



## HAUNTING PAST

Singer Neha Bhasin recalls how she was sexually abused at Haridwar when she was 10

LEISURE P2



## RAIL BLOCKADE LIFTED

Punjab farmers, who had set up rail blockades across the state, will now allow train services

TWO STATES P7



## SAUDI HOSTS G20

Saudi Arabia hosts the G20 summit in a first for an Arab nation, with the downsized virtual forum

INTERNATIONAL P10

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## VOTE RECOUNTING BIDEN WINS GEORGIA 'OFFICIALLY'



AGENCIES

Washington, Nov 21: Georgia has certified the results of the 2020 US Presidential poll following the full hand recount, making it official that Democrat Joe Biden won the state's 16 electoral votes.

"As Secretary of State, I believe that the numbers that we have presented today are correct," Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, a Republican, said at a news conference Friday. "Close margins of voters leads to fights that are as fierce after Election Day as the campaigns before," he added. "Close elections sow distrust. People feel their side was cheated. We saw this from the Democrats in 2018. And we see this from Republicans today."

The recount of roughly five million votes found that the former Vice President received 12,284 more votes than President Donald Trump in the traditional Republican stronghold, reports Xinhua news agency.

Most counties saw only minor changes in their tallies, with the recount vote totals differing by single digits.

# Dragon ups the ante along LAC

## CHINA RAPIDLY REINFORCES RADAR COVERAGE BETWEEN LADAKH AND SIKKIM

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Nov 21: China is upgrading and installing radars swiftly along the 3,488-km Line of Actual Control (LAC) even as it is engaged in talks with India to resolve the border dispute.

India and China are engaged in an eight-month standoff at LAC in Eastern Ladakh. Both the countries are also engaged in military and diplomatic talks to resolve the border dispute.

A total of eight rounds of corps commander level talks have happened between the militaries of both the countries and the ninth round of talks is to be scheduled very soon to disengage troops.

Amid this, apart from aggressively developing infrastructure, China has started installing radars from Ladakh to Sikkim region. Top sources said that at Ye Cheng a medium-sized building and a watch tower have come up at the facility.

The number of radars installed has also increased from three to four which include a JY-9 radar, one JY-26 radar, one HGR-105 radar and one JLC-88B radar. At Pali and Phari Kyarang La, which is opposite Sikkim, the radar site



is located two kilometers west of Kyarang La, and comprises four radars.

"Infrastructure development has been witnessed at surveillance facility at Yamdrok Tso which is opposite Central Bhutan," the top source said.

Around six km northeast of Tsona is the Cuona electronic warfare station. This site has three radomes, three radars and five support buildings. Infrastructure



development has been discerned at the surveillance facility located 2.6 kilometer North West of Tsona Dz Heli base.

Sources said that a radome site is located 6 kilometer south west of Kechen Tsho. It comprises radome, control building and antenna masts within a perimeter wall. At Qomo Dz the radar site comprises one radome atop a double-storied building, one control building and one medium building, all enclosed by a perimeter wall.

## Chinese Def Minister to visit Nepal Nov 29

KATHMANDU: Chinese Defence Minister and State Councilor Wei Fenghe is scheduled to visit Nepal November 29. Wei will arrive in the Himalayan nation two days after Indian Foreign Secretary Harsha Vardan Shringla concludes his Nepal visit November 27. Although China and Nepal are yet to announce the visit, according to the multiple media reports in Kathmandu, General Wei will embark on the single-day visit at a time when India is sending its high-level officials to Kathmandu to mend bilateral ties that has hit bottom low due to a boundary dispute. Wei is the first high-ranking Chinese official to visit Nepal since Chinese President Xi Jinping's trip last October. General Wei, a former rocket force commander with the China's People's Liberation Army (PLA), is the first of four members of the Central Military Commission chaired by President Xi. His visit is considered important at a time when the ruling Nepal Communist Party is engaged in intra-party row.

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## Petrol, diesel prices up for second straight day

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Nov 21: Oil marketing companies (OMCs) Saturday raised the retail price of petrol and diesel for the second consecutive day after a break of almost two months.

The price of petrol has increased by 15 paise per litre in the national capital to ₹81.38 from ₹81.23 a litre Friday. Similarly, retail price of diesel has been increased by 20 paise per litre to ₹70.88 per litre in Delhi.

With the price revision, the retail price of both the auto fuels has also been increased across the country but the level of increase is different across the cities due to variable taxation structure pursued by the states.

The benchmark Brent crude price is hovering close to \$45 a barrel for some time now while US WTI crude is also over \$42 a barrel. The two have remained firm since the beginning of the

The increase in prices was expected as global oil market shows signs of firming up after positive news on coronavirus vaccine

The demand for oil and falling inventory levels in major consuming markets has also firming up crude price

PRICES IN BHUB	
PETROL	₹81.98 (+0.35)
DIESEL	₹77.18 (+0.40)

month after remaining soft in most parts of October at close to \$40 a barrel or less. OMC sources said that auto fuel hike Friday and Saturday may not end just yet and the price of the two petroleum products may increase gradually over the next week as well. This is required to keep OMCs from incurring losses on the sale of petrol and diesel. India has brought both petrol and diesel out from an earlier administrative price regime.

# BJP, Cong stall proceedings over closure of 14K schools



If the government closes down the schools, what will be the fate of the teachers

NARASINGHA MISHRA | CONGRESS LEGISLATURE PARTY LEADER

The government Chief Whip to bring a motion tomorrow (Sunday) for a detailed debate on the issue: Speaker

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 21: No business could be carried out in the second half of Saturday Assembly session as Opposition BJP and Congress created an uproar over shutting down of around 14,000 schools in the state on grounds of low enrolment.

After a hot debate on custodial death cases, the House witnessed noisy scene as Opposition members went to Well of the House demanding a discussion and concrete decision on government's plan to close down over 14,000 schools functioning across the state.

Senior Congress legislator Narasingha Mishra first raised the issue which was supported by BJP members.

Stating that education is a fundamental right for everyone, Mishra urged Speaker Surjya Narayan Patro to direct the government for taking necessary steps in this regard.

Leader of Opposition Pradipta Naik requested the Speaker to suspend all



businesses of the day and convey an all-party meeting to discuss the issue. The School and Mass Education minister and department secretary should be asked to present details on the issue, he said.

Another senior Congress MLA Tara Prasad Bahinipati said the decision of the government to close down over 14,000 schools shows that 'British Raj' is going on in the state. "If the schools will be closed down, where the students of hilly areas like Koraput will go? The decision should be rolled back otherwise KBK region will strongly protest it and government will be responsible for it," he added.

# Meeting energy needs; adhering to green commitments

## IN THE NEXT 5 YRS, THE NATION TARGETS TO DOUBLE OIL REFINING CAPACITY WHILE REDUCING CARBON FOOTPRINT BY 30-35 PC

AGENCIES

Mumbai/ New Delhi, Nov 21: PM Narendra Modi Saturday laid out the country's oil refining capacity and carbon footprint plans while addressing a petroleum university's convocation.

"India is trying to reduce its carbon footprint by 30-35 per cent and working to double its oil refining capacity in the next 5 years," the PM said.

He was virtually addressing the 8th Convocation of Pandit Deendayal Petroleum University in Gandhinagar.

The statement on oil refining capacity gives a much more aggressive timeline than previously decided despite the coronavirus pandemic blighting the economy. The country's energy minister was quoted here in June as saying India's oil refining capacity could jump to 450-500 million tonnes in



10 years from the current level of about 250 million tonnes. The convocation was also addressed virtually by industrialist Mukesh Ambani, whose Reliance Industries Ltd operates the world's biggest oil refinery in Modi's home state of Gujarat. Modi said India was also aiming to raise the share of natural gas in its energy-consumption mix by up to four times. The cleaner-burning fuel currently accounts for

about six per cent of the energy consumed in the country. India would achieve its targets of increasing renewable energy capacity to 175 gigawatts by 2022 and 450 gigawatts by 2030 ahead of schedule, Modi added. The country had renewable energy capacity of about 75 gigawatts at the end of 2018.

The PM stressed on Gujarat's solar power movement and said that the energy sector can provide growth and jobs alike. He also said that India is moving swiftly on the solar energy scale. "Today, the per unit cost has dropped from ₹12-13 to under ₹2," he claimed and added that solar power has become an "integral part of the nation." The Climate Transparency Report looks at how G20 countries are doing when it comes to climate action and transitioning to a net-zero economy.

## How countries fare on climate targets?

- **FRANCE:** Insufficient climate actions to meet targets but doing well for policies around phasing out coal and fossil fuel-powered transport
- **GERMANY:** Insufficient climate actions to meet targets but leading for new zero-energy buildings
- **ITALY:** Insufficient climate actions to meet targets but doing better than others for energy efficiency, zero-energy buildings, and phasing out coal
- **RUSSIA:** Critically insufficient climate actions to meet targets. Also lagging behind in reducing emissions from passenger vehicles and energy-efficient buildings
- **TURKEY:** Critically insufficient climate actions to meet targets

■ **UK:** Insufficient climate actions to meet targets but doing well in policies to phase out coal and fossil fuel-powered transport

■ **INDIA:** The only '2°C compatible' country in the G20

■ **THE US and CHINA:** Are found to be a long way off meeting the goals they set themselves as part of the Paris-agreement



FROM THE RECENT CLIMATE TRANSPARENCY REPORT

## ASSEMBLY AGAIN ROCKED BY CUSTODIAL DEATHS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 21: The alleged custodial deaths in Puri and Biramitrapur continued to rock the Assembly for the second consecutive day Saturday with opposition BJP and Congress demanding stringent action against the erring police personnel including senior officers.

The issue was raised by Leader of Opposition Pradipta Naik as soon as the House assembled for the day. He rejected the state government's action of transferring Puri SP Akhileshwar Singh and demanded his suspension.

"K Ramesh was picked up by police at the instruction of SP. Ramesh was hacked to death at the police station. However, the SP says that Ramesh died following a scuffle with police. His transfer is just eyewash to divert public attention. A detailed discussion should be conducted through a motion in the House," Naik said.

The BJP leader also alleged that Ramesh's cremation was not done according to the Hindu tradition. Those who remained present at the cremation were taken to Brahmagiri police station and kept there for two days, he said.

The Leader of Opposition said that the state government cannot protect IAS and IPS officers by punishing low ranking officials. "We demand suspension and booking of Puri SP in the murder case," Naik said demanding a ruling from the Speaker.

He alleged that law and order situation has completely collapsed in the state as six members of a family were killed in Bolangir district. He also raised the issue of a Sarpanch seeking sexual favour from a woman in order to allocate a house under Awas Yojana meant for poor people in Kalahandi.

Congress Legislature Party leader Narasingha Mishra also came down heavily on the state government and dubbed prevalence of "Jungle Raj" in the state. "When such custodial deaths are happening, the Odisha Human Rights Commission doesn't have a chairman."

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



No other channel can have this story because only I hire fiction writers

WEATHER	
	BHUB CTK
TEMP MAX	32.7°C 32.5°C
TEMP MIN	22.3°C 21.2°C
Humidity	95% 84%
Rainfall	Nil Nil
	Partly cloudy sky



## SIA REACTS TO BACKLASH OVER AUTISM PORTRAYAL

Singer Sia has reacted to criticism she is facing over the portrayal of autism in her upcoming directorial film, *Music*, and asked people to watch the film before jumping to conclusions. The backlash against Sia started after the trailer of the film was unveiled.

## BLACK PANTHER SHOOT TO BEGIN IN JULY 2021

The sequel to the superhit superhero film *Black Panther* will begin filming in July next year, in Atlanta, according to *The Hollywood Reporter*. The sequel was temporarily put on hold after the sudden demise of Chadwick Boseman, who played the titular superhero, last year.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Today you will be perplexed by some inexplicable and fantastic event. Either that, or you may experience an unforeseen but favourable incident. It may not be earth-shaking, but it will definitely make you assess things.

**TAURUS**  
Much to the disappointment and annoyance of your friends and associates, you are likely to act unduly possessive and self-centred about persons and objects, warns Ganesh. Be sure, your overprotective attitude is not likely to amuse anyone.

**GEMINI**  
Your desire to go travelling with your family members will receive an impetus today and you will set out to schedule your itinerary. It is a good time for travel and you will be able to more than satisfactorily execute your travel plans within your budget, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
You may have to give more priority to your job. You will swiftly finish the task entrusted to you with concentration. Your zeal for work will be high. You will give so much importance to friends that you will go out of way to meet them.

**LEO**  
You will be able to meet all challenges and obstacles successfully. Your ultimate goal is to come out victorious from any situations. There is a possibility that you will have to face severe competition in business or trade.

**VIRGO**  
Your communication and creative abilities are your best weapons. You will be overflowing with zest for life and will exude cheerfulness. However, Ganesh warns that your creativity will bloom fully only in situations where there is no pressure or strain.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh says that you will be full of joy, enthusiasm and vigor today. Your knowledge will improve by being in the company of intelligent people. Anything that you take up today will have your luck or destiny supporting you. Ganesh wishes you success in all your undertakings.

**SCORPIO**  
You reveal your true avatar of being adventurous today, feels Ganesh. It's a favourable day for businessmen as they would make plans that would yield them huge profits. With your great communication and convincing power, you are going to impress your superiors today.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Being a part of all things bright and beautiful will remain the highpoint today, says Ganesh. You may don the hat of an activist and fight injustice and discrimination in the right spirits. Even if you are asked to conquer the world, you will be able to do it today, says Ganesh.

**CAPRICORN**  
You may feel utterly disappointed as all of your hard-work and planning will go in vain. You will have difference of opinion with others and at times these differences may turn into heated arguments, predicts Ganesh.

**AQUARIUS**  
Your plate will be full with plenty of work, and you will have no clue about how to handle all the chaos. Patience and organisational skills, your best qualities will help you sail through these difficult times, assures Ganesh.

**PISCES**  
It is important to plan your finances in life, and you will devote your energies towards the same today. You might turn stingy with your money all of a sudden. An unexpected illness in the family will leave you worried.

## Neha Bhasin opens up on being sexually abused

New Delhi: Singer Neha Bhasin has opened up on being sexually abused several times in her life.

In an interview, the *Dil diyan galan* singer opened up about the sexual abuse she faced as a child. She revealed that she was molested at the age of 10 during her visit to Haridwar. "I was 10 years old. I was in Haridwar, one of the religious places in India. My mother was standing a few feet away from me. Suddenly, a guy came and poked his finger inside my a\*\*. I was shocked. I just ran away. Then, a few years later, a man grabbed my breasts in a hall. I clearly remember these incidents. I used to think that it's my fault. Now, people have come on social media and have started abusing others -- mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually -- there. I consider it faceless terrorism," Neha said.

IAN S



## Sanjay expresses gratitude for fans' support

Mumbai: Actor Sanjay Dutt says he is grateful for the love and support he has received from his fans and followers over the past few months.

Back in August, it was revealed that the actor has been diagnosed with cancer and was undergoing treatment. In October, Dutt shared a health update saying he has come out victorious in his battle with the disease.

Now, he is looking forward to the digital release of his film, *Torbaaz*.

"The story of *Torbaaz* is closely aligned with the reality of Afghanistan, and the beautiful depiction of cricket as a means of deliverance is as true for the children as it is for my character, Nasser Khan, who bounces back from personal tragedy," Dutt said.

"I am truly grateful for all the

love and support that I have received over the past few months, and I am glad to be returning to the screen with this powerful film. I am glad that the film will reach discerning audiences around the world, where the story can resonate across boundaries," he added.

IAN S

## Be YouNick: From Dombivali to LA



*When one gets the support of audience, specials and cross media collaborations are bound to happen, says YouTube sensation Nikunj Lotia who has over four million subscribers on his channel*

AGENCIES

Social media influencer Nikunj Lotia, who found popular success through relatable, comic sketches posted on his YouTube channel BeYouNick, has come a long way in his creations and collaborations. From doing odd jobs at a cyber cafe and bartending to make extra money, the YouTube star now has over 4.1 million YouTube subscribers.

Speaking about creating content on YouTube, he says, "When I was a kid, I was born into a well to do family but I saw things spiralling out pushing us to the other spectrum of socio economic class. As a kid, I remember helping my mom make a living for us by delivering theplas and other stuff. Then I did a few jobs including bartending with extra shifts just so that I could earn a bit more. Then there was a brief overlap where my videos were popular but not enough to sustain my family so that led to a lot of funny bartender conversations. I think life is a summation of all these ex-

periences and what you learn from it and how you use it."

Sharing his thoughts on how YouTube, after a humble beginning, are now having some popular shows, specials and cross-media collaborations, Nikunj adds, "I think when you are good at something there's a lot of vested interest to benefit collaboratively from it. YouTube is the perfect validation for how engaging your art form is, be it sketch comedy or stand up or cooking. When you get the audience behind you, specials and cross media collaborations are bound to happen.

The popular YouTube, narrating his lockdown tales, states, "The start of this year was great. We did mighty well, then we flew to LA and spent a month there to plan what all is to happen in the coming here. And then came Covid and it sort of changed the world as we knew it. From jamming on ideas in flesh and bones to doing it over video calls, from playing pranks to playing PUBG, and then finally getting infected and cured of Covid."

He might just write a book about those learnings in future,

concludes Nikunj.



With actor Ayushmann Khurrana

## SRK will always be Coach Sir: Vidya

Mumbai: Actress Vidya Malavade fondly recalls working with Shah Rukh Khan in the Shimit Amin directorial, *Chak De! India*, saying he will always be Coach Sir for all the girls in the cast of the 2007 sports drama.

"For all the girls who were a part of that film, Mr. Shah Rukh Khan will always be Coach Sir. He took so much care of us while we were shooting for that film. He never made us feel that we are any less than him," she said.

"I think that is just a way he is. If you work with him or when you meet him, he just puts

you on a pedestal and you feel you are floating! He is extremely charming and intelligent. I think I would have done something right in this birth or my last birth that I got an opportunity to share screen space with him," added Vidya.

In *Chak De! India*, SRK played the coach of Indian women's national hockey team, and the film depicts how he moulds an underdog team into eventual world champions. Vidya played the captain and goalkeeper of the team.

IAN S

### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

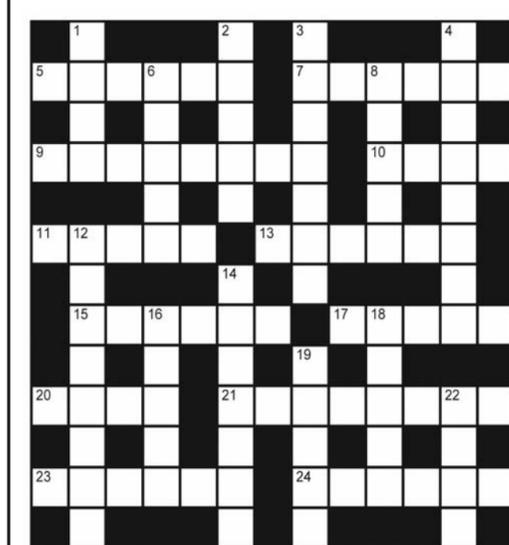


### BREVITY



### FUN post

### CROSSWORD

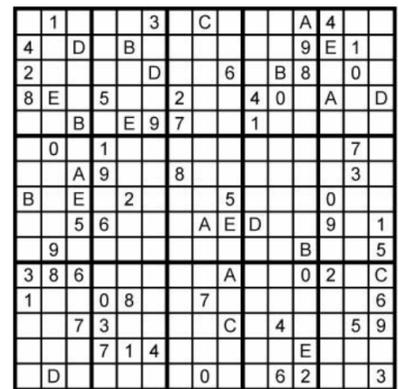


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- Across**
- 5 Choice bit
  - 7 Ask over
  - 9 Slaughter
  - 10 Fail miserably
  - 11 Bitter
  - 13 Breakfast cereal
  - 15 Playful aquatic animals
  - 17 Venomous snake
  - 20 Autocrat until 1917
  - 21 Muse of epic poetry
  - 23 Peaceful
  - 24 Dutch exports
  - 4 Food poisoning
  - 6 Seaweed dish
  - 8 Feelings
  - 12 American Chinese dish (4,4)
  - 14 Windpipe
  - 16 Brusque
  - 18 Dentist's tool
  - 19 Apartments
  - 22 Litter members
- Down**
- 1 Greek letter
  - 2 Timepiece
  - 3 Repulsive

### SUDOKU

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

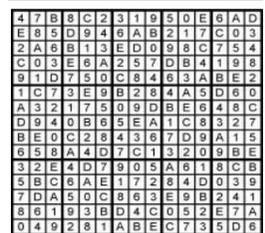


### SOLUTIONS

#### CROSSWORD



#### SUDOKU



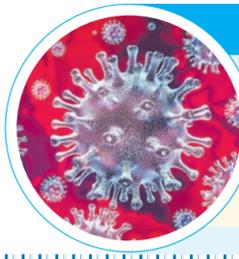
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



## FLOWER LOVERS

People buying flower saplings from a roadside vendor near Orissa High Court in Cuttack, Saturday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	5,81,13,171	4,02,72,279	13,80,993
India	90,50,597	84,78,124	1,32,726
Odisha	3,13,323	3,04,908	1,625

# 11 online services shot in the arm for MSME dept

Amidst the pandemic, the state govt was able to attract investments to the tune of ₹1.17 lakh crore, since Feb 2020, with an opportunity to create over 53,000 jobs

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Nov 21:** As part of 5T initiative, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Saturday launched 11 online services of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) department here through videoconferencing from his residence. These services will largely benefit the MEMSEs to avail government benefits and services in a hassle-free manner and add on to the ease of doing business in this sector.



