldest theatre troupes of Bhubaneswar, performed Odia play 'Surjyasta Purbaru' on the second day of their drama festival 'Nataka Parikrama-2023' at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Saturday. Written by Jagannath Prasad Das and directed by Chakradhar Patra, the play underscored that life is always incomplete and that people should learn to accept the failures. Those who performed on the stage include Chakradhar, Ranesh, Jigyansa and Sandhya.

FUN post

PEANUTS



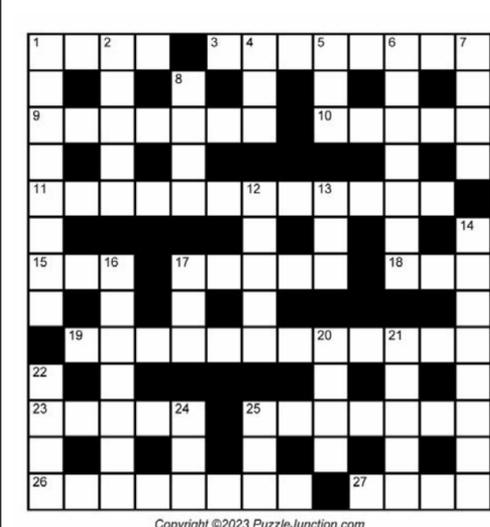
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



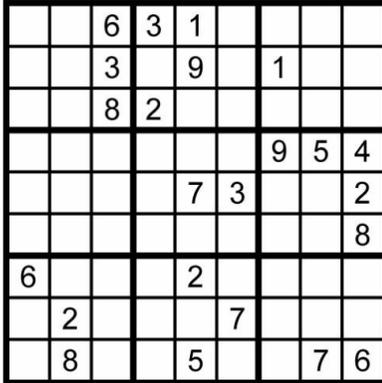
CROSSWORD



- Copyright ©2023 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 1 Wanes
 - 3 Noisy publicity
 - 9 Abrupt increase
 - 10 Latin dance
 - 11 Rhyme type
 - 15 Morsel
 - 17 Terminal
 - 18 *Lolita* actress Lyon
 - 19 Bowling green, e.g. (7,5)
 - 23 Speak
 - 25 Spiritual occurrence
 - 26 Computer accessory
 - 27 Living quarters
- Down**
- 8 Jog
 - 12 Mature
 - 13 Famous king
 - 14 Race result, possibly (4,4)
 - 16 *War and Peace* author
 - 17 Time period
 - 20 It can be found in the road
 - 21 Distinguish oneself
 - 22 Chinese boat
 - 24 Greek letter
 - 25 Disfigure

SUDOKU

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

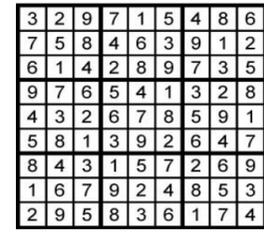


SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU



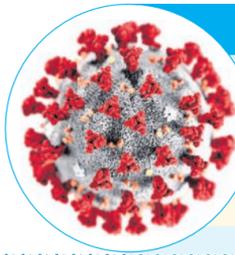
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



SOAKED IN DEVOTION

Lord Amabasya Narayan being carried on a procession on the occasion of Tribeni Amabasya in Puri, Saturday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	67,29,79,706	64,46,00,632	67,42,954
India	4,46,81,781	4,41,49,111	5,30,730
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

MIN URGES BIZ HONCHOS TO INVEST IN ODISHA



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 21: Industries and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Minister Pratap Keshari Deb Saturday met corporate captains at Kolkata and invited them to invest in Odisha, the emerging industrial hub of India.

Addressing the Odisha Investors' Meet organised by the state government in collaboration with the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) at Kolkata in West Bengal, Deb said Odisha, under the leadership of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and the pro-industry approach of the government, is becoming a major industrial hub and a destination of choice for investors across the country.

Attracted by the availability of raw materials, trained and skilled manpower and low cost of doing business in Odisha, many companies like IOCL, IFFCO, Aditya Birla Fashion, Jockey, Parle Agro, Britannia, and ITC have set up large manufacturing and service units in the state.

Highlighting that the tourism industry is going to expand manifolds, the MSME Minister invited businesses to establish hotels, resorts, hospitality facilities and

■ Attracted by the availability of raw materials, trained and skilled manpower and low cost of doing business in Odisha, many companies like IOCL, IFFCO, Aditya Birla Fashion, Jockey, Parle Agro, Britannia, and ITC have set up large manufacturing and service units in the state

■ Make in Odisha (MiO) Conclave 2022 was attended by over 18,000 industry delegates and attracted investments worth over ₹10 lakh crore from across the country

other infrastructure at tourist locations across Odisha.

"Food processing is also one of the focus sectors of our state. In terms of logistics and connectivity, with a 480 km long coastline, and three large ports at Paradip, Gopalpur and Dhamra, Odisha is connected to the global shipping lanes and is the gateway to new markets in South and East Asia," added Deb.

Odisha is also a power-surplus state and has an abundance of water resources, he said.

At least 320 delegates from Kolkata responded and around 70 closed-door (G2B) meetings were held with investment intent in Odisha.

Odisha Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra said the Make in Odisha (MiO) Conclave 2022 organised by the state government from November 30 to December 4 last was attended by more than 18,000 industry delegates and attracted investments worth over ₹10 lakh crore from across the country.

The state, with continuous support from its industry partners, has been able to build a robust industrial infrastructure and a flourishing industry setup.

Odisha is taking further steps for value addition in these sectors. One such initiative is the 'Skilled in Odisha' program, which has become a brand in itself. The state is looking at broad-basing the industrial presence and driving sustainability of the industrial landscape, Mahapatra pointed out.

As many as 20 sectors have been identified under 'Priority and Thrust Sector' categories in the IPR 2022, and the state is ready to host and accommodate all futuristic industrial establishments.

The government, the Chief Secretary said, is also taking pioneering policy measures for promoting green industrial practices and decarbonisation of the manufacturing processes by polluting industries.

'Adhere to Covid protocols at Khandagiri Mela'

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 21: The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Saturday issued a standard operating procedure (SOP) for the organisers of the Khandagiri Mela, which is set to begin January 28.

The fair will be held with full public participation after two years of Covid lull. Keeping in view the mass gathering, the civic body has asked the fair organisers to ensure adherence to the Covid protocols while making seating arrangements for the viewers. The BMC has also asked the deputy commissioner for the southwest zone to ensure all the office-bearers, members, and volunteers of the organising committee are fully vaccinated against Covid-19. The civic body has asked the committees to install adequate number of CCTVs in and around the opera shed for the safety of viewers.



LAST MINUTE PREP: An artisan gives finishing touches to the clay idols of Goddess Saraswati at Kumbhar Sahi in Cuttack, Saturday

DAKOTA ON DISPLAY FROM MARCH 5

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 21: The state government has taken the decision to put former Chief Minister Biju Patnaik's iconic Dakota aircraft for public display at the Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) here from March 5, the birth anniversary of the erstwhile leader which is also celebrated in the state as the Panchayati Raj Diwas.

"City-based Aerospace Research and Development Centre has bagged the contract for the repair and installation of the aircraft at a cost of ₹3 crore and the agency has begun work on the reassembly and installation of the aircraft transported from Kolkata," said a government official familiar with the developments. BPIA director Prasanna Pradhan said, "The repair works are underway at the state government hangar in the airport. Following the repairs, the aircraft will be taken to the allotted space at the airport and then will be reassembled before being installed on a pedestal for display."

The aircraft had been lying at the Kolkata airport for the past 55 years and was transported by truck to the City earlier this month.

BMC's cleanliness drive in full swing

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 21: As a part of the Bhubaneswar First initiative, placemaking and cleanliness programmes are in full swing in the City, with the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) taking a planned and well designed approach to dramatically enhance the appeal of public places.

"The unused places in the City are being converted into usable places for the citizen where people can sit relax and enjoy the beauty of the space," said a BMC official.

The bustling City squares like Rasulgarh, Rupali, Kalpana, Pokhariput, Jaydev Vihar, and Laxmi Sagar roundabouts have been redesigned to give them a posh feel. Areas near Kalinga Ashok hotel, Care Hospital, the park in front of Odisha State Cooperative Bank (OSCB) and few other sites have been renovated with



plantation, fibre-reinforced plastic benches and other designs. Soumya, the denizen who lives near Care hospital said, "This area used to be a sorry sight which every person coming to the hospital witnessed and developed a negative perception towards authorities. Now it looks beautiful with facilities to sit and relax as it looks opulent."

The BCM sweepers and workers are found cleaning areas of Janpath Road, Saheed Nagar and Gangotri Nagar as late as 10 in nights these days. Massive cleanliness drives including disposal of construction and demolition waste was undertaken by the BMC Saturday.

22-yr-old held for Patia rly stn rape

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 21: The Government Railway Police (GRP) Saturday arrested a man who was wanted by the police in connection with the kidnap and rape of minors at Patia railway station here January 17.

The accused identified as Bulu Mallik, 22, is a resident of Padanpur in Banki area of Cuttack.

Following a tip-off, a team of GRP late Friday night carried out a raid at the village of the accused in Banki and arrested him. He was Saturday produced before a local court that sent him to judicial custody.

Police sources said that the accused who fled the spot after committing the crime was roaming in Chandaka and Nandankanan areas for two days. Later, he went to his native place where the cops nabbed him. Meanwhile, the statements of the victims have been recorded under Section 164 of the CrPC.

Earlier, another accused Krushmachandra Mallik was arrested from his residence in Khurda area. Notably, two minor girls were reportedly abducted and raped at Patia railway station here January 17.

Outreach programme held to guide startups

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 21: Swabalambi Odisha, a non-profit outfit, organised Saturday an outreach programme 'Pravartan' to address challenges faced by startups in areas like infrastructure, mentorship, funding opportunities, legal compliance and trademark and copyright. More than 150 startups from different places of the state participated in this one-day program.

The introductory programme discussed solutions to the major challenges faced by startups in terms of funding, product making and service deployment. The program was initiated



FARMERS' CAUSE: Police personnel take an agitating member of Naba Nirman Yuva Chhatra Sangathan into custody as the outfit protests demanding transfer of Jagatsinghpur SP, in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

OP PHOTO

TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE SUPPORT TO SUITABLE STARTUPS, 10 INVESTMENT FIRMS HAVE SHOWN INTEREST IN FUNDING

ated with the aim of providing all facilities under one roof to serve young entrepreneurs coming forward to work towards socio-economic development of the state.

"To provide adequate support to suitable startups, ten investment firms have showed interest in funding and promised to start working on it," said a member of the outfit, who also informed that the program was organised in collaboration with Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), Startup-Odisha and IIT Bhubaneswar.

Start-up Odisha executive chairman Omkar Rai was the chief guest and Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) state head Pradyuman Chowdhury was the guest of honor. Swabalambi Odisha President Baikuntha Raul presided over the program and the chairman of the institute Jadhiv Mishra delivered the vote of thanks.

New protein target found which pancreatic cancer cells leverage to resist therapy: Study

Scientists have found a new protein target, leveraged by pancreatic cancer cells usually to suppress tumours, but here instead to help them evade therapy and, thus, grow more quickly, according to a new study.

Scientists revealed that this is another way in which the most-resistant pancreatic cancer cells defy treatment, the study said.

The international team of researchers was led by University of California San Diego School of Medicine and the Sanford Consortium for Regenerative Medicine, the study said.

Previous research has shown that pancreatic cancer treatment resistance is caused by differing responses to conventional agents, fuelled by the heterogeneity, or diversity, of tumour cells - and in particular, stem cell characteristics that encourage therapy resistance.

In this study, senior author Tannishtha Reya and colleagues investigated how shifting epigenomics, or the multitude of proteins that tell the genome what to do, rather than genomic changes might be driving resistance. Genomic changes are changes specific to the genes themselves.

The paper is published in the journal Nature Communications.



Pancreatic cancer is the third deadliest cancer in the United States, after lung and colorectal, though far less common. It is also among the hardest to effectively treat, with pancreatic cancer stem cells quickly developing resistance to conventional and targeted treatments, such as chemotherapy and emerging immunotherapies. As a result, the 5-year survival rate for people diagnosed with pancreatic cancer is just 10 per cent, the study said.

"Pancreatic cancer stem cells, which are aggressive cancer cells that can resist conventional therapies and drive tumour relapse, rely upon epigenetic regulation to protect themselves and promote survival and growth," said Reya, Columbia University.

"We wanted to identify the underlying tools and mechanisms that cancer stem cells use to better understand treatment resistance - and perhaps how

they might be circumvented," said Reya.

According to the study, Reya and colleagues zeroed in on SMARCD3, a member of the SWI/SNF family of proteins that regulate chromatin, a mixture of DNA and proteins that form chromosomes and are required for stem cell function in development.

But while SWI-SNF subunits often act as tumour suppressors, the researchers found that SMARCD3 was amplified in cancer, notably abundant in pancreatic cancer stem cells and up-regulated or increased in the human disease, the study said.

And when researchers deleted SMARCD3 in models of pancreatic cancer, the loss of the protein reduced the growth of tumours and improved survival, especially in the context of chemotherapy, the study said.

"Importantly, we found that SMARCD3 helps control lipid and fatty acid metabolism, which are associated with therapy resistance and poor prognosis in cancer," said Reya. "Our data suggest that therapy resistant pancreatic cancer cells depend upon SMARCD3 to help ensure a metabolic landscape in which they can avoid anticancer treatments and grow aggressively. That makes SMARCD3 an exciting new target for potential therapies," said Reya.

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Har Pal Apke Saath

Docs perform rare surgery to replant thumb with toe



Sitakanta Barik, a 25-year-old youth from Bhadrak district had lost his 9 cm-long thumb while working in a spinning mill in Tamil Nadu

toe-bone, tendon, blood vessels, nerves, etc were dissected and transplanted in place of the thumb. We joined all corresponding nerves which were earlier dissected. There were eight surgeons in our team and it took almost eight hours of surgery. It is a rare surgery where delicate blood vessels are joined," explained Nayak.



ted to the plastic surgery department for treatment three months ago. A team of eight doctors led by the Head of Plastic Surgery Department Nayak took nearly eight hours to conduct the complex surgery which is said to be the first of its kind in the state. The doctors replanted the thumb with second toe of left leg. The surgery was conducted 10 days ago at the hospital.

"All structures of the second

"It was a rare surgery that we conducted here on the patient, who was mentally disturbed after losing his right thumb. We have crossed 10 days, the danger period, and found the toe, which was transferred from the leg and positioned it on the right hand, was completely normal," said Bibhuti Bhushan Nayak. "I lost my thumb during work and the company owner had taken me to the hospital for treatment. As the thumb is necessary for work, I consulted the doctors at SCB Hospital who suggested me for thumb replant with left leg's long toe," the patient said.

"Now, I am feeling relieved that I can work properly with my reattached finger," he said.



ANNUAL FEST: Dignitaries attending the annual function of Sailabala Women's Higher Secondary School and +2 Cultural & Dramatic Association in Cuttack, Saturday

Two day workshop on crypto currency ends

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 21: Odisha Vigilance has achieved conviction rate up to 77 percent in DA cases in 2022 which was highest in the last decade. The director of state vigilance, YK Jethwa revealed the above fact while addressing the valedictory ceremony of two-day workshop on crypto currencies at State Vigilance Academy here.

The cops participating in the workshop was sensitized on strengthening the investigation and prosecution of disproportionate assets cases.

"In 2022, emphasis was also given to ensure prompt investigations and filing of charge sheets in courts. The disposal rate in 2022 was 122 per cent of registration, which was the highest in a decade," added Jethwa.

Member of Odisha Lokayukta and former DGP, RP Sharma who graced the occasion as the chief guest said that the workshop would go a long way in raising the competence of its members in investigation and prosecution skills. This in turn was essential to effectively prosecute corrupt public servants and help eradicate corruption from society.

PwD students flown to Rourkela for hockey WC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Jan 21: It was a moment of joy for sixteen differently abled students from Bhubaneswar when they got the opportunity to watch World Cup hockey matches live at the Birsu Munda Hockey Stadium in Rourkela Friday.

The students, who came from various academic institutions of the City, were excited to experience matches of the marquee international tournament along with other spectators as it was also their first visit to the Steel City. "They have expressed their gratitude to the state government and Chief Minister for extending them this privilege, said a department official.

Earlier Friday, the students were taken to Rourkela from Bhubaneswar by flight under the supervision of additional secretaries Dipak Routray and Sonia Behera from the Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities department (SSEPD). The Sundargarh district administration gave them a warm welcome on their arrival at the Rourkela airport, from where they were taken in a special bus to the stadium.

