



WATER FREAK

Actor Rakulpreet Singh has shared a picture on Instagram from her Maldivian holiday

LEISURE P2



PATHAK'S RESIDENCE RAIDED

SIT raids IFS officer Abhay Kant Pathak's official residence in Bhubaneswar in connection with a DA case

DOWNTOWN P3



HIDDEN THREAT

The Covid-19 could result in 123,000 to 293,000 new HIV cases and 69,000 to 148,000 extra AIDS-related deaths

INTERNATIONAL P10

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Are you telling me we are not as good as the Opposition? They successfully misled the farmers, we couldn't!

SHORT TAKES

SC junks Kochhar's plea against sack

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Tuesday rejected Chanda Kochhar's appeal against the Bombay High Court order which had dismissed her plea against her termination as the managing director and CEO of ICICI Bank, saying the issue falls within the realm of a private bank and employee. "Sorry, we are not inclined to interfere with the high court order," a bench headed by Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul said, adding, "This falls within the realm of a private bank and an employee."

Urmila hugs Sena

Mumbai: Hindi film actor-turned-politician Urmila Matondkar, who contested the 2019 Lok Sabha elections on a Congress ticket, joined the Shiv Sena Tuesday. Matondkar (46), who quit the Congress in September 2019 after five months in that party, joined the Shiv Sena in presence of Maharashtra CM Uddhav Thackeray at Matoshri. Sena sources said Matondkar's name was forwarded to Governor BS Koshiyari by the Shiv Sena.

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VAIATION
SENSEX	44655.44 ↑ 505.72
NIFTY	13109.00 ↑ 140.00
DOLLAR	74.08 ↓ ₹0.31
EURO	88.71 ↓ ₹0.02
GOLD	₹48,499 ↑ ₹707
SILVER	₹61,200 ↑ ₹2078

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	30.2°C	30.6°C
TEMP MIN	15.4°C	14.5°C
Humidity	91%	72%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Mainly clear sky

Talks with farmer union inconclusive

FARMER BODIES REJECT GOVT'S OFFER TO SET UP PANEL

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 1: The government Tuesday offered to set up a committee to look into issues raised by farmers protesting against new farm laws, but it was rejected by representatives of 35 agitating organisations during their marathon meeting with three Union ministers that ended without any resolution. The meeting remained inconclusive and the government has called for another round of discussions Thursday, December 3, union leaders said. Government officials said the dialogue would continue and the next round of talks has been scheduled for Thursday. Sources said the farmer representatives were unanimous in seeking repeal of the three laws that they have been terming as being against the interest of the farm community.

The protesting farmers have expressed apprehension that the Centre's farm laws would pave the way for the dismantling of the minimum support price system, leaving them at the mercy of big corporates. The government has maintained that the new laws will bring farmers better opportunities and usher in new technologies in



Farmers raise slogans during their 'Delhi Chalo' protest against new farm laws at Ghazipur border in New Delhi, Tuesday

agriculture. At the nearly three-hour-long meeting at Vigyan Bhawan here, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar was accompanied by Railways and Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and Minister of State for Commerce Som Parkash, also an MP from Punjab. After the meeting, Bharat Kisan Union (Ekta Ugrahan) chief Joginder Singh Ugrahan said it remained inconclusive and the government has called for another meeting Thursday. "We are ready for a discussion to resolve their issues. Let's see," Tomar had told reporters before start of the meeting. He further said the government will arrive at

a solution after hearing the representatives of the farmer organisations. "The farmer's organisations rejected the government's proposal to form a five-member committee to look into the issues related to the new farm laws," Roopsingh Sanha, member of Bharat Kisan Union (Ekta Ugrahan), told PTI. It is one of the largest blocks of farmers who have been protesting against the new laws. The government side was, however, firm in its stand that a high-level committee must be formed to look into the issues and wanted the farmer representatives to consider the proposal. The ministers said it was difficult to reach a decision while interacting with such large groups.

BMC seals private school for holding classes and exams

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: In gross violation of COVID norms issued by the state government, a private school at Chintamaniswar area of the Smart City was sealed by Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Tuesday for allegedly conducting classes and exams.

Acting on a tip-off, an enforcement squad of the BMC reached Sai Saraswati Vidya Mandir, Chintamaniswar at Laxmisagar and conducted a surprise inspection. On inquiry, it was found that the school was running offline classes and students were found present at the school without school uniforms to avoid suspicion.

"We got information that classes were being conducted and examination was underway at Sai Saraswati Vidya Mandir today. Later, we had sent our enforcement team to the spot. The team found that there were students and we got evidence that classes and exams were being held. Hence, we have sealed the school," said BMC Zonal Commissioner Anshuman Rath. Rath stated that while the school was sealed for an indefinite period of time, a detailed report will be sent to school and mass education department for necessary action. The state government had ordered closure of all schools in the state until December 31 in apprehension of the second wave COVID wave of the pandemic.

