



## DEFINING STRENGTH

Actor Ileana D'Cruz says strength isn't always just a big dramatic show of bravado

LEISURE P2



## TACKLING NEW STRAIN

Karnataka CM BS Yediyurappa urges 'missing' UK returnees to cooperate with government

TWO STATES P8



## BLAST IN YEMEN

Sixteen persons killed in blast, gunfire in Yemen after plane carrying new government lands

INTERNATIONAL P10

# NEW WING FOR WOMEN, CHILD SAFETY

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 30:** In the wake of the high profile rape and murder case of a minor girl in Nayagarh district, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Wednesday announced the creation of a special wing in the police department to curb rising cases of crime against women and children.

The announcement was made at the valedictory session of 62nd senior police officers' conference, 2020 via videoconferencing.

"Crime against women and children remains our focus area. I hereby announce creation of Special wing in Odisha Police to look after offences against women and children. I expect that with these initiatives, quality services will be provided to the women and children," the CM said.

Expressing concern over low conviction rate in the state, Patnaik asked senior cops to take all possible steps to enhance conviction rate by factoring in modern technology into the investigation.

"Road Safety is another area of concern. Road accident related fatalities are very high in the state. There is a need to take up preventive and enforcement initiatives as well as public awareness campaigns in coordination

## POOR CONVICTION RATE

ODISHA (21.5%) IS FOURTH IN THE LIST OF CONVICTION RATES FOR CRIMES UNDER IPC AFTER ASSAM (6.7%), BIHAR (13.1%) AND WB (13.4%)

CM NAVEEN PATNAIK ASKED SENIOR COPS TO TAKE ALL POSSIBLE STEPS TO ENHANCE THE CONVICTION RATE BY FACTORING IN MODERN TECHNOLOGY

HE ALSO STATED THAT THERE IS A NEED TO TAKE UP PREVENTIVE AND ENFORCEMENT INITIATIVES TO BRING DOWN ROAD FATALITIES



Police DG Abhay and other senior police officers attend the 62nd senior police officers' conference at Odisha Police headquarters, Cuttack



**Crime against women and children remains our focus area. I hereby announce creation of a special wing in Odisha Police to look after such offences**

NAVEEN PATNAIK | CM

with other stakeholders like Transport, Works department etc. to bring down such fatalities," he said.

Stating that the law and order situation in the state remained peaceful in 2020, Naveen said, "A progressive and sustainable improvement has been no-

ticed in the Left Wing Extremism situation. Two brave hearts laid down their lives this year in the fight against Maoists. Families of the martyrs should be taken care of by the state police."

As the LWE problem is dynamic in nature and keeps changing, he asked

the police officers to closely monitor it and continue to take focused efforts. He commended the work of SPs of Malkangiri and Kandhamal in this connection. He also appreciated the efforts of SP, Keonjhar and Angul for the overall improvement in the industrial atmosphere.

The Chief Minister also lauded the overall effort of Odisha police in handling the pandemic with compassion and empathy. While doing so many police personnel have laid down their lives in the line of duty. He paid homage to the departed souls and assured their families of all support.

Speaking on 5T and Mo Sarkar ini-

tiatives, the Chief Minister said, "It is satisfying to see that the feedback taken under Mo Sarkar has been very positive. Though certain good initiatives under 5T in Odisha Police have been taken up, there is a need to increase the same."

Within record time, special family pension has been sanctioned to 38 next of kin. Similarly, 29 next of kin have received ₹50 Lakh ex-gratia compensation and rest should be processed without any delay. He also lauded the 930 police personnel who have voluntarily donated plasma for treatment of Covid patients for their spirit of service.

He congratulated the state police for organising an effective drive against narcotic drugs throughout the state with the STF taking the lead. A record quantity of narcotics has been seized. Commendable work has been done by DIG, STF and SP, Koraput.

However, special drive against organized crime and extortion should be carried out with more focused efforts, he told the cops. On this occasion, the CM inaugurated six police stations at Angul Sadar in Angul district, Bharatpur in Bhubaneswar, Jharsuguda Sadar in Jharsuguda, Belaguntha in Ganjam, and Sabrang and Pirahat in Bhadrak district.

1800 266 266 1 (tollfree)

## ₹3,000 crore Paradip port project okayed



POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, Dec 30:** The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday approved a ₹3,000 crore project to turn Paradip Port world-class by setting up a dock.

The project focuses on 'Deepening and Optimization of Inner Harbour Facilities including Development of Western Dock on Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) basis under Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode to handle cape size vessels at Paradip Port.'

Addressing media on the issue, Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Union Minister of State for Ports, Shipping and waterways (I/C) Mansukh Mandaviya informed that the estimated cost of the project is ₹3,004.63 crore.

This includes development of the new Western Dock on BOT basis and capital dredging by the selected concessionaire at a cost of ₹2,040 crore and ₹352.13 crore respectively. It has also been informed that there will be investments to the tune of ₹612.50 crore towards providing Common Supporting Project Infrastructure.

"On commissioning of the project, it shall cater to the requirement of coal & limestone products," Dhar Pradhan said.

"The Concession period shall be 30 years from the date of Award of Concession. Paradip Port Trust (Concessioning Authority) shall provide the Common Supporting Project Infrastructure works to facilitate handling of cape size vessels," the ministry said.

**Paradip port in Odisha is one of the 12 major ports under the control of the Centre**

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



It was a horrible year. We had to manage 3 full days without a maid

## SHORT TAKES

### Last date for ITR filing now Jan 10

**New Delhi:** Extending the deadline for the third time, the government on Wednesday allowed individuals to file income tax returns for 2019-20 fiscal till January 10. The deadline for companies and individuals who need to get their accounts audited too have been extended by 15 days till February 15, the finance ministry said in a statement.

### Oxford vaccine approved by UK

**London:** The coronavirus vaccine designed by scientists at the University of Oxford and produced by AstraZeneca was Wednesday approved for human use by the UK's independent regulator. The approval by Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) means the vaccine is both safe and effective.

P10

## MUSIC MAESTRO SHANTANU DIES, TRIBUTES POUR IN

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 30:** Legendary Odia music Director Shantanu Mohapatra died here, family sources said on Wednesday. He was 84.

Mohapatra was suffering from old age related ailments and finally succumbed to pneumonia and cardiac failure Tuesday night. A large number of people paid their last respect to the music maestro at his Palasapalli residence.

Odisha Governor Ganesh Lal, Andhra Pradesh Governor B B Harichandan, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and many dignitaries condoled the demise of Mohapatra.

In a condolence message, Lal said Shantanu Mohapatra was part of Odisha music for almost six decades and he will be remembered by all for long. Patnaik described

Mohapatra as an 'Unfading Talent'. As a lyricist and music director, he has left the shining signature of his talent. The music directed by him will keep him immortal forever, the chief minister said. Noting that Odisha has lost a talent, Patnaik announced state honour for the departed music director.

Apart from Odia, Mohapatra also worked in different languages. He composed the first modern Odia ballad Konark Gatha with lyrics by lyricist Gurukrushna Goswami and sung by Akshay Mohanty. He also wrote 'Kaliyaj' which was sung by Sikandar Alam.

More on P2

## Cinema halls set to reopen

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 30:** Following a nine-month hiatus, cinema halls and theatres in the state are all set to reopen with 50 per cent capacity from January 1.

In its unlock guidelines for the month of January, the state government stated, "Cinema halls, theatres will be allowed to open with up to 50 per cent of capacity and operate as per SOPs issued by the Government of India/ State Government in that regard."

However, reopening of open air theatres and entertainment parks along with 'jatras' will be permitted by the local authorities (district collector, municipal commissioner or any officer authorised



by them) subject to compliance of safety protocols such as mandatory wearing of face masks and physical distancing among others.

The School & Mass Education, Higher Education and Skill Development & Technical Education departments will decide the date of re-opening of educational institutions under their control in a graded manner.

## Police modernisation: Funds lie idle

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 30:** Odisha Police has failed to utilise funds earmarked for modernisation of the force in recent years, as per a report by Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD).

Every year, the force receives grants from both the state and central government to upgrade its infrastructure and capacity to meet emerging challenges in internal security.

"The focus of the scheme is on strengthening of the police infrastructure by way of construction of secure and people friendly Police Stations, Police Outposts, Police Housing,



Improved Mobility, Modern Weaponry, Computerization, Communication Equipment, Modern Traffic Control Equipment, etc." stated the report. As per the report, the force got ₹68.91 crore for modernisation

Odisha Police could only spend ₹14.89 crore out of the combined ₹58.50 crore it received as grant in 2018-19

Similarly, the force spent a meager ₹6.8 crore out of the total ₹70.75 grant it received in 2019-20

out of the total ₹3,559.51 crore earmarked for the police force in the state's annual budget for the year 2018-19. However, the BPRD report reveals that Odisha Police managed to spend only ₹41.49 crore out of the total

budget during 2018-19, while the rest is still unspent.

Similarly, Odisha police received ₹35.10 crore as modernisation grant from the central government and ₹23.40 from the state government during the financial year 2018-19.

The force could only spend ₹14.89 crore out of the combined ₹58.50 crore it received as grant in the period.

On similar lines, the force received ₹42.45 crore from the central government and ₹28.3 crore from the state government as modernisation grant during 2019-20 financial year. As per the report, the force police spent a meager ₹6.8 crore out of the total ₹70.75 grant it received.

## Consensus with farmers on two issues, says govt



Narendra Singh Tomar

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Dec 30:** The government and farm unions reached some common ground Wednesday to resolve protesting farmers' concerns over rise in power tariff and penalties for stubble burning, but the two sides remained deadlocked over the main contentious issues of the repeal of three farm laws and a legal guarantee for MSP.

After nearly five hours of the sixth round of negotiations between three union ministers and a 41-member representative group of thousands farmers protesting on Delhi borders, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said at least 50 per cent resolution has been reached with mutual agreement on two out of four items on the agenda and discussions would continue on the remaining two January 4.

"Discussions on the three farm laws and MSP are continuing and will continue in the next round of talks on January 4," Tomar told reporters after the meeting ended.

He said talks were held in a cordial atmosphere and the two sides reached an agreement on two issues - one relating to the proposed electricity law and the other about an ordinance on penal provisions for stubble burning.

## RJD seeks to fish in troubled NDA waters in Bihar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Patna, Dec 30:** Defection of JD(U) MLAs to the BJP in Arunachal Pradesh and the resultant cold vibes between the partners in the ruling coalition in Bihar, seem to have kindled fresh hopes in the RJD which has ended up heading the opposition here despite being the single largest party.

Shyam Rajak, a former national general secretary of the JD(U) who joined RJD shortly before the recent assembly elections, Wednesday sought to fish in the troubled waters with the claim that 17 MLAs of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's party were willing to cross over.

They are all feeling stifled in the current dispensation where the CM appears to have capitulated before



a domineering BJP. They are willing to switch sides as soon as possible, Rajak, who was the JD(U)'s deputy leader in the previous assembly, said here.

He claimed en masse defection of the JD(U) MLAs has been put on hold since the RJD hoped that more would like to follow suit soon which

would raise the number sufficiently enough to cause a split, tenable under the anti-defection law in the party which has 43 MLAs.

At the JD(U) national executive meeting here Sunday, the party adopted a resolution condemning the violation of the spirit of coalition politics in the north-

eastern state.

K C Tyagi, the party's outspoken national general secretary and spokesman, asserted that events in Arunachal will not cast a shadow in Bihar but admitted that the JD(U) had felt aahat (hurt).

BJP leaders here have insisted that the party did not poach the

## ALLIANCE IN TROUBLE

RJD claimed that as many as 17 JD(U) MLAs were willing to defect to BJP after the Arunachal Pradesh episode

If the CM pulls out of NDA, there will be a realignment between the RJD and the JD(U), the party said

**Nitish should give up the CM's chair. He should help Tejashwi form the new government and the RJD would return the favour by backing him as PM candidate**

UDAY NARAYAN CHAUDHARY | RJD LEADER

JD(U) MLAs in Arunachal Pradesh where legislators recently switched sides of their own accord.

However, RJD national vice-president Shivanand Tiwary has maintained that a common link ran through the Arunachal Pradesh defections and the rebellion by LJP.

The LJP could not have done what it did in the assembly polls without the BJP's tacit approval, Tiwary, who was formerly with the JD(U), said.

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	47,746.22 ↑ 133.14
NIFTY	13,981.95 ↑ 49.35
DOLLAR	73.28 ↓ ₹0.20
EURO	89.90 ↑ ₹0.07
GOLD	₹50,031 ↓ ₹8.0
SILVER	₹68,401 ↑ ₹304

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
MAX	28.7°C	28.8°C
MIN	16.0°C	13.5°C
Humidity	92%	88%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Fog/mist in the morning	

# leisure



## WHEN AMANDA SEYFRIED WAS 'OBSESSED' WITH GHOST STORIES

Actress Amanda Seyfried has recalled the time when she became obsessed with ghost stories. "I became really obsessed with ghost stories when I was young, so my first memory is how comfortable and safe I felt exploring those tales," she said.

## BEEN GREAT PLAYING A DUMB PERSON IN FRIENDS: LISA

Actress Lisa Kudrow, who gained global fame playing Phoebe Buffay in the popular sitcom Friends, says it has been great playing a dumb person because people talk much more freely when they assume you don't understand them.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

**ARIES**  
Ganesh says you are going to have the time of your life; that is if you make the right plans. At work, there will be the usual ups and downs. But plan the evening well and you may surprise yourself. Try candlelights, roses, music...

**TAURUS**  
Ganesh predicts that you will work extremely hard to meet your targets today. The dividends may not be what you anticipated, but do not let that bog you down. There will be no cause for anxiety or trouble today, says Ganesh.

**GEMINI**  
It will be more or less a hassle-free day, predicts Ganesh. Some of your personal belongings are very dear to you. But you need not be too possessive about them, especially when you have no options but to share them with others.

**CANCER**  
A lot can happen over a cup of coffee, and today a lot will. Things will be moving quite swiftly today; a little too swiftly to your liking. You will get a lot of authority at the workplace, and you will use it to the point of abuse.

**LEO**  
Surviving an earthquake will seem easier compared to getting through this day without ruffling your feathers, says Ganesh. It is not your best day, and you shall have to work really hard to meet your targets today.

**VIRGO**  
Sunshine time today, says Ganesh. The spotlight is on you, and it'll be one of those excellent days. Difference of opinions might crop up at work, but stroll over them, says Ganesh. Late in the day, candles and dinner will make you feel blessed. You'll make quite an impression today.

**LIBRA**  
Having an elderly hand to guide you and back you up is always a good thing. Today promises to be very advantageous to you when it comes to gaining from your seniors. It may have something to do with your exceptional skills in building rapport with people, or your ability to perform truthfully.

**SCORPIO**  
Get your family together today and spend most of the time with them, says Ganesh. If being practical is important, then have your close friends over at your place too.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Self-righteousness, and a sense of duty set the mood for the day today. You'll be a miserly scrooge in the afternoon. But later in the day, expect dinner with your sweetheart to be extravagant and blissful.

**CAPRICORN**  
You may have craved for a mini vacation to some place quaint and peaceful for long, and would have given up the idea every time because of the burgeoning work pressure. But it's time to get impulsive. Give your imagination a free reign today, and go where it takes you, for travel is on the cards, and that too with your sweetheart, says Ganesh.

**AQUARIUS**  
You will be on the cloud nine today! With efforts getting recognised and rewarded, you are motivated to beat your own standards and raise the bar. Not that you have not worked hard, but at work, you may have to put in more efforts as your bosses expect you to be more efficient and productive.

**PISCES**  
You will need to enlist the cooperation of your colleagues while chalking out strategies at the workplace today, if you desire to make substantial progress, says Ganesh. The good news is that your efforts are likely to fructify.

SHANTANU MOHAPATRA, AN M.TECH IN APPLIED GEO SCIENCE FROM IIT-KHARAGPUR, WAS A GEOLOGIST BY PROFESSION. BUT HE WAS ALSO THE FIRST MUSIC DIRECTOR TO GET THE HINDI FILM GREATS LIKE, LATA MANGESHKAR, MOHD RAFI, MANNA DE AND USHA MANGESHKAR TO SING IN ODIA FILMS

## Exit of a wizard



Shantanu (2nd from R) with Mohd Rafi (2nd from L) during a recording session

Starting from acclaimed filmmaker Manmohan Mohapatra to playwright Bijoy Mishra, to legendary actors Bijoy Mohanty and Ajit Das the state has lost a galaxy of stars this year. The latest addition to the list is legendary music composer Shantanu Mohapatra. One of the greatest music directors to have graced the soil, Shantanu won nearly 100 awards/honours for his unique contributions to the field of music in the last 60 years. He composed music for many blockbusters like *Suryamukhi*, *Meghamukti*, *Priyatama*, *Agni Parikhya*, *Dora*, *Jaga Balia*, *Golamgiri*, *Ranabhoomi* and many others and was part of a number of National Award winning movies like *Chilika Tire*, *Priyatama*, *Agni Parikhya*, *Megha Mukti*, *Sitarati* and *Jibana Sangram*. He was also the music director of award-winning Hindi films *Shodh* and *Bagh Bahadur*. **Orissa POST** takes a look at the journey of multi-talented Shantanu Mohapatra.

**BORN TO SING**  
Born in November 1936 at Baripada, Mayurbhanj to Soudamini and Ramesh Mohapatra, Shantanu learnt classical and traditional vocal music from Sangeet Narayan Banchhanidhi Panda from the age of five and was ready for public performances at state level competitions when he was just nine. He went on to create a storm during the All Orissa Music Competitions organised by Utkala Sangeet Samaja, Cuttack by bagging the Best Singer Trophy for four consecutive years, singing Dhruwad, Khayal, Odissi, Champu and Bhajan.



### Shantanu's Top 5

- Song: **Mayuri Go Tuma Akashe Mu**  
Film: Arundhati  
Singer: Mohd Rafi
- Song: **Aji Mu Shrabani**  
Film: Arundhati  
Singer: Lata Mangeshkar
- Song: **Mu Ta Thili Ekutia Banra Pakhi**  
Film: Dora  
Singer: Suresh Wadekar
- Song: **Duniyare Samayara Nai**  
Film: Suryamukhi  
Singer: Manna De
- Song: **Sei nila pari deshe**  
Film: Surya mukhi  
Singers: Sikander Alam and Nirmala Mishra

**MAN OF MANY 'FIRSTS'**  
Shantanu has many firsts to his credit in the field of Odia Modern/Light music. He composed the first ballad, the first lullaby, the first qawali, the first bhanga tune, the first fusion composition (Classical+Western) in Odia. He, as a music director, also has this unique distinction of being the first to get the Hindi film greats like, Lata Mangeshkar, Mohd. Rafi, Manna Dey and Usha Mangeshkar to sing in Odia films. And this is in the 60's when all of them were in their peak.