"The newly built stadium includes disabled friendly features. Seats were reserved earlier for the students at the stadium to enable a hassle free viewing of the matches. They were elated for hav-



The students were taken to Rourkela by flight and Sundargarh district administration gave them a warm welcome on their arrival at Rourkela airport, from where they were taken in a special bus to the stadium

ing the opportunity to witness their favourite international hockey stars in action from a close proximity," said a department official. The students, who were accompanied by their guardians as well as officials from the Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities department (SSEPD), belonged to the Bhubaneswar-based Shree Harsha Memorial School for Deaf and

Mute, State Institute For Empowerment of Persons With Disabilities (SIEP), Jewels International Chetna Institute for Intellectual Disabilities and National Career Service Centre for Differently Abled (NCSA) during the latter's visit to Rourkela to watch the School and Mass Education department additional secretary Bhairab Singh Patel, Sundargarh DSSO Ashok Kumar Habadasingh and other officials were present at the airport to receive and welcome the visiting students.

Dense fog likely in 11 districts

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 21: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast dense fog at one or two places over the districts of Angul, Dhenkanal, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khordha, Kandhamal, Nayagarh, Ganjam, Rayagada and

Koraput during the next 24 hours. The weather agency has issued 'yellow warning' for these districts.

Similarly, shallow and moderate fog is very likely to occur at a few places over the districts of Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Ganjam, Gajapati, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Bhadrak, Angul,

Dhenkanal, Sundargarh, Deogarh, Keonjhar, Sambalpur, Kandhamal, Kalahandi, Bolangir, Koraput and Rayagada over the next 24 hours, the IMD said in its bulletin.

Besides, dry weather is very likely to prevail over the districts of Odisha during the next 24 hours, the IMD added.

Rare dinosaur nests, eggs found in Narmada valley

Continued from P1

The eggs, which ranged between 15 cm and 17 cm in diameter, likely belonged to a number of titanosaur species.

"During the field investigations carried out between 2017 and 2020, we found extensive hatcheries of dinosaurs in Bagh and Kukshi areas in Dhar District, MP, notably from the villages Akhada, Dholiya Raipuria, Jhaba, Jamniapura, and Padlya," the researchers said.

They said the region falls between the eastern most Lameta exposures at Jabalpur in upper Narmada in valley central India and Balasinor in the west in lower Narmada valley in western central India.



PROJECTS INFO: CMC Commissioner Nikhil Pavan Kalyan taking stock of various projects in Cuttack, Saturday

Drinking water projects worth ₹1,287cr get nod

Continued from P1

The Development Commissioner said 15,711 teaching and non-teaching employees will get such enhanced financial benefits and the government has to bear additional financial burden of Rs 290crore per annum.

The Cabinet has also decided to make an amendment to the Odisha State Commission for Backward Classes (OSCBC) Act, 1993 to include 22 castes in Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) list.

Moreover, the Cabinet has also approved the proposal for allotment of 2 acres of land in favour of Bagchi-Sri Shankara Cancer Care Centre and Research Institute (BSSCCI) for construction of a rest house for accommodation of cancer patients.

Does Covid really make you vulnerable to infections?

Over the past month or two, many northern hemisphere countries including the US and the UK have seen a large wave of respiratory viral infections. These include RSV (respiratory syncytial virus), flu and Covid in all ages, as well as bacterial infections such as strep A in children.

Sometimes these infections can be very serious. The UK has seen a huge surge in hospital admissions during winter, putting the health service under further stress.

This had led some to question whether Covid damages our immune systems, leaving those who have been infected more vulnerable to other infectious diseases like the flu.

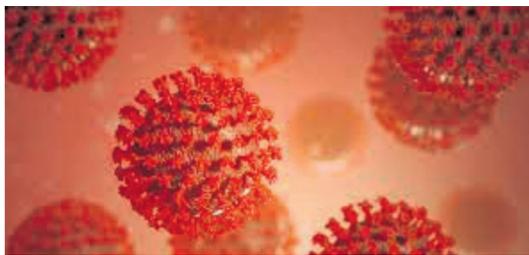
Another idea put forward to explain the surge in respiratory viruses is that children "missed out" on common childhood infections during the height of the pandemic, and

that this has left them more vulnerable to these infections now owing to an "immunity debt". But how credible are these explanations?

Covid and our immune systems The human immune system has evolved to deal with a host of different infections. It has a variety of weapons it can deploy which work together not only to eradicate infectious agents, but also to remember them for a more rapid and tailored response upon any subsequent encounter.

Likewise, many infectious agents have developed tricks to try to evade our immune system. For example, a parasite called Schistosoma mansoni disguises itself to avoid the immune system detecting it.

SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, similarly has tricks up its sleeve. Like many other viruses, it's been shown to evade host immunity, particularly newer variants



SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, similarly has tricks up its sleeve. Like many other viruses, it's been shown to evade host immunity, particularly newer variants

been shown to evade host immunity, particularly newer variants. Recent studies showed it can interfere with immune cells' ability to detect it within cells. This is concerning, but it's not clear that such changes impact immunity to other infections.

Short-lived changes in a person's immune defences are normal when

they've been exposed to an infection. Several studies have now shown that, in response to SARS-CoV-2, specialised white blood cells called lymphocytes grow in number. These lymphocytes also display changes in their features typical of cell activation, such as changes in surface proteins. Such changes may sound dramatic to the non-expert if taken out of context (called "ascertainment bias"). But they're normal and merely indicate that the immune system is working as it should. Research has confirmed that, for most people, the immune system regains balance following recovery.

Some exceptions SARS-CoV-2, like many viruses, doesn't affect everyone equally. We've known for some time that certain groups, including older people and those with underlying health complications such as diabetes or obe-

khwabon kon mana lenge' from Kai Po Che, 'naina da kya kasoor' from Anhadhuh, Nayan Tarse, Pitoor mera from Pitoor, Iktaara from Wake Up Sid, Daryaa from Manmarziyaan, Shaikh and Balma Ghode Pe Kyun Sawaar Hai from Qala.

Heading into its second week, .FEST is expected to get only bigger and better in the coming days. Day 8, January 22, will host the theme 'Suhana Safar', with classical and legendary musicians like Udit Narayan, Alka Yagnik and Satyajee Jena taking the stage for their solo performances.



Amit Trivedi soothes crowd with his voice

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 21: The day seventh day of .Fest witnessed enthralling performances by state and national level singers including Swayam Padhi and Amit Trivedi.

Swayam Padhi started the evening with some evergreen Odia and Hindi songs.

After which singer and composer Amit Trivedi started his performance with his song Namu Namu from the movie Kedarnath. Then Amit went on to sing some memorable songs of his like 'roothe

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BJP tries lunch politics to win votes in Ganjam

Residents claim that the saffron party has launched early preparations as the elections may be held ahead of the schedule in state

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Jan 21: BJP leaders and Union ministers have taken to lunch politics to reach out to the public in Ganjam district as 2024 elections draw nearer.

The BJP leaders and Union ministers during their visit to the district are visiting houses of the poor and the Dalit people and having breakfast and lunch with them. This has sparked intense discussion in the political circles.

Questions are doing the rounds whether the move by the saffron party leaders will pay off while leaders of other political parties have termed it as a political stunt and hypocrisy. Leaders of other political parties said that the BJP leaders have adopted the tactics to win votes as the general election is scheduled for 2024.

Meanwhile, BJP has set its eye on the Aska and Berhampur Lok Sabha segments for the 2024 elections. The saffron party hopes to win these two Lok Sabha seats as its vote share increased here in 2019 in comparison to 2014 elections.

Residents claim that the saffron party has launched early preparations as there is every possibility that the elections may be held ahead of the schedule.

Reports said that the then BJP National President Amit Shah had come to Berhampur on a one-day visit July 4, 2017 ahead of the 2019 elections and attended a party pro-



The state government led by the BJD has been attaching utmost priority to Mission Shakti and women's welfare and taking a number of steps to make them self-reliant

To counter the BJD strategy, BJP is mainly targeting the women and young voters and trying to attract them into party fold, analysts said

Minister of State for Railways and Textile Darshana Jordosh is regularly touring the district with an eye on 2024 elections. She is in charge of Berhampur and Aska Lok Sabha segments. She also undertook a three-day tour of the Berhampur Lok Sabha segment starting from January 9.

She attended various party programmes in Gopalpur on the last leg of her tour January 11 and visited the house of a fisherwoman Kameshwari and had lunch with her. Darshana during her visit highlighted about the woman empowerment initiatives and the Prime Minister's Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana. Onlookers claimed that this was an attempt by her to win the support of women voters.

Two more senior leaders of BJP Mahila Morcha Sanjita Dogra and Madhavi Bhuta had also visited the Berhampur and Aska Lok Sabha segments before Darshana and mainly sensitised the women voters about the welfare schemes of the Centre.

Darshana during her visit attended a special programme with the newly enlisted young voters at Golanthara in Ganjam district. Therefore it is presumed that BJP which has started preparations for 2024 elections is mainly targeting the women and young voters and trying to attract them into party fold.

The state government led by the BJD has been attaching utmost priority to Mission Shakti and women's welfare and taking a number of steps to make them self-reliant. The saffron party is trying to counter the BJD plan and is trying to win over the support of the women voters, political analysts said.

gramme at Hugulapata under Gopalpur Assembly segment near the Silk City. There he visited the house of Naveen Swain, a poor street vendor in the area and had lunch with him in his dilapidated house.

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and other party leaders also joined him during the lunch. The BJP party leaders also gave away Rs 1 lakh financial assistance to Naveen after the return of Shah. This gave rise to politics in the area as BJD leaders later claimed that Naveen was a party worker of the state's ruling party.

Five years later, the Union



SCINTILLATING SHOW: Girl students of Kendriya Vidyalaya performed a dance in their annual function in Boudh, Saturday

OP PHOTO

Boudh-Kiakata bridge turns into death trap

POST NEWS NETWORK

Boudh, Jan 21: The Mahanadi bridge connecting Boudh town with Kiakata has turned into a death trap. A host of projects have been taken up for faster development and beautification of Boudh town. But the bridge, a lifeline for the district's residents, is in a very bad shape with potholes, big and small, appearing throughout its length.

After the construction of this bridge, direct communication was established among western, southern and eastern parts of the state. Then, the newly built two-kilome-

tre long bridge was also touted as the second longest across Mahanadi.

With road works continuing in full swing along Cuttack-Sambalpur National Highway, over 5,000 vehicles are plying on the Boudh-Kiakata bridge on a daily basis.

Despite repeated repair works taken up by the National Highways wing, potholes are reappearing on the bridge.

Potholes are causing many mishaps on the bridge frequently. The locals have demanded quick steps to repair the potholes and exposed iron rods on the bridge endangering the lives of commuters.

Farmer writes to DC to let him grow ganja

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, Jan 21: Nilambar Biswal, a farmer from Bhaludunguri in Khaprakhol area of this district, wrote to Bolangir Collector Friday seeking permission for cultivating ganja on his farmland. He allegedly took to this out of the ordinary move because he didn't get the token for selling required amount of paddy at mandi.

Biswal had registered himself in the local cooperative society for selling paddy at mandi as he had cultivated paddy on 15 acres of his farmland during this Kharif season. The cooperative society intentionally did not register around half area of the cultivated farmland for the purpose of selling paddy, due to which the permitted quantity of paddy to be sold with the token fell short for him, he alleged.

Police driver held for rape, extortion of Facebook friend

POST NEWS NETWORK



POST NEWS NETWORK

Nilagiri, Jan 21: A police driver was arrested on charges of raping a woman, whom he befriended on Facebook, after making her unconscious with sedative-laced drinks and later looting her of lakhs by threatening to make her obscene videos and photographs viral under this police limits in Balasore district, police said.

The accused was identified as Goutam Mahal, 30, a driver of national highway police patrolling vehicle in Simulia area near Nilagiri in Balasore district. The survivor, a native of Jajpur district is married in Nilagiri area and is mother of a four year

old girl. The incident has spread shockwaves in the area.

Goutam befriended the woman through Facebook, three years back. Their friendship grew over the years but Goutam once gave the woman a sedative laced drink and made her unconscious. Taking advantage of the situation, he raped her and clicked her obscene photographs and videos on his mobile phone.

Later, he threatened the woman of making the videos and photographs viral and demanded money from her. Left with no option, she gave Rs 1.20 lakh to Goutam without the knowledge of her husband. However, that failed to deter Goutam as he along with another friend demanded more money from her while repeatedly threatening to make the obscene videos and photographs viral.

Frustrated, the survivor lodged a written complaint at the Nilagiri police station. Friday, Nilagiri police registered a case and arrested the accused youth. A medical examination was conducted on Goutam and the survivor before producing the former in court.

Aspiring model ends life over financial scarcity

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Jan 21: An aspiring model committed suicide by hanging due to alleged financial scarcity at her residence at second lane, Jagannath Vihar under Bada Bazaar police limits in Silk City, Friday night, police said Saturday.

The deceased was identified as Anika Mohapatra, 17, a Plus II student and daughter of Suprava Mohapatra and late Bishnu Prasad Mohapatra in the area. Police registered a case of unnatural death and handed over the body to her family after conducting post-mortem at MKCG Medical College and Hospital here. Preliminary inquiries indicated that she took the ex-

treme step due to constant financial scarcity plaguing her family.

The matter came to the fore when Anika's mother went to call her for dinner when she was in her bedroom. She knocked at the door but Anika did not respond. She then pushed the door and went inside to find her daughter hanging with her scarf. Hoping Anika might be alive, her mother with help of neighbours rushed her to MKCG Medical College and Hospital where doctors pronounced her brought dead.

Police said that Anika always dreamt of becoming a model and neglected her studies. This also resulted in frequent bickering between the woman and her daughter.

Man awarded life term for fratricide

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, Jan 21: A local court Thursday sentenced a man to life imprisonment after convicting him for the 2017 murder of his younger brother.

The convict was identified as Rohit Nayak, 46, of Kumurisingha village under Angul police limits. He was convicted for the murder of his younger brother Rajendra Nayak over land related dispute in the village. The additional district and sessions judge Ranjita Jyotishi also slapped a penalty of Rs 10,000 on Nayak, apart from the punishment.

In default, Rohit has to undergo additional one year of rigorous imprisonment. The judge passed the order



after examining the statements recorded by 18 witnesses, additional public prosecutors Tapas Ranjan Mishra and Biswajit Baral, who pleaded the matter for the state government said.

Sources said that the murder took place March 7, 2017. The incident oc-

curred when Rohit was constructing his house by bringing house construction materials in a truck from Boida. Rajendra opposed the construction which led to dispute between the siblings.

The dispute was resolved after the village elders intervened in the matter. Later, when Rohit once again took up house construction works, he was again opposed by Rajendra.

Enraged, Rohit hit Rajendra on his chest and shoulders with a crowbar.

Rajendra died on the spot after bleeding profusely. Police arrested Rohit and produced him in the court after Rajendra's wife Runubala Mohapatra lodged a complaint in the Angul police station.