The school had been functioning under severe financial strain owing to lockdown. While the school was unable to provide online classes, it was struggling to pay salaries to its employees as parents were reluctant to pay full fees citing closure of school. "The school management had asked all parents to send students without school dress in a bid to avoid suspicion. On inspection, it was also found that about 40 students of IX standard were giving English exams and other classes were going on. Many COVID violations such as wearing of masks and social distancing were also observed," sources said.

1800 266 266 1 (tollfree)

State eases Covid curbs on spending

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: The state government Tuesday relaxed some of the restrictions it had imposed on spending by various departments in the wake of the economic downturn exacerbated by the global Covid19 pandemic.

As the government has been successful in minimising the impact of the pandemic on the state economy and realisation of resources, it has relaxed some of the curbs imposed on expenses by various departments. "After initial shortfall in resources in the early part of the fiscal due to lockdown, resources are now looking up due to partial recovery in the economy, innovation in mobilization of resources and consistent monitoring," Finance Secretary Ashok Meena wrote to secretaries of all departments, Tuesday. The

partial recovery of the state economy has provided the state government with some fiscal space to enhance capital investment for revival of the economy and generation of livelihood, he said.

Relaxation has been given for procurement of equipment required for promoting digital communication while capping on expenditure out of the provision of 'other contingencies' and 'operation and maintenance expenditure' will be raised from 60 per cent to 75 per cent of the budget provision for the whole year.

The government has allowed use of new long-term advances (motor car advance, computer advance etc) and other advances.

The departments have been allowed to float new tenders for execution of works for ongoing schemes, procurement of goods and services keeping in view the budgetary provisions.

India slams Trudeau for pro-farmer comments

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 1: India Tuesday strongly reacted to comments by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and other leaders there on protests by farmers, calling the remarks as "ill-informed" and "unwarranted" as the matter pertained to the internal affairs of a democratic country. "We have seen some ill-informed comments by Canadian leaders relating to farmers in India. Such comments are unwarranted, especially when pertaining to the internal affairs of a democratic country," External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said. In a terse message, the ministry further added that "it is also best that diplomatic conversations are not misrepresented for political purposes." On Monday, Trudeau, backing the agitating farmers in India, said Canada will always be there to defend the rights of peaceful protesters.

"The situation is concerning and we are all very worried about fam-

ily and friends and I know that is a reality for many of you. Let me remind you, Canada will always be there to defend the right of peaceful protest," he said speaking at an online event on Monday to mark the 55th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev. Canada has a significant number of Indians and most of them are from Punjab.

"We believe in the importance of dialogue and that is why we have reached out through multiple means directly to Indian authorities to highlight our concerns," Trudeau said in the video posted on his Twitter account. Canada's Indian-origin Defence Minister Harjit

Sajjan too expressed concern over the situation.

"The reports of peaceful protesters being brutalized in India are very troubling. Many of my constituents have family there and are worried about the safety of their loved ones. Healthy democracies allow peaceful protest. I urge those involved to uphold this fundamental right," he tweeted Sunday.



MAKING A FACE



A pair of lionesses plays inside their enclosure at Lucknow Zoo, Tuesday

PTI PHOTO

GST revenues cross trillion mark for 2nd straight month

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 1: GST collections posted growth for the third month in a row in November over the previous year collections, in signs that the economy continues to reflate after a strict lockdown.

Collections of tax on the sale of goods and rendering of services came in at ₹1,04,963 crore in November, the finance ministry said in a statement Tuesday.

The collections were higher than ₹1.03 lakh crore recorded in November 2019 but were ₹192 crore lower than October 2020 collections. The Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections, which directly reflects the state of economic activity, had plummeted to a record low of ₹32,172 crore in April after the government imposed a nationwide lockdown to curb the spread of coronavirus.

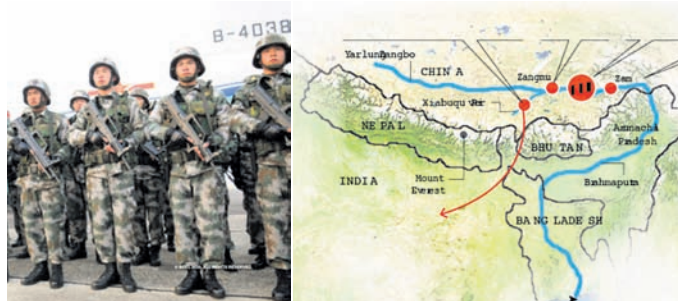
Subsequent easing of lockdown restrictions helped collections rise. The collections witnessed the first year-on-year growth in September and last month, it crossed the psychological ₹1 lakh crore-mark. November is the second straight month when GST revenues have topped ₹1 lakh crore. One lakh crore is one trillion. The year-on-year growth in GST collections in November stood at 1.4 per cent while in October and September, it was at 10 per cent and 4 per cent, respectively.