### ACHIEVEMENTS AT A GLANCE

- Total Songs Tuned: More than 1,900 in Odia, Hindi, Bengali, Telugu, Assamese, Sanskrit.
- Music directions: In over 50 Films
- 36 music cassettes/CD and 39 LP records (Discs)
- Being a mining expert, he led the massive operation on Bauxite (Aluminium ore) exploration jointly with Geological Survey of India. Successfully explored more than 1800 million tones of Bauxite which led to the establishment of NALCO (National Aluminium Co.) in Odisha.
- He played a key role in the establishment of NALCO (National Aluminium Co.) in Odisha as the nodal officer in deputation from Govt of Odisha.

## Ileana shares her definition of strength

**Mumbai:** Actress Ileana D'Cruz has shared what she believes is the definition of strength. "Strength isn't always just a big dramatic show of bravado. It isn't always a long monologue filled with inspirational words and hard hitting truths. Sometimes it's just uncurling yourself up from that ball of tears and lost confusion, cleaning yourself up, and stepping out into the world again," the actress shared on her verified Instagram account. On the work front, Ileana is all set to star in *Unfair N Lovely*, a comic take on India's obsession with fair skin. Set in the backdrop of Haryana, the film chronicles the story of a dusky girl, and will feature Ileana D'Cruz opposite Randeep Hooda. The film marks the directorial debut of screenplay writer Balwinder Singh Janjua. **IANS**



## Kritika on what drew her to the upcoming series Tandav

**Mumbai:** Actress Kritika Kamra says her upcoming web series, *Tandav*, is engaging because of its multi layered characters, and that was a factor that got her hooked to the script. "I received a call from the casting company and was given two pages out of the script to prepare for the auditions. The read interested me, and I decided to audition for the show. Meanwhile, I also came to know that it was going to be an Ali Abbas Zafar directorial, and I was sure that it would be a great experience," Kritika said. "After two rounds of auditions, I finally got a chance to meet him and that's when I got the complete script. While I started reading it, I fell in love with Gaurav Solanki's writing. The series is very engaging owing to the multi layered characters and by the end I knew that - I have to be a part of it, so I agreed for my role of Sana," she added. **IANS**

### PEANUTS



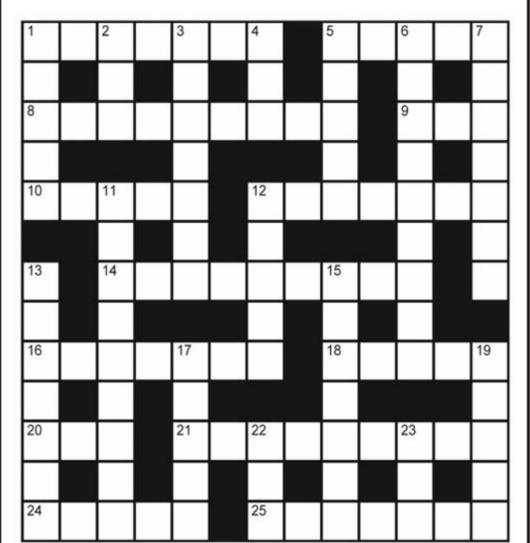
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



### FUN post CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Rabbit-sized rodents of Central America
  - 5 Axes
  - 8 Assortment
  - 9 Duffer's dream
  - 10 Give the slip
  - 12 Unnerved
  - 14 Negative one
  - 16 Journalists
  - 18 Confess (3,2)
  - 20 Outback runner
  - 21 Dress shops
  - 24 Milquetoast
  - 25 Reason to go on a diet
- Down**
- 1 Sufficient
  - 2 Choose
  - 3 Mason's tools
  - 4 Round Table address
  - 5 Fleet
  - 6 Quack, for one
  - 7 Slight
  - 11 Boxer's blows
  - 12 Train tracks
  - 13 Tooth problem
  - 15 Worship
  - 17 London policeman
  - 19 Bothersome
  - 22 ET carrier
  - 23 Israeli weapon

### SUDOKU

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

					B	5		2	7	1	
D	2							1	B		
				C	7	8				6	4
	3				B	E	2			5	
		B			9		3	4		D	C
C	0		1	3				6	5	4	2
A		6			C	4			9		
2	E		C	5	0	A	D			B	
									B		
7		A				E	8		6	0	
0	E		7		1	9	2			D	
9	4			2				7	3		
1		3			D	B					
	7			E	8	5	9	0		B	
	5	A	8		4			3		6	

### SOLUTIONS

**CROSSWORD**

R	A	I	N	B	O	W	B	U	R	S	T
A	G	E	E	I	E	I					
V	A	L	E	T	B	A	T	S	M	A	N
E	O	T	B	E	A						
I	O	D	I	N	E	S	T	R	A	I	
E	N	D	R								
M	A	N	A	G	E	T	I	D	Y	U	P
I	A										
R	E	I	G	N							
R	A	O	O	Q	O						
S	T	O	I	C	A	L	T	H	U	M	B
A	P	R	I								
P	R	I	D	E							
C	O	C	K	P	I	T					

**SUDOKU**

3	2	C	B	5	6	7	1	D	A	E	9	0	4	8
8	6	D	4	3	7	A	0	9	B	5	2	C	E	1
E	7	1	9	D	C	B	5	8	3	4	0	6	2	A
A	0	B	8	1	2	3	4	E	7	C	6	5	D	9
5	4	9	0	A	E	2	6	C	1	D	8	B	3	7
0	5	H	1	6	4	9	C	2	D	A	E	7	B	3
C	9	6	D	8	5	1	3	7	4	2	B	E	A	0
1	A	E	3	0	B	5	D	4	9	6	7	2	8	C
D	B	7	2	E	9	8	A	0	5	3	C	4	T	1
4	3	2	7	C	A	E	9	8	6	1	0	5	D	3
9	0	C	7	8	4	2	5	E	1	A	3	6	B	0
2	C	A	6	4	3	D	7	B	8	9	5	1	0	E
7	8	5	A	2	0	6	E	1	C	0	3	D	9	4
6	1	3	E	B	D	C	9	A	2	4	8	7	5	0
B	E	4	5	9	1	0	8	3	6	7	D	A	C	2

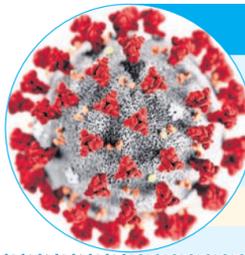
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



## HERITAGE STRUCTURE

Atharanala bridge in Puri decorated with ornamental plants as part of a beautification drive, Wednesday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	8,25,46,018	5,85,54,774	18,01,724
India	1,02,44,852	98,34,141	1,48,439
Odisha	3,29,306	3,25,103	1,871

# Weekend holiday for govt staff to continue

**ESSENTIAL OFFICES AND SERVICES LIKE SRC & OSDMA, POLICE, FIRE, HEALTH AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES WILL FUNCTION IN FULL STRENGTH**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 30:** All government offices across the state will continue to remain closed Saturdays in January in view of the Covid-19 pandemic, as per a notification issued by General Administration and Public Grievances department, Wednesday.

Offices in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack will function with 75 per cent strength of employees (all staffers including Group A officers) during January. The departments/head of offices in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack have been given power to decide the manner of selection of employees who will attend office.

However, essential offices and



services like Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) & Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA), police, fire, health & municipal services among others will function in full strength.

All government offices and employees have been instructed to strictly follow all precautionary measures issued by the department, it said.

In case of detection of any Covid case among the office employees, the office concerned will follow the protocol issued earlier.

The officers/staffers, who have

## NO COMPLACENCY

Offices in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack will function with 75 per cent strength of employees during January

All government offices and employees have been instructed to strictly follow all precautionary measures

The government has put restrictions on congregation and celebration of New Year's Day in government offices

been provided with VPN will continue to work from home, when not assigned roster duty. They must be available to attend to any office work of urgent nature, at short notice and be available on telephone at all times, read the order. Meanwhile, the government has put restrictions on congregation and celebration of New Year's Day in government offices. The employees have been asked to use virtual means for conveying New Year greetings to colleagues and seniors.

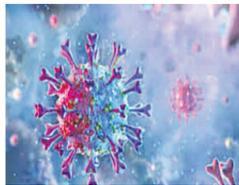
# 12 UK returnees still untraceable

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 30:** Amidst concern over spread of a new variant of Covid-19, about 12 returnees from the United Kingdom (UK) are still untraceable as civic authorities have failed to establish any contacts with them.

As per information provided by the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), about 62 passengers had arrived here from the UK. Out of these, 50 have been contacted, but others are still out of reach. Meanwhile, out of the 50 contacted, tests have been conducted on 15 persons.

"We have formed six special search teams to find the whereabouts of the people. Earlier, we had received a list of 20 travellers who had returned from the UK. We contacted all of them and only three travellers tested positive for Covid-19. Their swab samples have been sent to National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune for genome sequencing to verify if they carry the new Covid strain."



It's worth mentioning here that Director of Public Health, Dr Niranjana Mishra, had stated that 181 passengers had returned to Odisha from the UK between November 30 and December 21. These returnees are said to have dispersed to 18 districts of Odisha. Out of them, a majority were from the Capital city followed by Ganjam.

"Though at least 92 of them had given only their phone numbers and vague addresses, we could reach out to around 65 of them through persistent efforts. There is nothing for these returnees to worry about. We will study their genome sequence and are following the SOP issued by the Centre," the Director had mentioned.

# 305 new Covid cases push state tally to 3, 29, 306

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 30:** Odisha's Covid-19 tally mounted to 3, 29, 306 Wednesday as 305 more people tested positive for the infection, while three fresh fatalities pushed the state's coronavirus death toll to 1,871, a Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department official said.

As many as 174 new cases were reported in quarantine centres, while 131 infections were detected during contact tracing, he said.

Sundargarh and Sambalpur districts registered the highest number of new cases at 28 each, followed by Angul (26), the official said. The fresh fatalities were reported in Bhadrak, Bolangir and Puri districts, he said.

Fifty-three coronavirus patients have died due to comorbidities, the official said. Khurda district, under which Bhubaneswar falls, has reported the highest number of fatalities at 322, followed by Ganjam (246), Sundargarh (166) and Cuttack (138), he said.

The state now has 2, 607 active coronavirus cases, while 3, 24, 775 people have been cured of the disease so far, the official said.

# 6 tainted officials shown the door

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 30:** Taking stern action against corrupt officials, the state government Wednesday gave compulsory retirement to six tainted officials with immediate effect. Of the six officials, four are engineers and two from Excise department.

By the order of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, compulsory retirement has been given to the corrupt and inefficient officials. The officials are: Ajit Kumar Debata (deputy executive engineer of rural works division, Keonjhar), Jitendra Kumar Dalai (assistant engineer, quality control department of R&B division, Cuttack), Bijay Parida (assistant engineer, rural works section-1, Karanjia, Mayurbhanj district), Ganeswar Sethi (assis-

tant engineer, R&B division-II, Bhubaneswar), Jayadeep Patnaik (deputy superintendent of excise) and Rihaz Ahmed Beg (Excise Inspector, Sundargarh). They were asked to take retirement for alleged corruptions and indiscipline activities.

Action against the engineering staffers has been taken for corruption charges. Two Excise department officials have been asked to take retirement on the basis of allegations of misbehaviour, dereliction of duty and inefficiency.



Food safety officials examine synthetic paneer seized from a bus at OMP Square in Cuttack, Wednesday. Around a quintal of synthetic paneer was being brought to the Silver city from Kolkata

# Promotion for 35 senior IAS officers

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 30:** Ahead of the New Year's Day celebrations, the state government has given promotions to 35 senior IAS officers.

Sanjeev Chopra, a 1990-batch IAS officer, has been promoted to the Additional Chief Secretary rank while three 1996-batch IAS officers—Saswata Mishra, Vir Vikram Yadav and Vishal Kumar Dev—have been promoted to Principal Secretary rank.

Similarly eight 2005-batch officers were promoted to Super Time Scale. The officers are: R Vineel Krishna, Ratnakar Rout, Dasarathi Satpathy, Prafulla Chandra Pradhan, Anjan Kumar Manik, Benudhar Behera, Suresh Chandra Dalai and Debendra Kumar Jena.

As many as 12 IAS officers of

**Sanjeev Chopra, a 1990-batch IAS officer, has been promoted to Additional Chief Secretary rank**

2008 batch have been promoted to Selection Grade. The officers are: Bhupendra Singh Poonia, Yamini Sarangi, M Muthukumar, B Parameswaran, Guha Poonam Tapas Kumar, Maguni Charan Patra, Brundaban Behera, Dhananjaya Hembram, Gangadhar Patra, Pabitra Mandal, Sunil Kumar Nayak and Batakrisna Dehury.

Seven 2012-batch IAS officers and four 2017-batch officers have been promoted to Junior Administrative Grade and Senior Time Scale.

# Violators pay for littering City

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 30:** Intensifying its drive against littering in public and open spaces, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) collected penalties over Rs 1.61 lakh from different shops and establishments in two days.

Carrying out enforcement drives in the three zones, the civic authority is reported to have collected Rs 1,61,650 as fine from 1,970 shops and commercial establishments for littering the public places since Monday. Two shops were also sealed during the drive.

"As per an earlier order issued by BMC for penalising those who found dumping garbage in open and not using dustbins we carried the enforcement drive. On the first day of enforcement, we had inspected 620 shops and imposed Rs 41,750 penalty. Meanwhile, on second day a total of Rs 1.19 lakh were imposed on 1,350 shops,"



said a senior officer of the enforcement squad.

Launched under 'Mu Safaiwala' campaign, the civic authority in November had passed an official order banning any sort of littering in public spaces. However, it was found that shops and other entities are not following the thumb rule of keeping dustbins in their units,

**THE BMC IS REPORTED TO HAVE COLLECTED RS 1,61,650 FINE FROM 1,970 SHOPS AND COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS FOR LITTERING THE PUBLIC PLACES IN CITY SINCE MONDAY**

thereby not contributing in cleanliness of the city.

Speaking on the fines imposed, BMC Commissioner Prem Chandra Chaudhary said, "Initially, we had conducted awareness drives and informed shopkeepers to strictly use dustbins. Our objective is not to make profits out of penalties but to enforce efficient hygiene and clean environment for the city."

# Rail museum in City on the cards

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 30:** East Coast Railway (ECoR) General Manager Vidya Bhushan Wednesday laid the foundation stone for construction of a Rail Heritage Museum at Chandrasekharpur here in the presence of Additional General Manager, Sudhir Kumar, and other principal heads of ECoR depts.

The objective to establish the rail museum at Bhubaneswar is to preserve the old railway equipment, showcase the rich history of Railways in this region, enlighten the public about railways and its achievements and boost tourism.

Old equipment, instruments, technology devices and models will also be preserved in the Heritage Museum through an impressive display of artifacts, models and photographs. In the indoor section, various documents, old manuals, railway maps, equipment and others will be placed.

# Plea in HC for polygraph test of Babuli Nayak

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, Dec 30:** A miscellaneous case with regard to the alleged murder of a minor girl at Jadupur in Nayagarh was filed in Orissa High Court, Wednesday.

Surendra Panigrahi of Bharatiya Vikash Parishad filed the miscellaneous case and urged the HC to take steps to conduct polygraph test of Babuli Nayak of Nayagarh.

In their FIR with police, the victim's parents had alleged the involvement of Nayak in the incident. However, a Special Investigation Team (SIT), formed by the state government, has arrested Saroj Sethy of Jadupur in connection with the murder. The SIT claimed that Sethy raped the minor girl after killing her.

The petitioner also urged the



**MINOR GIRL MURDER** HC to order for a CBI probe into the incident. In his petition, Panigrahi informed the court that the State Forensic Science Laboratory, Bhubaneswar, has failed to determine the semen stain found from the victim's frock.

Panigrahi had earlier filed a miscellaneous case in the HC and sought polygraph test on SIT chief Arun Bothra. He had also pleaded for a CBI investigation into the case.

A division bench of Justice BR Sarangi and Justice Pramath Patnaik would take up Panigrahi's petitions January 12.

# State ready for nCoV vaccine dry run

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 30:** The state government Wednesday expressed its readiness to conduct dry run of Covid-19 vaccines.

State Director of Medical Education and Training (DMET) CBK Mohanty Wednesday said that the vaccine dry run is like a mock drill where the coordinated efforts undertaken by the government are analysed under the programme.

"This will see how the vaccination can reach from the manufacturer to the beneficiaries. This will reflect the need of the chain and the bottlenecks. The dry run directions are given by the Union government, which directed four states to conduct the same. Odisha was not in the list. Odisha has already been doing vaccination programmes and when needed, we can conduct the same. We are ready for the same," he said.

# APARAJITA FOR CONSENSUS ON SIMULTANEOUS POLLS

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 30:** BJP leader and Bhubaneswar MP Aparajita Sarangi Wednesday sought a consensus among the political parties and the people of the state on simultaneous elections in the country.

"The Union government is going to take a historic decision and the Odisha BJP is going to support the same. On November 26, 2020, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had briefed election officials of Gujarat and talked about 'One Nation One Election' and termed the same as national need," she said.

Sarangi said that under his vision, different activities have started across the state. "In Odisha, we organised a webinar and tried to interact with the people. Our na-

tional spokesperson Sambit Patra and national party leader Vinay Sahasrabudhe took part in the elections," she said.

The Lok Sabha MP said that the EC has been entrusted with the task of conducting elections, enumeration of voters and other works but multiple elections often lead to burden on state resources and administration. "Rs 450 crore was spent on EVM machines alone during the last elections," she said.

"Earlier, state elections and the Lok Sabha elections used to take place simultaneously. However, the earlier governments dissolved several state assemblies and imposed President's Rule in the states in 1968-69. Later, the Parliament was also dissolved and due to these activities, the two elections started taking place differently," she said.

# BJP slams govt for 'mileage' over pucca houses

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 30:** The state unit of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Wednesday objected the Odisha government's plan to take credit for pucca houses built in the state under Central schemes.

BJP leader Prithviraj Harichandan Wednesday objected to the new plan of the state government to paste posters on pucca houses built under schemes of the Centre. He said, "The state government had started setting wrong precedence by pasting the posters of their own on the houses constructed under central scheme. People are now fumed with the malpractices. Many villagers are asking such people in the government to go back."

He also said, "We are going to



protest against the proposed plan of the government to have joint posters of the Centre and the state on the works done under Central schemes. We will continue our fight against this. The Chief

Minister has planned to mislead the people on the issue. The government now plans to send letters to the beneficiaries from the CM. We want such misleading letters be taken back."

Harichandan said that the party wanted that the government must clarify as to which houses were built under which scheme and that the new plan of revised posters is likely to add more financial burden on the government. "It has already spent funds on the older posters. Earlier, the government has already spent upto Rs 10 crore on the works," he said.

The BLP leader said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has vowed to provide pucca houses to all and actions are now being taken on the same accordingly. He requested the state to help in achieving the target.

The BJD, however, countered the allegations. BJD spokesperson Lenin Mohanty said, "Odisha provides almost the same amount of financial resources/funds that the Centre

provides for the housing programmes in Odisha. The success of having built 20 lakh houses in only 5 years by the BJD government has unnerved the BJP in Odisha."

He also added, "Harichandan's statement is a reflection of the fear and anger within Odisha BJP relating to the success of the pro-poor, pro-people housing development programmes in Odisha under leadership of CM Naveen Patnaik."