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Name & Address of Borrower, Co-Aplicants / Guarantors:	Amount Due
Borrower: Mirza Toraf Baig, S/o.: Late Yasin Baig, At/PO.: Sukinda, Dist.: Jajpur, PIN - 755018/ Co-Aplicants/Guarantors: 1) Swaleha Tabssum, 2) Mr. Rabindra Das, S/o.: Ram Das, Both are At/PO.: Sukinda, Dist.: Jajpur, PIN - 755018	₹ 10,11,544.04 as on 01.07.2021 with further interest, Cost and expenses
Property No.1: Residential Property in the name of Mirza Toraf Baig , at Mouza: Nijagarh, Khata No.: 824/426 (Original Khata No.: 794), Plot No.: 1013/3697 (Original Plot No.: 1013/2999), Area: Ac.0.045 Dec., Homestead Land, At/PO./Tahasil: Sukinda, Dist.: Jajpur, Bounded by North: Liakat Ali Khan, South: Soraf Baig, East: Anisar Ali Khan, West: Road Type of Possession: Symbolic / Reserve Price: ₹15,87,000/- / Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹1,58,700/-	

KESHADURAPAL BRANCH, Dist.: Keonjhar,
Ph.: 9798394660, Email: ubin0546267@unionbankofindia.bank

Name & Address of Borrower/Co-Aplicant/Guarantor:	Amount Due
Borrower / M/s. Rath Electronics, Prop.: Dillip Kumar Rath, S/o.: Late Nilamani Rath, Co-Aplicant/Guarantor: Rajib Kumar Rath, Both are At/PO.: Keshadurapal, PS.: Ghasipura, Dist.: Keonjhar, PIN - 758025	₹ 41,67,124.91 as on 05.01.2022 with further interest, Cost and expenses
Property No. 2: Residential Property in the name of Dillip Kumar Rath over Plot No.: 410/2783, Khata No.: 654/131, Area: Ac.0.10 Dec., Gharabari, PO./PS./Tahasil: Ghasipura, Mouza: Keshadurapal, Dist.: Keonjhar, Bounded by North: Road, South: Sanjay Rath Type of Possession: Symbolic / Reserve Price: ₹50,90,000/- / Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹5,09,000/-	

BALASORE BRANCH-1, Plot No.: 810, Vivekananda Marg, Dist.: Balasore,
Ph. No.: 9082026412, Email: balasore@unionbankofindia.bank

Name & Address of Borrower / Guarantors:	Amount Due
Borrower: Dillip Kumar Giri, At: Mukulishpur, Kachuadi, Kamarda, Balasore-756035/ Guarantors: 1) Amulya Kumar Das, S/o.: Late Ramahari Das, At/PO.: Jhadpimpal, PS.: Jaleswar, Dist.: Balasore, PIN - 756026, 2) Pradeep Kumar Giri, At: Mukulishpur, Kachuadi, Kamarda, Balasore-756035	₹ 19,12,550.71 as on 30.06.2022 with further interest, Cost and expenses
Property No. 3: All that Part & Parcel of the Vacant Land consisting of Khata No.: 228/437, Plot No.: 725/1800, Gharabari, Area: Ac.0.08dec., Mutation Khata No.: 199/820, Plot No.: 725/1800, sarad, Area: Ac.0.08 Dec., M.S Khata No.: 115, Plot No.: 725, sarad, Area: Ac.0.08 Dec. out of Ac.0.85 Dec., Bounded by North: Plot No.: 717 & 724, South: Approach Road, East: Amarendra Chandra Debagoswami, West: Dilip Kumar Giri & others, Situated at Karanjia, PS: Balasore Town, Tahasil: Remuna, Dist: Balasore. Type of Possession: Symbolic / Reserve Price: ₹24,00,000/- / Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹2,40,000/-	

UDALA BRANCH, Dist.: Mayurbhanj,
Ph. No.: 06795-232004, Email: ubin0825549@unionbankofindia.bank

Name & Address of Borrower/Co-Aplicants/Guarantors:	Amount Due
Borrower: M/s. Maa Ambika Store, Prop.: Rakesh Kumar Khandelwal, At: Ward No.: 5, Mukunda Bazar, Udala (NAC), Dist.: Mayurbhanj, PIN - 757041/ Co-Aplicants/Guarantors: 1) Pinkesh Khandelwal, S/o.: Shankarlal Khandelwal, 2) Shankarlal Khandelwal, S/o.: Ramji Khandelwal, Both are At: Ward No.: 5, Mukunda Bazar, Udala (NAC), Dist.: Mayurbhanj, PIN - 757041	₹ 11,67,999.34 as on 22.02.2022 with further interest, Cost and expenses
Property No. 4: All that part of the property consisting of property of (1) Land and Building at Mouza: Udala Town Unit-9 (Jirida), Khata No.: 167/247, Plot No.: 541/951/1028/1146, Area: Ac.0.02 Dec., owned by Pinkesh Khandelwal , 2) Land and Building at Mouza: Udala Town Unit-9 (Jirida), Khata No.: 167/153, Plot No.: 541/951/1028, Area: Ac.0.02 Dec., owned by Shankarlal Khandelwal , Bounded by North: Mr. Gardhan Lal Khandelwal, South: Mr. Arka Narayan Manna, East: Road, West: Vacant Land Type of Possession: Symbolic / Reserve Price: ₹13,33,000/- / Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹1,33,300/-	

DHAMARA BRANCH, Dhamara, Dist.: Bhadrak,
Ph.: 8050030050, Email : ubin0814121@unionbankofindia.bank

Name & Address of Borrower/ Co-Aplicant / Guarantor:	Amount Due
Borrower : Sahadev Mandal, At/P.O.: Dosinga, Via: Dhamara, Dist.: Bhadrak, PIN-756171 / Co-Aplicant/Guarantor: Gautam Kumar Das, S/o: Pratul Das, At: Saompatia, P.O.: Dosinga, Via: Dhamara, Dist.: Bhadrak, PIN-756171	₹ 6,49,215/- as on 31.12.2014 with further interest, Cost and expenses
Property No.5: All that part and parcel of the Land and Building in Khata No.: 125/257, Plot No.: 277741, in an Area: Ac.0.05 Dec. & Plot No.: 277761 in Area: Ac.0.05 Dec. and Plot No.: 277761 in an Area: Ac.0.05 Dec., At: Pradyut Nagar, P.O.: Dosinga, Via: Dhamara, Dist.: Bhadrak in the name of Sahadev Mandal , Bounded by East: Pond, West: Subala Chandra Das, North: Road, South: Sachin Mandal Type of Possession: Symbolic / Reserve Price: ₹20,14,000/- / Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹2,01,400/-	

DJUBURI BRANCH - 2, Dist.: Jajpur,
Ph. No.: 9798394660, Email: ubin0546267@unionbankofindia.bank

Name & Address of Borrower / Co-Aplicant / Guarantor:	Amount Due
Borrower: M/s. SM Electronics, Prop.: Shankar Kumar Das, At: Duburi, Kalinga Nagar, PS.: Ghasipura, Dist.: Jajpur, PIN - 755026 / Co-Aplicant / Guarantor : Mrs. Pravati Das, W/o.: Shankar Kumar Das, At: Sukinda, Near Jagannath Temple, PO.: Sukinda, Dist.: Jajpur - 755018	₹ 5,70,828/- as on 04.10.2018 with further interest, Cost and expenses
Property No. 6: Residential Property in the name of Mr. Shankar Kumar Das over Khata No.: 564/114, 1) Plot No.: 2127/3130, Area: Ac.0.12 Dec., 2) Plot No.: 2128/3131, Area: Ac.0.12 Dec., Total Area: Ac.0.24 Dec. , Mouza: Madhapur, PS.: Sukinda - 103, Tahasil: Sukinda - 103, Dist.: Jajpur, Bounded by North: Road, South: Laxman Das, East: Salya Narayan Mahapatra, West: Pravati Das Type of Possession: Symbolic / Reserve Price: ₹19,70,000/- / Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹1,97,000/-	

BID INCREMENT AMOUNT FOR EACH PROPERTY : ₹10,000/-
DATE & TIME OF E-AUCTION : 23.02.2023 between 01:00 P.M. to 05:00 P.M.
(with 10 minutes unlimited auto extension), e-Auction Website : www.mstcecommerce.com
LAST DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF EMD : On or before the commencement of E-Auction

For Registration and Login and Bidding Rules visit:
<https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp>
For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in <https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in/english/tender/viewallauction.aspx>

Place : Balasore
Date: 21.01.2023
Sd/- Authorized Officer
Union Bank of India



Always do what you know to be the best even if it is the most difficult thing to do.

THE MOTHER



Pageantry & Drama

Governance is defined as the system by which an organisation is controlled and operates, and the mechanisms by which it, and its people, are held to account. Ethics, risk management, compliance and administration are all elements of governance. 'Good governance' is said to have eight characteristics. It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. "It assures that corruption is minimised, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society." The most important function of government is governance and in fortunate nations, this is often good governance.

ASER is a survey on education conducted since 2005. This year it covered 616 rural districts (which is more than 85 per cent of the total) and engaged 6.9 lakh children in the age group of 3 to 16. The survey is conducted by over 27,000 volunteers. It is simple and assesses three things: enrolment, reading ability and maths skill. Students are given a single sheet of paper with four levels of text: first, letters of the alphabet, second, common words, third, a short paragraph consisting of four easy sentences, fourth a longer text containing slightly more complex vocabulary.

In Class 3, children are usually about 8 years old. ASER's survey reveals that the number of Class 3 children who can read a text from Class 2 is 20 per cent. Meaning that four out of five children cannot read the text. The number has fallen from 27 per cent in 2018. In 2014 the figure had been 23 per cent, meaning that learning levels today are worse than they were a decade ago. The decline is across private and government schools. The number of children in Class 5 who could read a Class 2 text was 48 per cent in 2014, 50 per cent in 2018 and is now 42 per cent.

In 2014, the proportion of children in Class 3 who could do subtraction was 25 per cent (meaning that 3 out of 4 children did not know how to do 'this minus this equals to'). In 2018 the number who could subtract rose to 28 per cent. Today it has fallen to 25 per cent again. Similarly, of the students of Class 5, who are about 10 years old, the number that could do simple division was 26 per cent in 2014, 27 per cent in 2018 and has fallen again to 25 per cent. If our children cannot read and cannot do simple maths, what kind of skills will they acquire as grownups? In Bangalore's infotech companies, which together have some 15 lakh employees, nine out of ten engineers who apply for jobs are rejected, not because the position is filled but because they do not have the skills. We should not be surprised that a nation whose children are in school but illiterate also has engineers who are barely literate. It's not their fault.

We can acknowledge that the problem is not new. But we cannot avoid the reality that the problem is getting worse. We have regressed 10 years on an issue where we were already in bad shape compared to the rest of the world. Of course COVID has exacerbated the problem. A survey a few months ago, showed that during the pandemic only 8 per cent of rural students studied online regularly. Most studied sometimes, and one in three students did not study at all. The ASER study shows another alarming thing. For the first time, government schools have seen an increase in children enrolled. This has gone from 73 per cent in 2006 to 65 per cent in 2018 and back to 72 per cent today. Why? Have government schools suddenly become more attractive than private schools? No. The answer is that crores of Indian families have become poorer and can no longer afford private education for their children. The government's solution is to hide the poor when it conducts its G20 gatherings.

We can only solve problems after we acknowledge that they exist. When was the last time we heard this government speaking of the disaster in primary education, rather than Ganga cruises and cheetahs? Less money, Rs 88,000 crore, was spent by the Union government on education in its last budget than has been allocated to the bullet train. This sort of thing is happening across the board. According to the World Bank's figures, India's spending on health has gone from 3.7 per cent of GDP in 2013 to 3 per cent today.

In another nation, the problems that get acknowledged then begin to be solved. Here the fact is that the government has given up. It knows or is convinced that it cannot solve the issue of education and health and has no idea how to solve it. The reason is that solving problems of this magnitude require governance, proper, hard, everyday governance. Inaugurations, fancy dress and speeches do not solve such problems.

Urban unemployment in December was 10 per cent. This is about three times what it was a few years ago. Employment in agriculture, which had been reducing all these decades, increased as people with no work in manufacturing and services returned to farms. This is a fact and the data comes from the government itself. That it is not being held to account for it is also a fact.

Getting our children educated so that they live fulfilling lives and can compete with the world's children is good governance. The rest is pageantry and drama.



Aakar Patel

The most important function of government is governance and in fortunate nations, this is often good governance



Malay Mishra

IT IS NOW EVIDENT THAT A MAJOR AXIS IS DEVELOPING AROUND THREE DICTATORIAL REGIMES, CHINA, RUSSIA AND IRAN

FOCUS GEOPOLITICS

IRAN, CHINA & THE WORLD



In the fight of democracy against autocracy which the West has taken upon as a challenge, it is clear where India's options lie, lest it slides into what John Keane calls a 'democide'

In a riveting, yet not so unexpected, development the Iranian clerical autocracy, headed by the Ali Khamenei-Ebrahim Reisi combine, relaxed the rules of hijab and disbanded the morality or 'culture' police in early December last year. The move was ostensibly a reactionary step to counter pressures, internal and external, arising out of the huge protests which had snowballed following the Sept 16 death of the 22-year old Kurdish-Iranian national Mahsa Amini in the custody of the 'culture' police for improperly wearing the hijab. The continuing nationwide protests, led mostly by women and student groups, were soon joined by the bazaar, oil and steel workers, farmers, intellectuals, journalists and activists, and extended to the Iranian diaspora making foreign governments speak out against the unjust application of clerical laws and massive human rights violations on a population suffering theocracy for over 40 years. The UN in a recent ruling (11 Jan 2023) called out Iran for "weaponising the death penalty to crush dissent," and condemned its execution of protesters without due process as amounting to state-sanctioned killing. Human rights experts estimate that at least 470 demonstrators were killed until the end of December and over 18,000 arrested over trumped-up charges. The Iran Human Rights organisation reported that at least 62 journalists were behind bars.

I distinctly remember the day I alighted on Tehran's airport to take up my duties in the Indian mission where eventually I spent a good three and half year of my diplomatic life. That was the mid-nineties where Iran was a bewildered nation still suffering from the pangs of the Islamic Revolution of 1979, the third revolution in a row after the constitutional revolution of 1905 (until 1911) and dictatorial rule of the two Shahs (Reza Shah and his son Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi from 1921-79, the latter ousted from Iran with the arrival of Imam Khomeini from Paris in February 1979). There was then an anxiety which had erupted time and again in street

protests, of which the major ones were to come in 2009, 2017 and 2019. The first, called the "Green Movement" protesting the rigged election and bringing to power of the hard line President Ahmadinejad continued for over a year while the other two against food and fuel price rises were quickly suppressed. However, this time the protests for more than three months have shown no sign of abatement and have been compared to the 'Arab Spring' of 2011. People this time all united under the banner of "Women, Life and Liberty" and held placards of "Down with the Revolution. Khamenei Go." Even the sister of Khamenei joined the protesters in calling upon the Supreme Leader to quit office. Khamenei has talked of 'a foreign hand', an euphemism for intrusion into Iranian affairs by the Americans and Zionists (Israel). But his alarms sound far from credible. On the other hand, there is a general thinking among experts as to why Washington is not taking a forward position and imposing heavier sanctions on the Iranian regime and disassociating completely from the nuclear talks for its rampant human rights violations and egregious subversion of the rule of law.

The criticality of the situation has been further augmented with Iran's withdrawal from the nuclear talks in May last year with its rejection of IAEA to open its nuclear processing sites and leaning closer to Russia and China. It is now well known that Iranian drones are being used in the Ukraine war leading to consequential defeats for the Ukrainian army and severe damage to its urban infrastructure and power plants. Furthermore, Iran and China have signed multiple agreements for oil supplies and infrastructure building to secure Iran's joining solidly with the Belt and Road Initiative.

While such geo-political tensions continue in the Middle East, at the far end of the continent a global power has been proceeding through extremely hard times. With a declining population and shrinking economy, an annual growth rate of 3%, the first since 50 years except for 2020, China has been desperately calculating all options to boost its economy. With this in mind President Xi Jinping sent his Vice Premier Hu Li to the World Economic Forum at Davos to mobilise foreign investors to return to China on the specious ground of Xi's 'common prosperity' programme which was originally intended to flatten the rich and bring prosperity to the poorer segments of the economy. Liu tried to convince international companies that Iran was still business and investment friendly.

On December 7, after weeks of street protests by university stu-

dents in Beijing, Shanghai, and other metros against the 3-year-long regime of severe COVID restrictions, the Chinese government in an U-turn abruptly dropped its "Zero COVID Policy" which Xi had proudly flaunted at the 20th CCP meeting, resulting in millions of deaths and infections with mortuaries unable to find places for the dead. Two days later, Chinese troops attempted to encroach upon Indian territory in the Tawang region of Arunachal Pradesh, a move which was condemned by the US while stoutly defended by Indian soldiers. Having achieved its limited goal of pushing back Indian forces 1000 sq. km into Indian territory in the Ladakh sector, the Chinese would like to keep India under constant pressure while claiming their "historical right" to Arunachal. India-China political relations continue to take a nosedive aided by the Indian government's rhetoric of "no part of Indian territory has been ever occupied by China."

This could be an opportunity for India to seize. The eyes and hopes of the West are now pinned on India for a reset in the Asian continent and Pacific as China is further alienated along with Russia. India should leverage its G20 Presidency for global good while vying for leadership in the region. In his message to the Global South virtual meeting, attended by 134 nations out of 146 members of the G-77 on the side-lines of G20, PM Modi emphasised on the Global South being "the voice of the future" while admitting that the world had entered a prolonged period of crisis and uncertainty. Added to that, it is now evident that a major axis is now developing around three dictatorial regimes, China, Russia and Iran, all three engaged in internal and external conflicts which can deepen the cleavages of global politics. In the fight of democracy against autocracy which the West has taken upon as a challenge, it is clear where India's options lie, lest it slides into what John Keane calls a "democide."

The writer is a retired diplomat. Views are personal.

SPECTRUM EDUCATION

The Taliban cannot defeat women

In the weeks since the Taliban's December 2022 decree banning young women from attending university, Afghans have shown that they will not take this latest outrage lying down. Brave female students have launched a campaign of resistance - risking beatings, arrest, or worse - and their male counterparts (and many professors) have shown solidarity by walking out of their exams.

As much as the Taliban tries to crush girls' and women's rights, they are unlikely to achieve a final "victory." Afghan girls and women enjoyed a right to education in the years prior to the Taliban's return to power in 2021, and now neither intimidation nor prison sentences will silence them. They have experienced what it is to be free, and they will not accept the alternative.