"In line with the recent trend of recovery in the GST revenues, the revenues for the month of November 2020 are 1.4 per cent higher than the GST revenues in the same month last year. During the month, revenues from import of goods was 4.9 per cent higher and the revenues from domestic transaction (including import of services) are 0.5 per cent higher than the revenues from these sources during the same month last year," the ministry said in the statement. The gross GST revenues collected in November 2020 were ₹1,04,963 crore, out of which central GST was ₹19,189 crore and state GST was ₹25,540 crore.

India mulls dam on Brahmaputra to offset Chinese plan

Analysts warned that damming the Brahmaputra could potentially develop into another flashpoint, as Beijing's dam building activities moved closer to the Indian border

Brahmaputra river. The river, also known as the Yarlung Tsangpo in China, flows from Tibet into India's Arunachal Pradesh state and down through Assam to Bangladesh. Indian authorities are concerned Chinese projects could trigger flash floods or create water scarcity. "The need of the hour is to have a big dam in Arunachal Pradesh to mitigate the adverse impact of the Chinese dam projects," TS Mehra, a senior official in India's federal water ministry, told Reuters. "Our proposal is under consideration at the highest level in the government," Mehra said, adding the Indian plan would create a large water storage capacity to offset the impact of Chinese dams on flows. Diplomatic relations between



India and China are at a nadir, with troops locked in a border face-off in the western Himalayas for months. Some analysts warned that damming the Brahmaputra could potentially develop into another flashpoint, as Beijing's dam building activities moved closer to the Indian border. "India is facing China's ter-

restrial aggression in the Himalayas, maritime encroachments on its backyard and, as the latest news is a reminder, even water wars," Brahma Chellaney, a specialist on India-China ties, said in a tweet.

On Monday, Chinese state media reported the country could build up to 60 GW of hydropower capac-

ity on a section of the Brahmaputra, citing a senior executive.

Yan Zhiyong, chairman of state-owned Power Construction Corporation of China, speaking at an industry conference, said plans to dam the river were a "historic opportunity". "Formally, we are telling them (the Chinese) that any project you undertake, should not cause an adverse impact on India. They have given an assurance, but we don't know how long their assurance will last," Mehra said.

Hydro projects on Asia's great rivers have been a growing source of regional tensions in recent years. In Southeast Asia, China has faced accusations a series of dams it has built on the Mekong have worsened drought in downstream countries, which Beijing denies.

India would be concerned if the Chinese build a dam around a so-called "great bend", where the Yarlung curves southward before entering India and where the river gains substantial volume of water, said Sayanangshu Modak, a researcher at the New-Delhi based Observer Research Foundation think-tank. This region, however, is also geologically unstable, making potential dam construction challenging, he said.

In Bangladesh, Sheikh Rokon, secretary general of environment campaigners Riverine People, said multilateral discussion should be held before China builds any dams. "China's downstream neighbours have a legitimate cause for concern. Water flow will be disrupted," he said.

leisure



COOKING IS VERY DEAR TO DREW BARRYMORE'S HEART

Hollywood actress Drew Barrymore says cooking is very important to her. "Cooking is something very near and dear to my heart. It is also ritualistic and romantic. One of the ways I self-educated myself growing up," shared the *Charlie's Angels* actor.

MILLIE BOBBY BROWN ASKS FOR RESPECT FROM FANS

Actress Millie Bobby Brown is upset after she was harassed by a fan and feels people should respect her personal space. The *Stranger Things* star shared a tearful video on Instagram Story, recounting the uncomfortable incident when a fan filmed her without her permission, reports eonline.com.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Interactive sessions with people who think like you are on the cards. At last you may have an intimate talk with your beloved and you will get a chance to confide your commitment to the relationship, says Ganesh.

TAURUS
Be careful, says Ganesh. All your calculations and conclusions, plans and moves are likely to go haywire. Time and again, you could fail and, ultimately, get frustrated. Even simple and obvious things are likely to get you worked up.

GEMINI
You will feel physical and mental excitement and emotions today. You may take part in some competition and will seek to improve your self-esteem by performing physically in it. Your intellectual capacity will be on display in the work that you do, says Ganesh.

CANCER
Today is a day for taking things slowly, especially on the business front. This applies the most to the stockbrokers and also others who invest in stocks or shares on the side. Stars are not so bright today and haste will only worsen the matters.

LEO
You want to make your personal relationships conflict free and hence will attempt to resolve the conflicts which are within you. You will need to adopt a compromising attitude in life. It is best to stay away from risky financial investments today.

VIRGO
Today you may understand the utter uselessness of your dogged efforts and feel extremely anxious about success eluding you constantly. However, Ganesh advises you not to lose hope, but to re-energise your mind, give a boost to your curiosity and pay attention to long-term goals.