FOCUS POST-PANDEMIC WORLD

# 'ASIAN CENTURY'



If future historians want a precise date for when the 'Asian Century' began, they may be tempted to choose 2020, just as the US publisher Henry Luce dated the 'American Century' from the onset of World War II

is circumscribed by the fact that so many other Asian countries have been equally successful without Chinese assistance.

The post-war comparison also may be premature for economic reasons. Asian countries' economic performance in 2020 did not match the success of their pandemic response. While Vietnam, China, and Taiwan have beaten the rest of the world in terms of GDP growth, the United States has not fared too badly, despite its failure to manage the virus. With forecasts pointing to a 3.6 per cent contraction for the year, the US is in better shape than every European economy, as well as Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, and others in Asia. The difference is largely a function of interconnectedness: compared to the US, many Asian economies are more exposed to trade and travel bans, which cut deeply into the tourism industry.

Although China's public-health and economic outcomes have been better than the West's in 2020, it has neither found nor really sought a political or diplomatic advantage from the crisis. If anything, China has become more aggressive toward nearby neighbours and countries like Australia. This suggests that Chinese leaders are not even trying to build an Asian network of friends and supporters.

How China approaches the issue of international debt restructurings – especially those connected with its Belt and Road Initiative – will be a key test in 2021. But, of course, the US and the rest of the West also will be tested, and on a wide range of issues, from international finance to sociopolitical stability.

It may be too soon to announce a new historical epoch; but it is not too early to start absorbing the lessons of Asia's public-health successes.

*The writer, a former editor-in-chief of The Economist, is co-director of the Global Commission for Post-Pandemic Policy.*

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In the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was common to divide countries and their responses according to their political systems, with many attributing China's success in controlling the virus to its authoritarianism. As of late 2020, however, it is clear that the real dividing line is not political but geographical. Regardless of whether a country is democratic or authoritarian, an island or continental, Confucian or Buddhist, communitarian or individualistic, if it is East Asian, Southeast Asian, or Australasian, it has managed COVID-19 better than any European or North American country.

While this line is not exactly hemispheric, it is close enough to be suggestive. Even Asia's worst performers (in public-health terms) – such as the Philippines and Indonesia – controlled the pandemic more effectively than did Europe's biggest and wealthiest countries. Notwithstanding reasonable doubts about the quality and accuracy of the reported mortality data in the case of the Philippines (and India), the fact remains that you were much likelier to die of COVID-19 in 2020 if you were European or American than if you were Asian.

Comprehensive, interdisciplinary research is urgently needed to explain these performance differentials. Because much of our current understanding is anecdotal and insufficiently pan-regional, it is vulnerable to political exploitation and distortion. To help all countries prepare for future biological threats, several specific questions need to be explored. First is the extent to which the experience of SARS, MERS, Avian flu, and other disease outbreaks in many Asian countries left a legacy of health-system preparedness and public receptiveness to anti-transmission messaging.

Clearly, some Asian countries have benefited from existing structures designed to prevent outbreaks of tuberculosis, cholera, typhoid, HIV/AIDS, and other infectious diseases. For example, as

have the information we need to prepare for future threats.

Many are also wondering what Asia's relative success this year will mean for public policymaking and geopolitics after the pandemic. If future historians want a precise date for when the 'Asian Century' began, they may be tempted to choose 2020, just as the US publisher Henry Luce dated the 'American Century' from the onset of World War II.

But this particular comparison suggests that any such judgement may be premature. After all, Luce's America was an individual superpower. Emerging victorious from the war, it would go on to claim and define its era (in competition with another superpower, the Soviet Union). The Asian Century, by contrast, will feature an entire continent comprising a wide range of countries.

In other words, it is not simply about China. To be sure, the rising new superpower has been notably successful in coping with the pandemic after its initial failures and lack of transparency. But its scope for asserting systemic superiority

of 2014, Japan had 48,452 public-health nurses (PHNs), 7,266 of whom were employed in public-health centres where they could be mobilised quickly to assist with COVID-19 contact tracing. Although occupational definitions vary, one can compare these figures with those for England, where just 350-750 PHNs served 11,000 patients in 2014. (England's population is roughly half the size of Japan's.)

We also will need a better understanding of the effect of specific policies, such as rapidly closing borders and suspending international travel. Likewise, some countries did a much better job than others at protecting care homes and other facilities for the elderly – especially in countries (notably Japan and South Korea) with a high proportion of people over 65.

Moreover, the effectiveness of public-health communications clearly varied across countries, and it is possible that genetic differences and past programs of anti-tuberculosis vaccination may have helped limit the spread of the coronavirus in some areas. Only with rigorous empirical research will we

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson's ten-point plan for a Green Industrial Revolution also points the way ahead. Energy efficiency and diversification, sustainable infrastructure and housing, renewable power generation, green technologies, carbon capture and storage, and nature-based solutions all provide a clear pathway to a net-zero future. This is the "Marshall Plan for the Planet" we urgently need, and we must now double down on achieving a true green recovery.

It is encouraging to see the international community mobilising. Next year, China will play a pivotal role in helping to protect and restore nature as the host of the United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP15). The meeting comes at a critical time: one million species are threatened with extinction, and the destruction of our oceans, forests, peatlands, and mangroves – which all act as essential carbon sinks – has regrettably become routine business.

Valued at \$125 trillion a year, our natural capital and biodiversity are the real source of our wealth. Or, as the economist Herman Daly argued, "the economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment, not the reverse." That's why

Business for Nature – a diverse group of more than 600 firms and 50 partner organisations – is advocating more ambitious government and corporate action to provide nature with the safety net it needs to flourish.

Next year's UN Food Systems and Nutrition for Growth summits will also be important opportunities to raise collective ambition. But perhaps the most critical international meeting in 2021 will be November's UN climate conference (COP26) in Glasgow. Governments must boost their carbon-cutting measures in a race to the top that helps the world achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 – at the latest. Crucially, COP26 must also uphold rich countries' commitment to provide poorer economies with the climate finance they need to manage extreme weather hazards – storms, droughts, and wildfires – which are increasing in prevalence and holding back their development and growth.

Decisive climate action cannot be the responsibility of governments alone. Business must also play its part by setting science-based emission-reduction targets, improving energy efficiency, enhancing climate reporting and dis-

closures, and eliminating deforestation from supply chains.

The We Mean Business coalition is a great example of joint private-sector action. Companies with a combined market capitalisation of over \$24 trillion are working together to drive more ambitious climate policies and accelerate the transition to a zero-carbon economy. Similarly, the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures is helping firms better calculate the risks and opportunities of climate change, thereby making it easier for investors to support sustainable businesses. This is creating a domino effect that is helping to move financial markets in a greener direction.

The pandemic has led to a temporary decrease in greenhouse-gas emissions and a resurgence of nature. But a brief reprieve for the planet is no substitute for a coherent global climate strategy. All told, 2021 promises to be a super-year for climate action, with the stars aligning for a cleaner and more sustainable future. We must seize the opportunity while we still can.

*The writer is Chair of the Food and Land Use Coalition.*

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Bill Emmott

**IT MAY BE TOO SOON TO ANNOUNCE A NEW HISTORICAL EPOCH; BUT IT IS NOT TOO EARLY TO START ABSORBING THE LESSONS OF ASIA'S PUBLIC-HEALTH SUCCESSES**

## Children of one God

In the book/film 'Sophie's Choice', the protagonist is forced to choose between the lives of her two children. How would you decide? Many meat eaters try to justify killing animals by claiming they can neither feel nor think. They place intelligence as the primary criterion that warrants continuation on the planet. Here is proof that all creatures great and small are both wise and wonderful.

Let's start small. Look how social insects, like bumblebees, can solve complex non-natural tasks. A research team trained bumblebees to pull on a string in order to access a sugar water treat. The bees that acquired the string-pulling skill were labelled 'innovators'. Twenty-five untrained bees watched the innovator bees solve the puzzle. About 60 per cent of these 'naïve' bees learned just by watching trained bees. The team then introduced a single innovator bee to three separate colonies of untrained bees. The skill spread quickly and half of the untrained bees gained the ability by learning from the innovator bee. Even after the original innovator bee died, the skill continued to be passed on to future generations. So, apart from the enormous intelligence required to design and operate intricate hives and social systems, bees have the 'smarts' to learn, teach, internalise and pass on new skills.

Cambridge University tested western scrub jays to see what they remembered about foods they had salted away. The birds were given different items to hide, some perishable (worms), others durable (peanuts). Four hours later, the jays looked for the worms—their favourite food—before they looked for the nuts, but five days later their response was reversed. They didn't bother to look for worms, which by then would have rotted, but they still remembered the peanut locations. So, not only were the birds clever enough to remember their hiding places, but also to judge what should be eaten now and what saved for later.

Never be mean to a crow. Studies show how these birds can accurately identify tormentors. Like us, crows seldom forget or forgive and take revenge whenever their target is least expecting it. Plus, they call in reinforcements, in the form of their mates, who happily join in the surprise attack. The intelligence at work here seems comparable to our military strategists executing surgical strikes.

Chickens have a sense of numbers and can actually count. In one study, young chicks were able to track the changes of two quantities of objects hidden behind screens. They could consistently point out where the larger quantity was hidden, even when the puzzle required addition or subtraction.

But when it comes to maths, elephants may just be one of the cleverest creatures. A 2018 study shows how Asian elephants are able to process numbers in a more complex manner, similar to humans. Researchers trained a 14-year-old Asian elephant, named Authai, to use a computer touch screen panel. She had to indicate with the tip of her trunk, which one of two figures, shown to her at a time, contained more items. These ranged from 0 to 10 items. Authai was rewarded whenever she chose the figures featuring the larger number of items. This she did correctly 181 out of 271 times – a success rate of 66.8 per cent. Not just a pretty good score but evidence that non-human animals have cognitive characteristics, partially identical to human counting.

Rats are so small that the terror they evoke seems like an overreaction. Rats display a remarkable ability to reason. The fact that they avoid certain toxic foods, even if they don't become nauseated until hours later, cannot be explained by simple association. It seems they are able to think back to previous food encounters to determine which one was likely to have made them sick. This kind of memory, known as episodic memory, is different from associative learning, as, when a dog learns he will earn a cookie by responding to the command 'sit'. Episodic memory is the capacity to think back to a specific event, sometimes long ago—something that rats are able to do just like humans.

Fish are often mistaken to have no intelligence, no memory, and no ability to feel pain. Completely false. A new, well researched, book shows how fish have many abilities not that different from our own. Archerfish and damselfish are able to recognise human faces, even when the faces are partly obscured.

Of course we know that dogs can tell humans apart, but they can also identify human expressions. Studies show how dogs are able to consistently recognise the difference between happy and angry human faces. Even better, dogs can manifest emotional expressions on their own faces to evoke a desired human response. In a 2017 study, psychologists concluded that dogs display certain facial expressions in order to win human sympathy and attention. These particular facial expressions are not a reaction to food or any other stimuli, and nor are they something that dogs do when they interact with each other. In other words, dogs make these 'faces' only in the presence of humans to get their attention!

Goats are as clever as dogs. They too read emotions and can tell the difference between happy and sad humans. They gaze at humans in the same way as dogs do when asking for a treat that is out of reach. They are, in fact, just as capable of building emotional relationships with humans as any dog or cat. Sheep too are good with faces. They can distinguish between different expressions in humans, as well as detect changes in the faces of anxious sheep. Researchers found that sheep recognise the faces of at least 50 other sheep and can remember 50 different images.

Perhaps the greatest sign of intelligence, even in humans, is knowing what you previously do not know. In one study, a dolphin named Natua was asked to identify a high tone and a low tone. He swam at different speeds toward the response, depending on how easy or hard the answer was. When the tones were quite distinct, Natua swam confidently at full speed. If the tones were sort of similar, though, Natua slowed down, waggled his head, and wavered. Instead of touching one of the paddles to make his choice, he selected the opt-out paddle (asking for a new trial), which meant he knew that he'd probably flunk the task. So clever.

No surprises at how bright are our closest animal relatives, chimps. When heading out to a specific fig tree, where they have recently eaten, they can figure out how much sooner they would need to set out for trees far away from their nest, as for those nearby, to arrive at about the same early hour at both, in order to beat the rush by other animals. This suggests calculation of travel time based on distance, as well as the ability to plan ahead based upon past experience. Equally impressive is their power of inferential reasoning. In a test, apes were presented with two covered cups after they had learned that only one would contain grapes. Both cups were covered and shaken. As expected, the apes preferred the cup in which they could hear the grapes.

When mice are in pain, they grimace. Just like us. When chimps are tickled, they laugh. If we cannot see how amazingly bright animals are, it is our own lack of intelligence, not theirs. And if you can still bring yourself to eat an animal, you are clearly not using your head. Or your heart.

To join the animal welfare movement contact [gandhim@nic.in](mailto:gandhim@nic.in), [www.peopleforanimalsindia.org](http://www.peopleforanimalsindia.org)

### WISDOM CORNER

- Great minds have purposes; others have wishes. WASHINGTON IRVING
- It's kind of fun to do the impossible. WALT DISNEY
- Apparently there is nothing that cannot happen today. MARK TWAIN



Take Truth for your force; take Truth for your refuge.

THE MOTHER



Maneka Gandhi

If we cannot see how amazingly bright animals are, it is our own lack of intelligence, not theirs. And if you can still bring yourself to eat an animal, you are clearly not using your head. Or your heart

### SPECTRUM CLIMATE CRISIS

# A Marshall Plan for the planet



Paul Polman

**2021 PROMISES TO BE A SUPER-YEAR FOR CLIMATE ACTION, WITH THE STARS ALIGNING FOR A CLEANER AND MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE**

In a year dominated by COVID-19, it's perhaps understandable that we've neglected the most profound, existential crisis we face: runaway climate change. But we must quickly make up for lost time, before it's too late.

Fortunately, the prospects for effective international climate action in 2021 already look much better than they did a few months ago. For starters, as soon as President-elect Joe Biden takes office in January, the United States will rejoin the 2015 Paris climate agreement – the historic protocol that aims to limit global warming to well below 2°C, and preferably to 1.5°C, relative to pre-industrial levels.

This will send an unmistakable signal that the world's biggest economy is again serious about accelerating its transition to net-zero carbon-dioxide emissions, and will build on China's recent commitment to become carbon neutral before 2060. These two superpowers will define the twenty-first century, so the prospect of their enhanced climate collaboration provides real cause for optimism.

Likewise, the European Union is pressing ahead with its ambitious European Green Deal and aims to be climate neutral by 2050. And

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson's ten-point plan for a Green Industrial Revolution also points the way ahead. Energy efficiency and diversification, sustainable infrastructure and housing, renewable power generation, green technologies, carbon capture and storage, and nature-based solutions all provide a clear pathway to a net-zero future. This is the "Marshall Plan for the Planet" we urgently need, and we must now double down on achieving a true green recovery.

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*The writer is Chair of the Food and Land Use Coalition.*

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## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

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

### Effort for equality

Sir, A State Cabinet meeting held on 28 December 2020, decided to reserve seats in Engineering and Medical courses for students passing out of government schools in an effort to bring down the disparity between rural and urban students in higher education. Undoubtedly, this would inspire more rural talents to take part in the competitive ring. Generally, students of rural areas and particularly those from government schools are not getting basic facilities and therefore the government's step may be welcomed. But if we analyse the decision from the point of view of genuine hardworking students who are cracking engineering and medical entrances without getting any coaching due to economic disadvantage, the decision might be agonising. Therefore, it would rather be good if the government ensures supply of sufficient study material, employ professionals, develop advanced infrastructure in every block as a hub for coaching, assess individual aspirants after due coaching, and develop crash courses ahead of entrance examinations. Though the decision will be beneficial to students from rural background and government schools, a meticulous effort to pick up the most eligible is needed to ensure equality.

Santosh Kumar Satapathy, PARALAKHEMUNDI

### Clean governance

Sir, Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik is committed to administer clean governance in the state. Realising that corruption is an impediment on the road to development and making administration people-friendly is the need of the hour; he has made it mandatory for all government servants at all levels and politicians including the Chief Minister to declare their property every year. In a span of one year, ninety-one government officials have been shown the door and cases are contemplated against many. The latest case being investigated into is that of a tainted IPS officer charged with amassing wealth disproportionate to his known sources of income. The cleansing drive includes bringing names of corrupt officials in public domain. This would act as a deterrent for erring public servants. The cases pertaining to politicians and top bureaucrats would be referred to the Lokayukta. Patnaik has called upon his party MPs to voluntarily declare property that would set an example in national arena. The CM's drastic measures may see noticeable results in 2021 as he is a leader and administrator who believes in action, not in mere words. Let's hope everything augurs well for him and for the state as the New Year is about to arrive.

Sanjib Das, CUTTACK

# Land losers oppose Bharatmala project

The road project connecting Vishakhapatnam and Raipur will pass through Koraput and Nabarangpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Koraput, Dec 30:** The central government has drawn up an action plan for a major road project to shorten distance between Vishakhapatnam and Raipur. The road project to be developed under Bharatmala Yojana will pass through Koraput. But as soon as the groundwork for the project is going to start, people in some parts of the district have opposed it, a report said.

According to the report, people who are going to lose their land for the ambitious road project in Mahadeipur and Mastipur panchayats under Sadar block have accused the government of paying meagre amounts of compensation for their land.

They have expressed their displeasure over the fact that the compensation the government is offering them is much less than the right value of their land.

They are unlikely to spare their land for the project. The report said, the current market price of an acre of land in the two panchayat is Rs 5 lakh to Rs 8 lakh per acre while the government has fixed the price at Rs 30,000 per acre.



FILE PHOTO

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The report said, the current market price of an acre of land in the two panchayat is Rs 5 lakh to Rs 8 lakh per acre while the government has fixed the price at Rs 30,000 per acre

Jeypore MLA Tarapasad Bahinipati observed that the government should provide right amount of damages to the land losers and provide land in equal measure elsewhere

THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION IS PREPARING FOR A PUBLIC HEARING TO BE HELD JANUARY 21 ABOUT LAND ACQUISITION

price at Rs 30,000 per acre.

The land losers have come together over the issue and recently held a meeting at Litiguda.

Jeypore MLA Tarapasad Bahinipati observed that the government should provide right amount of compensation to the land losers and provide land in

equal measure elsewhere.

The district administration is preparing for a public hearing to be held January 21 about land acquisition. The land losers have decided to take up the issue with the District Collector well before the public hearing.

They warned that they will

strongly oppose the Bharatmala Yojana if they are not paid reasonable compensation for their land. They said that many house will be affected by the project at Rangamati village in Mahadeipur panchayat.

In the current situation, the distance between Vishakhapatnam and Raipur is 514 km. After completion of this road project, the distance between their two cities will be reduced to 464 km.

A 124.881-km stretch of this project will be laid in Chhattisgarh while 114.989 km will pass through Nabarangpur and Koraput districts. The road will be laid through Borigumma, Dasamantpur, Koraput, Semiliguda and Pottangi blocks before touching Vishakhapatnam.

On the other hand, scores of people who were affected by water reservoir and mines in Koraput have not yet got their compensation. They have been staging agitations in the past over their issue.