The Taliban have already been warned that if they exclude women from work performed by NGOs providing food and health care, these organisations will have no choice but to leave the country - a message reinforced this week by UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed. But another way to effect change is to threaten the Taliban regime with the full force of international law. The Taliban's brutal and inhumane treatment of

women and girls warrants investigation by an international tribunal. The regime is clearly in breach of the international conventions dealing with children's and women's rights to which it has agreed. No other country in the world bars women and girls from receiving an education, and no other country has such draconian forms of state-led gender persecution.

I have spoken to many Afghan students in my capacity as UN Special Envoy for Global Education, and words cannot capture the frustration they feel. The world's poorest and most vulnerable children know that they are now shouldering the heaviest burden in the global fight against one of the greatest injustices of all - the denial of girls' and women's rights. Afghan girls have been denied access to schools, banned from public spaces, prevented from travelling without a male escort, and forced to wear burqas that cover them from head to toe.

The university clampdown has been in the offing for some time. After the Taliban takeover in 2021, universities introduced gender-segregated classrooms and entrances, and declared that female students could be taught only by women professors or old men. Then, in October 2022, the Taliban issued sweeping

restrictions on the subjects that women were permitted to study. Veterinary science, engineering, economics, journalism, and agriculture were all deemed off limits.

But the authorities have been sending mixed signals, which suggests that the regime is not united behind the new restrictions. For example, while thousands of girls and women were allowed to sit for university entrance exams three months ago, that decision was soon followed by one barring them from matriculating. This likely speaks to a tension between the religious leadership and an education ministry that would prefer to see girls in the classroom rather than sitting at home.

Divisions within the regime are also reflected in the unevenness of policy implementation. In some parts of the country, education is continuing underground or in home schools, with little resistance from the authorities, and in other areas, girls are still allowed to attend regular schools, in open defiance of the Taliban's injunctions. One can also infer internal fissures from the ban on women NGO workers, a policy that the minister of public health claims does not apply to the health sector.

These examples all suggest that the authorities are not legislating

from a position of strength. Rather, they are acting out of fear of women's empowerment. After all, there is no other credible justification for such policies. Islam encourages education, and all of Afghanistan's neighbours offer schooling for girls. They understand that girls' education is not only in line with Islamic teaching but also essential to economic prosperity.

Moreover, Afghanistan itself has a history of benefiting from girls' education. The country's own past shows that if the Taliban continue down the road of repression, Afghans will have only half the doctors, nurses, and teachers they need. And if half of Afghanistan's human capital has been squandered, the economy, which desperately needs to be rebuilt, will remain among the worst-performing in the world. The Taliban's policy on girls' and women's education represents neither the real Afghanistan nor the true Islam. It is urgent that the international community, and especially the Muslim world, come together to support young Afghan women as they stand up for their rights.

Gordon Brown is a former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Yasmine Sherif is Director of Education Cannot Wait. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

WISDOM CORNER

The true secret of happiness lies in taking a genuine interest in all the details of daily life. WILLIAM MORRIS

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched - they must be felt with the heart. HELEN KELLER

Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope. MAYA ANGELOU

WORDSWORTH

Fawn

The verb fawn is not complimentary. Dictionaries define it as making a servile display of flattery or affection. The Dublin singer-songwriter James Vincent McMorrow had critics fawning over him when he released his debut album in 2011 (Daily Mirror, 3 Jan. 2014). It didn't start out like that. A thousand years ago it was applied only to dogs, who showed their delight by whining or wagging their tails. The word is Old English, from fægen, to rejoice or be glad. It was a special case of fain, to be glad or pleased, which went out of use in the sixteenth century, leaving the adjective, which itself is now obsolete. An early example of adjective fain is from the ballad of Lord Randal: "For I am weary with hunting and fain would lie down", meaning that he would be very pleased to be able to rest. Fawn stayed in the active language, though the idea of a fawning dog was long ago applied with greater force of insult to a human who acted like one. Spoken like a true dog. A fawning, slavishly affectionate, drool-dripping dog who'll cut off his left ear in return for a pat on the head (Kingdoms of Light, by Alan Dean Foster, 2001). Incidentally, fawn for a young animal, particularly a young fallow deer, derives ultimately from Latin foetus, offspring. The colour comes from that of the animal's coat.



Gordon Brown & Yasmine Sherif

THE TALIBAN'S BRUTAL AND INHUMANE TREATMENT OF WOMEN AND GIRLS WARRANTS INVESTIGATION BY AN INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL

Lack of empathy

Sir, This refers to "Man dragged on car bonnet for 1 km," Orissa Post, Jan 21. In a deplorable act, a man involved in an accident of road rage was dragged by a car driven by a woman with him clinging to the bonnet of the vehicle for a distance of one km in Bangalore. This incident took place after a heart-wrenching incident in which a 20-year-old woman, working with an events company and riding back home after a New Year's event in Delhi, was rammed by a car with five men. Her body was dragged over 12 kilometres from Sultanpuri where the accident took place. It is a horrendous crime. Despite being aware that they had knocked her down, the accused - said to be under the influence of alcohol - preferred to drive on than check on her well-being. Equally shocking is the victim's friend deserting her when she needed her the most. However, these inhuman acts suggest a sorry state of affairs in the society. A lack of empathy within society is far more dangerous than any external threat. Society exists for individuals and groups to help each other. Without empathy, we are just zombies with a singular focus away from mutual well-being. These cases are reflective of our degrading moral values and absolute disregard for others' well-being and life itself. Also, it is rampant in our country where people fallen by the roadside get no second glances. They are almost always assumed to have fallen drunk and ignored. It's time we realised where our society is heading - into a zone where empathy is waning, while apathy is rising.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

No exam worry

Sir, Examination season is round the corner. Many students fear facing examinations. Sometimes they have panic attacks. There is nothing to fear about examinations. They are a part of life and an annual event. Students should read scriptures and autobiographies of great men for confidence and motivation. They should remain above imaginary fears and doubts and peer pressure. Physical exercise and intake of protein rich foods are essential for maintaining good physical and mental health. Life itself is an examination. Every day we face hardships, difficulties, trials and troubles. One should study without expecting the results. Examination is a festival and not an entrapment. Teachers and parents should be facilitators and friend, philosopher and guide of students.

Prabhudutt Dash, BHUBANESWAR

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

of the day quote

If Kerala can earn money for backwater tourist spots why can't it be done in places of Bengal which have spots like the Sunderbans and islands. Why it cannot be done in places which are surrounded by huge waterbodies. Slowly we are getting into that, bringing people from other parts of the world

BABUL SUPRIYO | CABINET MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND ELECTRONICS AND TOURISM OF THE GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL

I hope the Election Commission of India gives its decision regarding the Shiv Sena poll symbol of 'bow and arrow' in accordance with law and existing rules

EKNATH SHINDE | MAHARASHTRA CM

We will start the Vijaya Sankalpa Yatra from all the four directions, for which the action plan has been prepared. We have to continue this Yatra till February-end

BASAVARAJ BOMMAI | KARNATAKA CM

First Indian nasal Covid vax launch on January 26

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, Jan 21: Homegrown vaccine maker Bharat Biotech will launch its intranasal COVID-19 vaccine INCOVACC, the first of its kind in India, on January 26, the company's chairman and managing director Krishna Ella said here Saturday.

Interacting with students at the India International Science Festival in Bhopal, Ella also said that the homegrown vaccine for the lumpy skin disease in cattle, Lumpi-ProVadnd, is likely to be launched next month. "Our nasal vaccine will be officially launched on January 26, on Republic Day," Ella said, participating in the 'Face-to-Face with New Frontiers in Science' segment of the IISF, organised at the Maulana Azad National Institute of Technology (MANIT).

In December, Bharat Biotech had announced that it would sell the intranasal vaccine for Rs 325 per shot for procurement by the government and Rs 800 per shot for private vaccination centres.

Dera Sacha Sauda chief walks out of jail

Chandigarh/Baghpat: Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh walked out of the Sunaria jail in Haryana's Rohtak Saturday after he was granted a 40-day parole and reached Barnawa Ashram in Uttar Pradesh's Baghpat accompanied by his adopted daughter Honeypreet amid tight security. The Shiromani Akali Dal and the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee strongly objected to granting parole to Ram Rahim Singh who is serving a 20-year jail term for raping two of his disciples. He had got another 40-day parole three months back.

Tirumala temple orders probe into drone video

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam, which manages the affairs of Sri Venkateswara temple atop Tirumala, has taken note of the video posted by a person from Hyderabad

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Tirupati, Jan 21: Tirumala temple authorities have ordered a probe into the alleged drone video of the temple making rounds on social media platforms.

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD), which manages the affairs of Sri Venkateswara temple atop Tirumala, has taken note of the video posted by a person from



A contingent of Indian Army daredevil marches past on Kartavya Path during rehearsals for the Republic Day Parade 2023, in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

Nine injured in twin blasts



Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha strongly condemned the incident and called for urgent steps to take action against those responsible

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Jan 21: Just two days before Congress leader Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Yatra is scheduled to reach Jammu, two back-to-back explosions rocked a busy locality on the outskirts of the city on Saturday, leaving nine people injured, officials said.

Police suspect that IEDs were used to carry out the twin explosions in an SUV parked in a repair shop and in a vehicle at a nearby junkyard at Transport Nagar area of Narwal. Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha strongly condemned the incident and called for urgent steps to take action against those responsible.

"A blast occurred in an old, parked Bolero (Sports Utility Vehicle) around 11 am resulting

in injuries to five people who were standing nearby. They were evacuated to hospital and their condition is stable," Additional Director General of Police, Mukesh Singh told reporters near the scene of the explosion.

He said the whole area was immediately cleared of the people but in the meantime another blast occurred 50 metres away, causing minor injuries to one more person who was also shifted to hospital. "Further investigation is on," the officer said.

However, a total of nine persons were brought with splinter injuries to Government Medical College (GMC) hospital following the blasts. "We have received nine patients with one having abdominal injuries and two others fractured legs. The condition of all of them is stable," a doctor

at the hospital said. The blasts were triggered by suspected terrorists at a time when security agencies in the region are on high alert in the wake of the ongoing Bharat Jodo Yatra of the Congress and the upcoming Republic Day celebrations. The Yatra entered J-K's Kathua district on Thursday evening via Punjab and is camping in Chadwal, about 70 km from here.

After a day's break on Saturday, the yatra, which commenced from Kanyakumari on September 7, is scheduled to resume from Hiranagar on Sunday and reach Jammu on January 23 after starting from Vijaypur in Samba district.

An official identified the injured as Suhail Iqbal, Vishav Partap, Vinod Kumar, Arjun Kumar, Amit Kumar, Rajesh Kumar and Aneesh - all residents of Jammu - and Sushil Kumar of Doda. The officials said the whole area was cordoned off by joint teams of police and CRPF immediately after the first explosion which was followed by another blast 15 minutes later.

A thorough sanitisation operation was carried out and forensic experts, bomb disposal squad and sniffer dogs were also pressed into service to look for clues, they said. Jasvinder Singh, an eyewitness, said the first blast occurred in a vehicle that was at a workshop for repair. About 15 minutes later, another explosion took place in the area littered with damaged parts and garbage, said Singh, president of the Motor Spare Parts Association.

Raj Kumar said he was working on another vehicle when the blast ripped apart another parked vehicle. "We initially thought that the petrol tank of some vehicle exploded but the blast was so powerful that it blew up the vehicle," he said.

BANGALORE TO HOST FIRST G20 ENVIRONMENT MEETING

The first G20 environment meeting under India's presidency will be held in Bangalore from February 9 to February 11 with focus on restoration of degraded lands and ecosystems, biodiversity enhancement, strengthening of the circular economy, and promotion of blue economy along with coastal sustainability



ED arrests TMC youth leader

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Jan 21: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Saturday arrested Trinamool Congress youth leader Kuntal Ghosh for his alleged involvement in teachers recruitment scam, a senior official said.

Ghosh was first detained on Saturday morning by ED sleuths following overnight search operations at his apartment in Chinara Park area and then arrested, the official said. The area, near the city airport, falls under North 24 Parganas district.

"We have arrested Kuntal Ghosh this morning for not cooperating with our officers investigating his involvement in illegal appointments in teachers recruitment scam. We will produce him at a city court today," the official said.

Several documents were seized from Ghosh's twin flats during the search operations by the ED, he added. The ED personnel said that the arrested TMC leader has been involved in "collecting" money from aspirants for the teachers' jobs. The central agency officer also hinted at the involvement of a few senior "people" in the state government for whom "Ghosh has been working and collecting money for recruiting people for the teachers' job in the state.

Kolkata streets turn into battlefield



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Jan 21: Indian Secular Front (ISF) activists fought a pitched battle with the police at Esplanade area in central Kolkata on Saturday during a protest against alleged attacks on their workers by the ruling Trinamool Congress in South 24 Parganas district.

The demonstration threw the traffic out of gear around the key Jawaharlal Nehru Road crossing. The sole ISF MLA Naushad Siddique, who was leading the protest, was detained, as a number of police personnel and agitators were injured.

A senior police official said the activists blocked an arterial road in the heart of the city, prompting the cops to request them to clear Jawaharlal Nehru Road and allow traffic movement. However, the workers of the party, which was formed before the 2021 assembly election, refused to vacate the road demanding that the perpetrators behind the attacks on its activists at Bhangar be arrested first.

As police baton-charged the workers and lobbed tear gas shells, the demonstrators numbering around 500 retreated but pelted the cops with stones from nearby lanes, injuring several police personnel.

As police baton-charged the workers and lobbed tear gas shells, the demonstrators numbering around 500 retreated but pelted the cops with stones from nearby lanes, injuring several police personnel

The protestors also damaged kiosks and guardrails of the police injuring several policemen, the official said. A strong police contingent, comprising RAF and armed policemen, was deployed in the area.

Several top police officers rushed to the spot to control the mob. After about an hour, the police managed to clear the road and chased away the protestors but stray incidents of stone pelting continued for some time.

Commuters, who were hiding in shops with their shutters down came out raising their hands. Siddique, before his detention, deplored police "inaction" at Bhangar and the "high-handedness" of the force in Esplanade by turning on "peaceful protestors".

Trinamool to contest Tripura polls alone

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, Jan 21: The Trinamool Congress Saturday said it will contest alone in the upcoming assembly polls in the north-eastern state of Tripura and will field the party's own candidates in all the 60 assembly constituencies there.

The decision was taken at a meeting between the Tripura Trinamool Congress leadership and the party's national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee at the latter's office at Camac Street on Friday, said the party observer for Tripura, Rajib Banerjee.

"Our prospects in each of the seats were discussed at the meeting. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Abhishek Banerjee are the principal assets of the party and hence we have decided to move alone," Rajib Banerjee said.

He said that the Tripura Trinamool Congress leadership has submitted a total of 120 names as prospective candidates, two names for each constituency. "The party's top leadership will finalise the names of the candidates and announce the final list of candidates shortly," Rajib Banerjee said.

The polling for the 60-seat Tripura assembly is scheduled on February 16. Rajib Banerjee expressed confidence that the party's performance in the upcoming assembly polls will be much better than "what it was in the past".

It was learnt that both Mamata Banerjee as well as Abhishek Banerjee will visit Tripura and campaign on behalf of the party there for the Assembly polls.



A view of a snow-covered resort after fresh snowfall, at Auli in Chamoli district

PTI PHOTO



Nitish feels vindicated by SC judgement on caste survey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, Jan 21: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar Friday welcomed the Supreme Court's decision to dismiss petitions challenging the caste survey being conducted by his government, stating that the exercise was meant to benefit all sections of society.

Talking to reporters on the sidelines of 'Samadhan Yatra' mass outreach programme in his home district of Nalanda, the JD(U) leader expressed delight over 'paksh mein faisla' (order in favour).

"I was appalled when I first learnt that a petition had been filed against the survey. I read it in a paper that the petitioner belonged to Bihar Sharif (the district headquarters of Nalanda). I felt like calling him up to know what was wrong with the survey," said Kumar.

"All political parties in the state were unanimously of the opinion that the survey be undertaken. Moreover, it is intended to benefit all sections of the society. It is also a caste survey (jaatiya ganana) and not a census (jana ganana)," said the CM.

Notably, the petition had challenged the survey claiming that it was a 'census' which could be undertaken only by the Centre and not by a state government, and also expressed apprehensions that it could sharpen caste divides.

The decision to undertake the survey was taken by the state government in June last year after the Centre made it clear that it was reluctant to include castes other than



All political parties in the state were unanimously of the opinion that the survey be undertaken. Moreover, it is intended to benefit all sections of the society. It is also a caste survey (jaatiya ganana) and not a census (jana ganana)

NITISH KUMAR | CHIEF MINISTER

SCs and STs in the census.

Notably, the apex court refused to entertain the PIL, dubbing it as "publicity interest litigation," though it added that the petitioner could move the high court concerned.