LIBRA
Ganesh says that any pending legal issues will be sorted out today either in court or through an out of court settlement. Your workload will get eased today and you will be able to find your way out from certain problematic situations.

SCORPIO
Your account balance may suffer suddenly as you decide to loosen your purse strings. You are all set to splurge on your loved ones today, according to Ganesh. However, it is important to remember that the value of money is precious, and once spent it never returns; spend wisely.

SAGITTARIUS
You rule your heart today, predicts Ganesh. You are likely to become an expert in reading people's mind. Everything is fair in love and war, is what you believe! Win over your sweetheart and set out on a journey toward destination unknown, says Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
It has become difficult for you to bear the heavy weight of responsibilities on your shoulders. But, be prepared for some more; the weight is about to get heavier as more responsibilities are going to be added. You will no longer enjoy the work, and it will bring down your efficiency level to an extent, feels Ganesh.

AQUARIUS
You are talented, hard working, confident and down to earth. These four characteristics are the pillars of success. Now, it is time build the building. Your curiosity and desire to achieve your goals will help you with it, feels Ganesh.

PISCES
Those who work hard to move towards their goals will do well today. It is a good day for business. You will be able to do a lot of new things in your job-business today.

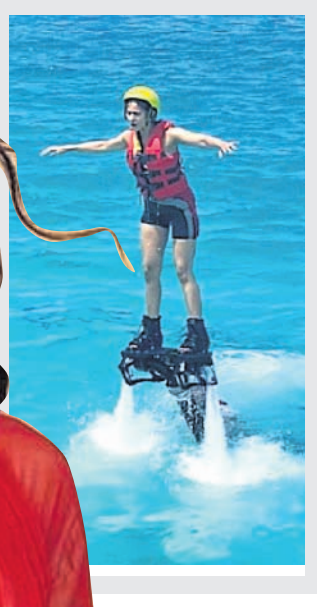
Rakulpreet Singh is a 'water freak'

Mumbai: Actress Rakulpreet Singh shared a picture on Instagram from her Maldivian holiday, calling herself a water freak. In the picture Rakul is seen standing on a fly-board.

"Fall 7 times, stand up 8.. just that here I fell 70 times #Flyboard #waterfreak," Rakulpreet wrote of her flyboarding experience.

The image has over 105K likes. Rakul is all set to star alongside Amitabh Bachchan and Ajay Devgn in the thriller drama

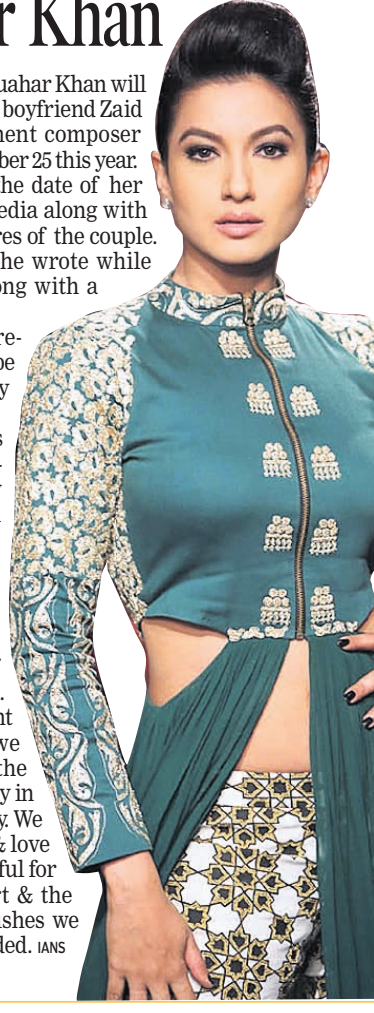
Mayday. The film is directed and produced by Ajay Devgn. The actress will be seen in the role of a pilot. This is her second film with Ajay after *De De Pyaar De*. She will begin the shoot of *Mayday* mid-December in Hyderabad.



Christmas wedding for Gauahar Khan

Mumbai: Actress Gauahar Khan will be getting married to boyfriend Zaid Darbar, son of eminent composer Ismail Darbar, December 25 this year. The actress shared the date of her wedding on social media along with a note and two pictures of the couple.

"#25thDec2020," she wrote while with the images, along with a sparkling emoji. In the note, she revealed that they will be celebrating the big day with their families. "The year 2020 has been anything but ordinary, & our love story through it all has been nothing short of extraordinary! It gives us immense joy to announce that we are tying the knot and embarking on a journey of forever," the note read. "Keeping the current scenario in mind, we will be celebrating the big day with our family in an intimate ceremony. We seek your blessings & love & are eternally grateful for the constant support & the outpour of warm wishes we have received," it added.