That another project is going to take away their land has left them worried. Many Congress leaders and people's representatives have supported the land losers.



DIVINE BLESSINGS

After nine months, temples were open to public in Koraput with relaxation of Covid norms. A devotee is scanned thermally at the entry point of a temple in Jeypore Wednesday

OP PHOTO

## Village youth becomes ISRO research scientist

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bargarh, Dec 30:** Nihar Ranjan Pradhan of Jharpali village under Ambabhona block in Bargarh district has been selected to join the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in Bangalore as a research scientist. Nihar said he got the intimation recently from ISRO and he will join the organisation in January.

Nihar is the youngest son of father Rajkumar Pradhan and Pankajini. The family ekes out their living from farming. Locals said that Nihar from his childhood had expressed keen interest towards science. He frequently used to make models of various scientific products.

After completing his primary schooling from the village, Nihar studied at Kedarnath Adivasi High School at Ambabhona in this district. He cracked the JEE Main and Advanced and took admission at the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology (IIST) at Trivandrum. He did his B.Tech course in aerospace engineering.

"I got selected as a research scientist in ISRO for my excellent performance in IIST absorption drive. I came out successful in my career, owing to the stress-free study atmosphere and career options provided by my family," the young scientist said.

## Jadupur villagers prepare to migrate

### SIT INTENSIFIES PROBE INTO PARI MURDER MYSTERY



FILE PHOTO

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nayagarh, Dec 30:** After a brief lull, the Special Investigation Team (SIT) has intensified its probe in the minor girl murder case in Jadupur village in this district, Tuesday. However, the SIT stayed away from visiting Jadupur village and instead called selected persons from the village and interrogated them in this connection.

This has left the residents unnerved as they chose to keep their mouth shut and refused to speak anything when questioned by the media or some other persons. When questioned, they said to have only received a call to appear in person before the SIT but are yet to be interrogated in this connection. They waited there for long and were returning home, a person called for

questioning said, in condition of anonymity.

Meanwhile, regular visits by the SIT team to Jadupur village and the time to time interrogation of the residents during the probe had its impact on the villagers. A villager claimed that this has led to loss of livelihood for many. As result, people are preparing to migrate to other states in search of livelihood.

When contacted, the village committee president Jaykrushna Parida and nine others are preparing to leave for Kerala in search of livelihood after January 12. He said he along with other villagers has fully cooperated with the SIT in their investigation and expect it to complete its probe soon. However, he requested not to implicate innocent persons in the case and arrest only those involved in the crime.

## Bajashala dance troupe to perform at R-Day in Delhi

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhawanipatna, Dec 30:** Bringing pride to Odisha, a folk dance group from Bhawanipatna town in Kalahandi district has been selected to perform at 2021 Republic Day parade at Rajpath in New Delhi.



According to sources, Bhawanipatna's Bajashala dance troupe will be the only group which will represent eastern India at Rajpath January 26, 2020. The group will take part in the parade through Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre (EZCC), Kolkata under the Ministry of Culture. As many as 80 members of Bajashala dance troupe has been selected to perform at the parade. Two gurus (dance masters) Chintu Prasad Naik and Debesh Singh will manage the troupe.

After arrival at New Delhi, the group will start rehearsal for the Republic Day Ministry of Defense will do all the preparation for the final performance of all dance troupes.

## Paddy from other districts lands in Sonepur, Sambalpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sonepur/Sambalpur, Dec 30:** Even as farmers in different parts of western Odisha have been cribbing about delayed tokens and other procurement issues, some traders are brining paddy from other districts to Sonepur. Some millers are allegedly buying outside paddy at under rates, a report said.

According to the report, traders are buying paddy at low rates in other districts like Bhadrak, Boudh and Nayagarh.

Following such allegations, the civil supplies department has been on its toes. It has started raids in various areas.

A team of officials led by district civil supplies officer Bishnu Prasad Supakar raided Patabhadi and Kalapathar Tuesday. They seized two trucks laden with paddy late Monday night.

It was learnt that one of the trucks was carrying paddy from Nayagarh to Bargarh. Another was carrying paddy from Kantamal area of Boudh district to a rice mill in Sonepur. This has revealed the



mess in the paddy procurement in the district.

On the other hand, the government has laid stress on smooth paddy procurement so that farmers do not face any problem in their respective areas. Despite all this, paddy being brought from other districts has added to the problems of the farmers in Sonepur where most of them fail to dispose of their paddy in mandis, it was alleged. The civil supplies department has registered a case in this regard.

Meanwhile, a report from Sambalpur said, even as paddy procurement is under way in Sambalpur, paddy from other dis-

tricts is landing at market yards in the district.

Such allegations made by farmers in different areas had come out in media earlier. About 70 per cent of the paddy has been procured, but the administration has now woken up to this problem.

A special squad recently formed to check supply of paddy from other districts seized a truck carrying 541 sacks of paddy at Jujumara late Tuesday night.

The seized paddy sacks have been unloaded at a rice mill at Batemura. An official said there was no valid document for the paddy loaded in the truck.

## Malkangiri inmate's death is murder: Kin

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Chitrakonda, Dec 30:** The death of a Malkangiri sub-jail inmate took a twist Tuesday when the deceased's family members brought up allegations that he was brutally murdered in the jail.

The inmate, Danu Goleri, died while undergoing treatment at a hospital in Malkangiri Sunday.

Danu was suspected to be a Maoist and was thus arrested three months ago. The family members met him at the sub-jail more than once and, they claimed, he never complained of any kind of sufferings.



After his death, the jail authorities had said he had slit his throat with a knife Saturday. He was admitted to a hospital in Malkangiri. He succumbed Sunday.

The family members alleged that they were told that Danu had fallen sick. It was when they reached at the sub-jail to enquire about his condition, the jail authorities asked them to take his body.

Demanding a high-level inquiry, the aggrieved family members were not performing the last rites of the deceased. Only when the villagers and relatives intervened, they budged and the last rites of Danu were performed.

## Cop under Vig scanner

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jagatsinghpur, Dec 30:** Separate teams of Vigilance sleuths simultaneously raided the houses of police ASI Rabintra Nath Senapati Wednesday morning over charge of amassing assets disproportionate to his known sources of income. The searches were conducted in his parental house at Panchapali area under Ersama block, a residential house at Mukundapur, his office room in Jagatsinghpur district and his flat at Hanspal area in Bhubaneswar.

The ASI is presently working at Tirtol court. Over 10 bank passbooks, huge gold ornaments, 3 houses worth over Rs 1.5 crore were traced.

## Undertrial dies at DHH in Dhenkanal

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Dhenkanal, Dec 30:** In a bizarre development early Wednesday morning, an under-trial prisoner (UT) died while undergoing treatment at the district headquarters hospital (DHH) in Dhenkanal. He was admitted to the hospital after he complained of severe stomach ache.

According to sources, the de-

ceased prisoner was identified as Brahmananda Dehuri of Haripur village in the district. He suddenly fell sick Tuesday night and was rushed to the DHH. The doctors treating the man pronounced him dead in the morning. Dehuri was earlier arrested in 2013 in connection with a murder case and was lodged in the district jail here.

In a similar incident, an under-trial prisoner who was lodged in district sub-jail in Malkangiri died under mysterious circumstances while undergoing treatment at Malkangiri DHH December 27. The prisoner identified as Danu Golori was a resident of Khajuriguda of Swabhimman Anchal in the district.

## PEOPLE DRINK WATER FROM STREAMS

SOLAR PROJECTS IN MANY HILLY AND REMOTE AREAS OF JHUMPURA BLOCK HAVE GONE KAPUT



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jhumpura, Dec 30:** As a solar-powered drinking water project and tube well are lying defunct, people in hilly and remote areas under Jhumpura block of Keonjhar district are forced to drink water from streams and pits, a report said.

According to the report, the government has made provisions of solar-powered drinking water projects in hilly and remote panchayats like

Malda, Nayagad, Basantpur, Kutugan and Nischintapur.

Over 200 tube wells have been set up in these areas too while nearly Rs 10 lakh from the DMF fund has been spent for these projects.

The state-owned OREDA had been awarded a contract to set up solar panels to run drinking water projects. A project was set up in Malda panchayat, but it has been left half-way done. Two years have passed, but no

step was taken to set it right, locals alleged. The company is bound by an agreement to repair the projects whenever necessary till five years since their installation.

As water is not available from the project, people have to drink water from a nearby stream, said a villager of Kutugan. The villagers accused the OREDA of being apathetic to their problem.

Villagers of Andharkhamani,

Goduatopa, Hatimara, Sanakalimati, Bagarampada Sahi, Jampada Sahi, Kutugan and Chipinda alleged that nobody from the OREDA or RWSS comes to repair once solar systems go out of order. Unless five to six projects go defunct in the area, the OREDA officials will not come for repair, they alleged.

At Kutugan, tow solar projects have been lying defunct for the last two months. The villagers appraised the Jhumpura-based RWSS division of their miseries that have cropped up over shortage of water, but no steps have been taken to set these projects right.

When asked about the problem, a junior engineer who is in charge of these projects at the RWSS office, said he is on leave for the last two months.

Another engineer Subhamsita Khamari said that she has intimated the problem to the district office.

Dayanidhi Sahu, executive engineer of the Keonjhar RWSS office said that technical staff of the OREDA has been intimated about the defunct solar projects. These projects will be repaired, Sahu added.

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
e-Tender Notice No. e-Tender-Elect-G-40-20  
Description of Work : COMPREHENSIVE MAINTENANCE OF DG SETS OF ELECTRICAL (G) DEPARTMENT AT VARIOUS LOCATION OVER KHURDA ROAD DIVISION FOR A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS.  
Approx Cost of the work : ₹ 45,41,002.26.  
EMD : ₹ 90,800/-. Cost of tender document : ₹ 3,540/-. Completion period: 36 Months.  
Tender closing date & time : at 1500 hrs. of 18.01.2021.  
No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders.  
Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website : <http://www.ireps.gov.in>  
Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 10 (Ten) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/ corrigenda issued for this tender.  
Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (G), Khurda Road  
PR-455/L/20-21

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER RWS&S DIVISION, BARIPADA**  
Tel.No.06792-254029, Fax No.06792-259464  
E-Mail: [eerrws\\_bpd@rediffmail.com](mailto:eerrws_bpd@rediffmail.com), [eerrws\\_bpd@ori.nic.in](mailto:eerrws_bpd@ori.nic.in)  
No.O:784- Govt. of Odisha e-Procurement Notice  
Bid Identification No.35 of 2020-21, Date: 21.12.2020  
1. Nature of the work: Retrofitting of Rural Piped Water Supply Commissioned Projects under different Blocks of Mayurbhanj District. In Lum-sum rate contract. (12 packages).  
2. Estimated cost: 20.29 lakhs to 77.91 lakhs.  
3. Period of completion: (180-300) days.  
4. Date and time of availability of bid document in portal: From 11 hour of 05.01.2021 to 15.01.2021 upto 17 hours.  
5. Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal: Both technical & financial bid for each package : Upto 17 hours of 15.01.2021.  
6. Name and address of the O.I.T.: Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Baripada.  
7. Date & time for opening of tender: 18.01.2021 at 11.00 A.M.  
8. Corrigendum and addendum if any shall only be published in the above website <http://www.tenderodisha.gov.in>  
Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal: "https://tendersodisha.gov.in".  
Sd./- Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Baripada  
OIPR-25014/11/0009/2021

**GOVT. OF ODISHA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES**  
OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PURI IRRIGATION DIVISION, PURI  
E-mail ID: [eeipuri\\_eicwr.od@nic.in](mailto:eeipuri_eicwr.od@nic.in) & [eeipuriirrigation@yahoo.com](mailto:eeipuriirrigation@yahoo.com)  
"e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE No. PID-03 of 2020-21  
Bid Identification No. PID 17 to PID 56 of 2020-21

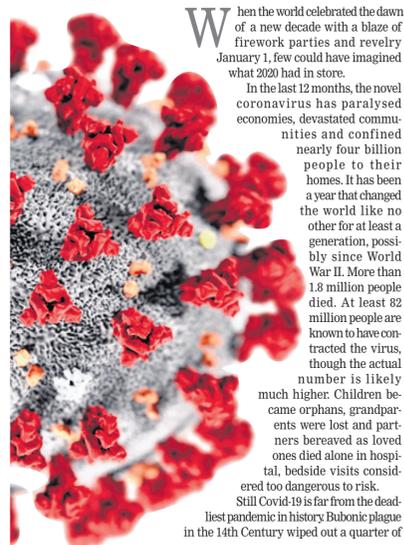
1. Name of the Work	: River/Canal/Saline embankments				
2. Total No. of Package	: 40 Nos.				
3. Tender Cost	: 6.11 lakhs to 42.47 lakhs				
4. Bid Security	: Rs.6200/- to 42500/- (Online payment mode)				
5. Class of contractor	: 'A' to 'D' Class				
6. Cost of tender paper	: Rs.4,000/- to Rs.6,000/- (Online payment mode)				
7. Period of Completion	: Four/Six Calendar Months				
Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender for Bidding	Last date and time of seeking tender clarification		Date & time of opening of tender
1	2	3	4	5	6
Executive Engineer, Puri Irrigation Division, Puri	PID 17 to PID 56 of 2020-21	From 12.01.2021 12.00 Noon	Upto 21.01.2021 5.30 P.M.	16.01.2021 upto 5.30 P.M.	22.01.2021 at 11.30 A.M. (Onwards) (In the Office of the Executive Engineer, Puri Irrigation Division, Puri)

Further detail conditions can be seen from the Govt. website <http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in>.  
OIPR-32011/11/0004/2021  
Sd./- Executive Engineer, Puri Irrigation Division, Puri

YEAR OF UNLEARNING, RELEARNING

The year 2020 has been one of anguish, fear and uncertainty, but if nothing else, it's taught us to remain steadfast in commitment to helping one another. It forced us to look at our humanity in relation to others on this planet, Orissa POST brings back glimpses of the year

How the pandemic changed the world



When the world celebrated the dawn of a new decade with a blaze of fireworks parties and revelry January 1, few could have imagined what 2020 had in store. In the last 12 months, the novel coronavirus has paralysed economies, devastated communities and confined nearly four billion people to their homes. It has been a year that changed the world like no other for at least a generation, possibly since World War II. More than 1.8 million people died. At least 82 million people are known to have contracted the virus, though the actual number is likely much higher. Children became orphans, grandparents were bereaved as loved ones died alone in hospital, bedside visits considered too dangerous to risk. Still Covid-19 is far from the deadliest pandemic in history. Bubonic plague in the 14th century wiped out a quarter of the population. At least 50 million succumbed to Spanish Influenza in 1918-19. Thirty-three million people died of AIDS. The scale of the global disaster was scarcely imaginable when December 31, Chinese authorities announced 27 cases of "viral pneumonia of unknown origin" that was baffling doctors in the city of Wuhan. The next day, authorities quietly shut the Wuhan animal market initially linked to the outbreak. On January 7, Chinese officials announced they had identified the new virus, calling it 2019-nCoV. On January 11, China announced the first death in Wuhan. Within days, cases flared across Asia, in France and the United States. By the end of the month, countries were airlifting foreigners out of China. Borders around the world started to close and more than 50 million people living in Wuhan's province of Hubei were in quarantine. As the horror went global, the race for a vaccine had already begun. A small German biotech company called BioNTech quietly put their cancer work aside and launched another project. Its name? "Speed of Light". On February 11, the World Health Organization named the new disease as Covid-19. First Italy then Spain, France and Britain went into lockdown. WHO declared Covid-19 a pandemic. US borders, already closed to China, shut to most of Europe. For the first time in peacetime, the summer Olympics was delayed. From Paris to New York, from Delhi to Lagos, and from London to Buenos Aires, streets fell eerily silent, the all too frequent wail of ambulance sirens a reminder that death loomed close. Scientists had warned for decades of a global pandemic, but few listened. Some of the richest countries in the world, let alone the poorest flourished in the face of an invisible enemy. In a globalised economy, supply chains ground to a halt. Supermarket shelves were stripped bare by panic buyers. Chronic underinvestment in healthcare was brutally exposed, as hospitals struggled to cope and intensive care units were rapidly overwhelmed. Underpaid and overworked medics battled without personal protective equipment. Businesses closed. Schools and colleges shut. Live sport was cancelled. Commercial airline travel saw its most violent contraction in history. Shops, clubs, bars and restaurants closed. Spain's lockdown was so severe that children couldn't leave home. People were suddenly trapped, cheek by jowl in tiny apartments for weeks on end. Those who could, worked from home. Zoom calls replaced meetings, business travel and parties. Those whose jobs were not transferable were often sacked or forced to risk their health and work regardless. Social inequities, which for years had been growing, were exposed like never before. Hugs, handshakes and kisses fell by the wayside. Human interaction took place behind plexiglass, face masks and hand sanitiser.

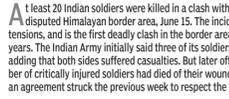
ROUND THE GLOBE

FARMERS' PROTESTS



For over three weeks, kilometers after kilometers of trucks and tractor-trailers have been piled up just north of New Delhi. The farmers who drove to New Delhi border are protesting agricultural laws they worry will hurt their earnings and benefit tycoons. And there is no sign of a retreat. Trucks hand out oranges, and stalls distribute hot tea and pudding to passersby. Temporary salons have sprung up. For now, these roads and trailers are their home, despite the cold. "More farmers are joining us next week," says farmer Ram Singh, who travelled 140 miles to join. "Most of our wives and children are back home for now, but they'll join us, too, if needed." As Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration veers right, fellow Hindu nationalists have often dismissed critics as "anti-national." But agriculture employs half of India's workforce, making the farmers' protests one of the most serious challenges yet to his populist image. And the demonstrations have come to symbolise a wider kind of discontent, about democratic ideals and room for dissent.

INDIA-CHINA CLASH



At least 20 Indian soldiers were killed in a clash with Chinese forces in a disputed Himalayan border area, June 15. The incident follows rising tensions, and is the first deadly clash in the border area in at least 45 years. The Indian Army initially said three of its soldiers had been killed, adding that both sides suffered casualties. But later officials said a number of critically injured soldiers had died of their wounds. India's external affairs ministry accused China of breaking an agreement struck the previous week to respect the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Galwan Valley.

AI PLANE CRASH



An Air India Express plane with 190 people on board has crashed at an airport in Kerala, killing at least 18 people August 6, officials say. The Boeing 737, en route from Dubai, skidded off the runway in rain and broke in two after landing at Calicut airport, aviation officials said. The flight was repatriating Indians stranded by the coronavirus crisis. The rescue operation at the crash site has now been completed and survivors have been taken to hospitals in Calicut and Malappuram, according to Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. Dozens of people were injured. 150ft then seriously, officials say. Air India Express said the two pilots were among the dead. Flight IX 1134 was carrying 184 passengers, including 10 infants, and six crew members.