About the quotas for EBCs in urban local bodies, which have been challenged by a separate petition slated for hearing next month, the chief minister said "in my view it is a settled issue. There were some technical issues which were sorted out as per the Patna High Court's order. Now elections are over and elected representatives are looking forward to discharging their duties."

Kumar was also asked about the 'Rozgar Mela' of Prime Minister Narendra Modi where people got jobs in various government departments, including railways, a portfolio the JD(U) leader had held under Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

"So much was achieved in the railways during my tenure, including creation of jobs," the JD(U) leader recalled nostalgically, and added that "those who are in power at present should remember that the land to which they belong also got a lot when I was at the helm of affairs."

The reference was, apparently, Gujarat which is the home state of the PM as well as Union Home Minister Amit Shah. Kumar also voiced disapproval of scrapping of a separate budget for railways and spoke in favour of reviving the old system.

"Railway budget is such a mammoth exercise. I remember during my tenure it used to be debated till late in the night in Parliament. I wonder why they discontinued it. It should start again," he said.

The JD(U) leader, who snapped ties with the BJP in August last year, reiterated, "I have great respect for Atal ji. He never let me down. I had excellent relations with Advani ji as well."

Ahom 'maidams' nominated for UNESCO tag

THE 'MAIDAMS' ARE AN OUTSTANDING NEW TYPE OF FUNERAL ARCHITECTURE OF THE STATE IN THE GEO-CULTURAL CONTEXT OF SOUTH ASIA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Jan 21: 'Maidams', the resting place of royal families of the Ahom era in Assam's Charaideo district, will be India's sole nomination for recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage Site this year, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said Saturday.

The dossier on the 'maidams', referred to as 'Assam's Pyramids', has been selected by Prime Minister Narendra Modi out of 52 heritage sites across the country seeking the coveted tag, Sarma said at a press conference here.

The 'maidams' or the mound burial system of the Ahom dynasty in Charaideo was first listed in the tentative list of UNESCO's World Heritage site in April 2014, he added.

"It took nine years for the dossier to reach the nomination status from the tentative list and this was possible only due to the initiative of the Prime Minister," Sarma said. During the 400th birth anniversary celebrations of Ahom General Lachit Borphukan in New Delhi, an exhibition was held at Vigyan Bhawan which included a model of 'maidam' that showcased the unique burial architecture and tradition of the Tai Ahoms, he said.

"The Prime Minister had viewed the exhibition and this nomination has been possible due to his interest in this heritage of ours. It is a matter of great honour for Assam that the country has decided to forward the World Heritage Site nomination



dossier to UNESCO for evaluation," the chief minister said.

The UNESCO team will visit Charaideo in September and it is expected to be declared a World Heritage site by March 2024, he said.

The 'maidams' will be under the cultural segment as per the categorisation of World Heritage sites.

There is currently no World Heritage site in the category of cultural heritage in the northeast out of 32 listed in the country. Manas and Kaziranga National Parks, both in Assam, are World Heritage sites under the natural category, of which there are seven in India, he said.

The state Directorate of Archaeology had prepared the

dossier to UNESCO for evaluation," the chief minister said. The UNESCO team will visit Charaideo in September and it is expected to be declared a World Heritage site by March 2024, he said.

The 'maidams' represent the late medieval (13th-19th century CE) mound burial tradition of the Tai Ahoms dynasty which ruled for 600 years in Assam.

Out of 386 'maidams' explored so far, 90 royal burials at Charaideo are the best preserved, representative, and most complete examples of this tradition, the chief minister pointed out.

The Charaideo Maidams, which are highly venerated, enshrine the mortal remains of Ahom royalty.

Initially, the deceased with their personal belongings and other paraphernalia were buried, but after the 18th century, the Ahom rulers adopted the Hindu method of cremation and later entombed the cremated bones and ashes at the 'maidams' at Charaideo.

The 'maidams' are an outstanding new type of funeral architecture of the state in the geo-cultural context of south Asia and southeast Asia.

Charaideo for the Tai Ahoms, who are ancestor worshippers, is the final resting place of their 'Swargadeos' (kings who are like gods), other royals and ancestors.

Spurt in idol theft cases gives Bihar police the jitters

OVER 20 PRECIOUS IDOLS HAVE BEEN STOLEN FROM TEMPLES AND OTHER PLACES IN THE LAST FOUR MONTHS



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, Jan 21: The spurt in the cases of idol theft and the alleged involvement of international gangs are giving the Bihar police the jitters.

Over 20 precious idols have been stolen from temples and other places in the last four months, a senior Bihar Police officer said on condition of anonymity.

"It is suspected that most of the stolen idols might have reached neighbouring countries with the active connivance of members of international gangs, operating in Bihar and other northern states," the officer said.

Recently, a 1,200-year-old idol of Lord Vishnu was stolen from the sculpture shed of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) at Datiana, here. The theft of the antique idol took place on the intervening night of December 25-26, 2022.

"Similarly, a 300-year-old idol of Lord Vishnu was stolen from a temple in Sitamarhi district December 28, last year. Ten precious idols made of 'ashtadhatu' (eight-metal alloy) were also stolen from a temple in Saran district in September last year. Reports of similar incidents also came from Purnea and Gaya districts," the officer said.

According to Bihar Police records, a total of 48 precious

idols were stolen from different temples and places in the state in 2022 (till December 20), whereas the figure was 44 in 2021.

While security personnel could recover 22 stolen idols in 2021, the state police could recover only 7 in 2022, the data says.

The Economic Offences Unit of the Bihar Police investigates idol theft cases involving inter-district, interstate and international gangs in coordination with their counterparts in other districts or states.

"Our investigations in several cases have revealed that handlers, associated with inter-state or international gangs, operating in Bihar are mainly involved in theft cases of precious idols or ancient artworks. We are already on high alert and idol theft cases are always on the top of our priority list," Additional Director General (ADG) of the Economic Offences Unit of the Bihar Police, Nayyar Hasnain Khan, told PTI Saturday.

The state government has already directed the authorities concerned to prepare a district-wise list of important temples and the artefacts preserved there.

It should specifically mention the movable and immovable properties of the temples, the names of the deities installed there, and the estimated cost of the statues.

The list should also incorporate the names of caretakers and their photographs.

'No statehood talks held with KLO chief'

AGENCIES

Guwahati, Jan 21: The head of banned Kamtapur Liberation Organisation (KLO), which has been agitating for long demanding a separate state, is currently a guest of the Assam government, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said here Saturday.

However, no talks were held by his government or the Centre with Jiban Singha Koch over the statehood demand, Sarma said. The KLO is demanding a separate state comprising parts of Cooch Behar, Malda, Uttar Dinajpur and Jalpaiguri districts of West Bengal and those of Goalpara and Kokrajhar districts of Assam.

"The KLO chief is now a guest of the Assam government... I have spoken to him over the phone and will soon meet him," Sarma told a press conference here.

He, however, did not disclose where Koch and the other KLO leaders, who came to India from Myanmar recently, are staying.

The media reports over the "Kamtapur state" are speculative and they are creating apprehension in the minds of some communities like the Rabhas and the Bodos in the state, the CM said.

A sizeable number of people belonging to the Rabha and Bodo live in Goalpara and Kokrajhar districts respectively. "I have not seen anything in the West Bengal media regarding Kamtapur (statehood issue) but there is a lot of speculation here (Assam). Why create turmoil? There has been no discussion so far. Peace should be given a chance," said Sarma.

Asked about his stand on the Kamtapur issue, Sarma said, "When there is no issue, why should I take a stand?"

Will Bihar CM speak to 'disgruntled' Kushwaha?

AGENCIES

Gaya, Jan 21: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar Saturday said he will have a word with his key political aide Upendra Kushwaha who has of late been disgruntled, triggering speculations of exit from the JD(U).

Kumar, the de facto supremo of the JD(U), was replying to queries from journalists about Kushwaha, the party's parliamentary board chief, in Gaya district which he visited as part of a mass outreach programme 'Samadhan Yatra'.

"Please ask Upendra Kushwaha to speak to me (Zara Upendra Kushwaha ko kahiyeh hamse baat Karne ke lein)," quipped the CM, with trademark wry humour, when his attention was drawn towards the speculations doing the rounds.

"Everybody has a right to decide his own course. Kushwaha has parted ways, only to return to us, on more than one occasion," recalled Kumar.

"He is currently not well. Let him come back. I will speak to him. The last I heard him speak he seemed to be firmly by my side," said Kumar about his party colleague whose pictures with some BJP leaders at AIIMS, New Delhi have gone viral on social media.

Notably, Kushwaha had merged his Rashtriya Lok Samata Party (RLSP) with the JD(U) two years ago and was quickly rewarded with the top party post and a berth in the legislative council.

An ambitious protégé of Kumar, Kushwaha had quit the JD(U) in



2013 to float RLSP, allied with the NDA, tasted success in the Lok Sabha polls a year later and won a berth in the Union council of ministers.

A volatile leader, Kushwaha, had grown uneasy with Kumar's return to NDA in 2017, which caused him to quit the alliance and give up his ministerial berth.

After spending several years in political wilderness he was finally resurrected by his former mentor.

However, Kumar's stout refusal to have another deputy CM besides Tejashwi Yadav of the RJD, the largest constituent of the ruling 'Mahagathbandhan' in Bihar, is said to have irked Kushwaha who is believed to have pined for the plum post.

In a related development, JD-U MLC Sanjay Singh put up posters

across the city, removing the photograph of Kushwaha from it.

The posters contain photographs of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar followed by party national President Lalan Singh, Finance Minister Vijay Kumar Chaudhary, Building Construction Minister Ashok Chaudhary, Water Resource Minister Sanjay Jha, as well as ministers Lesi Singh and Sumit Singh and almost all top leaders of JD-U - save Kushwaha.

Kushwaha has given several statements related to the objectionable comments of RJD MLA Sudhakar Singh and Education Minister Chandrashekhar Yadav.

Nitish has said that no JD-U legislators would become ministers in the next cabinet expansion as seats are limited and only the RJD and Congress leaders will be adjusted.

Who is Shah Rukh Khan, asks Himanta

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Jan 21: "Who is Shah Rukh Khan? I don't know anything about him or his film Pathaan," was Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's curt answer to queries by reporters here Saturday.

Mediaexperts had raised questions on the violent protest by Bajrang Dal activists, who stormed a theatre at Narengi in the city Friday where the film is slated to be screened. The far right wing group's volunteers tore down the film's posters and burnt them.



"Khan has not called me, though many from Bollywood do so, regarding the problem. But if he does, I will look into the matter. Action will be taken if law and order has been violated and a case has been filed," the CM said.

Khan and his film 'Pathaan' are facing backlash for showing Deepika Padukone in a saffron bikini in the song 'Besharam Rang'. Many leaders, including from the Vishwa Hindu Parishad have demanded a ban on the film.

When reporters told him that Khan is a Bollywood superstar, Sarma said that the people of the state should be concerned about Assamese and not Hindi films.

He said the Assamese film 'Dr Bezbaruua - Part 2' will be released soon. "People should see it."

Rhinos spotted in forest, days after eviction of squatters

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Guwahati, Jan 21: Three Rhinos have been spotted in Pabho Reserve Forest in Assam's Lakhimpur district after squatters were evicted last week, forest officials said.

"This is wonderful encouraging news for all wildlife enthusiasts," a forest official said, adding that it is not unusual to spot rhinos in Pabho, about 194 km from the northeast corner of Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve's Biswanath Wildlife Division.

According to the official, rhinos visit Pabho for a short duration of one or two months and the villagers living in adjoining areas have witnessed rhinos mating there in the past.

The 2,560.25 hectares Pabho was

declared as Milroy Buffalo Sanctuary decades ago but there was no official notification.

Environmentalist Bibhab Kumar Talukdar said that as the wild buffaloes and rhinos share the same habitat, hence the name was given accordingly.

The forest official said that Pabho was not given importance from the wildlife and environment point of view decades ago when different communities began encroaching upon it, leaving only 29 hectares for the trees and wildlife.

The Forest Department accompanied by the Lakhimpur district administration and the police, evicted 500 families belonging to Bengali-speaking Muslims January 10 and 11 from the forest areas, after which the reserve for-



est came into focus. The All Assam Minority Students' Union criticised the

BJP government in the state claiming that the eviction drive was 'aimed' at the Muslims

while people belonging to other communities were not driven out.

A leader of Rajior Dal, a local party, Azizur Rahman said the eviction area is one-eighth of the total reserve forest area.

He questioned the government's claim that rhinoceroses are moving in the forest areas immediately after the eviction of the 500 families even though the Pabho reserve forest was famous for wild buffaloes.

Assam's Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve is India's seventh UNESCO world heritage site famous for its one-horned rhinos and home to more than 2,613 one-horned Indian rhinos and other animals including tiger and elephants.



Narendra Modi ji, 30 lakh posts are lying vacant in government departments. The 71,000 recruitment letters that you are distributing are just too little. The process is on to fill the vacant posts. You had promised to give 2 crore jobs per year. Tell the youth -- where are the 16 crore jobs in the last eight years
MALLIKARJUN KHARGE | CONGRESS PRESIDENT

RAHUL LAUDS WAYANAD

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Saturday congratulated Kerala's Wayanad on becoming India's first district to digitise basic documents of all tribunals



of the day quote

The President will address the joint sitting of both the houses of Parliament in the existing building
OM BIRLA | LOK SABHA SPEAKER

It is the Delhi government's responsibility to ensure the safety of teachers. A review meeting was held with education department officials and suggestions will be taken from principals and teachers to make a policy to prevent attacks on teachers
MANISH SISODIA | DELHI DEPUTY CM

Terrorism is alive in Jammu and Kashmir and can only be ended by holding dialogue with Pakistan
FAROOQ ABDULLAH | NATIONAL CONFERENCE PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Woman dies

Thiruvananthapuram: A 55-year-old woman died by suicide on Saturday after her son was arrested with a synthetic drug MDMA. According to police, prima facie, it appears that Gracy Clement took the extreme step after her 25-year-old son Shine Clement was arrested for possessing four grams of MDMA on Friday evening. Gracy was distraught on learning about it.

5 killed, 15 hurt

Jammu: Five people were killed and 15 others injured late Friday evening in a road accident in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district, police said. The Police said the driver of a mini-bus lost control on the wheel at Sila village of Billawar area in Kathua. "The mini-bus plunged into a gorge killing four passengers on the spot and injuring 16 others." "One injured person died while being carried to the hospital.

Girl ends life

Hyderabad: A girl student of the English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU) allegedly committed suicide by jumping from a building on the campus here early Saturday. Anjali (22) allegedly killed herself by jumping from the fourth floor of the hostel building. A native of Haryana, Anjali was pursuing MA English at EFLU, a Central university located near Osmania University campus. On being alerted by the university authorities, police rushed to the scene and shifted the body to Gandhi Hospital for autopsy.

Skeleton found

Hyderabad: Making a breakthrough, rescue workers on Saturday found a human skeleton in a six-storeyed commercial building which was gutted in a massive fire on Thursday. The rescue teams, which continued their efforts to collect clues of three missing persons, found the skeleton on the first floor of the building at Nallagutta on Ministers Road in Secunderabad. The skeleton was removed from the debris and shifted to Gandhi Hospital for identification.

23 injured

Jhargram (WB): Twenty-three people were injured on Saturday after a speeding bus with around 35 passengers onboard hit a roadside tree in West Bengal's Jhargram district, police said. The accident took place around 11.30 am in Tuliboni area under the Jamboni Police Station limits, when the driver lost control over the bus and the passenger vehicle dashed against the tree, a senior officer said.

Govt blocks videos, tweets sharing BBC documentary

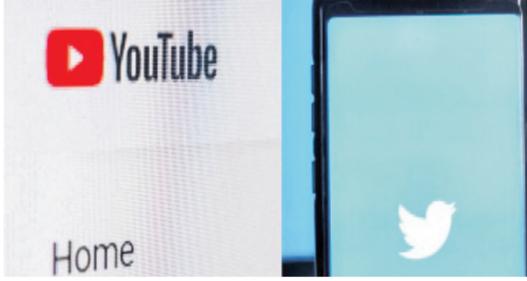
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 21: The Centre has issued directions for blocking multiple YouTube videos and Twitter posts sharing links to the controversial BBC documentary "India: The Modi Question", according to sources.

The two-part BBC documentary, which claims it investigated certain aspects relating to the 2002 Gujarat riots when Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the chief minister of the state, has been trashed by the Ministry of External Affairs as a "propaganda piece" that lacked objectivity and reflected a "colonial mindset".

The directions on blocking access were understood to have been issued by Apurva Chandra, Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on Friday using the emergency powers under the IT Rules, 2021.