Odisha's Subhashree makes it to Miss India-2020 pageant

Bolangir: Odia girl Subhashree Rayaguru has been qualified to participate in the latest edition of Femina Miss India-2020 beauty pageant scheduled to be held in Mumbai. Daughter of Bolangir Special Judicial Magistrate (SJM) Ramesh Chandra Rayaguru, Subhashree is among the 31 state winners for the contest. She was among the top five finalists from Odisha contesting to represent the state in the national level pageant and stake a claim to the title.

A lawyer by profession, she has hosted over 3,000 national and state

level cultural events. She is also the official emcee of e-commerce app Amazon. Besides, she is a keen athlete who has represented her school at regional level Kho-Kho competition and district-level badminton and cricket tournaments. "Hard work and dedication are keys to my success. I intend to work towards women empowerment in near future," said the Miss India aspirant.



A digital museum to preserve India's textile arts

The campaign aims at giving recognition to traditional craft and textile practices, says Jema Akshita M Bhanjdeo, the royal representative from the Belgadia Palace, Mayurbhanj

AGENCIES
Ertwhile royal families and historic properties have come together to pay tribute to India's textile heritage by working with karigars (or local artisan designers) from three states of India (Mayurbhanj in Odisha, Jaisalmer in Rajasthan and Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh) to launch a garment installation Karkhana Chronicles for virtual viewing.

The campaign via curated installations in India's palaces and forts for three months aims to pay tribute to its rich textile history by working with its custodians- the local artisans. Each royal house has set up a textile installation inspired by local arts they like to pro-



note. Through the campaign, they aim to start a conversation on circularity, history and social equity, while striving to ensure recognition and upliftment of local Indian artisans. Alongside the campaign's attempt to revive slow fashion in India and to breathe new life into

tative from the Belgadia Palace, Mayurbhanj, Odisha said: "Our local art forms showcase our cultural heritage and through Karkhana Chronicles, we show our pride and hope that the traditional craft and textile practices get the utmost love and recognition that they deserve." Sharing his thoughts on the sustainability of Indian textile arts, Yuvraj Chaitanya Raj Singh, the crown prince of the erstwhile Kingdom of Jaisalmer, said: "Sustainability has historically been one of the key driving forces for the local communities of Jaisalmer as we have always had to create garments in harmony with natural elements due to the desert terrain. Jaisalmer has always been a point where eastern and western cultural influence has been reflected in our rich textile trade as we were on the silk route which used to cut through this region."

PEANUTS



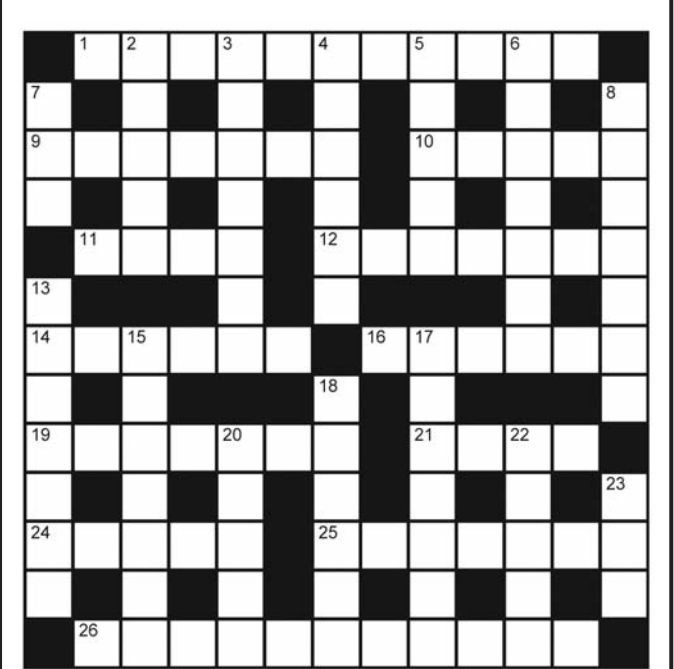
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



FUN post CROSSWORD



- Across**
1 They're made in hotels (4-2,5)
9 Defeat
10 Bit of Gothic architecture
11 Java neighbor
12 High-class
14 Zodiac symbol
16 Like some socks
19 Panorama
21 Rathskellers
- Down**
2 Sleep disorder
3 Hard to pin down
4 Hog
5 Quarrel
- 24 Parcel out
25 Makes a boo-boo (5,2)
26 Get a conversation going (5,3,3)
- 6 Book depository
7 Do film work
8 It might be found in a cap
13 Real
15 Deep-dish pie
17 Tortoise
18 Beginning
20 Uncredited actor
22 No-frills
23 Choose