TINSEL TOWN DRUGS CASE



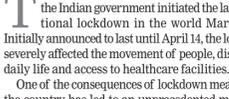
Sushant Singh was found hanging at his Sandra home June 14, sparking off a huge political controversy, an upheaval in the Hindi film world besides multiple probes by the Mumbai Police, Patna Police, Central Bureau of Investigation, ED and the NCB. On September 4, the brother of Sushant's ex-girlfriend Rhea- Shikha Chakraborty - was arrested by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) in a drugs related case as part of the investigations into the death of Sushant Singh Rajput. He was granted bail December 2, three months after his arrest.

BREXIT



Britain and the European Union (EU) finally look forward to begin a new chapter in their relationship; the negotiations to which began in 2017. UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson is expected to announce the contours of the trade deal at Downing Street soon. Johnson and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen have been in close contact over the past few days as the December 31 transition period cut-off loomed over the negotiations, which have missed repeated deadlines as the two sides failed to agree on key areas of fishing rights in each other's waters that would apply to the UK as a non-member of the 27-member economic bloc.

BLACK LIVES MATTER



George Floyd, a 46-year-old black man, was killed in Minneapolis, Minnesota, May 25, this year while being arrested for allegedly using a counterfeit bill. During the arrest Derek Chauvin, a white police officer from the Minneapolis Police Department, knelt on Floyd's neck for about 9 and a half minutes after Floyd was handcuffed and lying face down. Two police officers, J. Alexander Kueng and Thomas Lane, assisted Chauvin in restraining Floyd, while another officer, Tou Thao, prevented bystanders from interfering with the arrest and intervening as events unfolded. The barbaric killing of Floyd was captured by a man on his mobile, and the video went viral, following which widespread protests began not only in the US but across the world by the slogan, "Black Lives Matter".

PRICE FOR 'FLYING HIGH'



The year exposed an IFS officer, who had amassed ill-gotten wealth and was leading a plush lifestyle. The Vigilance sleuths December 27 arrested Odisha cadre IFS officer, Abhay Kant Pathak, for possessing assets disproportionate to his known sources of income and his son Akash Pathak for duping job seekers. Akash had identified himself as the MD of Tata Motors. The state government placed the senior officer under suspension immediately after the arrest. The Vigilance department said that Pathak's total properties are around 435 per cent of his known sources of income. Pathak had paid 33 crore towards booking chartered planes for travelling to jobs like Mumbai, Patna and Delhi during the lockdown. The Vigilance officials also seized gold ornaments weighing around 800 grams worth 723 lakh, 160 lakh cash from his house and also found three luxury cars like Mercedes, BMW and Tata Harrier in his possession along with three Yamaha Fz registered in his son's name. Gopalpur MLA Pradeep Maharath was also arrested and expelled from the BJP for his alleged complicity with the Pathaks.

FAITH PREVAILED OVER FEAR



Amidst the intense war against novel coronavirus, faith finally prevailed over fear as this year's Rath Yatra was organised without congregation of devotees on the Grand Road in Puri, adding a new chapter to the Sriramandi's history. Sriramandi, the abode of Lord Jagannath, was shut for devotees since March and due to the outbreak of novel coronavirus. The Supreme Court ordered for cancellation of Car Festival due to Covid-19 spread while hearing a petition June 18. The order created a lot of resentment among the devotees and servitors. The state government filed an affidavit in the SC and supported Rath Yatra with restrictions in place. Finally, on June 22 a three-member bench of the SC allowed conduct of Car Festival in Puri. With just a few hours in hand for the mega festival, the state government pulled out all the stops to hold the festival June 23. In another development, the temple, which remained out of bounds for devotees for nine-long months, reopened for servitors and their family members December 23 and for Puri residents December 26.

NAYAGARH HORROR



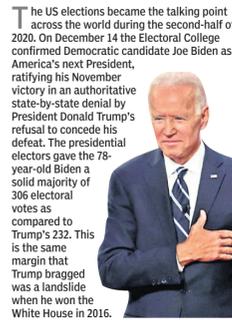
The alleged murder of a minor girl of Nayagarh continued to hog the limelight throughout the second half of the year. The allegation of organ trading by the minor girls' parents and the Opposition parties put the state government in a tight spot. Parents of the deceased minor alleged that their kid was murdered for organ smuggling and accused Minister Arun Sahoo of being involved in the act. The BJP and Congress took out rallies and staged demonstrations demanding CBI probe into the incident. Buckling under pressure from the Opposition parties, the government had to form an SIT to probe the matter. It was headed by OSRTC CMD Arun Bothra. The minor girl was playing near her house July 13. Her skeletal remains stacked in a gunny bag were found in the backside of her house July 23. The incident came to the fore after girl's parents attempted self-immolation in front of the Assembly in Bhubaneswar November 24 as the district police failed to crack the case several months after the incident. The SIT picked up Saroj Sethi, a college student and neighbour of the girl, from Jadupur village in the district.

GOOD NEWS FOR GOVT SCHOOL PUPILS



In a major move to promote students passing out of government-run high schools, the Odisha Cabinet December 28 passed a resolution to reserve some seats in medical and engineering colleges for these students. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Bikram Keshari Ananda said, after introduction of centralised exams like NEET and JEE for medical and engineering courses, it is observed that the number of meritorious students from government-run high schools and colleges in Odisha, qualifying for admissions in these institutions, has been reducing over the years. This is not due to lack of meritorious students but a deeper divide in access to coaching classes which is missing in rural areas, he said. The government realised that thousands of meritorious students from government schools are at a disadvantage and fare lower than their potential in the entrance exams. To correct the imbalance and provide divide to meritorious students of government schools, to help them fulfill their dreams to become doctors and engineers, the state government decided to provide reservation to eligible government school and college students of Odisha for admission into medical and engineering colleges in the state. The decision will come into effect from the next academic year.

US ELECTIONS



The US elections became the talking point across the world during the second-half of 2020. On December 14 the Electoral College confirmed Democratic candidate Joe Biden as America's next President, ratifying his November victory in an authoritative state-by-state denial by President Donald Trump's refusal to concede his defeat. The presidential electors gave the 78-year-old Biden a solid majority of 306 electoral votes as compared to Trump's 232. This is the same margin that Trump braggad was a landslide when he won the White House in 2016.

BIZZARE NEWS

Cannabis mistaken for meth



A family in Uttar Pradesh had to be hospitalised after cooking a dish with cannabis leaves. They thought the leaf was fenugreek or methi.

AK-47 rifle as wedding gift



A groom in Pakistan got a bizarre wedding gift from a guest: an automatic rifle. A video of the woman greeting the newlyweds and asking someone to hand over what looked like an AK-47 rifle got plenty of comments on social media.

Snake as mask



A man in England was spotted using a snake as a face covering prompting a range of reactions from across the world. A video showed the man with the snake wrapped around his neck and mouth even as he sat calmly in a bus.

Harmonica stuck in mouth



In an attempt to entertain her cousin, a high school student from Ontario stuffed a harmonica in her mouth. However, the musical instrument got stuck, making it difficult for O'Brien to breathe. The harmonica was later removed by a dentist.



HEARTBREAKING An exhausted migrant kid clinging onto suitcase wheeled by mother

Covid-19 and the plight of migrants

To contain the spread of the novel Coronavirus, the Indian government initiated the largest national lockdown in the world March 2020. Initially announced to last until April 14, the lockdown severely affected the movement of people, disrupting daily life and access to healthcare facilities. One of the consequences of lockdown measures in the country has led to an unprecedented migration of workers and families from large urban centers to rural India. For decades, millions of workers have migrated from their rural homes and villages to urban cities, looking for opportunities and livelihoods. The sudden enforcement of lockdown following a 14-hour 'Janata curfew' March 22 immediately disadvantaged already vulnerable populations as it restricted people stepping out from their homes. All transport—roadways, airways and railways—were suspended, including hospitality industries, educational institutions, and industrial units. As the factories and workplaces closed down, millions of migrant workers had to deal with loss of income, food shortages and an uncertain future. With no money, no job, unsure when the lockdown will finally end, the migrant workers had no other option than to return to their villages. Their massive migration from working states has formed a humanitarian and health security challenge and an exceptional logistical nightmare. This instigated the next problem for them. How to reach home? With road and rail transport links still suspended, walking back was the only option and they initially took to the road. People have undertaken hazardous journeys, sometimes walking up to 1,000 km with no money to spend and often without food for days together. Many were arrested by law enforcement officials for violating the lockdown, many died due to exhaustion or accidents on the roads.



To alleviate the workers' plight, the state governments started arranging buses to take them back to their villages for free. But these were heavily over-subscribed with migrants hanging on footboards and climbing on rooftops to find a place. Some group of migrants tried to hire people carriers, however returning migrants faced other danger.



On May 1, 2020, the government introduced special 'Shramik Special' trains from many districts in the country for migrants. Since then, Indian Railways have ferried over 5 million migrant workers by more than 3,000 Shramik special trains. For many migrant workers who des-

perately tried to return home, homecoming has been bittersweet. They stare at another crisis. With significantly reduced work opportunities (the very reason for them to migrate) and trying to come to terms with the labelling of 'virus carrier' stigma has caused a great deal of anxiety and associated violence has been reported. Migrants thought that going back to their hometowns; they could return to farming or take up employment in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act scheme, but only a fortunate few could avail the benefit. With chronic underfunding in the rural healthcare and economy, the pandemic has highlighted the failings of rural infrastructure. The extraordinary migrant crisis due to Covid-19 is unparalleled since Indo-Pakistan partition of 1948. Similar to the fallout from the partition, this current crisis will leave a lasting legacy on future of India. It appears the Covid-19 pandemic has forced India to finally acknowledge the migrant.

BACK HOME

PRICE FOR 'FLYING HIGH'

The year exposed an IFS officer, who had amassed ill-gotten wealth and was leading a plush lifestyle. The Vigilance sleuths December 27 arrested Odisha cadre IFS officer, Abhay Kant Pathak, for possessing assets disproportionate to his known sources of income and his son Akash Pathak for duping job seekers. Akash had identified himself as the MD of Tata Motors. The state government placed the senior officer under suspension immediately after the arrest. The Vigilance department said that Pathak's total properties are around 435 per cent of his known sources of income. Pathak had paid 33 crore towards booking chartered planes for travelling to jobs like Mumbai, Patna and Delhi during the lockdown. The Vigilance officials also seized gold ornaments weighing around 800 grams worth 723 lakh, 160 lakh cash from his house and also found three luxury cars like Mercedes, BMW and Tata Harrier in his possession along with three Yamaha Fz registered in his son's name. Gopalpur MLA Pradeep Maharath was also arrested and expelled from the BJP for his alleged complicity with the Pathaks.

FAITH PREVAILED OVER FEAR

Amidst the intense war against novel coronavirus, faith finally prevailed over fear as this year's Rath Yatra was organised without congregation of devotees on the Grand Road in Puri, adding a new chapter to the Sriramandi's history. Sriramandi, the abode of Lord Jagannath, was shut for devotees since March and due to the outbreak of novel coronavirus. The Supreme Court ordered for cancellation of Car Festival due to Covid-19 spread while hearing a petition June 18. The order created a lot of resentment among the devotees and servitors. The state government filed an affidavit in the SC and supported Rath Yatra with restrictions in place. Finally, on June 22 a three-member bench of the SC allowed conduct of Car Festival in Puri. With just a few hours in hand for the mega festival, the state government pulled out all the stops to hold the festival June 23. In another development, the temple, which remained out of bounds for devotees for nine-long months, reopened for servitors and their family members December 23 and for Puri residents December 26.

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A circular infographic titled 'RIP' featuring portraits and biographical details of several celebrities who passed away in 2020: QASEM SOLEIMANI (Iran's most powerful military commander), RUTH BADER GINSBURG (Ruth Bader Ginsburg became a heroine to the American Left), SEAN CONNERY (Scottish movie legend Sean Connery), DIEGO MARADONA (World soccer great Diego Armando Maradona died November 25 less than a month after his 60th birthday), HOSNI MUBARAK (Former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who held power for 30 years), PIERRE CARDIN (Fashion designer Pierre Cardin died December 29 aged 98), AHMED PATEL (Ahmed Patel was a Congress leader, MP and political secretary to Congress president Sonia Gandhi), SEAN CONNERY (Scottish movie legend Sean Connery, who shot to international stardom as the suave, sexy and sophisticated British agent James Bond), PRANAB MUKHERJEE (Pranab Mukherjee, who served as the 13th President of India, died August 31 at the age of 84), and CAPTAIN TANIA SHERGILL (Captain Tania Shergill is the first woman army officer to become parade adjutant for Republic Day).

NEWS MAKERS

**KAMALA HARRIS** Kamala Harris who has Indian roots made history as the first woman, the first Asian American and the first Black American to become Vice President of America November 4. The Biden-Harris ticket received the most votes ever - more than 74 million - in the history of America's elections.

**MUKESH AMBANI** After the Reliance Jio-Facebook deal was announced April 22, Mukesh Ambani's wealth surged to make him Asia's richest man surpassing Jack Ma. Ambani's fortune rose by \$4.69 billion to \$49.2 billion after Reliance Industries gained 10 per cent, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires' Index April 25. The ranking that changes after the close of every trading day in the US puts Ambani \$3.2 billion ahead of Jack Ma's \$46 billion.

**RATAN TATA** Veteran industrialist Ratan Tata was conferred the title of "Global Visionary of Sustainable Business and Peace" by the Federation of Indo-Israel Chambers of Commerce (FIICC) for epitomising "unity, peace and sustainability", December 22. He received the honour for his commitment to put India on the global map with dignity and respect has been noted by each and every one.

**MS DHONI** Putting an end to 16-year-old career, former Indian cricket captain and veteran wicket-keeper batsman Mahendra Singh Dhoni August 15 announced his retirement from international cricket. Posted a video on Instagram, Dhoni who last donned the blue jersey against New Zealand in the 2019 ICC World Cup 2019 semi-final -- thanked his fans "for their love and support" while announcing his retirement.

**ARCHANA SORENG** Archana Soreng, climate activist from Odisha, was named among the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres July 28 to his new advisory group comprising young leaders. Archana joined six other young climate leaders from around the world who have been named by Guterres to his new Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change.

**PRIYANCA RADHAKRISHNA** Priyanka Radhakrishna became New Zealand's first-ever Indian-origin minister after Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern inducted her as Minister for Diversity, Inclusion and Ethnic Communities November 2. Radhakrishna is one of the 5 members of freshly-re-elected Labour Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's "incredibly diverse cabinet".

**GENERAL BIPIN RAWAT** General Bipin Rawat took over as India's first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) January 1. He is entrusted with coordinating with the three Services and reporting to the Prime Minister. The tri-service agencies, organisations and commands relating to cyber and space will come under the command of the CDS, who will also function as the Military Adviser to the Nuclear Command Authority.

**SONU SOOD** Sonu Sood hit the headlines for his relief efforts during the Covid-19 pandemic, as he has been hailed as a real-life hero for migrant workers and those who lost jobs. Sood has been involved in charitable work through his trust, Professor Saroj Sood Trust, named after his mother.

**CAPTAIN TANIA SHERGILL** Captain Tania Shergill is the first woman army officer to become parade adjutant for Republic Day. She also leads the all-men contingent on Army Day. Commissioned in March, 2017, from the Officer Training Academy, Chennai, Shergill is electronics and communications graduate. Shergill, a fourth generation woman Army officer will break a glass ceiling on Wednesday when she becomes the first female to lead an all-men contingent at the Army Day Parade.



# Will Goa legalise cannabis cultivation

### MINISTERS IN THE STATE ARE DIVIDED IN THEIR VIEWS

AGENCIES

**Panaji, Dec 30:** Ministers in Goa appear to be a divided lot on regulated cannabis cultivation in the coastal state for medicinal purposes, a day after Law Minister Niles Cabral made a strong pitch for such endeavour.

Speaking to reporters in Panaji Wednesday, Art and Culture Minister Govind Gaude said that while the move could help generate employment, it could also lead to adverse social impact. Earlier in the day, he said he did not even know what cannabis was.

"I don't even know what cannabis is. Whether it is used for 'ganja' or for medicinal purposes, I can't comment on it. I will study it first," Gaude told reporters.

"If we are looking at it from the employment point of view,



we must also spare a thought for the families which may be destroyed on account of such a decision," Gaude said.

According to Tourism Minister Manohar Ajaonkar, the proposal mooted by the Health Department needed a thorough vetting by experts, to under the long-term impact



of the decision.

"It should be studied. This is a matter which deals with people's health," Ajaonkar said. The Cabinet Minister also said that experts needed to be consulted before allowing legal cultivation of cannabis in Goa.

"It should be studied and a report needs to be compiled before taking such a decision... if experts give us good inputs, the government can go ahead with it, but only after a proper study is conducted," Ajaonkar said.

The opposition is up in arms over the proposal - which has already been vetted by the Law Department - claiming that the implications would be disastrous for

Goa, a tourism-dependent state that is already infamous as a narco-tourism destination.

While Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has maintained that a final decision on the matter is yet to be taken and that the proposal needed Cabinet approval, Law Minister Niles Cabral has said that 'bhanga', a derivative of the cannabis plant, is already legally sold in seven Indian states.

"In seven states in India, a form of this (cannabis) plant, known as 'bhanga', is already available. Bhanga is sold across the counter in some states in licensed stores like liquor vendors elsewhere," Cabral said on Tuesday.

The Goa Forward party has opposed the move, saying it may lead the youth in Goa to ruin.

"How will this benefit the youth of Goa? Is this needed for their future?" Goa Forward President and former Deputy Chief Minister Vijai Sardesai had asked.

The Shiv Sena in Goa had also opposed the move and its state President Jitesh Kamat said sarcastically: "Now that farmers in Goa will be allowed to farm cannabis, the government should now consider issuing them Krishi cards".

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**It should be studied and a report needs to be compiled before taking such a decision... if experts give us good inputs, the government can go ahead with it, but only after a proper study is conducted**

GOVIND GAUDE | ART AND CULTURE MINISTER

MANOHAR AJAONKAR | TOURISM MINISTER

## MUTATED COVID STRAIN

# Yedi appeals for cooperation

### The Karnataka CM urges 'missing' UK returnees to cooperate with govt

AGENCIES

**Bangalore, Dec 30:** Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa Wednesday appealed to all "missing" UK returnees to get tested for the new strain of coronavirus, for their own safety and also to curb the spread of the infection.

"As the Chief Minister of the state, I urge all those who have returned from the UK to come forward and get their health check up done. See to it that you don't create trouble for others," Yediyurappa said before reporters.

Yediyurappa tweeted: "Dear citizens, the danger of corona has still not subsided. As we enter into the New Year even a slightest ignorance regarding the pandemic is not done. Follow the government's guidelines and rules and stay safe by taking all



**As the Chief Minister of the state, I urge all those who have returned from the UK to come forward and get their health check up done. See to it that you don't create trouble for others**



BS YEDIYURAPPA | CHIEF MINISTER, KARNATAKA

the necessary precautionary measures, and cooperate." The CM's appeal comes in the wake of seven people, who returned to the state from the UK recently, testing positive for the new strain of the virus and who are undergoing treatment at designated hospitals in the city.

A total of 2,500 people have come to the state from the UK between November 25 and December 22 on two flights - Air India and British Airways.