Sources said senior officials of several ministries, including external affairs, home affairs, and information and broadcasting, examined the documentary and found it to be an attempt to cast aspersions on the authority and credibility of the Supreme Court, sow divisions among various Indian communities, and make unsubstantiated allegations regarding actions of foreign governments in India.



The directions were reportedly issued by Apurva Chandra, Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on Friday using the emergency powers under the IT Rules, 2021

The two-part BBC documentary claims it investigated certain aspects relating to the 2002 Gujarat riots when Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the Chief Minister of the state

While opposition parties like the Congress and the TMC criticised the Modi government for "censorship", a group of 302 former judges, ex-bureaucrats and veterans slammed the BBC documentary as a "motivated charge sheet against our leader, a fellow Indian and a patriot" and a reflection of "dyed-in-the-wool negativity and unrelenting prejudice".

In a statement, the former bureaucrats and others claimed the documentary is the archetype of past British imperialism in India setting itself up as both judge and jury to resurrect Hindu-Muslim tensions that were overwhelm-

ingly the creation of the British Raj policy of divide and rule.

Former Rajasthan High Court chief justice Anil Deo Singh, former home secretary L C Goyal, former foreign secretary Shashank, former RAW chief Sanjeev Tripathi and former NIA director Yogesh Chander Modi are among the signatories to the statement. This documentary is not a neutral critique and is not about exercising creative freedom or a divergent, anti-establishment point of view, the statement signed by 13 former judges, 133 ex-bureaucrats, including diplomats, and 156 veterans said.

Vande Bharat attacked in Bihar again

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Katihar, Jan 21: In yet another incident of its kind in Bihar, the Vande Bharat Express was pelted with stones while passing through Katihar district, a railway official said Saturday.

The latest incident was reported Friday evening by a passenger of train number 22302 running from New Jalpaiguri to Howrah, senior security commissioner of Katihar railway division Kamal Singh said.

"The passenger complained to the train escort party that a stone has hit the coach, at 1625 hours. The place of occurrence was between Dalkhola and Telta stations, in Baharpur police station area of the district", said an official.

At Dalkhola railway officers inspected the bogey and found cracks in a window pane. The police station concerned was subsequently informed with the request to inquire into the incident.

This is the second such incident involving the semi high-speed train to have taken place in the state in less than a month. On January 3, the train was pelted with stones in Kishanganj district and three boys, identified with the help of CCTV footage, were caught by police and produced before the juvenile justice board.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had flown off the handle and threatened to sue media outlets which had wrongly reported that stone pelting took place in her state.



CRPF personnel during a flag march ahead of Tripura Assembly elections in Agartala

PTI PHOTO

Flight diverted after bomb threat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Panaji, Jan 21: A Goa-bound chartered flight from Moscow with 240 passengers on board was diverted to Uzbekistan in the wee hours of Saturday after the authorities at the Dabolim airport in the state received an email, which claimed that there was a bomb on the plane, police said.

This is the second such incident on the Moscow-Goa route involving the same airline in less than two weeks. The flight, operated by Russian airline Azur Air, was scheduled to land at the Dabolim airport in South Goa at 4.15 am, a senior police official said.

"The flight (AZV2463) was diverted to Uzbekistan after an email



This is the second such incident on the Moscow-Goa route involving the same airline in less than two weeks

was received at 12.30 am by the office of the Dabolim airport director, which said that a bomb was planted on the plane. The flight was diverted before it entered the Indian airspace. It landed at an airport in Uzbekistan around 4.30

am," he said. Apart from passengers, there were seven crew members on board, he said.

On January 9, a Moscow-to-Goa flight had made an emergency landing at Gujarat's Jamnagar airport following a bomb threat. That flight

Nora defamation case: Hearing on March 25



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 21: A Delhi court is likely to hear on March 25 a criminal complaint filed by actor Nora Fatehi against Jacqueline Fernandez for allegedly defaming her by "unfairly dragging" her name into a Rs 200 crore money laundering case involving alleged conman Suresh Chandrashekar.

Fatehi, a Canadian citizen, has also arrayed 15 media organisations as accused in her complaint. The matter, which was scheduled to come up for hearing on Saturday, was adjourned since the judge was on leave owing to a judicial training, Fatehi's lawyer said.

Fatehi, in her complaint, has said she has "a pristine reputation apart from a rapidly progressing career which has quite obviously threatened her rivals who are unable to compete with her on fair footing".

A defamatory statement was made by Fernandez in "bad faith" and with "mala fide intention" and was circulated by the media houses with an intent to defame her, she said. The complaint claimed that the allegations made by Fernandez, also a Bollywood actor, that Fatehi had received gifts from Chandrashekar were wrong.

"The only time the complainant spoke to Chandrashekar was when his wife, Leena Maria Paul, made her speak to him over speakerphone at the event in Chennai where the complainant was invited by Leena. At the event, the complainant was gifted an iPhone and a Gucci bag by Leena. No gifts were ever received by the com-

The matter, which was scheduled to come up for hearing Saturday, was adjourned since the judge was on leave owing to a judicial training, Fatehi's lawyer said

plainant from Chandrashekar," Fatehi has said in the complaint.

Fatehi also denied she had received a luxury car from Chandrashekar and said it was part payment to her brother-in-law Bobby Khan, who Chandrashekar had approached for directing a movie. "Since the complainant had never even spoken to Chandrashekar let alone having met him, hence the imputation made by the Fernandez and the subsequent publishing of the same by the accused media houses are untrue," the complaint said.

The court had on November 15 granted bail to Fernandez, who is an accused in the money laundering case. She was not arrested in the case. The court had on August 31 taken cognisance of a supplementary charge sheet filed by the Enforcement Directorate and asked Fernandez to appear before it. Fernandez, who was summoned by the ED several times in connection with the investigation, was named as an accused in the supplementary charge sheet.

Man sets self on fire

New Delhi: A 28 year-old man died after he set himself on fire in Delhi's Kalyanpuri area, an official said Saturday. The incident occurred Friday night, and the deceased has been identified as Rahul, who used to work as a private driver. According to Amrutha Guguloth, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (East), a PCR call was received at around 10 p.m. on Friday at Kalyanpuri police station that a person is setting himself on fire near Mother Dairy booth, near Kalyanpuri Bus stand, Kichripur. "A police team reached the spot while the victim was already taken to LBS hospital. On initial enquiry it was revealed that the victim had come in a Santro car and had put some inflammable substance on his body before setting himself on fire, as stated by witnesses," the DCP said.

Animals displaced as owners navigate subsidence fallout

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Joshimath (Uttarakhand), Jan 21: As land sinks in Joshimath, buildings are razed and hundreds of families forced out of their homes, there is another tragedy playing out in this Himalayan town - many dogs, cattle and other domestic animals left untended as their owners navigate the life-changing crisis.

Some animals have been left behind in houses, desolate and deserted as the cracks on their walls deepen, and some smaller pets have been crammed into shelter homes along with families forced into one room. The snow and the dipping temperatures have exacerbated the many woes.

The displacement is at many levels, say animal rights activists who have rushed to the once

bustling town of Joshimath to keep the voiceless safe. "Any disaster is as much a crisis for animals as it is for humans," said Rubina Iyer from People for Animals (PFA) Uttarakhand.

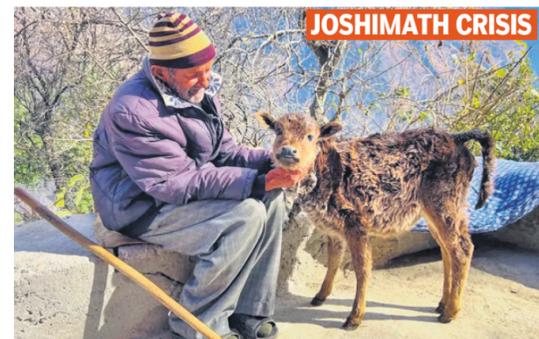
"We want to ensure the safety and welfare of the animals. People are taking care of humans, and we are here for the animals," Iyer, who travelled from Dehradun to Joshimath along with her colleagues to help rescue affected animals, said.

The mountain town, the gateway to trekking trails, pilgrimage destinations such as Badrinath and the famed ski slopes of Auli, has been on the edge since January 2 when the first major land subsidence event took place and hairline fissures in several places deepened into gaping breaks in walls and streets with a frightening rumble.

Families were segregated, and many pets and cattle neglected as people moved out to safety.

Neha Saklani, whose house in Sunil area on the way to Auli was heavily damaged during the subsidence event, said they have four pets. "One of them is with us in the hotel, while the three others are at our house. But we check on them in the day and feed them," she said.

Iyer said surveys are being carried out for a count of pets or stray animals and, if required, help with shifting them to shelter homes. "If there are any pets and people don't have space we can keep them safe." So far, 200 dogs, 300 cattle, and 20 equines have been identified in surveys from the affected areas, said Shreya Paropkari from Humane Society International/India (HSI).



JOSHIMATH CRISIS

"All are doing well except for two injured mules being shifted to the Happy Home Sanctuary run by PFA Uttarakhand in Dehradun," she said. "Our surveys found no abandoned pets in the affected

areas. Wherever people are being shifted they are taking their pets along," Paropkari said. HSI also plans to sterilise dogs so there are no puppies born during this calamity as it will be difficult for

them to survive. "Based on the current assessment, they would all need surgery - when the weather is suitable. Currently, it's snowing," Paropkari added.

Chief Veterinary Officer, Chamoli, D. Pralayankar Nath said the Animal Husbandry Department here is taking all precautions and making necessary arrangements to shelter stray animals and pets.

"For cattle, we are making two shelters in Sunil ward and in Ravigram area. We are distributing compact feed and green fodder. Pets are being provided feed and the necessary help," said Nath, who has been stationed in Joshimath since January 2.

"We are taking help from the NGOs to identify any affected or abandoned pets so that we can shift them to shelters and take care of them," he said.

international

of the day quote

Everything we're doing now is to prevent the pain and suffering of the tragedy of Ukraine from being repeated in our scenario in Taiwan

BI-KHIM HSIAO | TAIWAN'S ENVOY TO WASHINGTON

Like the president has said many times, raising the debt ceiling is not a negotiation; it is an obligation of this country and its leaders to avoid economic chaos

KARINE JEAN-PIERRE | PRESS SECRETARY, WHITE HOUSE

They are trying their best to disqualify me ahead of the general elections. New cases are being registered against me every other day

IMRAN KHAN | FORMER PM, PAKISTAN

SHORT TAKES

Allies arm Ukraine

Ramstein Air Base: Western allies Friday dampened Ukraine's hopes for a rapid shipment of battle tanks to boost its firepower for a spring offensive against Russian forces, with the United States urging Kyiv to hold off from mounting such an operation. The top US general, speaking after a meeting of the allies at Ramstein Air Base in Germany, also said it would be very hard for Ukraine to drive Russia's invading forces from the country this year. In the end, no decision on supplying Leopards was reached Friday, officials said.

Protecting Amazon

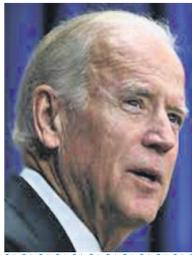
Rio de Janeiro: Brazil this week began the first operations against Amazon deforestation since veteran leftist Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva took office, the Ibama environmental agency said Friday. On the campaign trail before his October election victory -- when he defeated far right climate change skeptic Jair Bolsonaro -- Lula promised to end deforestation by 2030. The Amazon rainforest suffered during Bolsonaro's four-year presidency as the former army captain repeatedly enacted laws favoring agriculture and mining in the forest at the expense of that critically important ecosystem.

Council polls in SL

Colombo: Sri Lanka will hold the local council polls March 9, the country's election commission announced Saturday, ending speculation that the election may be postponed again due to the prevailing economic crisis in the country. The local election was earlier postponed by six months as the country was gripped by unprecedented economic turmoil which triggered a political crisis and led to the ouster of former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa. The officials of the election commission announced that the local polls for the 340 councils in the island nation will take place March 9.

Avalanche claims 28

Beijing: At least 28 people were killed in an avalanche in the city of Nyingchi in the southwestern region of Tibet, the official Xinhua news agency reported late Friday. Fifty-three survivors were found, five of whom were seriously injured, Global Times reported, citing a local government official in the western Chinese region. The avalanche was triggered by strong winds as the weather gets warm, Xinhua added.



I think you're going to find there's nothing there (classified documents). I have no regrets
JOE BIDEN | PRESIDENT, US

SUNAK MORE TRUSTWORTHY

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is seen as more trustworthy, more economically competent and more likely to win votes than his former boss, Boris Johnson, in a new survey of voting intentions. It finds that 63% are opposed to Johnson, trying to lead the country again, with only 24% in favour of the idea



CLIMATE CALAMITY

Greenland warmest in 1K years: Study

Greenland's ice sheet is currently the main factor in swelling the Earth's oceans, with the Arctic region heating at a faster rate than the rest of the planet



We need to stop this before we get to the point where we get this vicious cycle of a self-sustaining melting of the Greenland ice. The sooner the better
BO MOLLESOE VINSTER | ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Copenhagen, Jan 21: Temperatures in parts of Greenland are warmer than they have been in 1,000 years, the co-author of a study, that re-constructed conditions by drilling deep into the ice sheet, told AFP. "This confirms the bad news that

we know already unfortunately ... (It is) clear that we need to get this warming under control in order to stop the melting of the Greenlandic ice sheet," climate physics associate professor Bo Mollesoe Vinther

of the University of Copenhagen told AFP. By drilling into the ice sheet to retrieve samples of snow and ice from hundreds of years ago, scientists were able to reconstruct

temperatures from north and central Greenland from the year 1000 AD to 2011. Their results, published in the scientific journal Nature, show that the warming registered in the decade from 2001-2011 "exceeds the range of the pre-industrial temperature variability in the past millennium with virtual certainty". During that decade, the temperature was "on average 1.5 degree Celsius warmer than the 20th century", the study found. The melting of the Greenland ice sheet is already leading to ris-

ing sea levels, threatening millions of people living along coasts that could find themselves underwater in the decades or centuries to come. In a landmark 2021 report on climate science, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said the Greenland ice sheet would contribute up to 18 centimetres to sea level rise by 2100 under the highest emissions scenario. The massive ice sheet, two kilometres thick, contains enough frozen water to lift global seas by over seven metres (23 feet) in total. "The global warming signal that we see all over the world has also found its way to these very remote locations on the Greenland ice sheet," Vinther said.

UN personnel's pic with Taliban flag draws flak



ASSOCIATED PRESS

United Nations, Jan 21: The UN has apologised for "a significant lapse in judgement" after photographs surfaced of some of its personnel in front of a Taliban flag in Afghanistan during a visit by deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed this week to the war-torn country when she met the de facto authorities and expressed alarm over women's rights violations.

Mohammed, the highest-ranking woman in the United Nations, along with Executive Director of UN Women Sima Bahous and Assistant Secretary-General of the Department of Political, Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations Khaled Khiari completed a four-day visit to Afghanistan Friday.

During the visit, the delegation met Taliban leaders in Kabul and Kandahar and conveyed their alarm over the recent restrictions on education and work of women and girls across the country. However, as Mohammed was meeting the group's leaders, photographs of some UN security personnel in front of the Taliban flag drew criticism.

"That photo should never have been taken. It clearly shows a significant lapse in judgment. It was a mistake and we apologise for it. And in terms of that, I believe the supervisor for these officers has spoken to them on this," Farhan Haq, Deputy Spokesperson for Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, told reporters Friday when questioned about the visit and the photographs. Haq said the photograph was taken while the Deputy Secretary-General was meeting the de facto leaders in Afghanistan. Her security had taken her to that meeting and were waiting next door, he said.

In a post on Twitter, Head of Foreign Relations for the National Resistance Front of Afghanistan Ali Maisam Nazary said the "@UN personnel in Kabul taking a photo w/a terrorist group's flag brings the United Nation's impartiality & integrity into question."

POLITICAL UNCERTAINTY

Nationwide chaos in Peru



The protests have been marked by Peru's worst political violence in more than two decades and highlighted deep divisions between the country's urban elite, largely concentrated in Lima, and poor rural areas

- OVER 50 PEOPLE INJURED IN FRESH DEMONSTRATIONS
- POLICE IN LIMA USE TEAR GAS ON DEMONSTRATORS
- LIMA'S MOST HISTORIC BUILDINGS CHARRED IN STIRS
- SINCE DECEMBER, 45 PEOPLE DIED IN PERU PROTESTS

REUTERS

Lima, Jan 21: Dozens of Peruvians were injured after tensions flared again Friday night as police clashed with protesters in anti-government demonstrations that are spreading across the country. In the capital Lima, police officers used tear gas to repel demonstrators throwing glass bottles and stones, as fires burned in the streets, local TV footage showed. In the country's southern Puno

region, some 1,500 protesters attacked a police station in the town of Ilave, Interior Minister Vicente Romero said in a statement. A police station in Zepita, Puno, was also on fire, Romero said. Health authorities in Ilave reported eight patients hospitalized with injuries, including broken arms and legs, eye contusions and punctured abdomens. By late afternoon, 58 people had been injured nationwide in demonstrations, according to a report from Peru's ombudsman. Human rights groups have accused the police and army of using deadly firearms. The unrest followed a day of tur-

Why Peruvians are protesting?