As the pandemic has created a phase of economic recession all around the world, the state economy is also facing a tough time and the MSMEs need support of the govt at this critical juncture

**NAVEEN PATNAIK**  
CHIEF MINISTER

commendation for issue of Khadi industries certificate. "As you know, we are pursuing transformative initiatives through use of appropriate IT solutions to ensure efficiency and transparency in the process. The overall improvement in governance mechanism has made Odisha a top destination for new investments," Naveen said.

Even during the pandemic, he said, the state government was able to attract investments to the tune

of ₹1.17 lakh crore (since February 2020) with an opportunity to create over 53,000 jobs in varied sectors.

"My government is committed to create an enabling environment for MSME enterprises and support them to realise their fullest potentiality as it is the real growth engine of our economy," he said.

As the pandemic has created a phase of economic recession all around the world, the state economy is also facing a tough time and the MSMEs need support of the government at this critical juncture, he said. "The state government will certainly help them overcome the economic crisis they are passing through," the Chief Minister added.

He asked the MSME department to ensure that all eligible entrepreneurs are covered under various schemes implemented by the government from time to time.

The department should also continue its thrust on use of new generation technology and innovation for bringing transformational changes in the MSME ecosystem in the state, he further stated.

# CM writes to Soren for completion of Ichha dam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Nov 21:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has sought cooperation from his Jharkhand counterpart Hemant Soren for early completion of Ichha Dam project for the benefit of farmers of both the states.

Patnaik also urged Soren to ensure storage of water up to FRL (full reservoir level) in Chandil Dam in the monsoon season for mitigation of flood in Odisha.

Patnaik, in a letter to Soren, a copy of which was made available to media Saturday, said Subarnarekha irrigation project of Odisha will be able to utilise its full irrigation potential only after completion of Ichha dam by the Jharkhand government.

"I am happy to know that the government of Jharkhand has taken up Ichha dam construction work recently. Odisha government will extend all cooperation for Ichha dam construction and reimburse Odisha's share of the cost of the dam in time," Patnaik said in the letter.

A sum of ₹1026.91 crore has so far been paid to the Jharkhand government for the above works against the estimated share of ₹1208 crore of Odisha, he added.

"I am told that 36 villages in Odisha are affected under Ichha dam reservoir submergence area at FRL 225m. Accordingly, land ac-

## BOOSTING IRRIGATION POTENTIAL



THE SUBARNAREKHA MULTIPURPOSE PROJECT WAS TAKEN UP AS A FOLLOW-UP ACTION FOR UTILISATION OF WATER RESOURCES OF SUBARNAREKHA-KHARAKHAI BASIN AS PER THE TRIPARTITE AGREEMENT MADE IN 1978

SUBARNAREKHA IRRIGATION PROJECT OF ODISHA WILL BE ABLE TO UTILISE ITS FULL IRRIGATION POTENTIAL ONLY AFTER COMPLETION OF ICHHA DAM BY THE JHARKHAND GOVT

AS OF NOW, 5,196 ACRES OF LAND (98%) OUT OF 5,283 ACRES HAS ALREADY BEEN ACQUIRED. REHABILITATION ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN PAID TO 1,268 OUT OF THE TOTAL 1,369 PROJECT AFFECTED PERSONS

quisition and resettlement and rehabilitation (R & R) work in Odisha portion have been taken up.

"As of now, 5,196 acres of land (98%) out of 5,283 acres has already been acquired. Rehabilitation assistance has been paid to 1,268 out of the total 1,369 project affected persons," Patnaik wrote in the letter.

He further said that Chandil dam across river Subarnarekha has been

completed since long, but water has been stored up to RL 181.50 m during monsoon against FRL of 192 m due to R and R issues.

"As full storage capacity has not been utilised in the dam during monsoon season, we are facing flood havoc more often. I seek your cooperation in early completion of Ichha dam," Patnaik said.

Patnaik also thanked Soren for extending cooperation in provid-

ing water to Subarnarekha Irrigation project of Odisha during Kharif season.

The Subarnarekha multipurpose project was taken up as a follow up action for utilisation of water resources of Subarnarekha-Kharakhai Basin as per the tripartite agreement made during 1978 among erstwhile Bihar (now Jharkhand), Odisha & West Bengal, he said.

## CCTV footage says Ramesh cremated in dad's presence

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Puri, Nov 21:** The police Saturday released CCTV footage of the cremation of K Ramesh's body at Swargadwar here.

As per allegation, Ramesh died due to torture in police custody.

The CCTV footage was uploaded on the twitter handle of Puri Superintendent of Police (SP) amid allegation that police cremated Ramesh's body at Swargadwar without informing anything to his relatives.

The uploaded video, however, says that Ramesh's father K Gurumoorthy, uncle K Ariya and other relatives were present during the cremation at Swargadwar.

The police also released CCTV footage of the postmortem of Ramesh's body at the district headquarters hospital.

Meanwhile, a video message of Ramesh's mother went viral in social media. In the video message, Ramesh's mother claimed that she along with her husband is staying in a relative's house.

## CPET results out

**BHUBANESWAR:** The Higher Education department, Saturday, published statewide merit list of the common PG entrance test (CPET) 2020. The result shows that girls topping in approx 64 per cent of the PG subjects while boys topped in 36 subjects. Khushi Agrawal (statistics) tops the overall list with 91.29 per cent and Ipsita Mohapatra (Geology) is a close second. A total of 62,942 candidates appeared the CPET-2020 examinations out of the 71,789 registered candidates. The turnout percentage was 87.6.

# 5 accused hospitalised after third-degree by Pipli police

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Pipli, Nov 21:** In what would bring more trouble for the police administration in Puri after the recent death of a 32-year-old man in custody, five persons arrested by Pipli police in an attack case were subjected to third-degree torture by cops and hospitalised.

The accused were admitted to Sriram Chandra Bhanja Medical College and Hospital (SCBMCH) in Cuttack.

Pipli police in Puri district had arrested six persons November 18, 2020 in connection with the armed attack on a police informer Sajid Hussain November 13. Sajid had earlier provided some information regarding illegal drugs trade in Pipli area to the police, sources said.

Police had registered a case in this regard as per a complaint lodged by victim Sajid's brother Jahid. They had seized two swords and as many bikes from the arrested Hafiz Khan, 25, of Bhawanipur, Pratap Kumar Behera, 23, of Sultan Nagar, Raju Behera, 18, and Muhammad Tafiq, 18, of Jaypur Shasan, Jagannath Puspakala, 19, of Satasankha Colony

## DGP ORDERS ENQUIRY

Meanwhile, Director General of Police (DGP) Abhay directed the Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Central Range at Cuttack to investigate the allegations of custodial torture of five persons at Pipli police station in Puri. They were allegedly beaten up by cops before they were produced before the court November 19. On the other hand, human rights activist Pratap Chandra Mohanty, Saturday, moved the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) seeking the commission's intervention in the matter.

and Dharanidhar Behera, 24, of Teishpur area.

As per the allegation, the six accused were subjected to third-degree torture by Pipli police before they were produced in a local court.

"The arrested persons were subjected to severe torture by Pipli police. Even, they were unable to walk properly," alleged the relatives of the accused.

The court rejected the bail pleas of the accused and sent them to judicial custody at Nimapara in Puri district.

Nimapara jailer Santosini Das, however, refused to receive five among the six accused as they were found to be in critical condition, sources said.

Das asked the police to admit the five accused to Nimapara hospital. "The five accused were in critical condition and they have been shifted to SCBMCH from Nimapara hospital. While the sixth one, Raju Behera, is being treated at the jail," Das said.

Pipli police in-charge Gaurang Charan Prusti, however, rejected the allegation that the accused were subjected to third degree torture in custody.

"The accused were produced in a local court after their Covid-19 test at Mangalpur community health centre. The court rejected their bail pleas and sent them to Nimapara jail," he said.

# Doc dupes student of ₹10L

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Nov 21:** Commissionerate Police, Saturday, arrested a physician for allegedly duping a student of ₹10 lakh on the pretext of providing him an MBBS seat at Hi-tech Medical College in Rourkela in 2017.

The accused was identified as Prem Ranjan Ojha, former principal of Hi-Tech College of Physiotherapy Sources said Prajna Prakash Das, the victim, alleged in his complaint that he was assured by Ojha of an MBBS seat at the private medical college for the 2017-18 academic session. However, he failed

to fulfill the promise despite the lapse of more than three years.

Later, he lodged a complaint with Khandagiri police, who, during the course of investigation, found the allegations against the doctor true. They also ascertained that Ojha has duped several other students in similar manner.

# Alert locals foil ATM loot bid in Capital

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Nov 21:** Alert denizens in Jharpada area here foiled an ATM loot attempt made by some miscreants during the wee hours of Saturday.

The locals also nabbed one accused while others though managed to flee from the spot were later held by police.

The accused were identified as Lalan Kumar Das, 27, of Begusarai district in Bihar; Krushna Chandra Barik alias Tilu, 22, of Bhanjanagar in Ganjam, Kalandi Behera of Jankia in Khurda, Litu Behera of Khajuripada in Khandamal and Shankar Kumar Behera, 36, of Badabazar area in Ganjam.

All the accused have been staying at Haladipadia slum in Laxmisagar area here.

According to sources, the looters had targeted an ATM of Indian Bank at Cuttack Road in Jharpada area under Laxmisagar police limits.

"The incident took place at around 4am Saturday when the miscreants attempted to open the machine with iron rods and other instruments. There was a scuffle between locals and miscreants during which four members of the gang managed to flee the spot," said Deputy Commissioner of Police Umashankar Dash at a presser here.

Alert locals handed over one person to the police. However, police managed to nab four others later.

Sources also revealed that further investigation will lead to their identification and criminal link.

# Virtual tour sheds light on state's primitive tribes

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Nov 21:** As part of its virtual tour launched in August this year due to Covid-19 pandemic, the ST/SC Development department organised a tour on Paudi Bhuyan and Pahadi Kharia of the State Tribal Museum here, Saturday. The tour is organised every Saturday.

Paudi Bhuyan community mostly lives in the plateaus and hilly areas of Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Sambalpur and Angul districts. The Paudis speak local Odia with different accent. Their occupation includes broom stick making, mat making, basketry, litchi cultivation, tussar rearing. The Paudi Bhuyans are agriculturists, growing paddy in the valleys and participating in shifting cultivation in the hill slopes. Interacting with Orissa POST,



an ST/SC Development department official said, "Basically, the Paudis consider Dharam Devta as supreme being and Basukimata as supreme deity who look after people in all respects. The other deities are Boram, Birda, Pats, Galsiri and Thakurani. They also worship Hindu Gods and

Goddesses. Dehuri is the sacerdotal head who performs all religious rituals. They observe Am Nua, Kath Jatra, Akhani Paridhi, Asadh etc. So organising a virtual tour on them will definitely help people know more about these tribes." The Paudis keep their houses

## DIGITAL SHOW

THE PAUDI BHUYANS WORSHIP HINDU GODS AND GODDESSES. THEY OBSERVE AM NUA, KATH JATRA, AKHANI PARIDHI AND ASADH

PAHADI KHARIAS ARE FOREST DWELLERS WHO LIVE MAINLY IN JASHIPUR AND KARANJIA BLOCKS OF MAYURBHANJ DISTRICT. THE KHARIAS ARE EXPERT COLLECTORS OF HONEY, RESIN AND ARROWROOT

neat and clean-plastered with cowdung and red earth. Mostly 5 to 20 families constitute a village. The youth dormitory 'Darbarghar' is built at the centre of the village. Each family maintains a kitchen garden. The house is divided into three sections with the inner section

being used to store grains, middle for cooking and sleeping.

In another video, the visitors can visit the Pahadi Kharia. The Hill Kharias or Pahadi Kharias are forest dwellers who live mainly in Jashipur and Karanjia blocks of Mayurbhanj district.

Claiming Viswabasu Sabara, the first worshipper of Lord Jagannath, as their ancestor, the Hill-Kharias are expert collectors of honey, resin and arrowroot. They depend on food gathering and hunting. They also practice cultivation. Women usually weave mats from date palm. They make leaf plate and cups for their personal use.

They regard Badam as the presiding deity of Similipal. Sal trees are considered sacred. They worship forest and Jharia, a patch of Sal groves. They believe in Dharam (Sun God). Atvillage level Thakurani is the main deity.

# We aim to reach fish export up to ₹20k cr: Min

FISH FARMING HAS A HUGE POTENTIAL IN THE STATE AND CAN HELP CREATE GOOD EMPLOYMENT, SAID SAHOO



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Nov 21:** Minister of Agriculture & Farmers' Empowerment, Fisheries & Animal Resources Development and Higher Education Arun Kumar Sahoo said the government aims to reach fisheries export of ₹20,000 crore. He said this at the world fisheries day event organised at Krushi Bhawan here Saturday.

Sahoo said fish farming has a huge potential in the state and can be a good way for being self-employment and self-dependent. Fish farming is a good process for generating double income generation for our farmers.

The minister said that this year Odisha has achieved a milestone in fish production sector as the state received two national level fisheries award given by the Union Ministry of Fisheries and Animal Husbandry and Dairying. Odisha received the 'Best Marine State' award and Kalahandi received the 'Best district'

**The average annual growth rate of fish production in the state over last five years is over 14 per cent which is one of the best in the food and agriculture sector**

award in inland fisheries sector

In 2019-20, the fisheries and aquaculture sector in Odisha produced around 8.16 lakh metric tonnes of fish. The average annual growth rate of fish production in the state over last five years is over 14 per cent which is one of the best in the food and agriculture sector.

The minister said that our scheme of providing gram panchayat tanks to women self help groups (SHG) for fish production has helped in making women empowered and also helped in doubling fish production. The minister said during Covid

# Odisha bags best marine state award

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, Nov 21:** The state government Saturday received two awards for the growth in fisheries sector on the occasion of the World Fisheries Day in a ceremony organised by the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying here.

The state has received the "Best Marine State" award and Kalahandi district received the "best district award" in inland fisheries sector. The awards were given by the Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Giriraj Singh in the presence of Minister of State Pratap Chandra Sarangi and Sanjeev Kumar Balyan along with other officials.

According to the ministry, the 'Best Marine State' award carries a financial incentive of ₹10 lakh while the 'Best Inland District' award for Kalahandi district carries a financial incentive of ₹3 lakh.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik stated that Odisha is committed to be a pioneer state in fish production to ensure food security and boost livelihood. He congratulated the fisheries & animal resources development department and Kalahandi district administration for receiving the awards.

The fisheries and animal resources

department said the fisheries & aquaculture sector in the state grew at an impressive rate of 18.98 per cent and produced around 8.16 lakh metric tonnes of fish during 2019-20. The average annual growth rate of the fish production in the state over last five years is over 14 per cent. As per the NSSO reports, the share of farmer's income in Odisha from allied sector activities including livestock and fisheries has significantly increased over last two decades from 1.5 per cent to 26 per cent.

It has been further said that the seafood exports from the state has increased by 78 per cent in last five years from ₹1,817 crore during 2014-

15 to ₹3,243 crore during 2019-20. Currently, the state exports over 66,000 tonnes of sea food, majority of which is frozen shrimp.

The state government has taken up massive programmes to boost the fish fingerling production in the state. Four mega fish spawning centres are being set up in the state at Kausalyaganga, Saramanga, Chiplima and Bhanjanagar which will produce continuous and year round fish spawn.

Private fish seed growers and hatchery operators will be supported for quality fish seed production through fish hatchery accreditation and seed certification.



Union Fisheries minister Giriraj Singh giving away the award in the presence of ministers Pratap Chandra Sarangi and Sanjeev Kumar Balyan

19 pandemic many people of Odisha who were working outside the state and had returned, they can take the opportunity and can take ben-

efits of our scheme to be fish farmers and can help in making blue revolution more successful in state. As per an NSSO report, the

seafood exports from the state have increased by 78% over last five years from ₹1,817 crore from 2014-15 to ₹3,243 cr during 2019-20.

# State reports 778 new Covid-19 cases, 17 fresh fatalities

POST NEWS NETWORK

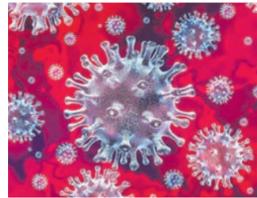
**Bhubaneswar, Nov 21:** Odisha's Covid-19 tally rose to 3,13,323 Saturday as 778 more people tested positive for the infection, a health official said. Seventeen fresh fatalities pushed the coastal state's coronavirus death toll to 1,625, he said.

As many as 446 new cases were reported in quarantine centres while 332 fresh infections were detected during contact tracing, the official said. Angul district reported the highest number of new cases at 68, followed by Sundergarh (64) and Khurda and Balasore (61 each), he said.

Five fresh fatalities were reported in Sundergarh, three in Keonjhar, two each in Cuttack and Ganjam, and one each in Deogarh, Jagatsinghpur, Khurda, Mayurbhanj and Puri districts, the official said.

Khurda district has so far reported the highest number of coronavirus fatalities at 273, followed by Ganjam (238), Cuttack (131) and Sundergarh (119), he said. Fifty-three coronavirus patients have died due to comorbidities so far, the official said.

The state now has 7,748 active coronavirus cases, while 3,03,897 people have recovered from the infection so far, he said. Odisha has so far tested over 55.18 lakh samples, including 47,464 Friday, the official said, adding the state's positivity rate stands at 5.68 per cent.



**Khurda district has so far reported the highest number of coronavirus fatalities at 273, followed by Ganjam (238), Cuttack (131) and Sundergarh (119)**

**46 new cases in Bhubaneswar**  
As many as 46 new Covid-19 cases were detected under Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) limits in last 24 hours, BMC said Saturday. While 10 of them are quarantine cases, remaining 36 are local contacts. Meanwhile, 68 persons who earlier tested positive for the disease have recovered.

According to a notification issued by the civic body, as of Saturday, 30,418 persons have tested positive for Covid-19 in Bhubaneswar out of which 29,603 have recovered. While there are 592 active cases while 202 persons succumbed to the disease.

# Athagarh forest to lose 4.5 ha for industry



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Nov 21:** Close to 4.5 hectares of Athagarh forest land are now under the threat of deforestation as the state government has planned to fell trees in the areas for establishment of power transmission lines due to the incoming of a cement plant there.

Villagers living near these forest areas claim that the forest department has started marking the trees which are scheduled to be felled for the industrial use. They also complained that neither Gram Sabha meeting has been done for the same nor the forest claims in such areas have been finalised by the government.