Till Tuesday evening, the Karnataka health department had conducted tests on 1,903 UK passengers. Out of them 29 have tested positive and 1,599 negative, while the results of 275 are awaited.

In view of some UK returnees going off the radar, Karnataka's health department has sought the

home department's help to locate them. The CM ruled out any change in the Covid safety guidelines for now as the danger of coronavirus has not subsided. "There is no change in guidelines at this point in time. If there is any instructions from Delhi (Union government), let's see then," he said in response to a query.

The Chief Minister said that the Union Health Ministry is monitoring the spread of the new UK variant of coronavirus in India, therefore Karnataka cannot decide on its own. "We will wait for fresh guideline from them only then the state will think of changing present Covid safety protocols," he said, adding that until then all will have to remain alert and test those who have come from outside.

# Will Mollem park survive rail, road expansion

### MOLLEM NATIONAL PARK HAS LONG BEEN THE EMERALD IN GOA'S CROWN

AGENCIES

**Panaji, Dec 30:** The verdant jungle which covers this steep area of India's Western Ghats mountain range is home to leopards, Bengal tigers, pangolins, black panthers and hundreds of endemic species of flora and fauna found nowhere else on the planet. The muscular state animal of Goa - the gaur, or Indian bison - is often seen trudging through the forests, and the park's Dudhsagar waterfall is among the highest in the country.

Yet Mollem and the adjoining Bhagwan Mahaveer Sanctuary, covering a protected area of 240 sq km, is set to be splintered and partially deforested by three invasive projects; the doubling of a railway line, road expansion and an electric power transmission line.

"This is an area declared by Unesco to be one of the world's eight biodiversity hotspots and which includes a proposed tiger reserve. This project will undo so much that can never be recovered again," said Claude Alvares, an ac-

tivist with the Goa Foundation who has taken up litigation against all three projects in the Bombay high court and before a committee of the Supreme Court.

Indian law bans construction in wildlife sanctuaries but the government has approved them in the name of public interest and Goa's future development. However, many believe these three projects are part of a masterplan to turn India's smallest state into a corridor for a fivefold increase in coal imports by some of India's biggest industrialists, known for their close ties to the ruling Bharatiya Janata party (BJP).

Cumulatively it will involve diverting 378 hectares (934 acres) of forest in Goa, felling 40,000 protected trees and shifting more than 1.8m tonnes of mud and earth from inside the sanctuary.

Activists and citizens claim these projects have been foisted on Goa by the central government without any public consultation or transparency. They are now subject to multiple legal challenges and have



sparked a grassroots opposition movement unlike anything seen in Goa for decades, with thousands taking to the streets in protest. Students, artists, biologists, tourism bodies and 150 scientists have written to India's environment minister Prakash Javadekar and the Supreme Court requesting the proj-

ects be halted, alleging environmental laws have been broken or ignored. More than 8,000 people took part in a recent demonstration and dozens have been booked by police or arrested.

"We are not just saving Mollem forests for their beauty but for the very survival of life in Goa," said

artist Svabhu Kohli, who began the My Mollem campaign, which brought together artists, lawyers, researchers, biologists and local communities to raise awareness through art and action of the impact the projects could have on Mollem.

"They say they are doing this to benefit the people of Goa. But everyone in Goa knows Mollem has a special magic, so how can cutting down irreplaceable forests be beneficial? And if it's for us, why were we never consulted?"

For the past three years, Goa's main port, Mormugao Port Trust in the north of the state, has been on an expansion drive to become a hub for imported coal. Since 2018, two of India's biggest coal importers, Adani and JSW, have set up multiple terminals at the port.

In 2020, the environment ministry granted clearance for a third coal terminal and deep-water dredging to accommodate large coal vessels. Currently the port handles 12m tonnes of coal, but importers hope to increase that to 51m tonnes by 2035.

# Undertrial escapes Goa police custody

### Two accomplices sprayed pepper and fired warning shots to stop the police escort from foiling their attempt to flee



AGENCIES

**Panaji, Dec 30:** An undertrial accused of robbery and lodged in the Colvale central jail in North Goa, escaped from police custody Wednesday while returning from a medical check-up at a nearby government hospital. Two accomplices sprayed pepper and fired warning shots to stop the police escort from foiling their attempt to flee.

Deputy Superintendent of Police Gajanan Prabhudessai said the attempt was pre-planned and that the police were now on the lookout for the accused Vivek Kumar Gautam, who originally hails from Uttarakhand.

According to the police official, the incident occurred Wednesday

morning after Gautam complained that he was suffering from a painful stomach ailment and was feeling uneasy.

While Gautam was returning from a government hospital in Mapusa town, his accomplices sprayed pepper spray at the police escort and fired shots in the air to deter the policemen from following them.

"We have intensified our search to nab the three accused. It was clearly a pre-planned move and points to the use of mobile phones within the jail. We have recovered the used cartridges from the scene and have begun interrogating key persons, including the ambulance driver who went missing at the time of discharge," Prabhudessai said.

# Karna prepares for schools reopening

AGENCIES

**Bangalore, Dec 30:** With schools set to reopen from January 1 in Karnataka, Primary and Secondary Education Minister S Suresh Kumar Wednesday visited a few institutions here and reviewed their preparedness to conduct classes adhering to COVID-19 guidelines.

The Minister inspected arrangements in classrooms and spoke to the headmasters, principals, lecturers and teachers, instructing them to take precautions to prevent spread of the virus once the classes resume, official sources said. He also advised the staff to sensitise the students about the sig-



nificance of passing the SSLC and secondary PU classes with high marks, they said.

The state is gearing for reopen of schools and pre-university (higher secondary) colleges, which have remained shut since March due to COVID-19, after the government on December 19 decided to resume

regular classes for Class X and PU-II year (class 12) students from January 1.

It has also planned to hold regular classes for PU-I year from January 15 and to start Vidyagama programme for students of classes six to nine in government schools, taking education to their doorsteps.

Under this programme a teacher will teach a small batch of students at a place convenient for them to assemble and study by abiding by the COVID-19 guidelines.

The government's decision to reopen schools has been opposed by some quarters, including ruling BJP MLC AH Vishwanath, a former education minister.

# Tourism in Goa yet to recover from Covid-dent

### ONLY 1,400 OF 4,000 HOTELS IN GOA ARE OPERATIONAL, SAYS A TOURISM OFFICIAL

AGENCIES

**Panaji, Dec 30:** Despite the rush of domestic holidaymakers in Goa, only 1,400 of the 4,000 hotels registered in the coastal state have opened for business. The emergence of the new mutated strain of Covid-19 has also had a detrimental effect on the state's tourism prospects, a top tourism official said Wednesday.

According to Niles Shah, President of the Travel and Tourism Association of Goa, hotel rates in the state during the festive season were nearly 20 to 30 per cent less than the comparative period last year.

"The situation is still evolving. Vaccination will play a major role in determining how the tourism prospects for 2021 pan out. The



emergence of the second strain of coronavirus has caused some negativity, as a result of which the tourism trade which we thought was opening up, has now gone into reverse gear," Shah told IANS

Wednesday. While Goa has witnessed a surge in domestic tourist arrivals during the week from December 25 onwards, Shah said the shortfall in expectations could be gauged from the number of regis-

tered hotels which have opened up during the pandemic and the comparatively low pricing of the existing hotels.

"Many hotels have not opened yet in Goa. At present, of 4,100 registered hotels, only 1,300 to 1,400 are open," Shah added.

While charter tourism, which used to facilitate the arrival of nearly half a million foreign tourists every year, has gone for a toss, the volume of domestic tourists has made up for the loss, he said.

The Travel and Tourism Association of Goa is one of the oldest tourism bodies in the state, comprising members from the travel and hospitality industry.

"The tourism season in 2021 looks challenging. We are not expecting any charter bookings till October. We have been lobbying for a flight

bubble arrangement from Russia which could help," Shah added. Over the last decade and a half, Russian tourists have topped the number of foreign tourists visiting the state, followed by travellers from the United Kingdom.

He said that once the vaccination programme rolls out globally, the tourism industry across the world could possibly be salvaged by a travel document regime like the one made for travelling to Africa.

"If you are flying to Africa, you need to be immunised for certain illnesses and travellers need to carry official certificates. The same protocol may kick in vis-a-vis Covid-19, after the vaccination programme rolls out. This means if one wishes to cross international boundaries, a Covid-19 immunisation shot may become compulsory," Shah added.

of the day quote

The Digital India initiative of the government should continue to strive towards reducing the digital divide



RAM NATH KOVIND | PRESIDENT

It has been a year now (since the Thackeray-led MVA government assumed office). They (BJP) were to bring down the government in two months, then they were to do so in six months, then in eight months. But, nothing will happen



SHARAD PAWAR | NCP SUPREMO

The BJP-led government must shed its out of sight and out of mind approach and take concrete steps to bring our sailors back home; the families of sailors are tensed up



JAIVEER SHERGILL | CONGRESS LEADER

SHORT TAKES

Congress leader, nephew shot dead

Chitrakoot (UP): A local Congress leader and his nephew were shot dead allegedly by their neighbour in Prasadpur village here, police. Pahadi police station SHO Shrawan Kumar Singh has been suspended on charges of laxity following the double murder. Former district unit vice-president of Congress Ashok Patel (55) had an old rivalry with his neighbour Kamlesh Kumar, who arrived at his house Tuesday night and opened fire with his rifle, Superintendent of Police Ankit Mittal said.

3 militants killed

Srinagar: Police Wednesday claimed to have killed three militants in an overnight encounter in the city's Parimpora area but families of the slain youths said they had no connection with militancy and that two of them were students. The families from south Kashmir's Pulwama and Shopian districts also staged a protest outside the police control room here and claimed that of those killed, one was a Class 11 student, one a university student and the other a carpenter.

CLASSIFIED

LOST

ମୁଁ Manoj Kumar Padhi, S/o. Raghunath Padhi ଗ୍ରାମ/ଆନା: ପୁରୁଣାକଟକ, ଜିଲ୍ଲା: ବୌଦ୍ଧ ଦର୍ଶାଉଛି ଯେ, ମୋର ପୁରୁଣାକଟକ ମୌଜାରେ ଥିବା ଖାତା ନଂ. ୨୨୧/୩୫୭, ପୁର ନଂ. ୩୮୨/୧୨୧୮, ଏକର ୦.୦୨ ବିଘିନିର Original Sale Deed No. 872/2006ଟି ହଜିରାଅଛି। ମୁଁ ଏହି Sale Deed (872/2006) Certified Copyରେ SBI, Purunakatak ଶାଖାରେ ୧୨.୦୦ ଲକ୍ଷର ଗୁହରଣ ଆବେଦନ କରିଅଛି। ଯଦି ଏହି Sale Deed ଉପରେ କୌଣସି ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିର ଆପତ୍ତି/ଅଭିଯୋଗ ଥାଏ ତେବେ SBI, Purunakatak Branch Managerଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ୨୧ଦିନ ଭିତରେ ଅଭିଯୋଗ କରିପାରିବେ।

Panel to consider SII's request for vaccine use

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 30: Experts at India's drug regulator were meeting on Wednesday to consider approving an AstraZeneca/Oxford coronavirus vaccine for emergency use after Britain became the first country to do so, two sources with knowledge of the matter said.

A representative of India's Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) declined to reveal the agenda of the meeting but said its minutes would be uploaded on its website within hours.

Sources earlier told Reuters the CDSCO was likely to approve the vaccine this week after its local manufacturer, Serum Institute of India (SII), submitted additional trial data.

SII, the world's biggest producer of vaccines, has already stockpiled about 50 million doses, enough for 25 million people.

It welcomed the UK approval. "This is great and encouraging



news," Chief Executive Adar Poonawalla said in a statement. "We will wait for the final approval from Indian regulators."

India wants to start administering the shots starting next month and is also considering emergency use authorisation applications for vaccines made by Pfizer Inc with Germany's BioNTech and by India's Bharat Biotech.

India, which has the world's second highest number of COVID-19 infections in the world after the United States, plans to inoculate

300 million people in the next six to eight months and the affordable Oxford vaccine is its biggest hope.

Though the Indian government has not yet signed a purchase agreement with SII, the company says it will focus on its home market first, and then exports, mainly to South Asian countries and Africa.

India's COVID-19 caseload rose to 1,02,44,852 with 20,549 new infections being reported in a day, while the number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 98.34 lakh pushing the national

20 people found with new UK variant

India Wednesday recorded 14 cases of a mutant strain of coronavirus, which is 70% more transmissible, and has prompted a wave of panic and border closures around the world. With 14 more cases in India, the authorities said today morning that 20 patients have been infected with the mutant strain, which was first reported in the United Kingdom in September, so far. The fresh 20 cases include six persons reported earlier (three in NIMHANS, Bengaluru, two in CCMB, Hyderabad and one in NIV, Pune). Around 107 samples were tested in the 10 labs as indicated in the table below.

recovery rate to 95.99 per cent, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Wednesday. The death toll increased to 1,48,439 with 286 new fatalities, the data updated at 8 am showed.

BJP plays hardball with AIADMK



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Palaniswami as its Chief Ministerial candidate in the election.

Chennai, Dec 30: The BJP Wednesday said it may seek the support of superstar Rajinikanth for the 2021 assembly elections in Tamil Nadu, a day after the star said he has abandoned his plan to make a political party.

Asserting that its alliance with the AIADMK was strong, BJP national general secretary C T Ravi, however, said the NDA was led by his party and 'Prime Minister Narendra Modi' in the state as well, apparently indicating that it was not steered by the ruling party, the senior partner.

In Tamil Nadu, AIADMK was the largest partner in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and naturally, the Chief Minister will be from that party, Ravi, BJP's state incharge, told reporters here, answering a volley of questions on ties between the two parties.

A formal decision would be made on the Chief Ministerial candidate of the NDA once the Election Commission issues the notification for the assembly elections, expected in April-May, he said, adding the strategy was part of the ongoing exercise to strengthen the BJP in the state. The AIADMK has already announced incumbent K

Earlier, former Indian team leg spinner and cricket commentator, Laxman Sivaramakrishnan and several elected representatives at the level of local bodies joined the BJP. On Rajinikanth's announcement that he would not launch a political party, Ravi praised the actor, saying he had always protected the national and Tamil Nadu's interests. "He is a great leader." Asked if his party would seek his support, he said, "I hope, we will ask him." To a similar question, Ravi said everyone knows, "how close Modi Ji and Rajinikanth are." AIADMK has also expressed the view that Rajinikanth would support the party-led alliance in view of his decision not to float his outfit. Opposition parties have said Rajinikanth's decision not to join politics would hurt the BJP, maintaining that it was hoping to join hands with him and become a force in the state. Rajinikanth, who earlier said he would launch his party next month, had on Tuesday announced he would not foray into politics in view of his health status, having undergone a kidney transplant four years ago, and considering the coronavirus pandemic situation.

India targets global arms sales

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 30: In a big boost to India's indigenous defence capabilities, the government approved Wednesday the sale of Akash missile system to foreign nations, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said.

A surface-to-air missile with a range of 25 km with over 96 per cent indigenisation, Akash, developed by the DRDO, is India's first indigenously designed missile system and can target fighter jets, cruise missiles, drones and other aerial assets. It was inducted into the Indian Air Force in 2014 and in the Indian Army in 2015.

Rajnath Singh, in a series of tweets, said that the Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the export of Akash Missile System and a Committee for faster approvals has been created.

Noting that till now Indian defence exports included parts or components for defence equipment, he said: "The export of big platforms was minimal. This decision by the Cabinet would help the country to improve its defence products and make them globally competitive." The Defence Ministry, in a statement, said: "After its induction in the Services, interest was shown in Akash missile by many friendly countries during International Exhibitions/Defence Expo/Aero India. The Cabinet approval will facilitate Indian manufactures to participate in RFI/RFP issued by various countries."

The export version of Akash will be different from the system currently deployed with Indian armed forces.

ROYAL WALK



A Royal Bengal Tiger walks inside an enclosure of Alipore Zoological Garden, in Kolkata

PTI PHOTO

Haryana civic polls: Setback for BJP-JJP

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chandigarh, Dec 30: In another humiliating defeat to Haryana's ruling BJP-JJP combine, it lost mayoral polls in two municipal corporations but won in one civic body Wednesday.

The opposition Congress won the post of Mayor for the Sonapat Municipal Corporation, while the BJP won the post in Panchkula Municipal Corporation.

In the Ambala Municipal Corporation, Congress rebel Venod Sharma's Haryana Jan Chetna Party won. BJP's Kulbhushan Goyal won the Panchkula mayor election

by defeating Congress' Upinder Kaur Ahluwalia by a margin of 2,057 votes. Goyal got 49,860 votes, while Ahluwalia polled 47,803 votes.

In Ambala, Haryana Jan Chetna Party's Shakti Rani Sharma defeated BJP's Vandana Sharma by a margin of over 7,000 votes.

Congress' Nikhil Madaan defeated BJP's candidate Lalit Batra by a margin of 13,818 votes in Sonapat for the mayor seat.

However in the Rewari Municipal Council, the BJP won the post of Chairperson. BJP's Poonam Yadav defeated Independent Upma Yadav by 2,087 votes. The Congress was third on this seat.

In the Uklana municipal committee election, independent candidate Sushil Sahu defeated BJP's ally Jannayak Janata Party (JJP) candidate Mahender Soni for the President's post.

In Sampla, independent candidate Pooja, who was backed by former Chief Minister and Congress leader Bhupinder Singh Hooda, defeated the BJP nominee for the President's post.

In the Dharuhera Municipal Committee election in Rewari district, independent nominee Kanwar Singh became the President by defeating nearest rival and BJP candidate Sandeep Bohra by 632 votes.

Fight against nCoV kept health ministry on its toes in 2020

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 30: The Union health ministry was in the thick of action throughout 2020 in India's fight against coronavirus, ramping up testing facilities as well as health infrastructure while simultaneously issuing COVID-19 treatment and management guidelines from time and time.

At the same time, it put on track the development of a vaccine which is likely to be available early next year.

The first case of coronavirus infection in the country was recorded January 30 in Kerala and the first death on March 10 in Karnataka. By September, India became the second worst-hit nation, after the US, in terms of COVID-19 cases.

As the country eased the lockdown norms through a graded and pre-emptive approach, the health ministry started issuing standard

operating procedures for opening up of religious places, shopping malls, restaurants, hotel and offices and most recently for educational institutions to prevent the spread of the virus.

The Centre March 30 also launched Rs 50-lakh insurance cover for health workers fighting COVID-19. It also constituted 11 empowered groups on different aspects of COVID-19 management in the country to take informed decisions on various issues.

The number of daily coronavirus cases peaked in September with 97,894 infections being reported on the 17th day of the month, after which India began witnessing a decline in cases even though several other countries saw a surge in infections.

Recoveries have crossed 98 lakh putting the country in the number one position in terms of the number of recovered coronavirus cases,



followed by Brazil while it is in the third spot in terms of fatalities globally after the US and Brazil, according to the Johns Hopkins University, which has been compiling global COVID-19 data.

While battling the pandemic, India ramped up the production of COVID-19 protective gears like PPE and N-95 masks while scaling up testing

facilities boosting indigenous production of such items thereby reducing dependency on foreign countries.