SUDOKU

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

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

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

SUDOKU

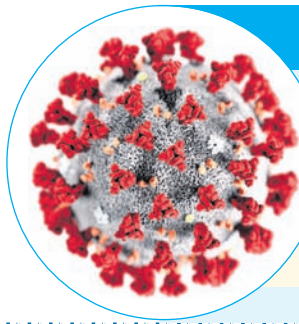
3	0	4	9	B	2	7	E	8	6	1	C	A	D	5
5	B	9	4	D	0	6	1	2	7	8	A	C	E	3
2	A	1	8	5	E	0	C	3	B	4	D	6	9	7
C	8	D	3	6	7	4	A	5	9	0	E	1	B	2
6	E	7	A	1	C	B	D	9	2	5	3	0	8	4
8	4	5	6	E	A	2	9	C	0	7	B	3	1	D
0	D	B	1	9	5	3	8	6	E	C	4	7	2	A
9	1	6	C	4	D	7	A	5	3	2	8	0		
A	2	C	0	7	3	E	0	1	8	6	9	5	4	B
E	7	3	0	8	4	9	4	A	0	1	9	6		
B	C	8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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



FOR A GOOD CATCH

A fisherman casts his net into Nuanai river in Puri, Tuesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	6,38,59,746	4,42,15,592	14,79,728
India	94,63,254	88,88,595	1,37,659
Odisha	3,19,103	3,12,734	1,744

SIT raids Pathak's residence, grills driver

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: The 20-member Special Investigation Team (SIT), set up by the Vigilance Directorate to probe the alleged possession of disproportionate assets by suspended IFS officer Abhay Kant Pathak, raided the official residence of the senior official at Unit-IX area here, Tuesday.

Later in the day, the officials went through various documents including salary slips and petitions against Pathak at the office of PCCF in the Capital city, sources said. Meanwhile, Pathak's driver, who has been under Vigilance scanner after seizure of Rs 20 lakh cash from his residence at Pipili, was interrogated by the team. The SIT also recorded the statements of a few bank officials in connection with the case, added the source.

The team has also examined some documents at the DFO offices at Bolangir, Berhampur and Angul where the tainted IFS officer had been posted over the past few years, the sources pointed out.



Vigilance officials during the raid at Berhampur

Three Forest department officials were also interrogated by the sleuths.

On the other hand, the Crime Branch (CB) has been investigating the allegations of job fraud against the tainted IFS officer's son, Akash.

Sources said that Akash had allegedly duped around 67 candidates of lakhs of rupees on the pretext of providing them employment opportunities with a leading automobile company. CB inspector general Amitendra

The officials went through various documents including salary slips and petitions against Pathak at the office of PCCF in the Capital city

The officials found Rs 14.77 crore stashed in several bank accounts of Akash

state government suspended the 1987-batch IFS officer who served as the Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Plan, Program and Afforestation).

The duo was sent to judicial custody by a court till December 9.

In another development, the owner of a travel agency Tuesday approached the Kharavela Nagar police alleging that Akash is yet to clear his hotel and travel bills worth over Rs 65 lakh.

Pravas Kumar Choudhury, 50, owner of Sky King Travel Agency, approached the police alleging that Akash Pathak had introduced himself as the managing director of Tata Motors Limited and booked chartered flights as well as rooms in luxury hotels through the former's agency. "Out of the Rs 2,78,39,087 bills, Akash still owes Rs 65 lakh by way of bills to Sky King Travel Agency. A case (293/2020) has been registered in this regard," said a police official.

Meanwhile, the Vigilance officials found Rs 14.77 crore stashed in several bank accounts of Akash.

Ganja worth ₹1cr seized; 4 nabbed

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: The Commissionerate Police Tuesday seized a huge cache of ganja from Karseikhana area on Jharpada Canal Road under Laxmisagar police limits here. Four persons were arrested in this connection.

The total amount of cannabis seized is around 83 kg with an approximate market value of Rs 1 crore. Acting on a tip-off, a team of Commissionerate Police conducted a raid at the house of one of the accused in the area and seized the contraband. After a thorough search, the cannabis was recovered from paper boxes hidden in the storeroom of the house.

The arrested were identified as Sk Basir, 25, Sagir Khan, 25, Manir Khan, 26, and Sk Sabir, 27 of Jharpada Muslim Sahi in the city.

Panigrahi seeks fair probe

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: Expelled Biju Janata Dal (BJD) leader Pradeep Panigrahi Tuesday attacked the people who are allegedly behind his expulsion and urged the top officials of the Home department and the police for a fair probe against him.

He said, "There have been attempts at local level, with the help of police and others, to disturb and defame me. I want to appeal to the Director General of Police (DGP) and the Home Secretary to have an independent enquiry committee against me and probe allegations leveled against me."

He also said that he had faith in Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. "It is tough for me to believe that the Chief Minister who groomed me with love and affection can do anything like that which happened to me. I want to know if whatever is happening to me is



The expelled leader said he attended a social function in Pune and used a chartered plane. Everything was used with the permission of the DGCA and AAI

done with his knowledge or without his knowledge. I want to get a clear answer from the CM," he said.