A complaint into this regard has now been written by the villagers of Dalabhadra from Athgarh in Cuttack district to the chief secretary, forest department, SC/ST department and other authorities seeking their intervention and suspension of the forest clearance for the same.

It is said that the village hosts 220 households with a population of 1500 out of which 300 are from the tribal communities. It is said that the villagers are largely dependent on the forest for minor forest produce and have also helped to conserve and protect the forest for decades.

"There is a Vana Surakshyan Samiti (VSS) in Dalabhadra for last 25 years and people of the village have restored the forest growth which had degraded for lack of protection and conservation measures. Around 200 ha of forest land was protected under the VSS scheme for which people have a say in decision making involving diversion of forest land," the complaint said.

It is said that the official documents claim that the forest areas are rich in flora and fauna. It is home to elephants, bats, rats, mangoes, squirrels, jackles, rabbits, pigs, foxes, monkeys, jungle cat, spotted deer and others

# Aanla Navami to be held sans devotees at Sakhigopal

DEVOTEES WILL BE BARRED FROM 'RADHAPADA DARSHAN' ON THE OCCASION, SECTION-144 TO BE IMPOSED OUTSIDE THE TEMPLE

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sakhigopal, Nov 21:** The 'Aanla Navami' festival that features 'Radhapada darshan' will be celebrated without devotees at Sakhigopal temple here in Puri district November 23 due to restrictions imposed for Covid-19 pandemic, a report said.

The famous festival will be held without crowds due to fear over the

spread of infection. The decision was the outcome of a meeting chaired by District Collector Balwant Singh at Sakhigopal Panthasala, Friday.

The meeting decided to impose prohibitory order in and around the temple to prevent devotees from visiting the shrine and assembling outside on the occasion of the festival, the Collector said.

Police will be deployed outside the temple to maintain law and order.



Awareness campaign urging people to abide by the Covid-19 restrictions will also be conducted through display of posters and banners. Stress will be laid on maintaining

cleanliness in and outside the temple, the Collector said.

Meanwhile, office bearers of the servitors' association demanded a raise in their allowances in the meeting as they are at a loss due to the closure of the temple this year for the pandemic. The rituals for the festival will be held on time like previous year, said Ramachandra Mohapatra, president and Kishore Chandra Mohapatra, secretary of

the servitors association.

Outgoing SP Akhileshwar Singh, sub-collector Bhabataran Sahu, assistant endowment commissioner Srideep Mishra, Satyabadi tehsildar Manoj Kumar Nayak, additional tehsildar Mousumi Mishra, BDO Khirod Behera, temple executive officer Binod Swain, additional executive officer Kailash Chandra Mishra, police officer Basant Kumar Jena attended the meeting.

# DEMO FOR ROAD



BJP members staging a demonstration against bad condition of road at Nayapalli in Bhubaneswar, Saturday OP PHOTO

# 7,135 KIIT students awarded degrees

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Nov 21:** A total of 7,135 students of 2019-20 graduating batch of Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) deemed to be university here received their degrees at the institution's 16th annual convocation on a virtual mode, Saturday.

Students received degrees virtually from the chief guest Professor Muhammad Yunus, Founder, Grameen Bank & Nobel Peace laureate, Bangladesh in the presence of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, spiritual leader & founder, Art of Living and other dignitaries.

The university also conferred Honoris Causa Degrees of D Litt upon Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and S K Chaudhary, Chairman & MD, IRCON International Ltd and Honoris Causa Degree of DSc on Dr Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, Director General of Meteorology, India Meteorological Department.

"You are entering a new phase of life. Education is a long and difficult journey but it makes you capable to transform the world," Professor Muhammad Yunus told

the graduating students in his convocation address.

"The pandemic has damaged lives and livelihoods of millions of people across the world. With 50% of the world struggling to make a living, it has revealed weaknesses in our system. It is an opportunity to redesign a world, which will be more just, more equal and more resilient", the Nobel laureate stated. Our present system suffers from extreme polarization of wealth with 99% of wealth concentrated in the hands of 1% population and global warming is threatening our very existence. "With your learning and imagination, it is possible to redesign a new world," he told the graduates while urging them to explore entrepreneurship as an option.

In his address, Ravi Shankar stated, "The purpose of education is to build a strong personality that is equipped to convert new challenges into opportunities and broad-mindedness and humility to continue learning forever". He underscored the importance of inner strength, perseverance, patience and creativity for achieving success in life.

# Cyber crooks dupe lady through matrimonial site

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Nov 21:** Another woman of the city fell prey to cyber criminals engaged in looting innocent persons through fake marriage proposals. Recently, a housewife from the city lost around ₹2 lakh to cyber criminals while trying to find a suitable groom for her sister-in-law through a prominent matrimonial site.

According to sources, the victim is a resident of Tankapani Road under Badagada police limits. The girl intending to find a suitable bridegroom online opened a paid

profile in her name on shadi.com November 4.

Subsequently, one of the miscreants collected her number from matrimonial website and sent a message on her Whatsapp number November 5. The accused identified himself as Ashok Kumar, a doctor who hails from Hyderabad in Telangana. Ashok informed the victim that he along with her mother Monica Kumar has been staying in Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Ashok also told her about having a dual citizenship as his mother, a school teacher, was Dutch in origin. On November 10, Ashok told the



victim that he would come to India for marriage. The fraudster in order to fool the victim shared all the fake details regarding seeking approval from hospital authorities, undergoing Covid test in Amsterdam.

Ashok asked the lady to share her address to book a ticket at a local travel agency there November 14. Later, he told her that he would come to Odisha via New Delhi as there is no direct flight between Amsterdam and Bhubaneswar.

On November 16, she received a call from Mohin Khan who identified himself as a customs department official from New Delhi Airport. Khan informed the lady that both Ashok and his mother had arrived at the airport but they had to pay ₹ 76,500, as Income Tax, custom fee before leaving the airport. Ashok and Monica requested the

girl to pay which they would return later. The victim deposited a total amount of more than ₹ 3 lakh in the account of Mohin Khan in separate installments as per their instructions under various pretexts.

However, the girl smelt a rat when the miscreants asked her to deposit around ₹ 5 lakh for some emergency reasons.

She subsequently contacted the manager of the SBI local branch who informed the lady that the account of Khan is a personal account. Badagada police have started investigation after registering a case in this regard.



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# Bottlenecks hit 7 railway projects

A REVIEW MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER 23 TO REMOVE VARIOUS HURDLES

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jajpur, Nov 21:** Seven major railway projects in the state are caught in stalemate over multiple bottlenecks related to forest land conversion, compensation over tree felling, provisions in FRA certificates. Forest land for 177-km stretch needs to be converted for non-forest use, a report said.

The report said that the progress of railway projects like expansion of Jakhapura-Jaroli, Vijaynagar-Titlagarh's third line, Khordhara-Bolangir new rail road, Talcher-Bimalagarh new railway line, Sambalpur-Talcher Road expansion, Bhadrak-Nirgundi third line, the third and the fourth railway lines between Salegaon and Budhapa is at different stages.

At different times, the commerce and transport department has been conducting review meetings to settle issues related to forest land.

For over a decade, there were proposals for conversion of the forest land into non-forest purpose for these projects.

Various quarters and experts observed that the apathy of various departments has been the reason for the inordinate delay for disposing the proposals.

Khurda Road-Bolangir railway project was approved in 1994-95, but land acquisition and row over the conversion of the forest land have been a major stumbling block in the project. Forest land row in this project is at three stages in Nayagarh and Boudh forest divisions.

The number of trees to be felled for the project was ascertained.



FILE PHOTO

According to a report, the progress of railway projects like expansion of Jakhapura-Jaroli, Vijaynagar-Titlagarh's third line, Khordhara-Bolangir new rail road, Talcher-Bimalagarh new railway line, Sambalpur-Talcher Road expansion, Bhadrak-Nirgundi third line, the third and the fourth railway lines between Salegaon and Budhapa is at different stages over a number of hurdles

The Nayagarh and Boudh DFOs will approve the letters. The Collectors of the two districts are to give their approval for tree felling. That apart, the wildlife clearance approvals are also pending at the DFOs.

Talcher-Bimalagarh railway project has been stuck over compensation for tree felling in Angul district. The authorities concerned have failed to sort out the compensation

issue raised by Gaham villagers, who have been fighting over it.

Sambalpur-Talcher Road expansion project is going on due to stage-1 clearance. The authorities had applied for forest land conversion in December 2016 under Athamallick forest division. 47 hectares of the degraded forest land and 29 hectares of government, pasture and revenue lands have been identified for the project.

In case of Bhadrak-Nirgundi third railway line, the authorities have applied for stage-1 clearance June 2, 2020, which are being awaited.

The stage-1 clearance for the 3rd and the fourth railway lines between Salegaon and Budhapa was applied June 19, 2018. The project required conversion of forest land. A proposal to this effect was sent to MoEF March 4, 2020. A regional empowered committee had returned the proposal, citing shortcomings in April, 2020. Wildlife clearance for the project is also being awaited

To remove all such bottlenecks, a high level review meeting will be held November 23. The meeting will be attended by the additional chief secretary of the forest and environment department, officials of the East Coast Railway division and Railway Vikash Nigam Limited. It is expected that a solution for the long pending forest land disputes will be worked out to clear these major railway projects.

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Various quarters and experts observed that the apathy of various departments has been the reason for the inordinate delay for disposing the proposals

Khurda Road-Bolangir railway project was approved in 1994-95, but land acquisition and row over the conversion of the forest land have been a major stumbling block in the project. Forest land row in this project is at three stages in Nayagarh and Boudh forest divisions

from Dhenkanal DFO.

Jakhapura-Jaroli expansion project is confined to stage-1 clearance. A forest land conversion proposal for the project has been returned and a revised proposal is to be submitted. The third line project of Titlagarh-Vijaynagar railway is in stage-1 phase. The project has been stuck over conversion of 14,364 hectares of forest land in Odisha and Andhra Pradesh.

To remove all such bottlenecks, a high level review meeting will be held November 23. The meeting will be attended by the additional chief secretary of the forest and environment department, officials of the East Coast Railway division and Railway Vikash Nigam Limited. It is expected that a solution for the long pending forest land disputes will be worked out to clear these major railway projects.

# RD dept to complete Tamasa bridge in Malkangiri by March

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Malkangiri, Nov 21:** Three weeks after Orissa POST published a report about the plight of people in remote villages in Malkangiri in the absence of a bridge across Tamasa river, the state government took the issue seriously and has decided to complete the incomplete bridge by March.

After publication of the report, Dibas Kumar Sahu, a social activist of Bargharh district, had tweeted it to the Chief Minister, the engineer of the rural development department, the secretary and the Malkangiri Collector, attaching paper cuttings of the reports published in OP and Odia daily Dharitri.

Besides, he had also written to the Collector and the executive engineer of the RWD-2, seeking expeditious steps to fast-track the work of the bridge at Pitakata.

The bridge is being constructed across Tamasa river under Pradhan Mantri Gramin Sadak Yojana-2.

Due to the pandemic situation now and rainy season, work on the bridge was affected. Work of three spans of the bridge has been completed while two more spans are to be done.

It was learnt that the rural development department has decided to complete the work by March, 2021.

Once completed, the perennial commuting problem for thousands of people living in Kalimela and Potteru panchayats will be resolved.



This Bridge is under PMGSY-I Missing link (LB-06). Out of 3(three) spans of 25.35m 1(one) span is completed and due to Covid-19 & Rains the work was stopped. The work is starting shortly and both spans will be completed by March 2021.

20.10.19 Nov 20 - Twitter Web App

Locals said seven decades after Independence, lack of commuting infrastructure has been a major problem in hilly and remote areas crisscrossed by multiple rivers.

Though work on some bridge projects was undertaken years ago,

their construction allegedly moves at a snail's pace.

According to locals, every year floods in Kadigada and Saptadhar rivers leave people miserable in fringe areas of Malkangiri and Koraput districts. In the absence of bridges, life comes to a standstill for days together.

Some bridges have been built across rivers in 2002. They have sorted out commuting problems to some extent. However, people in Kalimela and Potteru panchayats have been suffering a lot in the absence of a bridge on the Tamasa river.

They had long been demanding a bridge across the river near Kanyashram. In view of the problem, the government undertook construction of a bridge two years ago, but only 30 per cent of the work was completed.

It was learnt that the contractor has failed to complete the work in time while no action is being taken against him.

Another bridge project near MV-11, Korukunda and Tarlakota villages has remained incomplete. Once completed, the bridge will facilitate communication between Malkangiri and Balimela via Chittrakonda.

"The bridge work at Tarlakota and Korukunda is being carried out at slow pace," locals had alleged. The district administration had earlier held a meeting on disaster management May 7, 2020.

Officials had laid stress on expediting bridge projects in the remote pockets of the district.



# ₹1-cr heritage museum for Baripada



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Baripada, Nov 21:** The Union Ministry of Railways Saturday announced plans to build a 'heritage museum' at Baripada railway station as part of its initiative to preserve the glorious history of the erstwhile kingdom in Mayurbhanj.

According to East Coast Railway (ECoR) sources, the tendering

process will be initiated soon. The project is estimated to cost around ₹1 crore.

The proposed 'heritage museum' will be developed in two steam engines placed in front of the railway station.

Mayurbhanj monarchy was one of the princely states of India during British regime.

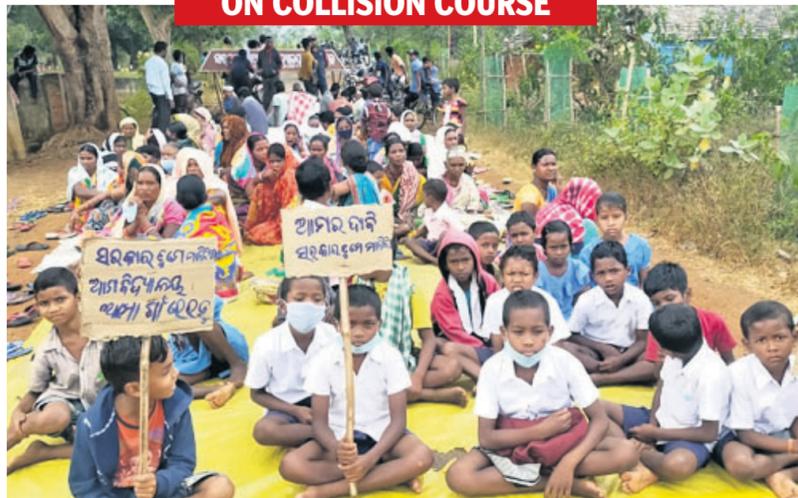
Baripada railway station is more

than a century old and it carries the glory of the region's past. It reflects the rich history as well as the contributions made by erstwhile ruler of Mayurbhanj towards India's freedom movement, railway official sources stated.

Notably, the Rupsa-Baripada-Bangripansi narrow gauge railway line was introduced by the ruler of Mayurbhanj Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanj Deo. The first section of the 52 km-long railway line from Rupsa to Baripada was inaugurated in January 20, 1905.

Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanj Deo had signed an agreement in December 2, 1918 with the formerly known Bengal-Nagpur Railway (presently converted to South Eastern Railway). The agreement was executed for expansion of a 9.5 km railway line project from Bangripansi to Talabandha which was completed in July 15, 1920.

## ON COLLISION COURSE



The school and mass education department has closed Belapasi-Tanganani UP school set up in 1962 in Keonjhar block due to poor student strength. The school was merged with Tanganani UP school. Students and their guardians staged protests against the closure of the school Saturday morning

## Man killed in clash

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, Nov 21:** A person from Anra village under Nandipada police limits in Keonjhar district who was undergoing treatment at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack for severe injuries sustained in a group clash succumbed Saturday.

A tiff between two families over a hen led a group clash, resulting in the death. The deceased was identified as Anand Nayak.

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Kilpauk, Chennai - 600 010.

Place: Chennai  
Date: 12-03-2020

## Woman gives birth in auto at Bargharh DHH

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bargharh, Nov 21:** For the fault of not getting tested for Covid-19, a woman was forced to deliver in an auto rickshaw and another delivered at a hospital's verandah on the premises of Bargharh district headquarters hospital (DHH) Saturday morning.

Sources said, a woman, identified as wife of Netrananda Mohapatra of Toravillage, went into labour pain Saturday morning. Netrananda immediately took her to the DHH in an auto-rickshaw.

"When we reached the hospital and con-

sulted the doctor, I was asked to get my wife tested for Covid-19 first. To my utter dismay, there was none at the DHH at that time to conduct the test. Eventually, my wife gave birth to a baby in the auto-rickshaw itself," rued Netrananda.

A few days ago, a similar incident had also reported from the DHH. Bhabindra Meena, a resident of Gudesira village, experienced the same fate. He had taken his wife to the DHH after she complained of labour pain. He was also asked to get a Covid-19 test report of her wife to get admission into the hospital. His wife gave birth on the hospital verandah.

## Body found behind Anganwadi centre

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sonepur/Tarabha, Nov 21:** A gruesome murder has taken place at Daitapur village under Tarabha police limits in Subarnapur district Friday late night, the police sources informed.

The deceased has been identified to be Pitamber Mahakud (45) of Arakhapadar village of Katapali panchayat in the district. The body of Mahakud was found behind Daitapur Anganwadi centre.

Both hands of the man were evidently chopped off with sharp

weapons. There were signs of severe injuries on head. The murder might have been the consequence of a past enmity, the family members suspected.

On being informed Saturday morning, Tarabha IIC Dolamani Bhoi along with police personnel and the Bolangir scientific team reached the spot. Body of the deceased was sent for post-mortem.

Acting on an FIR lodged by the family, police have registered a case in this connection and launched a detailed probe.

# Rayagada dist turns a tourists' paradise

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rayagada, Nov 21:** Bestowed with enticing gifts of nature like hills, lush jungles, rivers, streams, Rayagada district is a tourist's paradise in every sense of the word.

"As the pandemic fear still lingers, all opt for vacation and, for this reason, Rayagada has all the enticing features, making it in no way inferior to any other tourist spots," observed a town dweller.

Jhanjabati and Nagabali are the two perennial rivers that meander on the outskirts of Rayagada town. Such is the beauty of these rivers that a stroll along these rivers will leave you wanting for more.

The hanging bridge connecting two sides of Nagabali has been an attraction for tourists. This 151-metre-long bridge is second of its kind in the state. It is used for commuting on foot only. It is unlikely of tourists visiting to this site to miss a stroll on this bridge. They love to spend some time on this bridge, immersing in nature. Love Hill, locally known as Prema Pahada is another attraction.

In order to offer the best experience to visiting tourists, Rural



The hanging bridge connecting two sides of Nagabali has been an attraction for tourists. This 151-metre-long bridge is second of its kind in the state. Tourists love to spend some time on this bridge, immersing in nature

Works Division is presently constructing a roadside gallery at

Baisingh Ghat. Once completed, tourists can enjoy the nature sitting here in its lap. From here, they can feast their eyes on a panoramic view of the entire town.

While the kucha road from Rayagada to Baisingh via Chekaguda has been converted into a tarmac one, the narrow ghat road has also been expanded cutting through the hill. That apart, safety walls at curves in the ghat, parking facility at under construction gallery and rest sheds are also under construction at a budget outlay of Rs 45 lakh. The amount is being spent from KBK grant and another special grant.

The Rayagada-Baisingh Road, apart from helping grow tourism, has ad-

ressed the long felt communication problem by about 20,000 inhabitants of Baisingh, Dungalodi, Mirabali, Pipalguda, Karubai, Durgapadu panchayats on the other side of the hill.

These people are now getting all facilities as developmental activities are being taken up in their localities. In order to make the site more attractive, local people have been demanding a watch tower to be constructed at the top of the hill of Baisingh Ghat.

When contacted, executive engineer, Rural Works Division, Pradeep Chandra Mandal said there has been a proposal for a watch tower atop the hill. The site can be one of the best tourist destinations in the state. For this the district tourist department has to take initiative.