Protests have rocked Peru since Pedro Castillo was ousted as president in December after he attempted to dissolve the legislature to prevent an impeachment vote. President Dina Boluarte has dismissed calls for her to resign and hold snap elections, instead calling for dialogue and promising to punish those involved in the unrest. She stated that she is in favour of holding the presidential and congressional elections in 2024, two years earlier than originally planned.

moil in Thursday, when one of Lima's most historic buildings burned to the ground, as President Dina Boluarte vowed to get tougher on "vandals." The destruction of the building, a near-century-old mansion in central Lima, was described by officials as the loss of a "monumental asset." Authorities are investigating the causes. Romero Friday claimed the blaze was "duly planned and arranged." Thousands of protesters descended on Lima this week calling for change and angered by the protests' mounting death toll, which officially stood at 45 Friday. The unrest has until this week been concentrated in Peru's south. The government has extended a state of emergency to six regions, curtailing some civil rights.

Hipkins to be NZ PM after Ardern resigns

Jacinda Ardern stunned New Zealand when announcing her abrupt exit from office, less than three years after a landslide election win

REUTERS

Sydney, Jan 21: New Zealand's former Covid-19 response minister Chris Hipkins will replace Jacinda Ardern as prime minister after receiving the only nomination from fellow MPs, the ruling Labour Party said Saturday.

The 44-year-old senior politician must be formally backed by Labour members of parliament Sunday to take over as the country's 41st prime minister, following Ardern's shock resignation Thursday.

Hipkins vowed Saturday to "get things done" and win a looming October general election after being chosen as the only candidate to replace Jacinda Ardern as prime minister.

The 44-year-old red-headed politician emerged as the sole nominee to lead the ruling Labour Party in a meeting of members of parliament, and now faces what is seen as the mere formality of a confirmation by his colleagues Sunday.

As leader of the party, he will take over as the country's 41st prime minister following Ardern's shock resignation Thursday.



Ardern's successor is widely seen as a safe pair of hands with more than 14 years in parliament

Ardern said she would step down by February 7 but could do so earlier given that her successor was chosen in barely 48 hours. "I like to think I am pretty decisive and I can get things done," Hipkins told reporters outside parliament in the capital Wellington. With his party lagging in the opinion polls under criticism over rising prices, poverty and crime rates, reporters asked if he can win the elections to be held October 14. "Yes," he replied. Ardern, a global figurehead for progressive politics, stunned New Zealand by announcing her abrupt exit from office, less than three years after securing a second term in a landslide election win.

80% infected by Covid in China



REUTERS

Beijing, Jan 21: The possibility of a big Covid-19 rebound in China over the next two or three months is remote as 80% of people have been infected, a prominent government scientist said Saturday. The mass movement of people during the ongoing Lunar New Year holiday period may spread the pandemic, boosting infections in some areas, but a second Covid wave is unlikely in the near term,

Wu Zunyou, chief epidemiologist at the China Center for Disease Control and Prevention, said on the Weibo social media platform. Hundreds of millions of Chinese are travelling across the country for holiday reunions that had been suspended under recently eased Covid curbs, raising fears of fresh outbreaks in rural areas less equipped to manage large outbreaks. China has passed the peak of Covid patients in fever clinics, emergency rooms and with critical conditions, a National Health Commission official said Thursday. Nearly 60,000 people with Covid had died in hospital as of January 12, roughly a month after China abruptly dismantled its zero-Covid policy, according to government data. But some experts said that figure probably vastly undercounts the full impact, as it excludes those who die at home, and because many doctors have said they are discouraged from citing Covid as a cause of death.



AGAINST ABORTION: Anti-abortion activists gather on Capitol Hill during the first March for Life since the Supreme Court overturned the Roe vs Wade decision that created a legal right to an abortion in the United States, in Washington

PTI PHOTO



World's largest cane toad found in Australia

DUBBED "TOADZILLA", THE CANE TOAD IS AN INVASIVE SPECIES THAT POSES A THREAT TO AUSTRALIA'S ECOSYSTEM

REUTERS

Sydney, Jan 21: Australian park rangers believe they have stumbled upon a record-breaking giant toad deep in a rainforest.

Dubbed "Toadzilla", the cane toad, an invasive species that poses a threat to Australia's ecosystem, was spotted by "shocked" park ranger Kylee Gray during a patrol in Conway National Park in Queensland state January 12. Gray and her colleagues caught the animal and brought it back to their office, where it weighed in at 2.7 kg (6 pounds). Guinness World Records lists the largest toad at 2.65 kg (5.8 pounds), a 1991 record set by a Swedish pet.

"We considered naming her Connie after Conway National Park but Toadzilla was the one that just kept getting thrown out there, so that kind of stuck," Gray told state broadcaster ABC Friday. Gray's colleague, senior park ranger Barry Nolan, told Reuters the animal was euthanised due to its "ecological impact" - the usual fate for the toads across Australia. Cane toads were introduced to Australia in 1935 to control cane beetles and other pests but their population exploded and with no

natural predators they have become a threat to Australian species, Nolan said. "A female cane toad like potentially Toadzilla would lay up to 35,000 eggs. So their capacity to reproduce is quite staggering. And all parts of the cane toad's breeding cycle are poisonous to Australian native species, so prevention is a big part of how we need to manage them," he said. Toadzilla's body was donated to the Queensland Museum for research.



India remains a bright spot amid global geoeconomics and geopolitical crises
KLAUS SCHWAB | FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, WEF

NETFLIX CEO QUILTS AFTER 20 YRS

Netflix co-founder Reed Hastings is stepping aside as CEO of the company he's led for more than two decades, leaving the position to his two longtime associates, Ted Sarandos and Greg Peters



of the day quote

Relationship with India is central to our foreign policy and as one of the world's biggest economies India is a key partner



TARIQ AHMAD | UK FOREIGN OFFICE MINISTER FOR SOUTH ASIA

We are pleased to report a strong Q3 FY23, our first as LTIMindtree



DEBASHIS CHATTERJEE | CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND MD, LTIMINDTREE

Japan offers huge business opportunities for Indian apparel exporters and the industry should explore that market



NAREN GOENKA | CHAIRMAN, AEPIC

SHORT TAKES

Wipro lays off over 400 freshers

Bangalore: IT giant Wipro has laid off more than 400 fresher employees for poor performance in internal assessment tests. The company has issued termination letters to all the affected employees and stated that despite adequate training, they have failed to perform. Sources explained the termination letter maintained that the employees were liable to pay ₹75,000 of the training cost which company has spent on them. But, the amount is being waived off. "We wish to inform you that the training cost of ₹75,000 which you are liable to pay, will be waived off," the letter reads.

\$700mn in assets seized from FTX

Washington: Federal prosecutors have seized nearly \$700 million in assets from FTX founder Sam Bankman-Fried in January, largely in the form of Robinhood stock, according to a Friday court filing. Bankman-Fried, who has been accused of stealing billions of dollars from FTX customers to pay debts incurred by his crypto-focused hedge fund, has pleaded not guilty to fraud charges.

Musk admits he ignored investors

San Francisco: Elon Musk has admitted in a US court that he ignored his advisors and investors while tweeting about Tesla securing funding in 2018. Musk, who briefly took the stand on Friday during his ongoing trial in a class-action lawsuit by Tesla investors in a court here, said that "I suppose I continued to tweet, yes", when asked if he ignored the pleas from his well-wishers. The controversial 2018 tweets by Musk on taking Tesla private has come back to haunt him and he stands to lose billions.

Adani to demerge more cos

THE ADANI GROUP HAS SPUN OFF ITS POWER, COAL, TRANSMISSION AND GREEN ENERGY BIZ IN RECENT YEARS

REUTERS

Mumbai, Jan 21: India's Adani Group, which is controlled by billionaire Gautam Adani, said it plans to spin off more businesses by 2025-28, which is when we plan to demerge them," he told a media briefing Saturday.

The corporate house plans to spin off, or demerge, its metals, mining, data centre, airports, roads and logistics businesses, said Chief Financial Officer Jugeshinder Singh said.

"The criteria is for these businesses to achieve a basic investment profile and experienced management by 2025-28, which is when we plan to demerge them," he told a media briefing Saturday.

The company is betting big on its airport business and is aiming for it to become the largest services base in the country in the coming years, outside of government services, Singh said.

Adani, the world's third-richest man, according to Forbes, has been diversifying his empire from ports to energy and now owns a media company.

The flagship firm Adani Enterprises is set to raise up to \$2.5 billion in a follow-on share sale,

ADANI PLANS TO DEMERGE SOME BUSINESSES BY 2028

THE COMPANY HAS DISMISSED ANY DEBT CONCERNS

SET TO RAISE UP TO \$2.5BN IN A FOLLOW-ON SHARE SALE

IN 2022 ADANI'S STOCK INCREASED BY NEARLY 130%



The corporate house plans to spin off, or demerge, its metals, mining, data centre, airports, roads and logistics businesses
JUGESHINDER SINGH | CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, ADANI ENTERPRISES

Reuters previously reported, following a surge in the share price in recent years. Its stock increased by nearly 130% in 2022, but has dipped about 7% so far this year.

Other Adani group companies also rose over 100% last year, causing some investors to worry about the companies being overvalued. However, some traditional valuation metrics are not relevant for the businesses, Singh said.

"We don't look at P/E multi-

ples for any of our businesses. For infrastructure businesses, the rate of return on assets deployed is relevant. Adani Enterprises works on a sum-of-parts model," he said. The company is offering a discount of 8.5%-13% to woo retail investors, according to its prospectus.

"We don't go to market if we are not sure of raising the full amount (\$2.5 billion)," Singh said, adding that the company wants to increase the partici-

ipation of retail investors and is aiming for a primary issue instead of a rights issue.

It has said it plans to use the money to fund green hydrogen projects, airport facilities and Greenfield expressways, besides paying its debt.

The group has typically incubated businesses within its flagship company, to demerge and list them later. Its listed arms currently operate in sectors including ports, power transmission, green energy and food production.

NO DEBT CONCERNS

Analysts' concerns over its debt accumulation have been dismissed by Singh.

Adani Group's total gross debt in the financial year ending March 31, 2022, rose 40% to ₹2.2 trillion. CreditSights, part of the Fitch Group, described the Adani Group last September as "overleveraged" and said it had "concerns" over its debt.

While the report later corrected some calculation errors, CreditSights said it maintained concerns over leverage.

"Nobody has raised debt concerns to us. No single investor has. I am in touch with thousands of high net worth individuals and 160 institutions and no one has said this," Singh said.

LALCHND OPENS ITS FIRST STORE IN DELHI



POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, January 21: With an idea to bring the rich heritage of eastern India to Delhi and an eye on the younger generation, the Lalchnd Jewellers, Odisha's top jewellery chain, Saturday opened its brand new store. Aarouhi at Lajpat Nagar market here.

The jewellery brand is all set to offer 'absolute best' from eastern Indian like filigree to Delhiites, the company said. The main mission of Aarouhi will be to offer unparalleled range of lightweight jewellery in diamond, gold and silver, in keeping with the preferences of the younger generation. The store will also sell silver utensils and fashion jewellery, the firm said.

Sunjoy Hans, Founder Chairman of Lalchnd Group, said that the company is offering affordable jewellery with good designs which even office goers can wear in their day to day life. He also said that the making charges will be lowest at Aarouhi.

"The younger generation clearly prefers light and stylish jew-

ellery and there aren't enough options for them in Delhi. Most stores in Delhi are primarily keeping heavy jewellery, but you'll see that our range here is focused on light and fashionable designs," said Sunjoy Hans.

Palak Hans Sen, CEO of Lalchnd, said that people in Delhi love to buy jewellery and they are excited to showcase their unique products in the heart of Delhi.

"We are keeping all the latest designs. We have a lot of designs which are very unique and one can change them almost every day. They are not heavy, typical bridal sets which you need to keep in lockers. These are very lightweight and affordable pieces which you can keep changing. The designs we are keeping are really targeting the youth. We have all the lightweight jewellery so it will not even hurt the pockets of youth," Palak said.

The opening of Aarouhi showroom was hosted in the presence of chief guest Satyananda Mishra, former chief information commissioner of India and other dignitaries.

Norms eased for some sectors under EPCG

The latest relaxation will be available for hotel, healthcare, and educational sectors

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 21: In a relief to exporters from hotel, healthcare, and educational sectors, the government Friday announced a one-time relaxation for them with respect to maintaining the average export

obligation under the Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) scheme. Under the scheme, imports of capital goods are allowed duty free, subject to an export obligation.

"This relaxation has been provided in light of the economic slowdown caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. This relief will help the hotel, healthcare and educational sectors to cope with the negative impact of the pandemic on their export activities," the commerce ministry statement said.

For 2020-21 and 2021-22, these



sectors will not be required to maintain the average export obligation for EPCG authorisations issued to them.

"The government has announced a one-time relaxation from maintaining the average export obligation and an option to extend the

export obligation period for certain sectors under the EPCG scheme," it said.

These sectors will also have the option to extend the export obligation period for a longer duration without having to pay any additional fees.

The scheme aims to encourage the production of goods for export by providing import duty concessions on capital goods. It is administered by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) and is governed by the Foreign Trade Policy of India.

Q3 RESULTS

Yes Bank net tanks 79%

Mumbai: Yes Bank reported a 79 per cent dip in its consolidated December quarter net at ₹55.07 crore Saturday as provisions on legacy bad assets made it set aside higher amounts as provisions. The private sector lender also announced that it will appeal against the Bombay High Court's order in the ₹8,400-crore AT-1 bonds case of 2020, saying it has strong legal grounds to do the same. It reported an 11.7 per cent jump in the core net interest income at ₹1,971 crore on the back of a 10 per cent advances growth and a 0.10 per cent expansion in the net interest margin at 2.5 per cent.



Kotak Mahindra profit surges 31%

New Delhi: Private sector Kotak Mahindra Bank Saturday reported a 31 per cent jump in its standalone profit at ₹2,792 in the quarter ended December 2022 aided by improvement in net interest income. The bank had posted a net profit of ₹2,131 crore in the same quarter a year ago. The bank's total income increased to ₹11,099 crore in the latest December quarter from ₹8,260 crore in the year-ago period, the bank said.



ICICI Bank profit jumps 34%

New Delhi: Private sector lender ICICI Bank Saturday reported a 34 per cent jump in its standalone profit at ₹8,312 crore for the quarter ended in December 2022, helped by healthy growth in net interest income. The bank had posted a net profit of ₹6,194 crore in the same quarter a year ago. The bank's total income increased to ₹33,529 crore in the latest December quarter from ₹27,069 crore in the year-ago period, the bank said.



SBI Life Insurance net dips over 16%

New Delhi: Private sector SBI Life Insurance Saturday reported more than 16 per cent decline in net profit at ₹304 crore in the third quarter ended December 2022. The insurer's profit stood at ₹364 crore in the same quarter of the previous fiscal. SBI Life said in a regulatory filing. Total income increased to ₹26,626.71 crore in the latest December quarter from ₹20,458.31 crore in October-December 2021.



Google-CCI fight an opportunity for India's digital ecosystem

THE VERDICT IS A "MONUMENTAL STEP TOWARDS FAIR COMPETITION AND PRACTICES IN INDIA", AND THE DECISION "COULD POTENTIALLY EMBOLDEN THE STARTUP ECOSYSTEM IN THE COUNTRY, BOOST INNOVATION, AND ENCOURAGE SMALLER PLAYERS TO ENTER THE MARKET", ACCORDING TO THE ADIF

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 21: The latest verdict of Supreme Court in the Google-CCI case can benefit the Indian tech and digital industry in the long run but there is a long road ahead to achieve that goal, industry experts said Saturday.

In the ruling earlier this week, a Supreme Court bench said the findings by the CCI cannot be said to be "without jurisdiction or with manifest error" and affirmed the NCLAT order declining to grant interim relief to Google.

The bench directed the NCLAT to dispose of Google's appeal by March 31, and granted Google

seven days to deposit 10 per cent of the ₹1,337.76 crore penalty imposed by the CCI. However, the Supreme Court is yet to decide on the merits of the case.

"The SC order is good wherein Google may have to deposit initial money. But to recover the fine and penalty, the government will have to win before NCLAT and the Supreme Court by demonstrating clear violation of Indian laws by Google operations in the country," Supreme Court lawyer and cyber law expert, Virag Gupta, told IANS.