He also added, "I tried several times to approach the CM. Since I didn't connect to him over phone despite several attempts, I was compelled to write a letter to the Chief Minister."

Panigrahi also defended his chartered flight travel and said, "I attended a social function in Pune and used a chartered plane.

Everything was used with the permission of the Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and the Airports Authority of India (AAI). If anybody finds any misdoing on my part, he/she is free to attack me and punish me."

"However, let there be an enquiry into the people involved in my expulsion. Let there be an enquiry and the reports submitted to the Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and Prime Minister Narendra Modi."

Apps to boost OMC's digital edge unveiled

THE STATE PSU TO CROSS 20 MT IRON ORE OUTPUT BY NEXT YEAR

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: As part of the 5T initiative, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday launched customer integrated management services (CIMS) and stockyard management system (SMS) applications of the Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC).

Rolling out the two applications, Naveen said the OMC has demonstrated its customer-focus vision and integrity of the stockyard management. These two applications will transform online sale process and dispatch management with transparency and efficiency tak-

ing root in the system under the 5T framework, he said.

Describing the state-owned PSU as a flagship public sector company and one of the oldest public sector companies with a history of over six decades, Patnaik said it has significantly contributed to the development of the state.

He also lauded the role of OMC during the Covid pandemic and its support to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) and various welfare measures.

Stating that mining is a sensitive sector with large socio-economic and environmental implications, he praised the commitment

of the entity for its social responsibility with support for schemes like Aaahar, Adarsh Vidyalayas, and sports, among others.

OMC has been consistently putting up good performances in terms of ore production and sales revenues over last few years. It is expected that OMC is on its path to cross 20 million tonnes per annum iron ore production by next year.

Steel and mines minister Prafulla Kumar Mallik said the PSU is committed to realising the Chief Minister's vision to make it one of the most efficient and responsible corporate organisations.

OMC managing director Vineel

Krishna put out the details of the new initiatives of OMC while secretary to Chief Minister (5T) VK Pandian moderated the programme.

With the launch of CIMS, OMC customers will now get access to a separate dashboard for registration, evaluating order and stocks, get weekly dispatch report, order status, region wise sales, grievance status and mineral wise dispatch history.

The system is integrated with the iSMS of the state government, e-auction platform of MSTC, SAP of OMC to ensure a seamless integration for end-to-end customer service.

32nd Konark Festival gets off to colourful start



Dancers of Orissa Dance Academy perform Odissi on the inaugural day of Konark Festival

OP PHOTO

POST NEWS NETWORK

Konark, Dec 1: The inaugural performances at the 32nd Konark Festival, Tuesday exhibited the best of India's ancient cultural arts. The highly popular festival was inaugurated through a virtual address.

in post lockdown scenario.

Prior to the performances, the inauguration began with the traditional lamp-lighting ceremony. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik declared the festival open through a virtual address.

"The beautiful open-air auditor-

ium at Konark witnessed several prolific performances with the grand Konark Sun temple at the backdrop. This land is aptly called Utkala, given the synergy it witnessed among India's classical dances including Odissi, Bharatanatyam, Manipuri,

The opening performance was a series of Odissi dances performed by a troupe of Orissa Dance Academy under the guidance of by renowned Odissi Guru Aruna Mohanty

Kathakali, Kathak, Kuchipudi and Sattriya. This celebration has been made possible by the untiring and united efforts of Government of Odisha which has courageously tackled every challenge posed by the pandemic. It is our firm belief that the show must go on. It is this spirit that fuels our zeal for good governance and preservation of Odisha's rich cultural treasures", said Patnaik.

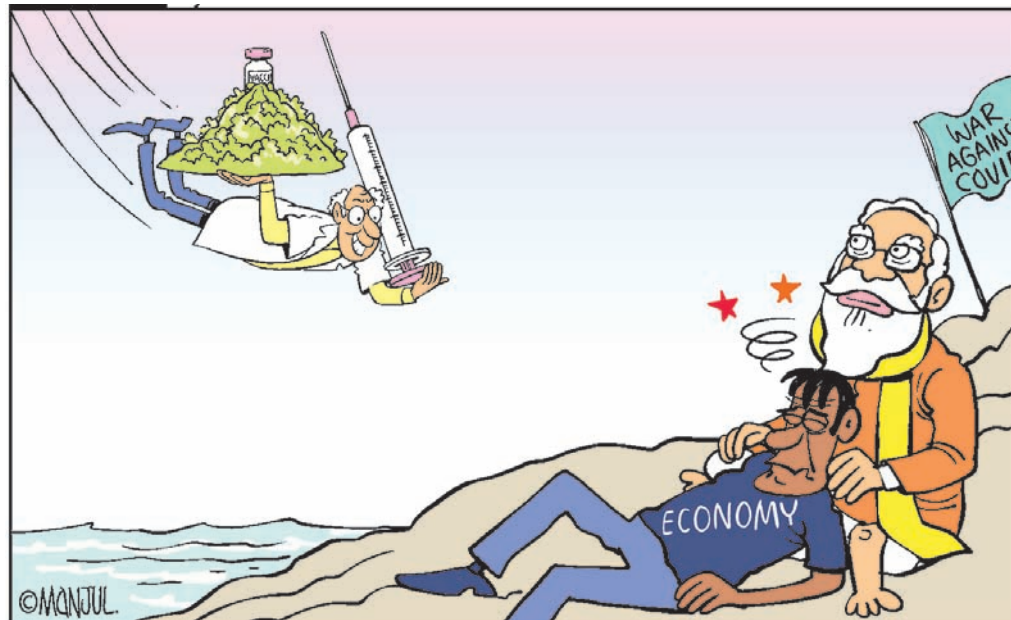
The opening performance was a series of Odissi dances performed by a troupe of Orissa Dance Academy under the guidance of by renowned Odissi Guru Aruna Mohanty. The Odissi performance, while generally performed by danseuses, also comprises items