India has so far tested over 17 crore samples for COVID-19 in its over 1,200 government and 1,080 private laboratories.

As several countries raced to develop a vaccine against the deadly

viral disease, Indian scientists too plunged into action and developed at least three vaccine candidates, one of which now is under active consideration for approval. At present, six COVID-19 vaccines are undergoing clinical trials in India.

They are: Covaxin, developed by Bharat Biotech in collaboration with ICMR; Oxford vaccine manufactured by SII under licence from AstraZeneca; ZyCoV-D being developed by Cadila Healthcare Ltd in Ahmedabad in collaboration with the Centre's Department of Biotechnology; Sputnik V vaccine manufactured by Dr Reddy's Lab, Hyderabad, in collaboration with Russia's Gamaleya National Centre; one manufactured by Biological E Ltd, Hyderabad, in collaboration with MIT, US and the sixth developed by Pune-based Gennova Biopharmaceuticals Ltd in collaboration with HDT, US.

Besides, there is NVX-CoV2373,

which is being developed by SII in collaboration with Novavax and its phase-3 clinical trial is under consideration with the drug regulator.

An eighth vaccine is being developed by Bharat Biotech International Ltd in collaboration with Thomas Jefferson University, US and it is at the pre-clinical stages.

Another vaccine, which is in the initial stage, is being developed by Aurbindo Pharma.

Meanwhile, Bharat Biotech, Serum Institute of India and Pfizer have applied to the Drugs Controller General of India seeking emergency use authorisation for their COVID-19 vaccines. While Pfizer is yet to make a presentation, the applications of Bharat Biotech and Serum Institute are being examined, the Centre recently said asserting that DCGI's requirement for more data from the companies will not impact the vaccine-roll out timeline.

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This transformative hospital price transparency rule has been fought at every step by the swamp and defenders of the status quo

KAYLEIGH MCENANY | PRESS SECRETARY, WHITE HOUSE

## KILLINGS SPIKE IN NYC AMID PANDEMIC

New York City has recorded 447 killings, a 41 per cent increase over last year and the largest number since 2011



## of the day quote

Baloch leaders are being assassinated by Pakistani military death squads. We can't rule out a targeted assassination as the cause of her sudden death

NABI BAKSH BALOCH | BALOCH ACTIVIST

It looks like Putin is in hysterics. They are trying to put me behind bars for failing to die and continuing to hunt for my killers and for proving that Putin was behind it

ALEXEI NAVALNY | OPPOSITION LEADER, RUSSIA

What we sought wasn't a rupture but a resolution, a resolution of the old and vexed question of Britain's political relations with Europe, which bedevilled our post-war history

BORIS JOHNSON | PRIME MINISTER, UK

# UK nod to Astra/Oxford vax

AGENCIES

London, Dec 30: Britain Wednesday became the first country in the world to approve a coronavirus vaccine developed by Oxford University and AstraZeneca, hoping that rapid action would help it stem a surge of infections driven by a highly contagious variant of the virus.

Boris Johnson's government, which has already ordered 100 million doses of the vaccine, has jumped ahead of other Western countries with its vaccination programme.

It was the first to approve a shot developed by Pfizer of the United States and Germany's BioNTech, with the result that hundreds of thousands of people were vaccinated in Britain before European Union countries and the United States even began administering it this month.

The AstraZeneca/Oxford shot, unlikely to be approved for some time by EU or U.S. regulators, will start being administered Monday,



The AstraZeneca/Oxford shot will start being administered Monday, beginning with those most at risk

Effectiveness was high, up to 80 pc, when there was a three-month interval between first and second doses

beginning with those most at risk from COVID-19.

While the approval by the UK Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is a vindication for a shot seen as essential for mass immunisations in the developing world as well as in Britain, it does not eliminate questions about trial data that make it unlikely to be approved so rapidly in the European Union or the United States.

Uncertainty has swirled over the most effective dosing pattern for the AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine since it released data last month showing a 90% success rate for a half-dose followed by a full dose, but only 62% - still usually more than enough for regulators - for two full doses.

The MHRA said that the results for the half-dose regimen had not been borne out by analysis. Instead, it approved the regimen of two full doses. An official involved in the

MHRA decision, said that the vaccine's effectiveness had risen when the doses were given three months apart.

"Effectiveness was high, up to 80%, when there was a three-month interval between first and second doses, which is the reason for our recommendation," Munir Pirmohamed, Chair of the Commission on Human medicines expert Working Group on COVID-19 vaccines, told reporters.

Hancock said hundreds of thousands of doses would be available to administer next week in Britain.

"The NHS (National Health Service) will be able to deliver these shots into people's arms at the speed at which it can be manufactured," Health Secretary Matt Hancock told Sky News.

"I am also now, with this approval this morning, highly confident that we can get enough vulnerable people vaccinated by the spring that we can now see our route out of this pandemic."

# 16 killed in Yemen blast



AGENCIES

Aden, Dec 30: At least 16 people were killed and dozens more wounded in an attack on Aden airport, shortly after a plane carrying a newly formed government for Yemen arrived from Saudi Arabia Wednesday, a local security source told Reuters.

Loud blasts and gunfire were heard at the airport shortly after the plane arrived, witnesses said.

The cabinet members including Prime Minister Maen Abdulmalik, as well as Saudi Ambassador to Yemen Mohammed Said al-Jaber, were transferred safely to the city's presidential palace, the witnesses and Saudi media said.

A local security source said three mortar shells landed on the airport's hall.

Yemeni Prime Minister Maen Abdulmalik Saeed and the others were quickly whisked away from the airport to the Mashiq Palace in the city.

"It would have been a disaster if the plane was bombed," he said, insisting the plane was the target of the attack as it was supposed to land earlier.

Mohammed al-Roubid, deputy head of Aden's health office, told the AP that at least 16 people were killed in the explosion. He said dozens were wounded but did not elaborate.

## Blast, gunfire in Yemen after plane carrying new government lands

Images shared on social media from the scene showed rubble and broken glass strewn about near the airport building and at least two lifeless bodies, one of them charred, lying on the ground.

In another image, a man was trying to help another man whose clothes were torn to get up from the ground.

The ministers were returning to Aden after being sworn in last week as part of a reshuffle following a deal with rival southern separatists. Yemens internationally recognized government has worked mostly from self-imposed exile in the Saudi capital of Riyadh during the country's years-long civil war.

Yemens embattled President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi, in exile in Saudi Arabia, announced a Cabinet reshuffle earlier this month.

The reshuffle was seen as a major step toward closing a dangerous rift between Hadi's government and southern separatists backed by the United Arab Emirates.

The Saudi-backed government is at war with with Iran-allied Houthis rebels, who control most of northern Yemen as well as the country's capital, Sanaa.

# UK MPs approve Brexit trade deal

AGENCIES

London, Dec 30: Members of the UK Parliament Wednesday voted in favour of the Brexit trade deal 521 votes to 73.

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson had recalled Parliament from its Christmas break to get the Brexit free trade agreement (FTA) struck with the European Union (EU) cleared through all parliamentary stages for the EU (Future Relationship) Bill to become law in time for January 1, 2021.

The 80-page Bill, which follows a last-minute deal agreed with the EU last week, just days before the December 31 deadline of the end of the Brexit transition period, was debated by MPs in the House of Commons followed by the House of Lords.

Johnson had urged MPs to back the "historic" Bill, which he says is not "a rupture but a resolution" of the UK's relationship with its European neighbours.



Once both Houses pass the Bill, it will go to the Queen for her Royal Assent to make it law.

"What we sought was not a rupture but a resolution, a resolution of the old and vexed question of Britain's political relations with Europe, which bedevilled our post-war history," says Johnson, as part of his opening speech in the Commons.

"First we stood aloof, then we became a half-hearted, sometimes obstructive member of the EU. Now, with this bill, we shall be a friendly neighbour - the best friend and ally the EU could have - working hand-in-glove whenever our values and interests coincide while fulfilling the sovereign wish of the British people to live under their own laws, made by their own elected Parliament. That is the historic resolution delivered by this Bill," he said.

# A PAW-FECT WINTER



A pack of huskies pulls a rig during a training session in Chelford, Britain

REUTERS

# Congress inching closer to Trump veto override

AGENCIES

Washington, Dec 30: The US Senate was due Wednesday to hold a procedural vote that could pave the way for Congress to override President Donald Trump's veto of a key defense bill, as tension between the outgoing Republican president and party leaders grows.

Trump Tuesday ramped-up pressure on his fellow Republicans to support his decision to veto the bill because it does not repeal certain legal protections for tech giants, and to back \$2,000 one-time stimulus checks for struggling Americans.

The president attacked Republican leaders on Twitter as "pathetic," and warned that the party had a "death wish" if it did not back the bigger payments. He also called again for scrapping social media company legal protections.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, however, blocked a quick vote on the checks, and urged lawmakers to override Trump's veto. If successful, the veto override would be the first such con-



Republican rebuke of Trump.

The House of Representatives overturned his veto on Monday, and the Senate is expected to hold a procedural vote on Wednesday evening. Final passage of the override could come later in the week or over the weekend.

Late on Tuesday, McConnell introduced a bill that combined the \$2,000 checks with a provision scrapping the social media company protections and another to study election security, a major issue for Trump who has claimed without evidence that fraud robbed him of victory in the November election.

Since most Democrats do not support the second two measures, the maneuver looks set to kill off all three.

# NEPAL IS SEEKING INDIA'S 'HELP' TO PROCURE COVAX

AGENCIES

Kathmandu, Dec 30: Nepal has sought India's help to procure COVID-19 vaccines for around 20 per cent of its population. The Himalayan nation is ramping up its efforts to contain the deadly virus that has killed more than 1,800 people and infected over 260,000 others, a media report said Wednesday.

The Nepal government has written to the Indian government, requesting for procurement of COVID-19 vaccines to inoculate around 20 per cent of the Nepali population, the Kathmandu Post reported.

Nepal will pay for the vaccines it sources through India, the paper added. At least two vaccine candidates including Oxford's AstraZeneca and domestically developed candidate Bharat Biotech's vaccine are in the final stages of a third phase trial in India.

"To get the vaccines at the earliest, the government has requested the Indian government to buy vaccines for 20 per cent Nepalis," the paper said, quoting a Health



Ministry official.

Nepal is also pursuing vaccines made in other countries.

"Around 15 vaccine candidates of different countries and companies are in third phase trials. The government has written letters to most of the countries for help and to the individual companies to procure the vaccines," said Dr Shyam Raj Upreti, coordinator of Nepal's COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Committee.

Last month, the government sent diplomatic notes to India, China, Russia, the UK and the US, countries whose vaccines against the coronavirus have either completed the third phase trials or are near their completion, for early availability in Nepal, the report said.

Last month, India assured the people of Nepal that once it rolls out a vaccine against COVID-19, meeting their requirement will be a priority for New Delhi.

# ARGENTINA PASSES LANDMARK BILL TO LEGALISE ABORTION

THE BILL WAS ALREADY APPROVED BY ARGENTINA'S CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES AND HAS THE SUPPORT OF PRESIDENT ALBERTO FERNANDEZ, MEANING THE SENATE VOTE WAS ITS FINAL HURDLE

AGENCIES

Buenos Aires, Dec 30: Argentina's Senate has passed a law legalising abortion in Pope Francis' homeland after a marathon 12-hour session, a victory for the women's movement that has been fighting for the right for decades.

The vote means that abortion will be legalised up to the 14th week of pregnancy, and also will be legal after that time in cases of rape or danger to the mother's life. It will have repercussions across a continent where the procedure is largely illegal.

The measure was passed with 38 votes in favour, 29 against and one abstention, after a session that

began late Tuesday.

It was already approved by Argentina's Chamber of Deputies and has the support of President Alberto Fernández, meaning the Senate vote was its final hurdle.

"This has been a struggle for many years, many women died. Never again will there be a woman killed in a clandestine abortion," said Vilma Ibarra, the author of the law and legal and technical secretary for the presidency, who wept as she spoke to reporters after the result.

"We did it sisters. We made history. We did it together. There are no words for this moment, it passes through the body and the soul," tweeted Monica Macha, a lawmaker with President Alberto Fernandez'



center-left ruling coalition.

"Safe, legal and free abortion is now the law," Fernandez himself tweeted after the vote, noting that

it had been an election pledge.

"Today, we are a better society that expands women's rights and guarantees public health," he added.

Protests outside parliament Argentina is the largest Latin American country to legalise abortion and the vote was being closely watched.

Abortion is extremely rare in a region where the Church has held cultural and political sway for centuries. With the exceptions of Uruguay, Cuba, Mexico City, Mexico's Oaxaca state, the Antilles and French Guiana, abortion remains

largely illegal across the region. Outside the Senate, pro- and anti-abortion rights activists gathered, with the bill's supporters wearing the color green that represents their abortion rights movement. Backers waved green flags as Vice President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, who presided over the debate, announced the result, shouting "legal abortion in the hospital" as the measure was passed.

Argentina until now has penalised women and those who help them abort. The only exceptions were cases involving rape or a risk to the health of the mother, and activists complain even these exceptions are not respected in some provinces.

This has been a struggle for many years, many women died. Never again will there be a woman killed in a clandestine abortion

VILMA IBARRA | TECHNICAL SECRETARY FOR THE PRESIDENCY

# business

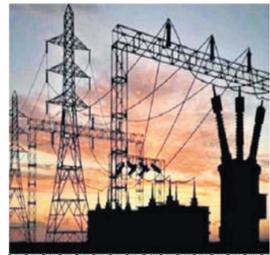


**After witnessing significant participation from banking and financial services players, GIFT (Gujarat International Finance Tec) City will also become a key platform for the bullion trading ecosystem**

TAPAN RAY | MD AND GROUP CEO, GIFT CITY

## POWER DEMAND TOUCHES ALL-TIME HIGH

All-India power demand Wednesday morning touched a record high of 182.89 GW, said Power Secretary SN Sahai. "The all-India demand for power touched 1,82,888 MW, which is an all-time high crossing previous high of 1,82,610 at 1458 hours on May 30, 2019. The entire demand was met," Sahai tweeted



## of the day quote

UK's approval of Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine is great and encouraging news. We will wait for the final approval from Indian regulators



ADAR POONAWALLA | CEO, SERUM INSTITUTE OF INDIA

It is the immense passion of our bankers and the customer confidence invested in us that has allowed us to open new branches even during the pandemic. All our new branches across Maharashtra have digitised environment with best in class offerings



AJAY KANWAL | MD & CEO, JANA SMALL FINANCE BANK

The coronavirus pandemic has changed the way business is done, necessitating a change in the entire skilling landscape, and the present workforce in the auto industry needs upskilling



NIKUNJ SANGHI | CHAIRMAN, AUTOMOTIVE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

## SHORT TAKES

### 100-MW project commissioned

**New Delhi:** Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL) Wednesday said it has commissioned a 100 megawatt (MW) solar power project at Khirsara in Gujarat. "Adani Solar Energy Kutchn Two Private Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL), has commissioned a 100 MW solar power project at Khirsara, Gujarat, ahead of its scheduled commercial operation date (COD) as per its 25-year power purchase agreement (PPA) with the Gujarat Urja Vikas Nigam India (GUVNL)," AGEL said in a statement.

### Colgate extends naturals portfolio

**New Delhi:** Leading oral care products maker Colgate-Palmolive (India) Wednesday announced the launch of ayurveda-based oil pulling, extending its portfolio in the naturals segment. Oil pulling is a simple method of swishing oil in the mouth for a few minutes after waking up. Colgate Vedshakti Oil Pulling is based on centuries-old practice in ayurveda combined with the company's oral care expertise, it said in a statement.

### Union Bank gets shareholders nod

**New Delhi:** Shareholders of Union Bank of India Wednesday approved the bank's proposal for raising up to Rs 6,800 crore equity capital to fund business growth. During the Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM), the shareholders passed the special resolution with the requisite majority for raising capital through FPO (Follow-on Public Offering) /Rights or QIP (Qualified Institutional Placement) or preferential allotment, the bank said in a regulatory filing.

### Housing sales recover in Q3

**New Delhi:** India's residential real estate market seems to have bottomed out in 2020 and sales momentum that picked up during October-December is likely to continue through the next year to reach pre-COVID level or even surpass it provided there are no further unforeseen negative events, according to top property developers and consultants.

## BEATING COVID BLUES

# Revenue collection up 4% by Nov end

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 30:** Beating the pandemic in different sectors of economy, Odisha has maintained an upward trend in revenue generation because of the government's dynamic financial management strategies. By the end of November during the current fiscal, the total revenue collection has grown by 4% over the corresponding period of 2020. Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy briefed about this today at the all secretaries meeting held under his chairmanship at the Convention center located at the Lokseva Bhawan.

The total revenue generation from both the sources by end of November, 2019 was Rs 28,402 crore which increased to Rs 29,411.29 crore during the current financial year. The total non-tax revenue during the period grew by 23.29 per cent during the current fiscal as compared to the last fiscal. The total revenue generated from non-tax sources up to November, 2019 was Rs 8,485 crore which increased to Rs 10,462 crore during the corresponding period of the current year.

On face of shutdowns and lockdowns, the total budget utilisation by end of November, 2020 reached around Rs 60,000 crore in different infrastructure, social, agriculture and allied sectors.

Reviewing fiscal performances of various departments up to November 2020 presented by Principal Secretary (Finance) Ashok Kumar Meena, Chief Secretary Tripathy directed the departments



### Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy has directed to expedite expenditure without parking the funds

to focus on faster implementation of the projects by utilising the budgeted money without parking the funds anywhere. He also directed the departments to ensure expeditious execution of the infrastructure laying and livelihood generating projects.

Development Commissioner Suresh Chandra Mohapatra directed the departments to take regular review and monitoring of the OMBADC (Odisha Mineral Bearing Areas Development Corporation) and DMF (District Mineral Foundation) projects. Mohapatra added, "The projects of Rs 20,000 crore are being implemented in major mineral bearing districts of Angul, Jajpur, Jharsuguda,

Keonjhar, Koraput, Mayurbhanj, Rayagada, and Sundargarh. These projects would cater to many basic needs of the people."

Further, Tripathy asked the departments of water resources, rural development, works, housing and urban development to "prioritise identified strategic projects and complete those within the scheduled time". On the other hand, Meena assured the departments that there would be "no dearth of funds project implementation".

Development Commissioner Mohapatra, Additional Chief Secretary and Agriculture Production Commissioner Raj Kumar Sharma, Additional Chief Secretary (Rural Development and SRC) Pradeep Kumar Jena, Additional Chief Secretary (Health and Family Welfare) Pradipta Kumar Mohapatra, Additional Chief Secretary (Forest & Environment) Mona Sharma, along with Principal Secretaries, Secretaries and Special Secretaries of all departments participated in the discussion.

## International flight ban extended till January end



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 30:** The coronavirus-induced suspension of scheduled international passenger flights has been extended till January 31, aviation regulator DGCA said Wednesday.

"However, international scheduled flights may be allowed on selected routes by the competent authority on a case-to-case basis," the Directorate General of Civil Aviation added.