According to some local residents, tourists' first preference in Rayagada district is Baisingh Ghat. When contacted, assistant executive engineer Chittaranjan Panda and assistant engineer Markesh Mallick said that the ghat is going to have a few more rest sheds for tourists. Once completed, many tourists can stay at the ghat at a given time, beholding the beautiful nature.

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**"e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE**  
BID REFERENCE NO. EO/BPHM/02/2020-21  
BID IDENTIFICATION NO. 2020\_ORULB\_64028  
TENDER CALL NOTICE NO. 2185 DT.20.11.2020

Bid documents consisting of specification, the schedule of quantities and the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in the Govt. website i.e. [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in).

Name of the Work	: Individual Civil Construction Works
No. of Works	: 03 Nos.
Estimated Cost	: Varies from Rs.4,45,200.00 to Rs.20,00,000.00
Period of Completion	: 2 Calendar Months to 4 Calendar Months
Date & Time of availability of the bid documents in the portal	: From Dt.23.11.2020 at 10.00 A.M. to Dt.04.12.2020 upto 5.00 P.M.
Submission of Original Financial documents (Bid Cost & EMD) by Regd. Post/Speed Post	: Dt.05.12.2020 to Dt.10.12.2020 during office hours on working days
Bids received online shall be opened on	: 11.00 A.M. on Dt.11.12.2020
Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid	: Executive Officer, Belpahar Municipality

Further the details can be seen from the procurement portal: [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in). If any addendum/ corrigendum/ cancellation of tender shall be published in the above website only.

**Sd./- Executive Officer, Belpahar Municipality**



When mind is still, then truth gets her chance to be heard in the purity of the silence.

SRI AUROBINDO



## Criminal neglect

Hong Kong has banned Air India flights again this week, after Indians landing there tested positive for Covid-19 for the fifth time since August.

Passengers are supposed to board the plane only after taking a test that confirms that they are negative, but the testing does not appear to be done at our end with any sort of rigour. The passengers who boarded the flight and landed in Hong Kong had certificates showing they were Covid negative but this turned out to be untrue.

I was not surprised by this because there is no standard process that India is following for testing and for flying and I can vouch for this from personal experience. For the last few months I have been going to Surat every month to attend to a case that has been filed against me. The first time I went was the first time I flew after Covid and had to find out what the process for flying was. I was told by the airline that an app from the Surat Municipal Corporation would have to be downloaded, and a form that was self-attested which said that I was not bearing any symptoms would also be needed to be signed and submitted. I tried downloading the app but it was not a fairly crude piece of software and my phone refused to download it.

On landing in Surat, I was not asked to show either the app or the form but instead all passengers above 50 were told to take a rapid test, and their phone numbers and addresses were taken. On leaving Surat, I was asked to show if I had downloaded the Aarogya Setu app, which I did not have and did not know I was supposed to have. On landing back in Bangalore, nothing was asked for.

That was the first time I travelled. The second time, the following month, on landing in Surat there was nobody at the airport to check anything and I walked about without the test or any form. The third time, which was in October, there were people at Surat airport who were taking the temperatures of passengers who were getting off the plane but no testing or taking down of addresses or phone numbers. This time, on leaving, nobody checked Aarogya Setu either.

One airline gave out face shields but did not insist that all passengers use them. Another airline forced all passengers to wear the shield over their mask.

Each time there was a different process and even that process wasn't followed with any kind of rigour. It is random and does not reflect the seriousness with which the rest of the world has taken the virus. This could be one reason why China has 100 times fewer infections than India and why Hong Kong has had to repeatedly ban Air India.

The problem of testing is not limited to the airlines. A report from Bloomberg this week said that questionable testing in India could be the reason why our Covid numbers were down. Half of all testing in India was done through rapid antigen tests. These tests were quick but were likely to result in false negatives (meaning reporting a negative wrongly) half the time. This could mean that one out of every four people getting tested negative could actually be infected with Covid.

In mid-August only 25% of the total tests were done in this way but now it was 50%. In states like Bihar, about 90% of all tests are of the rapid variety. This could explain the sharp fall in the number of cases in India, the report said. Other nations which had large numbers of positive cases like the US and the UK were using RT-PCR tests which took longer but were more reliable. There is also uneven testing across the country and no specific standard. The day the Bloomberg report was published, Bihar, which had just voted in an election with large rallies, reported only 600 cases while the city of Delhi added about 7,000.

The report quoted several experts who were sceptical about the numbers in India and again, this doesn't surprise me. We have no standard processes in place to address the Covid-19 pandemic - the most serious public health hazard of our lifetime. It is obvious to those of us who have travelled in this time.

The rest of the world, as the repeated bans on us from Hong Kong show, knows it too now.



Aakar Patel

We have no standard processes in place to address Covid-19 - the most serious public health hazard of our lifetime. It is obvious to those of us who have travelled in this time

## FOCUS MIDDLE EAST

# CHANGING VIEWS OF ARAB YOUTHS

A recent 2019-2020 Arab Opinion survey conducted by Doha-based Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies has brought out some revealing perceptions of the Arab citizens. The survey in its seventh year collated responses from 28,288 individual respondents based on 95 questions in 13 Arab countries.

The survey findings besides being a reflection of the common Arab were also able to bring out public perceptions of two Arab leaders, whom people feel will be able to lead the Arab region in a new direction. According to respondents, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and his UAE counterpart, Mohammed bin Zayed, have gotten some things right. Most importantly, both men have to varying degrees replaced religion with nationalism as the ideology legitimising their rule and sought to ensure that countries in the region broadly adhere to their worldview.

Asad Mirza

A RECENT 2019-2020 ARAB OPINION SURVEY CONDUCTED BY DOHA-BASED ARAB CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND POLICY STUDIES HAS BOUGHT OUT SOME REVEALING PERCEPTIONS OF THE ARAB CITIZENS

### The new Arab view

Young Arabs' worldview rejects any political expression of Islam, propagates a religious duty to obey the ruler with no exception, represses freedom of expression and dissent, and leaves unchallenged religious concepts such as notions of infidels and slavery that are viewed by Muslim reformers as well as significant segments of Arab youth as obsolete or out-dated.

The changing youth's attitude towards religiosity is evident in various public opinion polls and also expressed in mass anti-government protests in countries like Lebanon and Iraq recently. And this young view has also impacted on the two crown princes' similar worldview.

Both rulers have initiated changes like loosening of social restrictions in Saudi Arabia, including the emasculation of the kingdom's religious police, the lifting of a ban on women's driving, less strict implementation of gender segregation, the introduction of western-style entertainment and greater professional opportunities for women, and a degree of genuine religious pluralism in the UAE, in response to youth aspirations. But they also face criticism on establishing ties with Israel.



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Currently the Arab youth is sceptic of religious clerics and scholars who parrot the regimes and move them away from religious establishments and leaders. Besides they are also disillusioned by zero efforts to recontextualise Muslim concepts that no longer apply in a modern and changing world or present them in a new paradigm.

### Survey findings

The survey found that, despite 40 per cent of those polled defining religion as the most important constituent element of their identity, 66 per cent saw a need for religious institutions to be reformed. Similarly, 70 per cent of those surveyed rejected the notion that democracy was incompatible with Islam while 76 per cent viewed it as the most appropriate system of governance.

Arab public opinion appears split down the middle when it comes to issues like separation of religion and politics or the right to protest. The researchers, nonetheless, also concluded that youth favoured a reduced role of religious leaders in political life.

Saudis, like most Gulf Arabs, are likely less inclined to take grievances to the streets. Nonetheless, polls by The Washington Institute

of Near East Policy indicates that they may prove to be more empathetic to protests should they occur.

Taken together, the various polls suggest that at a time of economic downturn and inevitable transition that puts a premium on good governance, Arab and Muslim leaders could find changing attitudes towards religiosity to be a double-edged sword.

### Change and Saudi Arab

In the case of Saudi Arabia, it's chairmanship of the G20 is proving to be a mixed blessing. The country and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman saw the chairmanship as an opportunity to showcase the kingdom's leadership and ability to be seen as a visionary global player. The chairmanship had the potential to give the kingdom and Prince Mohammed a chance to project themselves as agents of change in a region which, with few exceptions, seemed incapable of liberating itself from the shackles of history, tradition, poor governance, and ingrained animosities and tribal rivalries.

Though the G20 chairmanship gave a badly needed opportunity to Saudi Arabia, but it has thus far been a missed opportunity. A candid analysis of the forum's rec-

ommendations reveals the crucial role played by Prince Mohammed for endorsing these recommendations. Further he might have taken this stand due to the questions being posed by younger Saudis questioning both the role of the political leadership and why they should accept everything endorsed by the faith leadership at its face value. This might have seemed to be a good opportunity for him to better his image both at home and abroad. The results of his new initiatives may start showing in a year or two and will also have a bearing on his own future.

Similarly for UAE, which though has been much ahead of Saudi in terms of economic and trade development, much depends on the future actions of Prince Mohammed and his counterpart Sheikh Mohammed, the ruler of Dubai. Though the emirate has normalised relations with Israel, keeping in view the economic and scientific cooperation with the Jewish state, yet how the young population takes to it is yet to be seen.

However, the strong grip with which both these nations are governed may not give much leeway to the young aspirations until and unless they are in consonance with the leadership's views and this may increase societal tensions there. The dilemma which these two young leaders face as per the demands of real politic and also keeping close to the western world, besides maintaining an independent Islamic posture are evident by the recent statement given by a prominent UAE minister calling on Muslims to accept the stance of French President Emmanuel Macron on his claims about the need for "integration" in Western societies. Obviously statements like these will not be taken kindly by the young Arabs, just like the manner in which the two young princes may not like the findings of the survey as it has been carried out by an organisation based in Qatar; their present sworn enemy

The writer is a political commentator based in New Delhi. The views expressed are personal.

IAN S

## SPECTRUM THE UNITED STATES

# Back to liberal American hegemony

After four years of Donald Trump, his impending departure has sent hopes soaring. The Great Disruptor will be replaced by Joe Biden, an internationalist and institutionalist. He likes Europe and NATO, and, unlike Trump, he will treat America's friends better than its traditional foes, including by honoring free trade. In the realm of security, he won't clobber allies with threats amounting to "pay up, or we pull out!" Multilateralism will again guide American policy. It will be back to liberal hegemony instead of Trump's narrow-minded illiberal version.

"Liberal" implies a rules-based international order, the promotion of democracy, and open societies. Trump not only ditched these principles, but also demonstrated a penchant for the world's strongmen, alternately flirting with the likes of Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un.

Trump's game was strictly zero-sum, especially on trade. This was a marked departure from the post-war American tradition, which stressed positive-sum outcomes in which both sides won. Trump dragged the world back to nineteenth-century power politics: states have no permanent friends, on this

view, only permanent interests.

Naturally, we now hope for a restoration of the old liberal order. Some reconstruction will happen under Biden, a president schooled for nearly a half-century in the habits of America's liberal empire. But note that Trump was not a total aberration. America's shift toward "more for us" and "less for them" precedes the Tweeter-in-Chief. Recall that while Trump ordered the withdrawal of thousands of US troops from Europe in 2020, Barack Obama's administration (in which Biden served as Vice President) did the same thing in 2012. For all of Trump's Europe-bashing, Obama also groused that, "Free riders aggravate me." It was he who initiated the retrenchment of US power in the Middle East, cutting troops in Afghanistan and Iraq while refusing to intervene against Bashar al-Assad's chemical warfare in Syria.

When Trump promised to end America's "forever wars," he was merely copying Obama. It was his progressive predecessor who began to experiment with neo-isolationism, proclaiming that "it is time to focus on nation-building here at home." Trump echoed that line by pledging a \$1 trillion infrastructure programme - "America First" for the sake

of domestic development and welfare.

The point is to show that America's inward turn predates Trump, and will not be completely reversed under Biden. Nor will the Biden administration abandon the power competition with China, whose own protectionist policies and appropriation of intellectual property are an abiding source of tension. The US will continue to assert itself in the Western Pacific, where a classic rivalry between a rising land power and an established sea power is escalating. Democrats and Republicans are largely committed to Containment 2.0, corraling regional players such as India, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Australia. In the Middle East, Biden has already confirmed that he will try to restore the Iran nuclear deal, albeit not in the well-meaning ways of his old boss, Obama. The incoming administration will leave intact the new anti-Iran alliance between Israel and Arab Gulf states, and it will not repeat the Obama administration's mistake of pursuing a "reset" with Russia.

Even as Biden presents himself as the anti-Trump, he will continue to pursue some of the same core US strategic interests when it comes to China, Russia, and commercial competition with Europe. Still, as

the French say, it is the tone that makes the music. The Biden administration will bring a most welcome change to the style of US diplomacy, replacing Trump's brutishness with well-mannered professionalism.

As in private life, respect and civility go a long way in international relations. Beyond improving the tone, Biden will pursue fewer zero-sum, and more positive-sum, games. He will focus on common interests and seek to restore American leadership by winning consent, rather than through boorish unilateralism. For example, he intends to stop the withdrawal of US troops from Europe ordered by Trump.

In abandoning Trump's "America First" doctrine, Biden will offer relief - but not a free lunch - to the rest of the Western world. As he wrote earlier this year in Foreign Affairs, his administration's "policy agenda will place the United States back at the head of the table," where it will lead "not just with the example of our power, but also with the power of our example."

The writer, a fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, serves on the editorial council of the German weekly Die Zeit.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

## WISDOM CORNER

You've gotta dance like there's nobody watching, love like you'll never be hurt, sing like there's nobody listening, and live like it's heaven on earth.

WILLIAM W. PURKEY

Fairy tales are more than true: not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten.

NEIL GAIMAN

When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us.

HELEN KELLER

## WORDSWORTH

### Benidorm leave

In a speech to the charity Age Concern on 24 October 2006, David Cameron, the leader of the British Conservative Party, used this phrase in reference to the employment policies of the supermarket chain Asda (owned by the US company WalMart). Benidorm leave is a period of up to three months unpaid leave between January and March that doesn't affect an individual's employment history. The term is also used by the retailer B&Q and some other large organisations and refers to the Spanish resort on the Mediterranean, which is popular among many British holidaymakers and to which it seems it is assumed older staff may wish to decamp during the coldest months of the British winter

### Beside oneself

It puzzles us today because language has changed but the idiom hasn't. The phrase appears first in the language a long time ago. In 1490, William Caxton, who established the first English printing press in Westminster, published a book with the title Eneydos. We know it better as The Aeneid by Virgil. Caxton records its linguistic travels in its title: "translated oute of latyne in to frenshe, and oute of frenshe reduced in to Englysshe by me Wylm Caxton". This is the relevant passage, describing the grief of Dido at the departure of Aeneas.

## LOL



### Chemistry class

Little Johnny's Chemistry teacher wanted to teach his class a lesson about the evils of liquor, so he set up an experiment that involved a glass of water, a glass of whiskey, and two worms. "Now, class. Observe what happens to the two worms," said the professor putting the first worm in the glass of water. The worm in the

water moved about, twisting and seemingly unharmed. He then dropped the second worm in the whiskey glass. It writhed in pain for a moment, then quickly sank to the bottom and died. "Now kids, what lesson can we derive from this experiment?" he asked. Little Johnny raised his hand and wisely responded, "Drink whiskey and you won't get worms!"



Josef Joffe

AFTER FOUR YEARS OF DONALD TRUMP, HIS IMPENDING DEPARTURE HAS SENT HOPES SOARING. THE GREAT DISRUPTOR WILL BE REPLACED BY JOE BIDEN, AN INTERNATIONALIST AND INSTITUTIONALIST

## Sibal's lament

Sir, Three months ago, Congress "letter writers" shocked the nation by asking Congress president Sonia Gandhi to put an end to the problems faced by the party - indecisive leadership being their top concern. Sonia Gandhi did a cosmetic rejig of the party, sending some from here to there and calling a few from there to here, leaving no doubt who was the boss. Now, one of the letter writers Kapil Sibal has fired a fresh salvo of opinion. In a newspaper interview, the senior leader and eminent jurist has questioned the 'nominatation culture' of the party. The Congress Working Committee (CWC) is packed with Gandhi loyalists. Independent-minded leaders have no place in the CWC. An election to the CWC looks far-fetched. Till men and women with their own mind find a place in the highest decision making body, the party will continue to find itself in a hole. Sibal wants more 'dialogue' within the party, a tough ask. In Congress, there are no discussions, only orders. A sense of everything is fine syndrome can doom the Congress. After the Bihar election results, it is clear the Congress is satisfied to be an 'also ran', a very disturbing and dangerous trend for the grand old party. In Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, as pointed out by Sibal, the Congress is out of power for a very long time. The party high-command does not appear interested in making any headway in these two states. How can a national party hope to capture power at the Centre without one of the states in its kitty? Playing second fiddle to a regional party should have been outright humiliating, but it appears the Congress is not too keen to make its presence felt in some states.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

## Pfizer vaccine for India

Sir, As the Pfizer vaccine trial shows a 95 per cent success rate and no serious side effects it must come as another shot in the arm for the health authorities in the West. They found the efficacy of the vaccine to be consistent across different ages and ethnicities. Pfizer's candidate is also 94 per cent effective in people over 65 years of age, a significant achievement in the race to end the pandemic. The biotech firm has already sought emergency regulatory approval within days. Still, it could have little implications for India, given that most of the doses to be manufactured till next year have been booked by rich nations.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

## 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

# Punjab farmers agree to lift rail blockade, talks to continue

The farmers said the blockade would be lifted for 15 days but warned that it would be re-imposed if talks to address their issues failed to take place within that period

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chandigarh, Nov 21:** Punjab farmers, who had set up rail blockades across the state to protest the Centre's controversial farm laws, will allow trains (both passenger and goods) to resume service from

Monday night, it was announced after a meeting between farmers' unions and Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, Saturday. The farmers' unions said they would lift the blockade for a 15-day period, but warned it would be re-imposed if talks to address and re-

solve their issues failed to take place within that period.

Tweeting shortly after the announcement was made, Chief Minister Amarinder Singh said he welcomed the farmers' decision and called on the Centre to resume rail services to the state.

"Had a fruitful meeting with kisan (farmers) unions. Happy to share that starting November 23 night, kisan unions have decided to end rail blockade for 15 days. I welcome this step since it will restore normalcy to our economy," Singh said.

"I urge the Central government to resume rail services to Punjab forthwith," he added.

On Wednesday the farmers decided against lifting their blockade. They later said they would allow passenger trains, but only if the centre committed to allowing goods trains to run. The supply of essential commodities - like fertilisers for the agriculture sector and coal for power plants - has been hit due to the weeks-long standoff between farmer unions and the Railways.

The Railways had stopped all trains in Punjab after vociferous protests by farmers saw blocked highways and rail rakes at more than two dozen locations across the state. The farmers had said their protests would continue indefinitely if the centre did not accept their demands.

Last week representatives from the farmers' unions met Union



Minister Piyush Goyal (Railways) and Narendra Singh Tomar (Agriculture) in Delhi and presented a long list of these demands, which included the immediate withdrawal, or repeal, of the farm laws. "We have made a demand in front of the Agriculture Minister and Railway Minister that the three laws related to agricultural reform should be withdrawn because through this the corporate grip will become very strong," Sukhdarshan Singh Natt, the leader of the Punjab Kisan Union, said.

The farmers also called for the immediate restoration of goods train services across the state.

The set of three farm laws - cleared by parliament after shocking chaotic

scenes - have been met with protests from across the country.

Apart from fears it will remove MSPs (a source of credit in hard times like droughts and crop failure), critics say the laws leave small and marginal farmers at the mercy of corporates and private players.

The government says by removing barriers to inter- and intra-state trade of farm and agricultural produce, it is empowering farmers to sell their goods at markets and prices of their choice.

Last month Punjab became the first state to formally reject and counter the farm laws; the Assembly passed three Bills - each of which is designed to counter one of the centre's laws.

## J&K BANK FRAUD CASE

# ED conducts searches in seven locations

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Nov 21:** The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Saturday conducted searches at seven places in Kashmir in connection with its ongoing money laundering investigation in a case related to suspicious transactions in Jammu and Kashmir Bank, under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA).

Among these seven locations, six are in Srinagar and one in Anantnag district.