The apex court observed that Google ought to follow regulations established by the European Union. "However, India lacks a strong



legal framework. European penalties against tech giants are based on a robust GDPR regime. The Digital Markets Act of the EU defines three elements of size, control and durable positions of tech giants. Such comparable laws don't

exist in India," Gupta lamented.

Google alleged that the CCI copy-pasted parts of a European court order without examining associated evidence in India. The tech giant is reviewing the Supreme Court's decision.

A company spokesperson said in a statement that the decision "is limited to interim relief and did not decide the merits of our appeal."

"Android has greatly benefited Indian users, developers, and OEMs and played a key role in India's digital transformation. We remain committed to our users and partners and will cooperate with the CCI on the way forward, in parallel with our appeal," said a Google spokesperson.

The CCI has also imposed a penalty of ₹936.44 crore on Google in a separate case for abusing its dominant position with respect to its Play Store policies.

Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Minister of State of Electronics and IT, had hailed the CCI's decision, stressing that a free and fair internet is a firm policy goal for the government.

According to the Alliance of Digital India Foundation (ADIF), a policy think tank for Indian startups, the SC order established that Google is not above the law of the land.

"The recent CCI decision and the SC upholding NCLAT decision of refusing stay has set a global benchmark, and would cement India's position in preventing startup's interests and severely restricting abuse of dominance by Google," said an ADIF spokesperson.

CASH-STRAPPED

Foreign shipping lines warn to stop services for Pak

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, Jan 21: Shipping agents have warned the cash-strapped Pakistan government that all exports could come to a halt as foreign shipping lines are considering stopping their services for the country after banks stopped remitting freight charges to them due to a lack of dollar availability, according to a media report Saturday.

Apart from bordering countries, almost all the international logistics from Pakistan are catered by sea and any disruption could create serious issues for the country's international trade, Pakistan Ship's Agents Association (PSAA) chairman Abdul Rauf warned Finance Minister Ishaq Dar through a letter.

"If the international trade is stopped the economic situation will worsen," the association warned, adding that the foreign shipping lines are already considering winding up their services in Pakistan due to reduced cargo volumes.

The PSAA chairman also wrote letters to State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Governor Jameel Ahmed, Commerce Minister Syed Naveed Namar, and Maritime Affairs Minister Faisal Sabzwari, the Dawn newspaper reported.

Rauf requested the ministries and departments concerned to intervene to ensure continuity in Pakistan's seaborne trade by allowing outward remittance of surplus freight amounts to respective foreign shipping lines forthwith. "Due to discontinuation of outward remittance of surplus freight amounts to respective foreign shipping lines, was hampering Pakistan's seaborne trade which is heavily dependent on foreign shipping lines," the letter added.

NZ test awaits India

WFI rejects wrestlers' allegations



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Jan 21: A below-par show against debutants Wales denying them a direct quarterfinal berth, hosts India would look to address their attacking woes against a plucky New Zealand for a place in the last-eight stage of the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup here Sunday.

India needed to beat Wales – eight places below them in world rankings – by a margin of eight goals to top Pool D and qualify directly for the quarterfinals but the home side could only notch up a 4-2 win Thursday, as the forwards lacked in finishing. India are now up against New Zealand in the must-win crossover match. The Black Sticks finished third in Pool C with a win and two losses.

Currently ranked 12th in the world as against India's sixth position, New Zealand – who have never reached the semifinals – have also not done anything extraordinary in the tournament and the home side definitely would start as favourites in front of an expected jampacked Kalinga Stadium.

India's key midfielder Hardik Singh has been ruled out of the remainder of the tournament after he failed to recover from his hamstring injury sustained in the match against England January 15.

Hardik's absence will be a big setback for India as they have been struggling in the attacking department, and considering the fact that they are expected to run into defending champions Belgium in the quarterfinals if they beat New Zealand.

Hardik, who scored a brilliant solo goal in India's 2-0 win over Spain in the opening match, will be replaced by alternate player Raj Kumar Pal. He did not play against Wales. Against a Wales team whom England and Spain had beaten 5-0 and 5-1, the Indians struggled to find goals as the forwards put up a poor show.

The Indians simply failed to get their strategy right against Wales, who defended in numbers inside their own circle. The Indian defence, which had a clean sheet till then, conceded two goals against Wales, who are ranked 14th in the world.

Injured midfielder Hardik Singh was Saturday ruled out of the remainder of the FIH World Cup, dealing a big blow to India. The 24-year-old failed to recover from a hamstring injury sustained at the fag end of India's pool match against England, January 15

Captain Harmanpreet Singh scored his and the team's first goal from penalty corners, while the experienced Akashdeep Singh saved India by scoring twice after Wales made it 2-2 at the end of the third quarter. In the absence of Hardik, the performance of senior players like Mandeep Singh and Akashdeep will be key for the hosts.

India, no doubt, would start as favourites against New Zealand, but the Black Sticks will not be an easy side to beat. India had beaten them twice (4-3 and 7-4) in October-November last year during the FIH Pro League at the same stadium here but New Zealand are no pushovers in world hockey.

It will not be an easy match against New Zealand. It was a very tough match in the first game (in FIH Pro League) though the second one was a bit easier. We have to play our best," Reid had said.

Historically, the two sides had played 44 matches against each other and India had won 24 of them while losing 15. Five games were drawn. The last time New Zealand beat India was a 2-1 win in 2019.

New Zealand would be smarting after their 2-3 loss to Malaysia in their final Pool C match Thursday. They had beaten tournament debutants Chile 3-1 in their opening game before expectedly losing to Netherlands 0-4.

New Zealand have some genuinely world class players in their ranks and the Indians will have to play their best. Defender Blair Tarrant, defensive midfielder Nick Ross and veteran striker Simon Child are New Zealand's key players. Penalty corner expert Kane Russell is yet to sound the board so far and would be gunning for goals. Sam Lana and Sam Hiha have scored two goals each in the tournament and they would look to add more.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 21: The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) has rejected all the allegations, including that of sexual harassment against its president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, and claimed that the wrestlers' protest was motivated by a "hidden agenda to dislodge the current management".

The WFI denied all the charges in its response to the government's notice and asserted that "there is no scope for arbitrariness and mismanagement" in the federation.

The Sports Ministry had sought an explanation from WFI after the country's top wrestlers sat on a dharna and alleged that the federation chief sexually harassed women wrestlers and acts like a "dictator".

The WFI sent its reply on Friday evening and, few hours later, the wrestlers called off their protest after the government announced that it will form an oversight committee to probe the charges. It also said the WFI chief will step aside till the investigation is over.

"The WFI is managed by an elected body as per its constitution, and therefore, there is no scope for arbitrariness and mismanagement in WFI by any one individually, including the president," the WFI said in its response to the Sports Ministry.

"The WFI, in particular, under

the sitting president has always acted keeping the best interests of wrestlers in mind. The WFI has enhanced the image of wrestling sport nationally as well as internationally and for the record of this ministry, it is not possible without fair, supportive, clean and strict management of WFI," it added.

The allegations were made by renowned wrestlers Vinesh Phogat, Bajrang Punia, Sakshi Malik and Ravi Dahiya. The federation brought to the notice of the government that it has a five-member sexual harassment committee in place, chaired by its secretary general VN Prasood and which also has Sakshi as a member.

It said the charges were "motivated, biased, unfounded, untrue and false" and that the allegations were made solely with a view to harm the president, the WFI and its coaches.

"Any aggrieved person/wrestler may approach the said committee for its grievances if any, and the committee is bound to inquire as per law. However, no such complaint of any such nature as has been received from the protestors/wrestlers," the WFI wrote.

The wrestlers, including young Anshu Malik, Sangeeta Phogat and Sonam Malik among others, started a sit-in protest at Jantar Mantar here on Wednesday and demanded the sacking of the WFI chief.

The wrestlers also demanded that the WFI be disbanded immediately and a new panel is formed, including grapplers. The WFI listed 23 national events conducted in 2022 and claimed it "speaks of fair, supportive, clean and strict management".

The WFI questioned the timing of the protest, and said vested interests are behind it. "Who have evidently acted more in personal interest or under undue pressure or under any bigger conspiracy to malign and defame the present management of the WFI or president for vested interest only."

"The protesting wrestlers are accountable to explain for themselves, to the public as well as the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, particularly when mostly the protestors are seen coming together from a particular region/state of Haryana," the federation wrote.

"It would also be worth drawing attention that even the next election of WFI is due in near future of 2023. That the protest is not in the best interest of the wrestlers, it has some personal as well as hidden agenda to dislodge the current management of WFI."

The letter, signed by WFI secretary general VN Prasood, also said that the federation is ready to cooperate with the government and will provide all the necessary information the ministry seeks.



Vinesh Phogat speaks during the wrestlers' protest against president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh

Pacers help India seal series against Kiwis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Raipur, Jan 21: India's relentless pace attack ran through a fragile New Zealand batting line-up as the hosts cantered to an eight-wicket win in the second ODI to seal the three-match series here Saturday.

The Mohammed Shami-led attack produced an incisive effort to bowl out New Zealand for a meagre 108 before India knocked off the runs in 20.1 overs. Rohit Sharma hit a sublime 51 (50b, 7x4, 2x6) while Shubman Gill remained unbeaten on 40 (53b, 6x4).

It was an emphatic win but the sea of fans that had flocked to the remotely located Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh Stadium for Raipur's first international game was left wanting for more due to the early finish.

Shami (3/18) and Mohammed Siraj (1/10) made life tough for the batters with their high-quality seam bowling reducing New Zealand to a dismal 15/5 after Rohit opted to bowl. The odd ball stopping made the New Zealand batters' job tougher though the Indian openers made batting look easy in the evening.

New Zealand opener Finn Allen was the first to depart after missing a full ball that came back in late to clip the pads and shatter the



WONDERFUL SPELL: Mohammed Shami reacts after dismissing Finn Allen in the second ODI, Saturday

stumps. Siraj then got one to seam away from good length inducing an outside edge from number three Henry Nicholls with Gill doing the rest in the slips.

Two brilliant return catches from Shami and Hardik Pandya (2/16) put New Zealand in further trouble. Shami got one to shape

away and Daryl Mitchell, in his attempt to flick it on the on-side, ended up mistiming it back to the bowler.

Hardik's one-handed catch to get rid of Devon Conway in the 10th over was sensational. Shardul Thakur (1/26) got himself into the wicket column in the following

over by drawing a thick edge from Tom Latham's bat. It was a loose shot from the New Zealand skipper, ending with an easy catch to Gill in the slips.

New Zealand were in dire straits but all hope was not lost with last match's centurion Michael Bracewell (22) and the equally dan-

gerous Glenn Phillips (36) in the middle. Shami bowled a sharp bouncer and Bracewell went for the pull only to edge it back to the keeper.

Mitchell Santner (27) joined Phillips and the duo took the team past 100 with a 47-run stand for the seventh wicket. However, both were dismissed in a space of six balls to end New Zealand's hopes of a recovery.

While Santner played a well-disguised slower ball from Hardik on to the stumps, Phillips gave a regulation catch to Suryakumar Yadav at deep midwicket off a long hop from Washington Sundar (2/7). Kuldeep Yadav (1/29) trapped number 11 Blair Tackner in front to end the New Zealand innings in 34.3 overs.

India were clinical in the run chase with Rohit enthralling the crowd with his trademark pull shots. Fresh from a double hundred in Hyderabad, Gill too came up with some exquisite strokes. The New Zealand pacers failed to get as much seam movement as their Indian counterparts, making the task easier for the batters.

BRIEF SCORES: New Zealand 108 (Glenn Phillips 36; Mohammed Shami 3/18, Washington Sundar 2/7, Hardik Pandya 2/16) lost to India 111/2 (Rohit Sharma 51, Shubman Gill 40 n o) by 8 wickets.

MOST US MEN IN OZ OPEN WEEK 2 SINCE 2004; DJOKOVIC WINS

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Melbourne, Jan 21: It's been almost two full decades since this many US men reached Week 2 at the Australian Open.

And while that group in 2004 included a couple of Grand Slam champions in Andre Agassi and Andy Roddick, everything is all so new for the quartet there this time: Tommy Paul, who is 25; JJ Wolf, 24; Sebastian Korda, 22; and Ben Shelton, 20, are all about to make their fourth-round debuts at Melbourne Park. It must feel very much like a chance for a career-defining result for them and other young men still in the bracket.

The 67th-ranked Wolf eliminated lucky loser Michael Mmoh 6-4, 6-1, 6-2 in an all-American matchup Saturday. Wolf next plays yet another American, 89th-ranked Shelton. Using his passport to travel outside of the United States for the first time in his life, Shelton extended his stay in his Australian Open debut by defeating 113th-ranked Australian wild-card entry Alexei Popyrin 6-3, 7-6(4), 6-4.

Paul, who is ranked 35th, topped Californian Jensen Brooksby by a score of 6-1, 6-4, 6-3. Next for Paul will be either three-time major champion Andy Murray or 14th-seeded Roberto Bautista Agut.

This is seen by most as a period of transition in men's tennis, a

chance for new faces to make themselves known.

That No. 5 seed Andrey Rublev, a 25-year-old from Russia, and No. 9 seed Holger Rune, a 19-year-old from Denmark, would still be in the bracket, and are set up to face each other for a quarterfinal berth Monday, should come as a surprise to no one.

Still, neither has been past the final eight at any Grand Slam tournament. Nor has No.22 Alex de Minaur; a 23-year-old from Australia, who advanced Saturday and now gets the unenviable task of meeting 21-time Slam champion Novak Djokovic.

Nine of those titles came at Melbourne Park, and Djokovic has now won 24 consecutive matches there after topping No.27 Grigor Dimitrov 7-6(7), 6-3, 6-4 at night despite some more signs of trouble from his left hamstring.

An intriguing fourth-round matchup on the women's side was established with No.5 Aryna Sabalenka to take on No.12 Belinda Bencic. Sabalenka is now 7-0 in 2023 after beating Elise Mertens 6-2, 6-3, and Bencic stretched her winning streak to eight matches by defeating Camila Giorgi 6-2, 7-5.

Also moving into Week 2: No.4 seed Caroline Garcia, two-time major finalist Karolina Pliskova, Zhang Shuai, Donna Vekic and 17-year-old Linda Fruhvirtova.

ICC RECOMMENDS 6-TEAM T20 EVENTS FOR LA GAMES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 21: The International Cricket Council is still hopeful of the sport's inclusion in Los Angeles 2028 Olympics and has "recommended" six-team T20 events for both men and women to the Games' organising committee.

A final decision on the inclusion of cricket will be taken by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) around October after the organisers finalise the list of new sports by March, stated a report in ESPNcricinfo. These will then be ratified at the IOC's session in Mumbai, which is expected to take place around October this year, it added.

In a strategic move, BCCI secretary Jay Shah has been added to the ICC's Olympics working group headed by ICC chairman

Greg Barclay, and which also includes Indra Nooyi (independent director) and Paraag Marathe (former USA Cricket president).

Shah was included "keeping in mind India's ambition" to host the Olympics in 2036. "And the ICC believes Shah's involvement could lend an important and potentially influential push in its negotiations with the IOC for cricket to be included at sport's biggest global event," the report said.

The proposal for a six-team event was made to ensure a more cost efficient Olympics which is part of their Olympic Agenda, it added.

Cricket along with eight other sports – baseball/softball, flag football, lacrosse, break dancing, karate, kickboxing, squash and motorsport – are competing to make the LA 28 roster.

Balaji-Jeevan stuns 5th seeds, reaches Rd2



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Melbourne, Jan 21: The Indian men's doubles pair of N Sriram Balaji and Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan continued their good run by stunning fifth seeds Ivan Dodig and Austin Krajicek in the opening round of the Australian Open here Saturday.

Balaji and Nedunchezhiyan, who came into the tournament as an alternate team, took two hours

20 minutes to win the first round fixture 7-6(6), 2-6, 6-4 against Croatian Dodig and American Krajicek.

In the mixed doubles event, veterans Sania Mirza and Rohan Bopanna too advanced to the second round, with a straight set win.

Despite having less number of aces and winners, Balaji and Nedunchezhiyan had more service points, and delivered when it mattered the most, converting both their break points.

The Indian team, featuring in its debut Grand Slam, won the tie-breaker after saving a set point. However, they were broken in the sixth and eighth games as Dodig and Krajicek forced a decider. A forehand winner in the seventh game gave Balaji and Nedunchezhiyan the crucial break in the third set.

Balaji and Nedunchezhiyan, who had finished runners-up at the Tata Open Maharashtra earlier this month, will take on the French duo of Jeremy Chardy and Fabrice Martin in the second round.

Mirza and Bopanna dispatched locals Jaimee Fourlis and Luke Saville 7-5 6-3 in their opening round. The Indian took a crucial break in the 11th game to take the opening set. With the wind in their sails, Mirza and Bopanna then dominated the second set, breaking their opponents in the seventh and ninth game.