Scheduled international passenger services have been suspended in India since March 23 due to the coronavirus pandemic. But special international flights have

been operating under the Vande Bharat Mission since May and under bilateral "air bubble" arrangements with selected countries since July.

India has formed air bubble pacts with 24 countries including the US, the UK, the UAE, Kenya, Bhutan and France. Under an air bubble pact between two countries, special international flights can be operated by their airlines between their territories.

The DGCA circular also said that the suspension does not affect the operation of international all-cargo operations and flights specifically approved by it.

## 'Ahmedabad most affordable housing market, Mumbai costliest'

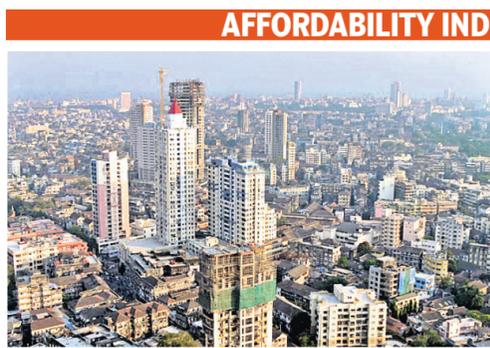
AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Dec 30:** Ahmedabad has become the most affordable housing market in the country while Mumbai remains the costliest, according to property consultant Knight Frank India.

The consultant released its Affordability Index 2020, which showed that Ahmedabad was the most affordable housing market in India with an affordability ratio of 24 per cent, followed by Pune and Chennai at 26 per cent each in 2020.

A ratio over 50 per cent makes it difficult to secure home loans from banks and housing finance companies, making it unaffordable to purchase a house, Knight Frank India said.

The affordability index, which tracks the EMI (Equated Monthly Installment) to income ratio for an average household, has shown meaningful improvement in affordability over the last decade.



### AFFORDABILITY INDEX 2020

The consultant said that decline in housing prices and multi-decade low home loan interest rates have helped improve housing affordability in 2020.

"While Mumbai is the most expensive market, with affordability ratio of (61 per cent), other cities like

Ahmedabad, Chennai and Pune are relatively more affordable," Knight Frank said.

Even for Mumbai, the affordability ratio has improved from a high of 93 per cent in 2010 to 61 per cent in 2020.

The index captures movement

## Hy'bad-based co booked for ₹4,837cr bank fraud

CBI has booked IVRCL and its directors on a complaint from the State Bank of India, a spokesperson from CBI said

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 30:** The CBI Wednesday carried out searches at the premises of infrastructure firm IVRCL, its Managing Director E Sudhir Reddy and Joint Managing Director R Balarami Reddy who have been booked by the agency for an alleged fraud worth over Rs 4,800 crore against a consortium of banks, officials said.

The agency has booked the Hyderabad-based company and its directors on a complaint from the State Bank of India, CBI Spokesperson RC Joshi said. It was alleged that the accused in connivance with unknown public servants and others defrauded the consortium of public sector banks, consisting of State Bank of India, IDBI Bank, Canara Bank, Andhra Bank, Corporation Bank, EXIM Bank, Punjab & Sind Bank, Union Bank of India and caused a loss of



Rs 4,837 crore to the banks,' he said.

The CBI has alleged that the company had availed credit facilities from consortium members and cheated them by not repaying the loan amount. It was also alleged that as per the forensic audit report, the company made payments to related parties through letters of credit (LCs), without recording any

purchase transactions in the books and routed the funds to the account of the company and thereby misappropriated the bank funds,' Joshi said.

He said searches were conducted Wednesday at the residential and official premises of the accused at Hyderabad which led to recovery of several incriminating documents.

## Current account surplus moderates to \$15.5bn in Q2: RBI



AGENCIES

**Mumbai, Dec 30:** India's current account surplus moderated to \$15.5 billion or 2.4 per cent of the GDP in the July-September quarter of the current fiscal. The same was at \$19.2 billion or 3.8 per cent of the GDP in the preceding three months on account of a rise in the merchandise trade deficit, the RBI said Wednesday.

A current account deficit of \$7.6 billion or 1.1 per cent of the GDP was recorded in the second quarter of 2019-20.

## India recorded a current account surplus of 3.1% of the GDP in the first half of the fiscal as against a deficit of 1.6% in the corresponding period of 2019-20

India recorded a current account surplus of 3.1 per cent of the GDP in the first half of the fiscal as against a deficit of 1.6 per cent in the corresponding period of 2019-20. This was mainly on account of a sharp contraction in the trade deficit.

The narrowing of the current account surplus in the second quarter of 2020-21 was due to a rise in the merchandise trade deficit to \$14.8 billion from \$10.8 billion in the preceding quarter, the central bank said.

## 'RCom group owes ₹26,000cr to banks, financial institutions'



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 30:** Debt-ridden telecom firm Reliance Communications Wednesday said the group owes around Rs 26,000 crore to Indian banks and financial institutions.

The Indians banks, vendors and other creditors have made claims of around Rs 86,000 crore on the company which is currently going through insolvency proceedings.

"As per figures certified by the Resolution Professional appointed by the lenders, the RCOM group owed around Rs 26,000 crore to Indian banks and financial institutions as on the date of filing before the NCLT," Reliance Communications (RCom) said in a statement.

The creditors have submitted claims of around Rs 49,000 crore on RCom, Rs 24,000 crore on Reliance Telecom and Rs 12,600 crore on Reliance Infratel before the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).

"The alleged 'fraud' classification by certain banks is entirely unjustified and unwarranted, and the Hon'ble Delhi High Court by an interim order has directed the same to be kept in abeyance for the time being, and the matter is now sub-judice," RCom said.

It further said that the Resolution Plans unanimously agreed by the

The Indians banks, vendors and other creditors have made claims of around ₹86,000 crore on the company which is currently going through insolvency proceedings

lenders are at various stages of approval before the NCLT, and upon implementation thereof, the lenders are likely to recover at least 70 per cent of their dues, with potential subsequent upside.

"The financial stress in the telecom sector, owing inter alia to the entry of a new player in 2016 with unlimited free offerings, was not unique to Rcom, but decimated the entire industry, and led to the shutdown of services by Aircel, Sistema, Videocon, Tata Docomo and several other players, and also severely impacted the financials of global giants like Vodafone in its Indian operations," RCom said.

The company said that Vodafone Idea has reported losses aggregating Rs 1 lakh crore in the last 15 months.

## Digital India delivered outcomes effectively amid pandemic: Prasad

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 30:** The efficacy and strength of 'Digital India' were proven during the pandemic as the programme delivered the outcomes "effectively and substantially", IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said Wednesday.

Prasad said the programme's role in bridging the digital divide and bringing in inclusion was "so evidently" in play during the challenging times of pandemic.

"Digital India is a transformative programme, launched in 2015...Five-and-a-half years down the line, the pandemic was a big opportunity to test the efficacy of Digital India.



"I would never say that everything was completely extraordinary but the Digital India ecosystem delivered very effectively and substantially," Prasad said speaking at Digital India Awards' virtual ceremony.

He said it is a mark of accomplishment that Digital India Awards 2020 are being conferred digitally this time.

Lauding the communications and IT sector for its role in enabling business continuity during the pandemic, Prasad said the Centre, states, various government agencies, and district administration all ensured digital delivery of services.

Total 22 digital governance initiatives/ products by government entities under six categories received Digital India Awards 2020 for designing and implementing innovative citizen-centric solutions and improving the ease of living for citizens.

President Ram Nath Kovind conferred the Digital India Awards via video conferencing. Awards under Jury Choice were given to Arogya Setu and eOffice.



**INDIAN DESERT STORM:** The Indian Premier League (IPL) was shifted from India to UAE (Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah) due to pandemic and lockdowns. However, it didn't bother the organisers considering the rise in digital viewership. Mumbai Indians secured their fifth title beating Delhi Capitals in the final. KL Rahul (670 runs) and Kagiso Rabada (30 wickets) won the Orange and Purple caps respectively. It was also a heartbreaking season for Chennai Super Kings fans as the MS Dhoni-led side couldn't make it into the play-offs for the first time in IPL history.

**WOMEN'S T20 CHALLENGE:** Smriti Mandhana-led Trailblazers won the tournament beating Supernovas in the final and denying the Harmanpreet Kaur-led side their third successive title in the tournament history.

**ICC WOMEN'S WORLD T20:** Australian eyes decimated India to claim their fifth world title. They entered the semifinals, losing first game and narrowly surviving the second. They were lucky enough to enter the final, courtesy rain. However, they brought out their 'A' game in the summit clash to overwhelm an unbeaten Indian side to clinch the title.

**FIRST INT'L CRICKET POST PANDEMIC:** West Indies visited England for a three-Test series in July. The Caribbean side drew the first blood winning the first match in Southampton. However they lost the series losing the next two Tests in Manchester.

**HOUR OF EMBARRASSMENT**  
The historic low came in the first Test - a Day/Night affair at Adelaide. Virat Kohli's men were in complete control of the match, before an embarrassing hour of play in their second innings pulled them into the history books. They were bundled out for 36, lowest than their previous worst of 42. They lost the match comprehensively. However, they won the Boxing Day Test to level the series at 1-1. The Men in Blue made a sloppy start to the tour losing the ODI series 1-2, before making a comeback in T20Is, winning it 2-1.

## END OF AN ERA

MS Dhoni hung up his gloves announcing his international retirement, August 15. He last played for India in the 2019 World Cup semifinal against New Zealand. Since then, he was out of the team showing personal reasons for more than a year. Interestingly, he had begun his international career in an ODI, being dismissed via run-out and he ended his career also in an ODI via run-out. However, he played in the IPL later in the year, captaining CSK. Dhoni is the only skipper in the world to have won all three major ICC trophies - 2007 World T20, 2011 World Cup and 2013 Champions Trophy. He has also held the ICC Test mace for leading India to the top of ICC Test rankings.



### Major Sports events cancelled/postponed

- OLYMPICS**  
Tokyo Summer Games (postponed to 2021)
- CRICKET**  
ICC Men's World T20 (postponed to 2022)
- FOOTBALL**  
UEFA Euro 2020 (postponed to 2021)
- TENNIS**  
Wimbledon, Indian Wells Masters (cancelled)
- BADMINTON**  
Swiss Open, India Open, Orleans Masters, Malaysia Open, Singapore Open, German Open and the China Masters (cancelled); Thomas & Uber Cup (postponed)
- FORMULA 1**  
Australian GP, Monaco GP, French GP (cancelled)
- ATHLETICS**  
World Athletics Indoor Championships (postponed)

# MORE AGONY THAN ECSTASY

The world witnessed one of the most wicked years since the end of World War II. The novel coronavirus pandemic, which put the world in a tragic state, stole more than half-a-year from everyone's life. The impact was heartbreaking. As far as sports are concerned, it's like a sportsperson grew by age, but not by on-field experience. However, the final third of the year saw some magical moments in various fields, adding the glorious scenes at the beginning of the year. It was like ecstasy in a year of agony.

### REST IN PEACE

<p><b>DIEGO MARADONA</b> Sport: Football Age: 60 Death: November 25 Cause: Heart attack</p>		<p><b>BALBIR SINGH SR</b> Sport: Hockey Age: 96 Death: May 25 Cause: Multiple health issues</p>		<p><b>PK BANERJEE</b> Sport: Football Age: 83 Death: March 20 Cause: Prolonged illness</p>	
<p><b>KOBE BRYANT</b> Sport: Basketball Age: 41 Death: January 26 Cause: Helicopter crash</p>		<p><b>CHUNI GOSWAMI</b> Sport: Football Age: 81 Death: April 30 Cause: Prolonged illness</p>		<p><b>SOME OTHER NOTABLE MENTIONS</b> Former India cricketer Chetan Chauhan, Australian cricket great Dean Jones, One of the founders of Duckworth-Lewis method Tony Lewis</p>	



**JOY OF THREE**  
ATK FC became the first team in Indian Super League (ISL) history to win the title thrice after overcoming Chennaiyin FC 3-1 in the final of the 2019-20 season.

The year also saw the merge of ATK FC and East Bengal. East Bengal too entered the ISL.

**LEAVING A MARK**  
Before heading to ISL, Mohun Bagan won the I-League title with 39 points, 16 ahead of the second-placed and their arch rivals East Bengal (23 points).

**Football turns silent!**  
The pandemic showed the world a new normal when football returned to the field without fans.



**MADRID A REAL DEAL**  
Real Madrid, who were two points down from top-placed Barcelona, won all the 10 matches post pandemic break to claim their 34th Spanish League (La Liga) title. Their arch rivals, Barcelona, were never looked in shape and dropped points dramatically.

**DOMINATING BAYERN**  
It was a completely new and probably a one-time version of the tournament when single leg at one venue (Lisbon). Bayern German League (Bundesliga) title, defeated first-time finalists and French League (Ligue 1) champions PSG in the final.

### ODISHA SPORTS

OCA Men's Inter-District T20 League became the first state level sporting event post pandemic.

- Indian women's hockey star Namita Toppo was honoured with Eklabya Puraskar
- Arjuna Award for **DUTEE CHAND**, who won gold medals in 100m & 200m at Khelo India University Games

### NATIONAL SPORTS AWARDS

For the first time, there were five Khel Ratna award winners - Rohit Sharma (Cricket), T Mariyappan (Para-Olympian), Manika Batra (Table Tennis), Vinesh Phogat (Wrestling) and Rani Rampal (Hockey).

A total of 27 athletes won Arjuna awards. The Dronacharya Awards were won by eight coaches in lifetime achievement category while five won in the regular category. A total of 15 sportspersons won Dhyan Chand Award. Punjab University, Chandigarh won the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy.

### LAUREUS WORLD SPORTS AWARDS

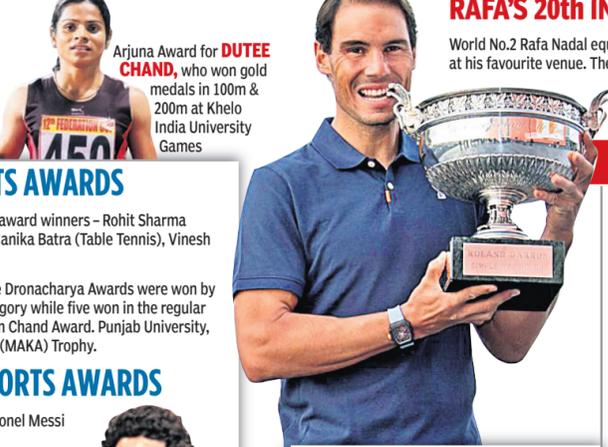
- Sportsman of the Year:** Lewis Hamilton (F1) & Lionel Messi (Football)
- Sportswoman of the Year:** Simone Biles (Gymnastics)
- Team of the Year:** South Africa Rugby Union team
- Breakthrough of the Year:** Eagan Bernal (Cycling)
- Comeback of the Year:** Sophia Fiorsch (Motor Racing)
- Sportsperson with Disability:** Oksana Masters (Cross Country Skiing)
- Action Sportsperson of the Year:** Chloe Kim (Snowboarding)
- Sporting Moment (2000-20):** Sachin Tendulkar (Cricket)
- Sports for Good:** South Bronx United (Football)

### ICC AWARDS

- Sir Garfield Sobers Award for Male Cricketer of the Decade: **VIRAT KOHLI**
- Rachael Heyhoe-Flint Award for Female Cricketer of the Decade: **ELLYSE PERRY**
- Men's Test Cricketer of the Decade: **STEVE SMITH**
- Men's ODI Cricketer of the Decade: **VIRAT KOHLI**
- Women's ODI Cricketer of the Decade: **ELLYSE PERRY**
- Men's T20I Cricketer of the Decade: **RASHID KHAN**
- Women's T20I Cricketer of the Decade: **ELLYSE PERRY**
- Men's Associate Cricketer of the Decade: **KYLE COETZER**
- Women's Associate Cricketer of the Decade: **KATHRYN BRYCE**
- Spirit of Cricket Award of the Decade: **MS DHONI**

### FIFA 'THE BEST' AWARDS

- MEN'S PLAYER:** ROBERT LEWANDOWSKI (POLAND; BAYERN MUNICH)
- Women's player:** Lucy Bronze (England; Manchester City)
- Men's coach:** Jurgen Klopp (Liverpool)
- Women's coach:** Sarina Wiegman (The Netherlands' women's team)
- Best Women's Goalkeeper:** Sarah Bouhaddi (France)
- Best Men's Goalkeeper:** Manuel Neuer (Germany)
- Fair Play Award:** Mattia Agnese
- FIFA Puskas Award:** Son Heung-min (Spurs)



**RAFA'S 20th IN 2020**  
World No.2 Rafa Nadal equalled Roger Federer's 20 Grand Slam titles record at his favourite venue. The Spaniard overwhelmed World No.1 Novak Djokovic in the French Open final to reach the milestone. The title at Roland Garros was Nadal's 13th in the clay-court Grand Slam event.

### OTHER MEN'S ACHIEVEMENTS

**WORLD NO.1 NOVAK DJOKOVIC** won ATP Cup title with Serbia before claiming Australian Open and Cincinnati Masters titles.

**DOMINIC THIAM** pulled off his biggest achievement of his playing career when he claimed his maiden Grand Slam title beating his close friend Alexander Zverev in the US Open final.

### ON 7th HEAVEN



Despite being hit hard, F1 managed to complete the curtailed season. And the star of the run was Lewis Hamilton. The Brit broke a couple of records of the great Michael Schumacher. First he broke the record of 91 Grand Prix wins sealing Portuguese GP for his 92nd Grand Prix title. Then he equalled Schumacher's seven World Championship crowns after winning the Turkish GP.

### EVES' SUCCESS AT A GLANCE

**SOFIA KENIN** soared to her first Grand Slam title, rallying from a set down to defeat former World No.1 Garbine Murguza to win the Australian Open. She also became the youngest American since Serena Williams in 2002 to capture a major crown.

**NAOMI OSAKA** won her second US Open title and third overall including 2019 Australian Open title, rallying to beat Victoria Azarenka. Osaka is the first player since 1994 (Arantxa Sanchez Vicario) to come from a set down to win the women's final at the US Open.

Teenager **IGA SWIATEK** became the first Polish player to win a Grand Slam singles title when she beat Kenin in the French Open final. The unseeded 19-year-old is the youngest winner since Monica Seles lifted the Suzanne Lenglen Cup in 1992.



### REDS IN THE ZONE

After claiming the Champions League in 2019, Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool were on a rampage before the pandemic halted their progress. At some point, it was rumoured that the Premier League would be cancelled. Had it happened, it would have raised many questions considering the Mersyside giants were 25 points ahead of second-placed Manchester City. However, the play resumed post pandemic and the Reds finished their campaign one shy of 100-point mark and 18 ahead of Man City. With seven matches still to play, Liverpool beat the record for winning a title with five matches to spare, which was jointly held by Manchester United (2000-01) and Man City (2017-18). Liverpool, who ended a 30-year wait to be England's top-flight champions for the 19th time, became the seventh club to lift the EPL trophy, after Man Utd, Blackburn Rovers, Arsenal, Chelsea, Man City and Leicester City.