On the basis of specific information, searches at seven places belonging to Mohd Ibrahim Dar, Murtaza Enterprises, Azad Agro Traders, M&M Cottage Industries and Mohd Sultan Teli were conducted, which resulted in recovery of evidence of money laundering as the bank accounts have been found to be used for routing suspicious transactions, the ED said.

"The parties covered under searches are involved in hospitality and agro-based industries, civil construction and real estate. Statements of persons covered in the searches are being recorded to unravel the source

of huge credits and debits in their accounts. Recovered incriminating documents and soft data are also being analysed."

The financial probe agency initiated the investigation in the case under PMLA after the Jammu and Kashmir Criminal Investigation Department (CID) registered First Information Report (FIR) against the officials of J&K Bank, some unidentified public servants, a few private persons and others for suspicious transactions in various bank accounts.

It has been alleged in the FIR that the bank accounts were used for routing money of public servants as well as some private parties, the ED said. "Further, bank officials, in connivance with these public servants, deliberately omitted to raise the alerts as required under Anti-Money Laundering (AML) norms."

"Investigations conducted under the PMLA so far have revealed that the transactions in many of these bank accounts maintained with J&K Bank were not genuine and these accounts were utilised for the purpose of laundering. Further investigation is under progress."

## Stir cost Rlys ₹2220crore

**New Delhi:** The farmers' agitation that started in Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan and which still remains largely active in Punjab, against the contentious agri Bills, has resulted in a revenue loss of Rs 891 crore, for the Northern Railways, till November 19. The total loss in earnings for the Indian Railways has been a whopping Rs 2,220 crore.

The revenue loss has been in fact Rs 825 crore for 55 days, with effect from September 24, which goes up due to cancellation of passenger trains, which cost the Railways an additional Rs 67 crore as farmers were squatting on the rail tracks to register their protest.

The loss of the Northern Railway originating earnings which was computed to be Rs 1,485

crore per day which was based on 40 rakes of loading per day.

The freights have been massively affected due to the agitations. For the inward traffic, there was an average loss of 30 rakes per day and the outward loading affected in the Punjab area stands at 40 rakes per day. A total of 3850 freight trains could not be loaded.

Meanwhile, there have been a total of 230 rakes held up outside, loaded for Punjab, 78 of them are of coal, 34 of fertilizer, 8 of cement and 102 are containers, steel and other commodities. There are 22 rakes that are stuck in different parts of Punjab. A total of 96 locos too are stuck in the state.

There have been a total of 2,352 cancellations or diversions of trains.

## CHHATH CELEBRATIONS



Devotees perform rituals during Chhath Puja celebrations at Maloya village in Chandigarh, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

# Won't allow CBI to probe without consent: Punjab CM

EIGHT STATES, INCLUDING PUNJAB, HAVE WITHDRAWN PERMISSION TO THE AGENCY TO ENTER WITHOUT PRIOR PERMISSION

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chandigarh, Nov 21:** Citing the agency's poor track record in the Bargari case, which it had closed without any investigation, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh Saturday said his government will not allow the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) into his state without permission.

Pointing out that eight states, including Punjab, had withdrawn permission to the agency to enter without prior permission, the Chief Minister said the agency was being increasingly used to play politics, and a fair probe could not be ensured through CBI. Dismissing the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as a non-entity in Punjab's political arena, the Chief Minister told a TV channel that the BJP was welcome to contest all 117 Assembly seats in the state though the party would not be able to win a single seat without an alliance partner.

The Congress had, in fact, no challenge in Punjab, with even the Akalis and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) posing no threat, he said, adding that neither of these parties had ever talked about anything positive in the interest of the state.

With elections in the state still around 18 months away, it was not possible to say which issue will dominate the polls, said Singh, while expressing the hope that the BJP will resolve the farmers' grievances soon.

Farmers want the minimum support price (MSP) to remain and the government of India should take steps to ensure that, he said, lament-



ing the adamant stand being taken by both the Centre and the farmers, leading to the prolonged agitation which was affecting supplies to the frontline soldiers while damaging Punjab's interests.

He, however, said agitation was the democratic and constitutional right of farmers, which the Central government had evidently realised, as apparent from their decision to call Kisan Unions for talks.

The Chief Minister reiterated that corporate houses were welcome to buy foodgrains in Punjab as long as they follow the existing marketing system, built on close ties between farmers and 'arhtiyas'.

He rejected the BJP charge of the Congress and other central Opposition parties were misguiding the farmers, pointing out that the entire Vidhan Sabha in Punjab had unanimously rejected the farm

laws, though some parties had subsequently made a U-turn due to political compulsions.

When the Bills were brought in Parliament, the Central government should have consulted all stakeholders, including the Punjab government, instead of passing them without discussion, said the CM.

Termining the dissent in the Congress as a sign of internal democracy in the party, the Chief Minister pointed out that those who had written a letter to the party high command had been included in key committees constituted by party chief Sonia Gandhi.

On the issue of SGP elections, the Chief Minister said he had been demanding those for long but the Akalis did not want polls to the body which they had been using for their own political gains.

## India summons Pak official over J&K encounter

AGENCIES

**New Delhi:** India Saturday summoned the Charge d'Affaires of the Pakistan High Commission to raise concerns over Thursday's encounter in Jammu and Kashmir's Nagrota, in which four suspected Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorists were killed. The Foreign Ministry registered a strong protest, demanding Pakistan to stop supporting terrorists and terror groups operating from their territory while dismantling the terrorism infrastructure, sources said.

New Delhi reiterated its long

standing demand that Islamabad fulfil its international obligations and bilateral commitments to not allow any territory under its control to be used for terrorism against India in any manner, sources said.

The four suspected Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorists, who were hiding in a truck, were killed in a three-hour encounter with security forces on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway near Nagrota early Thursday morning. Two policemen were injured during the gunfight and the driver managed to escape. The police said it is likely

that the terrorists were "planning a big attack" and that they were headed towards the Kashmir valley where local elections are due later this month.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday held a meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and others. "Our security forces have once again displayed utmost bravery and professionalism. Thanks to their alertness, they have defeated a nefarious plot to target grassroots level democratic exercises in Jammu and Kashmir," PM Modi tweeted.

Sources said the investigation so far has indicated that the terrorists were plotting a strike on the anniversary of the 26/11 Mumbai attacks.

This is the second time in a week that a Pakistani official has been summoned. Last Saturday, India had summoned the Charge d'Affaires of the Pakistan High Commission to register a strong protest over the heavy shelling by Pakistani forces on multiple sectors along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir that left at least nine people dead.

# Punjab ready to help Delhi govt to fight Covid crisis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chandigarh, Nov 21:** Chief Minister Amarinder Singh Saturday said Punjab was ready to provide all possible help to the Delhi government to combat the Covid-19 threat.

"Delhi is fighting a tough battle, and we are there to help if needed. I have said that earlier also," he said. Singh lauded the healthcare and frontline workers of Punjab for their "excellent" work in handling the pandemic in the state. He assured full preparedness by his government to augment healthcare facilities to prepare for a possible second wave of the pandemic.

Singh said while nobody knew when the second wave of infection would strike Punjab, the experi-



ence of the NCR and other states and regions showed it was almost certain. The Chief Minister expressed confidence that the health department will once again rise to the occasion to meet any challenge, a government release issued here said.

It was the duty of the state government to support the healthcare and other frontline workers, many of whom have got infected and

some have even lost their lives to Covid-19, Singh said.

He also exhorted the people to actively help the state in the fight against the pandemic by strictly following all safety norms.

"Mask hi vaccine hai" (mask is the vaccine), as a resolve for the next few months till a vaccine against infection finally is available, Singh said.

The Chief Minister also launched 107 health and wellness centres to boost the healthcare infrastructure in the state and to provide health services to patients at their doorsteps in both rural and urban areas. He said these new centers would take the state's health infrastructure to a new level of efficacy amid the pandemic.

## 'Centre obstructing participation in DDC polls'

THE ALLEGATIONS CAME AS MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE VALLEY, INCLUDING THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE AND THE PDP, BLAME LACK OF A LEVEL-PLAYING FIELD FOR THE ELECTIONS

AGENCIES

**Srinagar, Nov 21:** People's Democratic Party (PDP) chief Mehbooba Mufti Saturday accused the Centre of "sabotaging" the participation of political parties other than the BJP in the District Development Council (DDC) polls in Jammu and Kashmir by not allowing them to campaign freely.

Mehbooba Mufti's allegations came as major political parties in the Valley, including the National Conference and the PDP, blame lack of a level-playing field for the elections, accusing the administration of locking up their candidates in accommodations at several places and not allowing them to campaign.

"GOI sabotaging participation of non BJP parties in DDC polls. PDPs Bashir Ahmed despite having adequate security has been detained at



Security blanket for District Development Council (DDC) polls in Jammu and Kashmir

Pahalgam on the pretext of security. Today is the last day for filing nominations & have spoken to DC Anantnag for his release @manojnsinha," the PDP chief claimed on Twitter.

Police have said the candidates were being provided collective security and put up in secure areas

as providing security to every candidate was difficult.

Inspector General of Police, Kashmir, Vijay Kumar said the candidates are provided a double escort and the security forces guard an area where they want to visit and campaign after leaving their se-

cure accommodations.

Meanwhile, People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) president and former Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah in a letter to the state Election Commissioner KK Sharma Saturday alleged that ahead of the District Development Council (DDC) elections the candidates of the PAGD are being whisked away to secure locations and not being allowed to canvass.

"I am taking the liberty of writing to you about the upcoming DDC elections. A strange and a unique feature has come to the fore. Candidates put up by the PAGD are immediately whisked away to 'secure locations' in the name of security and confined to those 'secure locations'. They are not allowed to canvass, they are completely out of touch with those from whom they are supposed to seek votes," the letter reads.



It would be a great initiative if Bihar government introduces a law against love jihad. I appeal to CM Nitish Kumar to do the same  
GIRIRAJ SINGH | UNION MINISTER

## COPS GEARING UP

Goa police is gearing up for a surge in tourists ahead of the peak tourism season in December, Director General of Police Mukesh Kumar Meena said Saturday



## of the day quote

All hospitals and medical personnel of Rajasthan must provide treatment with utmost care in view of the COVID-19 pandemic  
ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CM

In UP, there have been several deaths due to consumption of spurious liquor at many places, including Lucknow, Firozabad, Hapur, Mathura and Prayagraj. Deaths were also reported from Agra, Baghpat and Meerut due to consumption of spurious liquor. What's the reason that the Yogi government has failed to take action against the liquor mafia? Who is responsible?  
PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS LEADER

Officials must start work on the Rs 36,410-crore Ganga Expressway from Meerut to Allahabad by next year  
YOGI ADITYANATH | UP CM

## SHORT TAKES

### Woman robbed

**New Delhi:** In two shocking broad daylight incidents caught on CCTV cameras, a woman was robbed off her gold chain at gunpoint in East Delhi, while in the other one, a mobile phone of a girl was snatched away by bikers in Northeast district. Accused in both incidents are still at large. The first one occurred in Kalyanpuri, the mobile snatching was reported from New Usmanpur area. The Kalyanpuri incident took place on Friday afternoon. The woman was in the market with another woman when the incident happened.

### Two nabbed

**Srinagar:** The J&K Police in South Kashmir's Pulwama district have arrested two Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) associates from Awantipora who were involved in providing shelter and transport of arms, officials said Saturday. They have been identified as Bilal Ahmad Chopan, resident of Wagad Tral and Mursaleen Bashir Sheikh resident of Chatlam Pampore. Police said as per the investigations, they were providing logistic support and shelter, besides transporting of arms and ammunition of the terrorists in Pampore and Tral areas.

### 20 injured

**New Delhi:** A Uttar Pradesh Roadways bus collided with a tree in South-East Delhi's Sukhdev Vihar area near New Friends Colony injuring at least 20 people in the early hours of Saturday. The driver of the bus absconded after the accident. At about 3:22 am a call about accident near Sukhdev Vihar was received in Police station NFC.

### Three drown

**Chandrapur:** Three boys drowned while swimming in Wardha river near Chincholi ghat in Maharashtra's Chandrapur district Saturday, police said. At least five youths from Ghugus had gone swimming in the river, when three of them went missing in the water, said S R Nandedkar, sub-divisional police officer, Chandrapur circle said.

### Man arrested

**Ballia (UP):** A man has been arrested for sodomising a 13-year-old boy in Uttar Pradesh's Ballia district, police said Saturday. The boy, who is a student of Class 7, was alone in his house on Thursday night when his neighbour sodomised him, Kotwali police station incharge Vipin Singh said.

## REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

# 1 killed, 20 injured in Tripura violence

The Bru issue had started in September 1997 following demands of a separate autonomous district council by carving out areas of western Mizoram adjoining Bangladesh and Tripura. About 30,000 Bru tribals had then fled Mizoram due to the ethnic tension there and took shelter in refugee camps in Tripura

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Agartala, Nov 21:** One person was killed and at least 20 others were injured when police opened fire at the picketers, who blocked the Assam-Agartala National Highway at Panisagar in North Tripura district Saturday in protest against resettlement of Bru migrants from neighbouring Mizoram, police said.

A large number of people had gathered on the NH 08 at Panisagar and blocked it, demanding to call off the resettlement planning of the government. The Joint Movement Committee (JMC) comprising Bengalis and local Mizos had observed five days strike from Monday on the issue and blocked NH8 Saturday.

The Bru issue had started in September 1997 following demands of a separate autonomous district council by carving out areas of western Mizoram adjoining Bangladesh and Tripura. About 30,000 Bru tribals had then fled Mizoram due to the ethnic tension there and took shelter in refugee camps in Tripura.

The first attempt to repatriate the Brus was made in November 2009 by the Centre along with the governments of Tripura and Mizoram. However, the effort had met with little success. The Centre signed a fresh agreement in January this year according to which the Brus who stayed back in Tripura relief camps will not be forced to return.



PTI PHOTO

The Centre sanctioned Rs 600 crore as rehabilitation package for the displaced Brus as a final solution to the vexed problem after the agreement.

JMC chairman Zairemthiama Pachuau had told newsmen recently that the North Tripura district magistrate had assured that 1,500 families would be settled in the area. "But now the government is trying to settle 6,000 families," he said.

Trouble started, when large contingent of police and paramilitary, including Tripura State Rifles (TSR), were involved in a scuffle following altercation over withdrawal of the road blockade. Police resorted to lathi charge and later opened fire on the agitators, leading to death of a 40 year-old Srikanta Das, a carpenter who was among the protests.

Additional Director General of Police Rajiv Singh said the police was compelled to fire in self defense since the crowd had turned unruly and tried to snatch weapons from the security personnel.

# Drugs case: NCB arrests Bharti Singh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Nov 21:** The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) Saturday arrested comedian Bharti Singh following seizure of ganja (cannabis) from her house in suburban Andheri, an official said.

The NCB searched Singh's house and office in the morning as part of its probe into alleged drug use in the Hindi film industry. A team led by Sameer Wankhede, the central agency's zonal director, carried out a search at Singh's residence at Lokhandwala Complex as well as her production house based on a tip-off, a release said.

It recovered 86.5 grams of ganja during the search, the release added. "Both Bharti Singh and her husband Harsh Limbachiya accepted consumption of ganja. Bharti Singh was placed under arrest under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act and exam-



PTI PHOTO

ination of Mr Limbachiya is underway," the NCB release added.

The quantity allegedly seized from Singh's possession is considered as "small quantity" under the act, as against "commercial quantity", an NCB official said. Upto 1,000 grams of ganja is considered small quantity, which attracts jail term upto six months and/or fine of Rs 10,000. Possession of com-

mercial quantity - 20 kg or more - can attract upto 20 years in jail. For the quantity in between, the punishment can be as much as 10 years in jail.

"Singh's name had cropped up during the interrogation of a drug peddler," he added. The agency also carried out searches at two other locations in the metropolis, the official said. Bharti Singh has appeared

The NCB searched Bharti Singh's house and office as part of its probe into alleged drug use in the Hindi film industry

in many comedy and reality shows on TV. She has also hosted a few such shows.

The NCB has been probing the alleged drug use in Bollywood after the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput in June on the basis of WhatsApp chats involving drugs.

The central agency had earlier arrested Rajput's girlfriend, actress Rhea Chakraborty, her brother Showik, some employees of the late film star and a few others under various sections of the NDPS Act. Rhea Chakraborty and some other accused are currently out on bail.

## LIVING WITH COVID



A worker, wearing PPE kit, sanitizes a shopping mall amid the ongoing pandemic in Jabalpur, Saturday, PTI PHOTO

## 7 charred in accident

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Gandhinagar, Nov 21:** Seven members of a family were charred to death in a road accident near Surendranagar at around 3 a.m. on Saturday when a dumper truck hit their Echo vehicle. The accident caused a fire in the vehicle, in which all the seven persons trapped inside perished, according to police.

The Surendranagar police have nabbed the person who was driving the dumper and have sent him for corona testing. The seven victims belonging to the Nai (Barber) community included three women (one girl child) were returning from Chotila pilgrimage to their homes in Patan district. One unit of the extended family was from Nanapura village in Radhanpur Tehsil of Patan while the other was from Korada village in Santalpur Tehsil of Patan.

"The accident is believed to have been caused between 3 and 5 in the morning. We received the information around 5.30 a.m. There were seven persons, including the driver, inside the car which was hit by the dumper. All the bodies are badly burnt. We have sent the bodies for postmortem to the Rajkot hospital. We have caught the driver of the vehicle which caused the accident, who had fled the scene and sent him for corona testing. The Bajana police is investigating the matter," said BN Jadeja, Inspector, Bajana police station, who is investigating the case said.

## Shivakumar gets CBI summons in DA case

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bangalore, Nov 21:** Just 48 hours after his daughter's engagement, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) gave a shock by issuing summons to Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee President D. K. Shivakumar to appear before the agency for questioning on November 23.

Speaking to the media and confirming receiving the summons Shivakumar said, "The CBI investigators had come with the summons to my house on November 19, but I wasn't at home. They have asked me to come at 4 p.m. on November 23."

He added that he had written to the CBI stating that he would be in Basavakalyan and Maski on that day for election campaigning.

"I have requested them if I can appear before them for questioning on November 25 instead of November 23," he said.

The CBI registered an FIR against Shivakumar on October 2 stating that he was allegedly in possession of disproportionate assets worth Rs 74.93 crore.

The CBI alleged that these assets belong to him and his family members.

On October 5, the CBI conducted a search and seizure operation at 14 properties belonging to Shivakumar, including in Karnataka, Delhi and Mumbai.

The CBI had recovered Rs 57 lakh and several allegedly incriminating documents from these properties including bank statements and hard drives.

The recovery of Rs 57 lakh was contested by both Shivakumar and his younger brother and Bengaluru Rural Lok Sabha member, D. K. Suresh.

# 'AIADMK, BJP alliance to continue'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chennai, Nov 21:** The ruling AIADMK in Tamil Nadu Saturday said its alliance with the BJP will continue for the 2021 Assembly elections and exuded confidence it will win a hatrick poll next year.

AIADMK top leaders O Panneerselvam and K Palaniswami made the announcement at a government event here, attended by Union Home Minister and BJP veteran Amit Shah. Chief Minister Palaniswami is the AIADMK Co-Coordinator while Coordinator Panneerselvam is his deputy.

"I would like to inform through this meeting that in the coming election (2021), the victorious alliance of AIADMK and BJP will continue," Panneerselvam said. Palaniswami, who said Prime Minister Modi and Shah were working towards making the country a superpower, asserted that "the alliance formed for the Lok Sabha polls will continue."

"Our alliance will win maximum seats and AIADMK will retain power," he said. The AIADMK and the BJP aligned for the 2019



Union Home Minister Amit Shah waves at party workers after arrival at Chennai airport, Saturday, UNI PHOTO

Lok Sabha polls, along with others, including PMK, but the combine could win only the lone Theni seat out of the 39 segments in Tamil Nadu, with the ruling party clinching it.

The top leaders' assertion comes in the backdrop of the government's denial of permission to the BJP's Vel Yatra, aimed at exposing the DMK for "lending support" to an atheist group accused of deni-

grating Tamil hymn 'Kanda Sashti Kavacham', sung in praise of Lord Muruga, citing the COVID-19 pandemic.

The AIADMK had recently lashed out at its saffron ally on the matter and accused it of attempting vote-bank politics. BJP state President L Murugan has been courting arrest in different towns after trying to take out the procession despite denial of permission.

## CHHATH PUJA CONCLUDES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, Nov 21:** Beneath an overcast sky, devotees paid obeisance to the Sun god on early Saturday morning at large water containers at home, nearby ponds, rivers and other waterbodies, marking the culmination of the Chhat puja.

As on Friday afternoon, they also performed the puja rituals at artificial pools prepared by civic authorities but did not play music, unlike the previous years, officials said. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had appealed to people to offer prayers at home or visit neighbourhood ponds to hold the puja following health protocols related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Kolkata, the administration did not allow the puja in two lakes - Rabindra Sarobar and Subhas Sarobar following court orders. The Supreme Court had on

Thursday ruled that Chhath puja will not be allowed at the Rabindra Sarobar Lake, while the Calcutta High Court banned celebrations at Subhas Sarobar.

The National Green Tribunal had passed an order in 2018, banning Chhath puja at Rabindra Sarobar. However, hundreds of devotees flouted the ban and broke open the gates of the lake in 2019 to perform the puja.

An official of Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority -- the custodian of the two lakes -- said that five gates

of Rabindra Sarobar and several entry points of Subhas Sarobar remained locked since Thursday midnight, with personnel of the Kolkata Police guarding the premises. The gates were locked till 3:30 pm Saturday, the official said. The chief minister had also urged everyone to cooperate with the administration and honour the court orders.



PTI PHOTO

# Tourists blamed for COVID spike in Lahaul Valley

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Manali, Nov 21:** Authorities in Himachal Pradesh Saturday blamed the spike in tourists, largely unregulated, in the Himalayan terrain of Lahaul Valley known for majestic landscapes and rich Buddhist cultural heritage for the sudden spike in Covid-19 cases.

Almost an entire tribal village with current inhabitants of 42 in Lahaul-Spiti district has been diagnosed coronavirus positive, triggering panic among the local authorities. The village, Tholang, some 12km from district headquarters Keylong, is known producing the highest number of civil servants and professionals. It is located on the Manali-Leh national highway.

As per government health bulletin, 41 residents of Tholang in

Gondla panchayat have been tested the virus positive. Only one resident, Bhushan Thakur, 52, was tested negative. Five of his family members were diagnosed positive. Eighty-one cases were reported in a single day in the district on Friday.

As the health bulletin, they included 20 from Hurling village in Spiti and 18 from Jhagla. With these, the district saw 938 cases of the virus with six deaths. Deputy Commissioner Pankaj Rai said the sudden spike in coronavirus cases in the district was a matter of concern. The virus-affected inhabitants have been declared containment zones with focus on contact tracing.

The Gondla panchayat with a population 166 is the worst affected. The lone survivor Thakur said he followed the health protocols by maintaining physical distance, sanitizing hands and using mask to



contain the virus. Also his strong immunity saved him.

"All of my family members, including my wife, are in isolation. I am cooking food these days for the entire family," he said. The population in the district is mainly rural, spread across 521 villages. Local

authorities blame the recent tourist boom in the area with the opening of the Atal Tunnel on October 3.

The 9.2-km long horseshoe-shaped single-tube, two-lane Atal Tunnel has shortened the distance between Manali and Keylong, the headquarters of Lahaul-Spiti, by 46 km, reducing the travel time by nearly three hours. It has also ensured all-weather connectivity. People in the landlocked Lahaul Valley, who are largely Buddhist and earn their livelihood by growing a single crop of potatoes, peas and exotic vegetables, believe the Atal Tunnel will bring economic prosperity to the otherwise snow-bound, inhospitable region.

Before the tunnel construction, the Rohtang Pass was the only gateway to Lahaul towards Manali. The pass normally remained closed for five months every winter owing to heavy snowfall. Travel agents told

said a large chunk of tourists bound for Manali prefer for a day-long visit of villages located in Lahaul with the opening of the Atal Tunnel.

"Since the government has checked unregulated plying of vehicles by imposing an environmental cess on each of the 1,300 vehicles permitted every day to cross the Rohtang Pass, there is no such permit or fees is required while travelling towards Lahaul via the tunnel. This is an added attraction for a large chunk of tourists," explained a travel agent.

Suman Thakur, the panchayat head of Sissu, said the region has seen a sudden influx of tourists with the opening of the tunnel. "Since there is no adequate arrangement to handle garbage in plenty, a huge trash left behind by the tourists has started creating problems now."



There should not be VIP or non-VIP categories for vaccinating people against COVID-19 as everyone's life is important and priority should instead be given to corona warriors, vulnerable groups such as senior citizens, and those having comorbidities

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CM

## GOA SCHOOLS REOPEN

Schools for Classes 10 and 12 in Goa reopened Saturday after being shut for nearly eight months due to the COVID-19 pandemic, officials said



## of the day quote

There is a need to reform the UN and create a more inclusive and equitable world order



M VENKAIAH NAIDU | VICE PRESIDENT

What sub-judice? It is not sub-judice? Anyone can take a case to the court. If you take my press conference to court, will it be banned? Who told you it is sub-judice? Article 370 is not sub-judice. J-K is an integral part of India... No power in the world can restore Article 370, that is for sure



SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN | BJP NATIONAL SPOKESPERSON

A mask and a lockdown have same benefits. In fact, a mask is better than a lockdown



SATYENDRA JAIN | DELHI HEALTH MINISTER

# India crosses milestone of 13 crore COVID tests

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research, over 13.06 crore samples have been tested till November 20 with 10,66,022 being tested on Friday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Nov 21:** The total number of tests conducted in India for the detection of COVID-19 infection has crossed the 13-crore mark with last one crore done in just 10 days, while the cumulative positivity rate remained low and continues a downward trajectory, the Union Health Ministry said on Saturday.

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), over 13.06 crore samples have been tested till November 20 with 10,66,022 being tested on Friday. The cumulative national COVID-19 positivity rate has declined and stood at 6.93 per cent as on date while the daily positivity rate on Friday was just 4.34 per cent.

Higher volumes of testing eventually lead to low positivity rate, the ministry said. "An average of more than 10 lakh tests conducted daily has ensured that the cumulative positivity rate is sustained at low levels and is presently following a downward trajectory," the ministry underlined.

The last one crore COVID-19 tests were conducted in a span of just 10 days. Twenty-four states and Union Territories have conducted more tests per million population than India as a whole. Twelve states have lower tests per million population than the national average and they have been advised to substantially ramp up the levels of testing, the ministry underscored.



According to the health ministry data updated at 8 am on Saturday, 46,232 people were found to be infected with COVID-19 in a span of 24 hours. "The daily positivity rate of 4.34 per cent point out that a comparatively huge volume was tested to detect these cases from the population. With a continuous surge in daily cases in European and the American countries, India is taking all cautionary steps to bring the trajectory of the disease under control.

"In view of the increase in coronavirus cases of some of the north Indian states, the Centre has advised all states and Union Territories to ramp up testing," the ministry said. India's current active case-load of 4,39,747 comprises 4.86 per cent of total cases. The country has registered 49,715 new recoveries in a day taking the total recovered cases to 84,78,124 which ex-

ceed active cases by 80,38,377. The recovery rate has improved to 93.67 per cent as on date.

The health ministry said that 78.19 per cent of the new recovered cases was contributed by 10 states and UTs. Delhi saw 8,775 people recovering from COVID, while Maharashtra and Kerala reported 6,945 and 6,398 new recoveries, respectively.

Besides, ten states and UTs have contributed 77.69 per cent of the new cases of coronavirus infections. Delhi reported 6,608 cases in a day. Kerala recorded 6,028 new cases while Maharashtra reported 5,640 cases on Friday.

Of the 564 new fatalities, 82.62 per cent have been reported from 10 states and UTs. With 155 deaths, Maharashtra reported 27.48 per cent of the new fatalities. Delhi accounted for 20.92 per cent of the daily toll with 118 deaths.

## VACUUM IN RED BASTION

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kolkata, Nov 21:** As many as 21 West Bengal Left Front (LF) members from the erstwhile red bastion of East Midnapore district joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Saturday.

The district-level leaders and cadres from Haldia joined the saffron fold in the presence of BJP central leader in-charge of West Bengal Kailash Vijayvargiya and the party's state unit president Dilip Ghosh, MP Locket Chatterjee, Sabyasachi Dutta and others at a programme organised at Ramnagar area.

District Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) leader and the party's state committee members Ashwini Jana, CPI-M district committee member Arjun Mondal, former district secretary member Shyamal Maity and many others switched to the BJP creating a major vacuum.

The East Midnapore district used to be known as a Red bastion before the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress stormed to power in 2011. "People of Bengal have seen all the political parties, like Congress, Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M)-led Left Front and Trinamool Congress to run the government in the state. I urge people to vote for the BJP to welcome a change in Bengal," said Vijayvargiya. He also took potshots at the incumbent Trinamool Congress and criticised their corruption even with the cyclone Amphan relief funds given by the Centre. "We do not support the government that encourages corruption with food grains and cut-money," the BJP leader added.

## SOLDIER KILLED IN PAK FIRING



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jammu, Nov 21:** A havaldar in the Indian Army was killed and three others, including two women, were injured Saturday as Pakistani troops resorted to unprovoked firing on forward posts and villages in different sectors along the Line of Control (LoC) and the International Border (IB) in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said.

The casualties came barely a week after multiple ceasefire violations by Pakistani troops along the LoC in north Kashmir left 11 people, including five security personnel, dead on November 13. Havaldar Patil Sangram Shivaji, who was manning a forward post, was critically injured in the Pakistani firing in the Lam area of Rajouri district's Nowshera sector around 1 am, the officials said, adding he later succumbed to injuries.

Another soldier also sustained injuries and is currently undergoing treatment at a military hospital, they said. The officials said the Indian Army retaliated effectively to silence the Pakistani guns, and the cross-border firing between

the two sides continued for quite some time. Taking to Twitter, the general officer commanding (GOC) of the Jammu-based White Knight Corps and all other ranks saluted the soldier and offered their condolences to his family. In a statement, a defence spokesman said Havaldar Shivaji, a resident of Nigave village of Kolhapur in Maharashtra, was a brave, highly motivated and sincere soldier. "The nation will always remain indebted to him for his supreme sacrifice and devotion to duty," he said.

In another ceasefire violation this evening, the officials said two women - Sakina Bi (40) and Mansha bi (18) - were injured in firing and mortar shelling along the LoC in Bhagal Dara village of Digwar sector in Poonch district.

Both the injured were evacuated to hospital amid shelling which started around 5.50 pm, the officials said, adding there were also firing in Malti and Dallan sectors in Poonch district. The defence spokesman said Pakistan also fired small arms and mortars in the Nowshera sector of Rajouri about 6 pm, prompting retaliation by Indian army.

## SHORT TAKES

### Minor fire breaks out

**Kolkata:** A minor fire broke out Saturday in the debris of a plastic recycling factory in West Bengal's Malda district where a blast claimed the lives of six people on November 19, police said. However, no one was injured in the blaze that erupted around 1.20 pm when forensic experts were collecting samples from the blast site in Sujapur, a senior police officer said. "One of the forensic expert's PPE caught fire from the blaze. The officer and other members of the team were moved to safety and the blaze was doused," he said.

### Woman rescued

**Ramgarh (Jharkhand):** A police constable rescued a woman chhath devotee when she slipped into deep water while offering 'arghya' to the setting sun on the Damodar riverbank here, an officer said. Deputy Superintendent of Police (Headquarters) Prakash Soy told PTI that police constable Sanjay Gorai posted at Ramgarh town police station on duty on the Damodar riverbank jumped into deep water after a woman Chhath devotee slipped into deep water and started drowning and rescued the woman safely on Friday.

### 2 Naxals held

**Raipur:** Two Naxals, including a senior cadre carrying a reward of Rs 5 lakh on his head, were arrested from different places in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district, police said Saturday. Korsa Dasru (45), a member of Madded Area Committee of Maoists, was apprehended from his native place Savnar under Ganganal police station area on Friday, while Satyam Kattam (31) was nabbed from Galgam village in Usoor police station limits on Saturday, an official said.

### Two arrested

**Bhopal:** Two persons have been arrested for allegedly possessing leopard skins at a village in Madhya Pradesh's Shahdol district, an official said Saturday. Acting on a tip-off, the state tiger strike force and a forest team intercepted two persons and seized two leopard hides from their possession at Jaitpur village of Shahdol, deputy forest conservator (wildlife) Rajnish Singh said. The arrested accused has been identified as Mahavir Singh Gaud, a resident of Kotadol of Chhattisgarh's Korea district and Surya Pratap Singh Gaud from Parsilli in Sidhi district, he said.

## TN bans online betting games

The ordinance was promulgated by Governor Banwarilal Purohit Friday based on a proposal from the state government, days after Chief Minister K Palaniswami promised action in this connection

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chennai, Nov 21:** An ordinance to "ban online gaming" involving betting, has been promulgated by the Tamil Nadu government in the backdrop of suicides by gamers who allegedly lost money, and any violation would attract both fine and imprisonment, ranging up to two years.

The ordinance was promulgated by Governor Banwarilal Purohit Friday based on a proposal from the state government, days after Chief Minister K Palaniswami promised action in this connection. Incidentally, Andhra Pradesh had recently banned online gaming, besides betting and gambling, while neighbouring Union Territory Puducherry wrote to the Centre seeking a similar action on such activities following the alleged suicide of a man who lost money in it.

The ordinance promulgated by Purohit provides for provisions including "banning the persons who are wagering or betting in cyber space using computers or any communication device or resource," a Raj Bhavan release here said.

Palaniswami had recently said the government was taking steps



to ban online games following demands from several quarters and complaints about suicides of people who lost money in such activities in the state. The Madras High Court Madurai Bench is also hearing a case against online gaming. Three people had allegedly died of suicide in Coimbatore this month due to heavy financial loss in the online rummy game.

"Due to online gaming, innocent people, mainly youngsters are being cheated and some people have committed suicide. In order to avoid such incidents of suicide and protect the innocent people from the evils of online gaming, the Government submitted the proposal," seeking amending relevant police acts, the release said.

Other provisions of the ordinance include punishing those found "gaming" with Rs 5,000 fine and six months imprisonment, two years jail and Rs 10,000 fine for people who operate common gaming houses.

## NASHIK BOY SETS RECORD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Nov 21:** Om Mahajan will be turning 18 only next month, but he has already broken the record for the fastest bicycle journey across India.

Mahajan, resident of Nashik in Maharashtra, covered the distance of 3,600 km from Srinagar to Kanyakumari on bicycle in eight days, seven hours and 38 minutes, finishing Saturday afternoon.

"I was always into cycling, but it was more about sprinting. I began to dream of endurance cycling and taking part in the Race Across America (RAAM) after lockdown began." Om said after reaching Kanyakumari. "About six months ago, I began training for the qualifier ride for RAAM which was to happen in November," he said.

But rather than going for the standard 600-km qualifier ride, Om set himself a 'Race Across India'.

He started from Srinagar on a chilly night last week, and braved heavy rains in Madhya Pradesh and punishing heat down south before reaching the destination.

The existing Guinness Book record for the fastest bicycle ride from Srinagar to Kanyakumari is held by his uncle, Mahendra Mahajan.

However, that record was recently broken by the Indian Army's Lt Col Bharat Pannu, who cycled the distance in eight days and nine hours, though it was yet to be entered in Guinness Book.

## UTTER SILENCE



An aerial view of a deserted road after authorities imposed 60 hours curfew due to rise in COVID-19 cases in Ahmedabad, Saturday

## COVID-19 hits IAS academy; 57 test positive

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Nov 21:** As many as 57 civil services officer trainees have tested positive for coronavirus at Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) at Mussorie, prompting authorities to close "all non-essential departments" there.

The academy is taking every measure to break the chain of COVID-19 spread in consonance with the guidelines of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the District

Administration, Dehradun, a statement issued by the Personnel Ministry Saturday said. All officer trainees, who have tested positive, have been quarantined in a dedicated COVID care centre, it said. It said, "57 officer trainees have tested COVID positive at LBSNAA since November 20, 2020. A total of 428 officer trainees are on campus for the 95th foundation course which is conducted for new entrants to the civil services."

The academy has conducted more than 162 RT-PCR tests in

coordination with district authorities since Friday, the statement said. "The academy has decided to conduct all activities, including training, online till the midnight of December 3, 2020. The protocols relating to social distancing, frequent hand wash and wearing of mask is being strictly followed by the officer trainees and staff members," it said.

Food and other necessities are being delivered to the officer trainees in their hostels by staff, it added.

# Oldest known human-made nanostructures discovered

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Nov 21:** Scientists have discovered the oldest known human-made nanomaterials in the "unique black coatings" of ancient pottery shards - dated to 600 BC - unearthed from an archaeological site in Keeladi, Tamil Nadu.

The research, published recently in the journal Scientific Reports, revealed that these coatings are made of carbon nanotubes (CNTs) which have enabled the layer to last more than 2600 years, raising questions on the tools used during those periods to achieve high temperatures for making earthenwares.

According to the scientists, including those from Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) in Tamil Nadu, the coatings are "the oldest nanostructures observed till now." "Until this discovery, to our knowledge, the most ancient known nanostructures in human-made artifacts are from the eighth or ninth century AD," study co-author Vijayanand Chandrasekaran from VIT said.

CNTs are tubular structures of carbon atoms arranged in an ordered manner, Chandrasekaran said, adding that coatings in ancient artifacts may not usually last this long due to wear and tear caused by changing conditions. "But the



robust mechanical properties of the CNT based coating has helped

the layer sustain more than 2600 years," he added.

Carbon nanotubes have superlative properties, including high thermal and electrical conductivity, and very high mechanical strength, explained nanomaterial scientist M. M. Shaijumon from IISER Thiruvananthapuram, who was unrelated to the study. "But the people of this time may not have intentionally added CNTs, instead, during the processing at high temperatures, these would have just formed accidentally," Shaijumon said.

"If there is some processing of the potteries, which probably would have involved some high-temperature treatment, then it will add more justification to the findings,"

he added. According to Chandrasekaran, the closest scientific explanation for the finding is that some "vegetal fluid or extract" might have been used in the coatings of these pots which may have led to the formation of CNTs during high-temperature processing.

Rajavelu S, Professor of History at Alagappa University in Tamil Nadu, who was unrelated to the study, said that the people of this time may have added or coated something similar to plant-sap to the inside of the pots, and subject it to the nearly 1100-1400 degree Celsius high-temperature fire treatment as seen in kilns.



**The recent breakthroughs on COVID-19 vaccines offer a ray of hope. But that ray of hope needs to reach everyone**  
ANTONIO GUTERRES | SECRETARY GENERAL, UN

## UK SIGNS TRADE DEAL

The UK signed an interim trade deal with Canada, the second major agreement the country has reached as negotiators hurry to cement trading relationships in preparation for life outside the European Union



## of the day quote

I have just decreed the renewal of the state of emergency. The later measures are taken, the less effective they will be



MARCELO REBELO DE SOUSA | PRESIDENT, PORTUGAL

The increasing pressure on our nature and wildlife is a major factor behind the rise of zoonotic diseases. It is a fertile breeding ground for future pandemics



URSULA VON DER LEYEN | PRESIDENT, EUROPEAN COMMISSION

We're really at risk of seeing case loads go up and hospitals get overwhelmed, and more loved ones dying. So we need to do everything we can, right now, to slow the spread of COVID-19, to stop this spike in its tracks



JUSTIN TRUDEAU | PM, CANADA

## SHORT TAKES

### Thousands mourn cleric's death

**Lahore:** Tens of thousands of mourners on Saturday thronged the funeral of a radical cleric whose Islamist party has defended Pakistan's controversial blasphemy law that calls for the death penalty for insulting Islam. The mourners gathered in the eastern city of Lahore, where the Islamist scholar and leader, Khadim Hussein Rizvi, died two days ago at the age of 54. Rizvi's party, Tehreek-e-Labbaik, holds only two seats in parliament, but his movement has repeatedly pressed its cause by staging large-scale demonstrations.

### Iran closes businesses

**Tehran:** Iran Saturday shuttered businesses and curtailed travel between its major cities, including the capital of Tehran, as it grapples with the worst outbreak of the coronavirus in the Mideast region. Top Iranian officials initially downplayed the risks posed by the virus outbreak, before recently urging the public to follow measures like wearing masks and avoiding unessential travel.

### Canada to return statue of goddess

**Toronto:** A Canadian university will soon return to India a unique statue of Hindu goddess Annapoorna that was stolen from a shrine in Varanasi over a century ago and found its way to the varsity's art gallery, in an attempt to "right historical wrongs" and help overcome the "damaging legacy of colonialism". The statue is part of the University of Regina's collection at the MacKenzie Art Gallery. The statue was part of the original 1936 bequest by Norman MacKenzie, the gallery's namesake.

### Trump Jr. tests positive for Covid

**Washington:** Donald Trump Jr, the eldest son of US President Donald Trump, has tested positive for COVID-19, his spokesperson said, latest in the First Family to have been infected by the deadly virus. Trump Jr tested positive at the start of the week and has been "quarantining out at his cabin since the result," the spokesman said Friday. "He has been completely asymptomatic so far and is following all medically recommended COVID-19 guidelines," the spokesman added.

# Saudi hosts G20 Summit in a first for an Arab nation

AGENCIES

**Riyadh, Nov 21:** Saudi Arabia hosted the G20 summit Saturday in a first for an Arab nation, with the downsized virtual forum dominated by efforts to tackle the coronavirus pandemic and a crippling economic crisis.

The two-day meeting of the world's wealthiest nations comes as President Donald Trump refuses to concede a bitter election and campaigners criticise what they call the G20's inadequate response to the worst global recession in decades.

World leaders will huddle virtually as international efforts intensify for a large-scale roll out of coronavirus vaccines after a breakthrough in trials, and as calls grow for G20 nations to plug funding shortfalls.

Amid a raging pandemic, the summit, which is usually an opportunity for one-on-one engagements between world leaders, is reduced to brief online sessions of what some observers call "digital diplomacy".



Saudi Arabia's King Salman will preside over the summit, with sources close to the organisers saying climate change was among the issues topping the agenda.

World leaders, from German Chancellor Angela Merkel to Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian leader Vladimir Putin, are expected to make speeches at the summit, the sources said. Trump will also participate, a US official said.

G20 nations have contributed more than \$21 billion to combat

the pandemic, which has infected 56 million people globally and left 1.3 million dead, and injected \$11 trillion to "safeguard" the virus-battered world economy, organisers said.

The Paris-based Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development projects global economic output will contract by 4.5 per cent this year.

The summit "will seek to strengthen international cooperation to support the global economic recovery," said Saudi Finance Minister Mohammed al-Jadaan.

## Saudi FDI up in H1 2020, says minister

**Riyadh/Dubai:** Saudi Arabia's Minister of Investment Khalid al-Falih said Saturday foreign direct investment (FDI) increased by 12% in the first half of 2020 compared with the same period last year. The Saudi government, which is hosting this year's G20 summit, has made attracting greater foreign investment a cornerstone of its Vision 2030 plan to diversify the economy of the world's largest oil exporter away from oil revenues. "I'm glad to say that FDI, my area of focus, in the first half has been reported to increase by 12% compared to last year," Falih, who previously chaired state oil company Saudi Aramco, told a G20 conference. Falih said in September the kingdom had experienced a slowdown in FDI this year due to the global disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. "When I mentioned the 12% increase I wanted to assure people that there was no decline, our FDI target is much higher," Falih said Saturday.

# Mortar shells hit Kabul, 8 dead, over 25 injured

AGENCIES

**Kabul, Nov 21:** About 23 mortar shells slammed into different parts of the Afghan capital on Saturday, killing at least eight people and wounding 31 others, an official said.

The shells were fired from two cars, Interior Ministry spokesman Tariq Arian said. No one took immediate responsibility for the early morning attack that also targeted the posh Wazir Akbar Khan area of Kabul, which houses diplomatic missions.

The Taliban issued a quick statement denying any responsibility for the attack. The Islamic State group affiliate also operates in the area and has claimed responsibility for recent assaults in Kabul including two devastating attacks on educational institutions that killed more than 50 people, many of them students.

As well as insurgent groups, there are several heavily armed warlords with militias living in Kabul with long-standing animosities against each other.

The mortar barrage comes as

representatives of the Afghan government and the Taliban continued to hold talks in Qatar, though progress has been slow. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is expected to press for a reduction in violence in his meetings with both Taliban and government negotiating teams later Saturday during a daylong stop in Doha. The Taliban have mostly ignored such previous requests.

Hours before the attack rattled Kabul, a bomb attached to a car killed one security personnel and wounded three others in an eastern neighborhood of the capital, said Kabul police spokesman Ferdaws Faramarz.

Violence in Afghanistan has spiked in recent months with increasingly horrific attacks often claimed by the Islamic State group affiliate. Still the Taliban have been waging near daily assaults on beleaguered Afghan security forces.

There have been increasing calls for a cease-fire if peace talks are to continue. The Taliban have been steadfast in their refusal, demanding that any cease-fire be part of the negotiations.



## VALIANT ACT



A child pushes his bicycle through a flooded road after the passing of Storm Iota, in Marcovia, Honduras

# APEC economies pledge joint efforts on post-Covid recovery

AGENCIES

**Kuala Lumpur, Nov 21:** The leaders of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) have committed their efforts to combat the Covid-19 crisis and pushing for post-pandemic recovery in a coordinated manner.

At the virtually-held 27th APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting, the bloc also launched a new long-term blueprint for regional cooperation, which envisions an "open, dynamic, resilient and peaceful Asia-Pacific community", reports Xinhua news

agency. In his opening speech Friday, Malaysian Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin said APEC would play a central role in spearheading post-pandemic recovery.

In a joint declaration later in the day, the APEC economic leaders announced their commitment to "stand united in our determination to enable the Asia-Pacific region to successfully recover from the pandemic and its economic impacts" amid one of the most "challenging health and economic crises".

"We are committed to protecting our people's lives and safeguarding their health. We resolve to further navigate the region towards recovery along the path of strong, balanced, inclusive, sustainable, innovative and secure economic growth," said the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, named after the capital city of Malaysia, the host of this year's APEC meetings.

"Our coordinated action and cooperation are more important than ever to overcome the challenges of Covid-19 and realize new and emerging opportunities for prosperity for all," it said.

ing our people's lives and safeguarding their health. We resolve to further navigate the region towards recovery along the path of strong, balanced, inclusive, sustainable, innovative and secure economic growth," said the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, named after the capital city of Malaysia, the host of this year's APEC meetings.

## ETHIOPIA CONFLICT

# UN fears 200,000 people could flee in 6 months

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**United Nations, Nov 21:** UN agencies are appealing for funding to aid more than 33,000 people fleeing violence in Ethiopia's Tigray region, fearing more than 200,000 could follow in six months, a spokesman for the world body said.

On Friday, Stephane Dujarric, the spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, said people are streaming into neighbouring Sudan every day from Ethiopia's conflict-impacted northernmost region, reports Xinhua news agency.

The UN Refugee Agency estimated that up to 200,000 people could take refuge in eastern Sudan in the coming six months if instability in Tigray continues, Dujarric said.

While the number of internally displaced people grows daily, the lack of access to those in need, cou-



pled with the inability to move relief supplies into the region, remain impeded to delivering aid.

Earlier this week the world organization's agencies set \$75 million as necessary to help the displaced and refugees until January.

Providing hot meals, high-energy biscuits and food rations, the

World Food Programme (WFP), is also providing logistics support, establishing supply hubs to store supplies and through its UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) is transporting humanitarian responders to affected areas, he said.

The WFP needs to increase the number of UNHAS flights, and

While the number of internally displaced people grows daily, the lack of access to those in need, coupled with the inability to move relief supplies into the region, remain impediment to delivering aid

road repairs to allow responders to reach remote and inaccessible areas where refugees are arriving, the spokesman said.

The Unicef reports that about 45 per cent of refugees are children under 18 years old and that since schools had already re-opened in Ethiopia, schooling has been dis-

rupted, Dujarric said. Since the early hours of November 4, the Ethiopian government has been undertaking military operations against the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF).

The Ethiopian government has been blaming the TPLF, which was one of the four coalition fronts of the former ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF party), for masterminding various treasonous acts with an overarching goal of destabilizing the East African country.

The mounting disputes between the federal government and the TPLF were exacerbated in September this year, when the Tigray regional government decided to go ahead with its planned regional elections, which the Ethiopian parliament had previously postponed due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

# Twitter to hand @POTUS account to Biden Jan 20

The @POTUS account is the official account of the US President and is separate from the @realDonaldTrump account that Trump uses to tweet

AGENCIES

**Los Angeles, Nov 21:** Micro-blogging site Twitter will hand control of the presidential @POTUS account to President-elect Joe Biden the moment he is sworn in on inauguration day on January 20, even if President Donald Trump has not conceded his election loss, the company has said.

The @POTUS account is the official account of the President of the United States and is separate from the @realDonaldTrump account that Trump uses to tweet.

Biden, 78, will be the 46th US President when he is sworn in.

The handover requires no sharing of information between the outgoing Trump team and the incoming Biden team, Twitter said, adding that all existing tweets on those accounts will be archived and Twitter will transfer the accounts — reset to zero tweets — to the Biden White House that day.

"Twitter is actively preparing to support the transition of White House institutional Twitter accounts on January 20th, 2021,"



Twitter spokesperson Nick Pacilio told Politico in an email.

"As we did for the presidential transition in 2017, this process is being done in close consultation with the National Archives and Records Administration," Pacilio said.

The same goes for @whitehouse, @VP, @FLOTUS, and a handful of other official accounts associated with the presidency, the report said on Friday.

Twitter also confirmed that staffers will meet with representatives from the Biden-Harris transition team in the coming months to review how the new administration plans to use its government-related accounts, The Hill reported.

# UK to set up nat'l infrastructure bank amid pandemic

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**London, Nov 21:** The UK's Treasury announced that it will launch a national infrastructure bank to co-invest alongside the private sector in key infrastructure projects, like transport, renewable energy and digital connectivity, amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak is set to unveil plans next week for the new bank, which is expected to invest more than 600 billion pounds over the next five years, Xinhua news agency quoted the government as saying on Friday.



It will also replace the functions of the European Investment Bank after the end of the Brexit transition period December 31.

Infrastructure investment will incentivize "better and greener" construction in the country to help resist the ravaging pandemic, according to Sunak. He added said the move would allow those "in all corners of the UK to get their fair share of our future prosperity".

Sunak called it the "levelling up" agenda.

The Chancellor also confirmed the Treasury will move some staff to a new base in the north of England next year, as part of a shift of 22,000 civil servant roles out of London and the South East. The location of the new headquarters will be announced "in the coming weeks".

# Iran urges E3 to implement commitments

**Tehran:** Iran's Foreign Ministry has urged France, Germany and the UK, the three European signatories to the 2015 nuclear deal, to implement their commitments to protecting Tehran's nuclear rights enshrined under the pact.

France, Germany and the UK, also known as E3 with reference to the nuclear deal, are expected to stop their political "blame game" against Iran and fulfil their commitments pertaining to the multilateral accord, Xinhua news agency quoted Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh as saying on Friday. The remarks were made in reaction to a recent E3 statement which urged Iran to adhere to its obligations under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and the non-proliferation treaty.

**NUCLEAR DEAL**

# business



**“In today's situation it is much easier to lease a widebody compared to one year ago. Those opportunities and scenarios are being worked on”**  
VINOD KANNAN | CEO, VISTARA

## 'BUYER-SELLER MEETS TO PROMOTE EXPORTS'

The Commerce Ministry has said APEEDA has organised virtual buyer seller meets during April-October period with potential importing countries such as the UAE, South Korea, and Japan to promote exports



## of the day quote

**“His confidence and conviction have inspired and galvanised the entire nation. I am sure that the bold reforms introduced under his leadership will pave the way for India's swift recovery and rapid economic recovery in the years to come”**

MUKESH AMBANI | CHAIRMAN, RELIANCE INDUSTRIES LIMITED

**“What is RBI's interest in handing over LVB with a wide network of 563 branches and about 970 ATMs to DBS Bank India. What was the influence exercised and by whom”**

CH VENKATACHALAM | GENERAL SECRETARY, ALL INDIA BANK EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION

**“Although we are optimistic about the progress made in developing vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics tools for COVID-19, we must work to create the conditions for affordable and equitable access to these tools for all peoples”**

SALMAN BIN ABDULLAZIZ AL SAUD | SAUDI KING

# India set to resume talks on FTAs with EU, US

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Nov 21:** India, which has not signed any trade agreement since 2012, will soon revive talks on the possible free trade agreement (FTA) with the European Union and the US. Even as the Narendra Modi government opted out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), it is keen on inking trade deals with other economic blocs, a highly placed source said, adding that India could gain significantly amid a growing anti-China sentiment in many parts of the world.

The EU is India's largest trading partner accounting for 11.1 per cent of total Indian trade, on par with the US and ahead of China (10.7 per cent). "We are positive that FTAs with the EU and US will benefit India and talks will be resumed," Gopal Krishna Agarwal, the Bharatiya Janata Party's national spokesperson on economic affairs, said.

"India is not opposed to trade agreements with other countries, though now that seems to be the popular notion after we exited the RCEP, we understand the need to remain globally and regionally integrated," Agarwal added.

After intense negotiations for



THE EU IS INDIA'S LARGEST TRADING PARTNER ACCOUNTING FOR 11.1% OF TOTAL INDIAN TRADE, ON PAR WITH THE US

AFTER INTENSE NEGOTIATIONS FOR AN FTA WITH THE EU, TALKS HAVE BEEN STALLED SINCE 2013 FOLLOWING DIFFERENCES ON VARIOUS ISSUES

VIETNAM, WHICH IS EMERGING AS A FORMIDABLE COMPETITION TO MANY ECONOMIES, HAS ALREADY SIGNED A TRADE PACT WITH THE EU

an FTA with the EU, talks have been stalled since 2013 after differences on various issues could not be ironed out.

Other Asian nations looking at trade deals with the west, Vietnam has already inked one.

Vietnam, which is emerging as

a formidable competition to many economies, has already signed a trade pact with the EU.

"The European economy needs now every opportunity to restore its strength after the crisis triggered by the coronavirus," Ursula von der Leyen, President of the

European Commission, said in a statement.

"India should not waste time now. It must act fast before other countries seal the deals," Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) president S.K. Saraf told Indianarrative.com. "We must revive talks on the stalled FTAs and other trade pacts to cash in on the changing geopolitical order. The current anti-China sentiment in Europe could help India at this point and we must not waste an opportunity."

Typically, trade agreements including the one with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) have not worked in India's favour but experts opined that New Delhi must remain engaged with other countries not only to boost trade but also to be heard in the global community.

Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla's seven-day trip to Europe just a few weeks ago is being seen as an important development in this direction. On Thursday the first stand-alone India-Luxembourg summit between PM Narendra Modi and his counterpart Xavier Bettel was held via video conferencing, where the former underlined the need to expand trade and economic co-operation between India and the EU.

# Sunak plans new investment bank for UK infra projects

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, Nov 21:** UK Chancellor Rishi Sunak is set to unveil a new National Infrastructure Strategy next week for an estimated 100-billion pounds worth of long-term investment, including a new bank to leverage private sector capital for such projects, media reports said Saturday.

The Indian-origin finance minister, who is leading the country's economic fightback against the coronavirus pandemic, will publish the strategy to help tackle the climate crisis and invest in transport Wednesday, when he will also outline a Spending Review.

The UK Treasury has said that the infrastructure strategy would contain a down payment on flagship programmes including fibre broadband, flood defences and transport schemes.

The new UK investment bank is intended in part to replace the functions of the European Investment Bank (EIB), after the end of the Brexit transition period December 31.



"We are absolutely committed to levelling-up opportunities so those living in all corners of the UK get their fair share of our future prosperity," said Sunak.

"All nations and regions of the UK have benefited from our unprecedented 200 billion pounds COVID support package. And after a difficult year for this country, this Spending Review will help us build back better by investing over 600 billion pounds across the UK during the next five years," he said.

The Spending Review will also see the launch of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, under which money previously allocated to poorer regions by the European Union (EU) will now be spent by the UK government.

# ₹57,379cr of Sagarmala projects on track in state



*14 projects of ₹5,006cr have been completed, 22 projects worth ₹3,254cr are under implementation and 10 projects worth ₹19,059 cr are under development*

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Nov 21:** Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Saturday reviewed on ongoing Sagarmala projects being implemented in Odisha. He said that about 46 Sagarmala projects are being implemented in the state at a cost of ₹57,379 crore.

The Minister took virtual review meeting on same projects with officials of Shipping Ministry and Paradip Port chairman.

Pradhan also tweeted, "Happy to note that 14 projects worth ₹5,006 crore have already been completed while 22 projects worth

₹33,254 crore are under implementation and 10 projects worth ₹19,059 are under development."

"These projects, which are focused on port modernisation, port connectivity, port-led industrialisation and coastal community development will transform Odisha's coastline into an epicentre of economic development and international value chains," he said.

The minister also reviewed about setting up new fishing harbour at Chandipur in Balasore district. "I am also happy to learn that ₹5 crore has already been released by Union Shipping Ministry to the Fisheries Department of Government of Odisha for the new fishing harbour at Chandipur in Balasore district. The harbor is being setup with an investment of ₹ 50 crores," he said.

The new fishing harbour will go a long way in improving the livelihood of the fishing community of Chandipur and nearby areas thereby contributing to Primi Minister's dream of bringing about a blue revolution in Odisha.

# Global Public Cloud end user spending to reach \$305bn in 2021

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Nov 21:** The global end-user spending on Public Cloud services is forecast to grow 18.4 per cent in 2021 to reach \$304.9 billion, up from \$257.5 billion in 2020, according to Gartner.

The proportion of IT spending that is shifting to cloud will accelerate in the aftermath of the Covid-19 crisis, with cloud projected to make up 14.2 per cent of the total global enterprise IT spending market in 2024, up from 9.1 per cent in 2020.

According to Sid Nag, research vice president at Gartner, the ability to use on-demand, scalable cloud models to achieve cost efficiency and business continuity is providing the impetus for organisations to rapidly accelerate their digital business transformation plans.

"The increased use of public cloud services has reinforced cloud adoption to be the new normal, now more than ever," Nag said in a statement. Although software as a service (SaaS) remains the largest market segment and is forecast to grow to \$117.7 billion in 2021, application infrastructure services (PaaS) is anticipated to grow by a higher margin at 26.6 per cent.

The increased consumption of PaaS is driven by the need for remote workers to have access to high performing, content-rich and scalable infrastructure to perform their duties.

"The Covid-19 pandemic forced organisations to quickly focus on three priorities: preserve cash and optimise IT costs, support and secure a remote workforce, and ensure resiliency," said Nag. "Investing in cloud became a convenient means to address all three of these needs."

# Centre okays ₹107cr grant for 28 food processing projects

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Nov 21:** The government Saturday said a grant of ₹107.42 crore has been approved for implementing 28 food processing projects spread over 10 states that are likely to generate jobs for nearly 10,000 people.

A decision in this regard was taken in the virtual meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Approval Committee (IMAC) chaired by Food Processing Industries Minister Narendra Singh Tomar. Junior minister Rameswar Telu was also present in the meeting.

The committee considered the projects applied through an unit



scheme of Creation and Expansion of Food Processing and Preservation Capacities (CEFPCC) under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY) for necessary grants-in-aid.

"28 projects with project costs of ₹320.33 crore, supported with a grant of ₹107.42 crore by Ministry

of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) were approved under the CEFPCC Scheme by the IMAC," an official statement said.

Of this, a grant of ₹20.35 crore has been approved for six projects from north eastern states. These projects are worth ₹48.87 crore, it said.

The projects will create a processing capacity of 1,237 tonne daily and are spread across the states of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Assam, and Manipur. These projects are likely to generate employment for nearly 10,000 people, it added.

# IOCL promotes zero emission electric mobility

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Nov 21:** In a bid to promote electric mobility in the country, Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL) successfully conducted a "Proof of Concept" feasibility study on "Zero-Emission Electric Mobility".

Zero-Emission Electric Mobility is a concept that allows the electric vehicle (EV) to charge using solar power thereby ensuring zero emissions. The EV charging system has been designed by M/s Hyge Energy, a start-up incubated by Tech Mahindra, and has three main features - EVs are charged using solar power, no upgrades are required in grid infrastructure, and grid re-

silience is improved by the system's architecture, especially in remote areas.

Vigyan Kumar, Executive Director (Retail Sales), IndianOil, said, "As part of IndianOil's foray into alternative energy, we have already set up 54 battery charging / swapping stations for electric vehicles in partnership with various companies. Given the challenges of grid capacity and reliability amid the uncertainty of EV adoption, we are committed to finding an integrated solution to ensure green power for EV charging at our fuel stations. We will conduct pilot studies at more fuel stations across Bangalore."

challenges of grid capacity and reliability amid the uncertainty of EV adoption, we are committed to finding an integrated solution to ensure green power for EV charging at our fuel stations. We will conduct pilot studies at more fuel stations across Bangalore."

# "Working with Hero to ensure smooth transition for customers"

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Nov 21:** American cult-bike maker Harley-Davidson Saturday said it is working with its new partner Hero MotoCorp to "ensure a smooth transition" for its customers in India, including after-sale services and warranty.

Last month, Harley-Davidson and Hero MotoCorp announced their partnership for the Indian market. They have inked a distribution agreement, under which Hero MotoCorp will sell and service Harley-Davidson motorcycles. It will also sell parts and accessories and general merchandise riding gear and apparel through a network of brand-exclusive Harley-Davidson dealers and Hero's existing dealership network in India.



Harley-Davidson Managing Director (Asia Emerging Markets and India) Sajeer Rajasekharan said in a statement, "As we change our business model in India, we are pleased to be continuing our journey in the country together with Hero MotoCorp. We are working closely with Hero to ensure a smooth transition for our riders." He further said the company is providing its riders with updates as available.

The firm has assured them that Harley-Davidson motorcycle, parts and accessories and general merchandise sales, as well as after-sale services, warranty and H.O.G. (Harley Owners Group) activities will continue from January 2021 onwards, he added.

## MARKET WATCH

# Reviving economy expected to keep markets high

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, Nov 21:** Economic recovery along with hopes of a Covid-19 vaccine will keep domestic stock markets high during the upcoming trade week. Analysts opined that markets are likely to oscillate between renewed fears of rising covid cases globally and optimism over vaccine development. Besides, profit booking as well as expensive propositions might dampen sentiments.

Nevertheless, upcoming Q2FY21 GDP figures combined with sales push during the festive season is expected to arrest any major downside movement.

"Going ahead, the market is likely to be volatile as sentiments oscillate between fear of rising covid cases globally and optimism over vaccine progress," said Siddhartha Khemka, Head of Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.



"Investors would closely watch out the development over the US stimulus talks where the hopes are fading. However the overall structure of the market remains positive, as the economic activity continues to improve and Covid cases continue to decline domestically, except few regions." Besides, market observers pointed

out that healthy fund inflows and expected positive macro economic data points will buoy sentiments. As per estimates, more than ₹25,000 crore have flown into the country's stock markets till now during November.

"Nifty ended the week with gains of 0.6 per cent, the smallest gain in the past three weeks. This reflects

**“The prospects of more money coming in from foreign institutional investors and a relatively better macro-economic scenario should help the markets in the coming days though the possibility of some profit-taking cannot be entirely ruled out”**

JOSEPH THOMAS | HEAD OF RESEARCH, EMKAY WEALTH MANAGEMENT

the conflicting state of markets after showing continuous upward movement since late September," said Deepak Jasani-Head of Retail Research at HDFC Securities. "The fact that market manages to turn upwards on an intra day or overnight basis after dipping is heartening, keeping hopes of some more upmove alive."

"In terms of Nifty 12,963 and later 13,250 remains a resistance while 12,730 remains a support."

According to Joseph Thomas, Head of Research - Emkay Wealth Management: "The prospects of more money coming in from foreign institutional investors and a relatively better macro-economic scenario should help the markets in the coming days though the possibility of some profit-taking cannot be entirely ruled out."

Last week, Indian equity markets extended their gaining streak, as investors bet on a faster return to economic growth following upbeat news on a Covid-19 vaccine.

However, some profit booking was also seen in between as global cues were mixed amidst the US Treasury's decision to end all the emergency loan programmes, while new shutdowns were being implemented in major US cities post the sharp rise in Covid cases again.

# ROHIT 'KEEPING FINGERS CROSSED'

# 'TPL show has taken pressure off' Shami

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Nov 21:** The hulla-baloo over his hamstring was confusing as well as amusing for Rohit Sharma, who says he always knew that the injury was not that serious and he would be battle-ready for the tour of Australia.

India's white-ball vice-captain, in a detailed conversation with this agency, opened about the left hamstring injury during the IPL, which became a matter of intense speculation after he returned to action within days of being left out of the Australia tour earlier this month. He was subsequently added to the Test squad.

"I don't know what was going on, to be honest and what all were people talking about. But let me put this on record, I was constantly communicating with BCCI and Mumbai Indians," Rohit said.

He hit a match-winning knock of 68 off 50 balls in the IPL final against Delhi Capitals, playing through pain. Rohit is currently doing strength and conditioning work at the National Cricket Academy in Bangalore before heading to Australia.

"I told them (Mumbai Indians) that I can take the field since it is the shortest format and I will be able to manage the situation quite nicely. Once I made my mind clear, it was all about focussing on what I needed to do," he said.

"Hamstring is feeling absolutely fine. Just started the process of getting it nice and strong. Before I play the longer format, I absolutely needed to be clear in mind that there is no stone that is left unturned, that's probably the reason, I'm at the NCA," Rohit added.

For Rohit, the chatter on the outside regarding his injury and his subsequent participation in the IPL play-offs, didn't matter much.

"So for me, it was not a concern what x, y or z was talking about like whether he would make it to Australia," he said. "Once the injury happened, the next two days all I did was to figure out what I can do in



the next 10 days – whether I will be able to play or not."

Unless one goes to the ground, one won't know how the body is shaping up, feels the five-time IPL champion captain.

"But every day, hamstring (degree of injury) was changing. The way it was responding was changing, so I was feeling quite confident that I could play and that is the communication that I had with MI

at that point.

"I told them that I think I will be okay to play just before play-offs. If there is any discomfort, I won't be playing the play-offs."

All Rohit needed was three and half weeks to get ready for Tests and he fails to understand what the fuss was all about given that the series starts December 17.

"Of course, there is still some work that needs to be done on my

hamstring. That's why I didn't go to Australia for the white-ball leg as there are back-to-back games. Around 6 games in 11 days," he said about the limited overs leg beginning November 27.

"So I thought if I get to work on my body for 25 days, I can probably go and play the Test matches. So it was an easy decision for me and I don't know why it became so complicated for others," he wondered aloud.

Rohit also spoke about his enduring relationship with his IPL franchise Mumbai Indians. The five-time champions, he said, were not created overnight.

"Yeah, we have a (Kieron) Pollard, a Hardik (Pandya), (Jasprit) Bumrah but has anybody thought why this team is successful?" he asked.

"Lot of people, I hear say that can he (Rohit) do it with other teams? Firstly, why shall I need to do it with other teams? There is a certain way this franchise wants to go and same direction I want to go as well, both as a player and leader," he explained. "Did this team become good overnight? No. It's just that this franchise doesn't believe in chopping and changing. And every player, including Rohit Sharma, was available (2011) at auctions. Just that MI picked and believed in building a team."

He was extremely proud of MI getting New Zealand pacer Trent Boult on board, which worked wonders for them. Boult was released by Delhi Capitals before the players auction, a decision that they would probably regret given how effective he was this year.

"Boult was with Delhi last year and before that with Sunrisers. We needed someone to provide wickets upfront and who could swing the ball," Rohit said. "We strongly pursued him and got him from Capitals, something I am proud of."

It was a tough year on all counts but Rohit said the franchise provided an environment that created memories of a lifetime while being locked in a bio-bubble due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"MI in a year where everything was uncertain, created a happy space for us. 80 days in a bio-bubble never felt claustrophobic. Every little aspect was taken care of and the preparation started in June in a bio-secure environment with all net bowlers and Indian players," he said. Rohit also touched upon his IPL leadership and spoke about the freedom he gives his players by letting them evolve as individuals.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Sydney, Nov 21:** India's craftiest pacer Mohammed Shami is in the 'right zone' after his impressive performance in the IPL, allowing him to prepare for the big Test series against Australia 'without any pressure'.

Shami had his best IPL season as his 20 wickets for Kings XI Punjab, including a spectacular defence of five runs in double Super Over game against Mumbai Indians, was one of the highlights of the tournament.

"My performances for KXIP in IPL has given me a lot of confidence and put me in the right zone," Shami told BCCI.TV Saturday.

Shami feels that a good IPL has taken off the burden from him. "The biggest advantage is that I can now prepare for the upcoming series without any pressure. There is no burden on me. I am very comfortable at the moment."

"I had worked hard on my bowling and my fitness in the lockdown. I knew that IPL would take place sooner or later and I was preparing myself for it."

Shami made no bones that Test matches are a priority for him on this tour as he is trying to get into the groove during the training session over last one week.

"We are going to have a long tour starting with the white ball followed by pink and red ball Tests. My focus area has been the red ball

and I am working on my lengths and seam movement. I have always felt that once you start pitching the ball at the lengths you desire, you can succeed in different formats."

He feels that post IPL, his white ball form is in control and that's why he required more preparation with red ball. "What you need is control. I have done well with the white ball and now spending time in the nets bowling with the red ball. You don't bowl in the same area since both formats are different but your basics don't change much."

The senior bowler is hardly perturbed by the presence of Steve Smith and David Warner.

"India have quality batsmen and we bowl at them in the nets. We don't look at names, we focus on our skills. You can be a world-class batsman, but one good ball will still get you out," Shami said.

The veteran pacer said that the diverse skill sets makes for a very potent attack like the one India has with him, Umesh Yadav, Ishant Sharma and Jasprit Bumrah.

"Our fast bowling group can bowl at 140 kph plus and you need that kind of pace in Australia. Even our reserves are quick, you don't get to see that kind of an attack."

Shami reminded that the pacers have done well in all overseas conditions and have taken 20 wickets in a lot of away Test matches as well as in spin-friendly conditions at home.

# FC Goa lock horns with BFC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Margao, Nov 21:** A new-look FC Goa, strengthened by the addition of fresh foreign players and a new head coach, will begin their Indian Super League campaign with renewed vigour when they clash with formidable Bengaluru FC (BFC) here Sunday.

FC Goa have never won the coveted ISL trophy and would be hoping that this time around they go one step forward than 2018 and 2015 seasons, when they emerged as runners-up.

But it won't be an easy task for coach Juan Ferrando, who wants the club to continue playing attacking brand of football, which they also displayed under their previous coach Sergio Lobera.

FC Goa, who won the League Winners Shield last season to become the first side from India to qualify for the group stage of the AFC Champions League, have parted ways with the likes of star forwards Ferran Corominas and Hugo Boumous, who have established themselves as feared goal scorers in the ISL over the years.

They have added a few quality players, both domestic and foreign,

and their familiarity with the home conditions will come in handy in their bid to at least reach the play-offs stage.

FC Goa would bank on their Spanish lethal striker Igor Angulo to prove his mettle right from the beginning. The coach has options in other forwards like Aaren D'Silva, Devendra Murganekar, Ishan



Pandita and Makan Chothe, to choose from, to support Angulo.

Goa have an array of strong midfielders, the prominent being skipper Edu Bedia, who can decide the fate of the game. Also, the likes of India international Brandon Fernandes, Lenny Rodrigues, Albert Noguera, and Jorge Ortiz will have

to play their role as feeders.

Then there are defenders Ivan Gonzalez and James Donachie, apart from other local defenders, to man the line and thwart the opposition attack.

Edu said the team has prepared well for this game and that Bengaluru are a mentally and physically strong side. Their mid-fielder Lenny Rodrigues said this season would be different since they have a new coach.

On the other hand, Bengaluru who have won the ISL once, would also be hoping for a winning start and the contribution of star striker Sunil Chhetri would be the key.

The Bengaluru team boast of a well-rounded unit and will be a tough opponent first up. The high-profile Chhetri can turn a game on its head singlehandedly and with a strong support cast, BFC will be hard to get by.

Another important cog in BFC's wheel is experienced custodian Gurpreet Singh Sandhu, who kept the record of 11 clean-sheets last season. His role would be equally important as that of Chhetri.

Bengaluru are also expected to play strikers Cleiton Silva and Kristian Opseth.

# Prajnesh enters last 4; regains India No.1 spot

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Orlando, Nov 21:** Prajnesh Gunneswaran regained the India number one spot with a dominant straight sets win over Kazakhstan's Dmitry Popko, carrying him into the Orlando Open semifinals here Friday.

The fourth seeded Indian won 6-0, 6-3 against the sixth seeded Kazakh in the quarterfinals of the USD 52,080 hard court tournament.

The win will take Prajnesh, who is ranked 137th this week, to at least 133 in the ATP singles chart even if he does not make the final. It will push Sumit Nagal to number two as he is placed 136 this week and has not played in the last two weeks.

Prajnesh had reached the final of the Cary Challenger last week and has carried his good form into this event. Popko was off colour today as his erratic serve and ground strokes made the job of Prajnesh very easy.

Rankumar Ramanathan had made a first round exit after losing 3-6, 4-6 to local lucky loser Nick Chappell.

# Appiah spot-kick lifts NEUFC

AGENCIES

**Goa, Nov 21:** A second half penalty strike from Ghanaian international Kwesi Appiah was enough for NorthEast United FC (NEUFC) to down Mumbai City Saturday at the Tilak Maidan here.

Mumbai's midfield general Ahmed Jahouh was given the marching orders just minutes before the halftime as the Islanders were reduced to 10 men for the rest of the game.

Sergio Lobera's side dictated the game right from the beginning. The Spanish coach deployed a 4-2-2-2 formation with Hernan Santana and Sarthak Golui as central defenders with Ahmed Jahouh and Rowlin Borges lying deep.

Hugo Boumous was given a free role who operated right behind the two forwards Bartholomew Ogbeche and Adam Le Fondre.

Mumbai were the team with more possession throughout the first half with Jahouh orchestrating the game from the centre of the pitch.

Disaster struck the away side just two minutes from the halftime when their key midfielder Jahouh was sent off after a clumsy and un-



necessary challenge on Khassa Camara near the centre circle.

The Highlanders looked confident in their approach as the second half resumed and won a penalty within two minutes.

Dylan Fox tried to head the ball in from a dangerous cross from Luis Machado and the ball hit

Borges' hand inside the box. Appiah converted the spot-kick to hand NEUFC the lead.

The goal and the red card completely changed the complexion of the match.

Mumbai next face FC Goa November 25 while NEUFC take on Kerala Blasters the next day.

# Moreno penalty spoils Real evening in La Liga



AGENCIES

**Madrid, Nov 21:** Gerard Moreno's penalty saved Villarreal the blushes as Real Madrid's La Liga title defence suffered yet another early setback as they were held to a 1-1 draw despite leading for 74 minutes Saturday.

Mariano Diaz's previous start in May 2019 had seen him score twice in a victory over Villarreal, yet his goal proved only enough for a point this time.

Thibaut Courtois felled Samuel Chukwueze and Moreno tucked away the resulting penalty to

equalise, keeping Madrid fourth following their humbling at Valencia prior to the international break.

Mariano's contentious opener came after the linesman briefly raised his flag in error, seemingly believing the offside Lucas Vazquez was set to collect Dani Carvajal's pass. The right-back instead himself seized on the loose ball and crossed for Mariano to head in.

However, Courtois – underworked despite the hosts' openings – raced from his line and took down Chukwueze, allowing Moreno to pick out the bottom-left corner 14 minutes from time.

# Chelsea down Newcastle

AGENCIES

**London, Nov 21:** Chelsea shrugged off the early Saturday start that Frank Lampard wants scrapped as they cruised to a 2-0 victory at Newcastle United in the English Premier League.

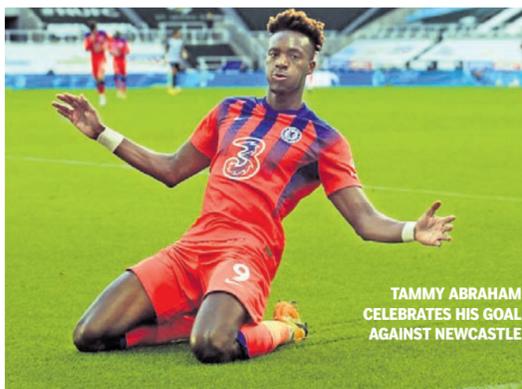
An own goal from Federico Fernandez and a second-half finish from Tammy Abraham gave the visitors a comfortable win against opponents who barely threatened.

Victory took Chelsea to the top of the Premier League, for a few hours at least, as they returned from the international break with a lively display at St James' Park.

A stumbling Fernandez turned in a cross from Mason Mount for the opener in the 10th minute, with the largely quiet Abraham striking midway through the second half.

Karl Darlow made a sharp early save from Timo Werner's low shot and the goalkeeper excelled for a second time when he touched Abraham's powerful header over the bar after an excellent cross from the left by Hakim Ziyech.

The Newcastle goalkeeper did not get near a whipped cross from



Mount moments later, though, when the ball came in from the right and Fernandez put the ball into his own net.

Newcastle, weakened by the absence of injured leading scorer Callum Wilson, had won five of their last seven Premier League home games against Chelsea.

Newcastle captain Jamaal Lascelles took a blow late in the first half and was replaced by Fabian

Schar for the second 45 minutes.

The Germany international raced in from the left and had only Darlow to beat, but he tried to give Ziyech an easier finish and made a mess of his pass.

Abraham's goal essentially ended the contest, as he rifled home off the inside of the right post from Werner's pass, with Sean Longstaff denied a stunning consolation when his strike bounced off the bar.

# Gangjee cards even par in Japan tourney

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Miyazaki, Nov 21:** Rahil Gangjee staged a superb comeback on his back-nine to card an even par 71 in the third round of the Dunlop Phoenix Open, here.

Gangjee now has rounds of 71-72-71 and at one-over for 54 holes he is Tied-49th in only his second event in Japan in 2020.

Gangjee started from the 10th in his first eight holes but on his second nine, the front side of the Phoenix Country Club, Gangjee found three birdies and dropped no more shots to get back to even par.

"I began finding my rhythm finally in the second nine and also putted well and made no three-putts," said Gangjee.

Former World No.1 Amateur, Takumi Kanaya, playing only his fourth event as a Pro, is once again in contention as he shot a third straight round in 60s and moved into

sole third place. Kanaya is one shot behind co-leaders, Tomoharu Otsuki (66) and Tomohiro Ishizaka (68), who are both at 11-under.

After a 68 in the first round, he was T-12 and then with a 66 moved to T-2 after the second round and is now third after 68 in the third round.

Kanaya, winner of the 2018 Asia-Pacific Amateurs, has as an amateur won the 2019 Taiheyo Masters, finished second at 2017 Japan Open and been third at 2019 Australian Open.

"This is my first year as a pro, so most of the courses are first time for me. So, it takes a while for me to adjust to the touch on yardages and feeling on the courses. I cannot get adapted to the course on my 1st round," Kanaya said.

Almost 20 events have been cancelled in Japan this year due to the pandemic.