denoting mythological stories involving male characters, which are choreographed accordingly.

The second set of performances in Bharatanatyam was by a troupe from Sridevi Nrithyalaya, Chennai - led by exponent Sheela Unnikrishnan. Being a predominantly solo dance, Bharatanatyam leans heavily on the abhinaya or mime aspect of dance - the nritya, where the dancer expresses the sahitya through movement and mime. Shabdham follows the jatiswaram in a Bharatanatyam dance performance. The accompanying song is generally in adoration of the Supreme Being. After the shabdham, the dancer performs the varnam. The varnam which is the most important composition of the Bharatanatyam repertoire encompasses both nritya and nritya and epitomises the essence of this classical dance form.

The various acts constituting both dances represented mythological stories of morality, romance, and historical linkages with pilgrimage. The dancers and groups, including the vocalists and musicians, were felicitated on stage for their mesmerising performances.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



DGP reviews CCTV ops at police stations

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Dec 1: Director General of Police (DGP) Abhay, Tuesday, reviewed a host of issues, including the functionality of CCTVs at various police stations across the state, through a videoconference with senior officials.

The top cop also reviewed the

resumption of 'Mo Sarkar' telephonic feedback system, preventing illegality or irregularity during arrest or detention (in custody) and examination for promotion of police personnel to the rank of ASI. This apart, he took stock of the out-of-the-turn promotion, premature retirement and incentive for good work to the police officials.

Moreover, Abhay reviewed the quality of investigation, progress in adoption of SR Module and crime review through CCTNS.

Among other senior officials, DIGs, IGs and ADGP (Railways) attended the virtual meet, according to a statement issued by the Odisha Police headquarters, Tuesday.

Early closure of House biz riles BJP

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: The state unit of Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) Tuesday attacked the state government over the early adjournment of the Odisha Assembly and accused the government of depriving the legitimate rights of the legislators.

Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Pradipta Naik Tuesday talked to reporters and lambasted the government for having less number of working days of the Assembly.

"Under the Naveen Patnaik government, the Odisha Assembly has not been working as per norms. It has been mandated to function three times a year. However, the duration of such sessions has been reduced to almost half. The Assembly should function for 60 days a year but the session continued for 30 days only," Naik said.

He also added, "The legitimate rights of Odisha MLAs to raise their concerns before the Assembly have been compromised by the actions of the Odisha government. It sat for 13 days during the Budget Session, seven days in Monsoon Session and 10 days during the Winter Session. The Assembly has not covered even 50 per cent of the scheduled days. This is unconstitutional. The rights of MLAs to discuss issues are now gone."

He said that whenever the state government comes under scanner for some adverse acts and things go



The legitimate rights of Odisha MLAs to raise their concerns before the Assembly have been compromised by the actions of the Odisha government

PRADIPTA NAIK | LEADER OF OPPOSITION

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Cycle rally in City on World AIDS Day

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: World AIDS Day was observed by city based schools and civil society organisations (CSOs) in their own ways. ODM Public school in association with Rotary Charitable Trust organised a cycle rally to create awareness about the World AIDS day. The rally was inaugurated by ODM School Chairman-cum-Principal Satyabrata Minaketan and Police ADG Lalit Das.

The campaign titled 'Say no to AIDS, Support those with AIDS'. On the occasion, Minaketan said that the young generation needs to understand about the disease and must have knowledge about it so that they can keep themselves at bay from the dreaded virus and lead a healthy life.

Similarly, an awareness rally was organised near Master Canteen by Kar Foundation in which actor Chandan Kar participated.

EVICTED DRIVE



Civic officials demolish illegal structures at Aiginia in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

State registers record low daily nCoV cases

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: State's Covid-19 caseload mounted to 3,19,103 Tuesday as 378 more people tested positive for the disease, while five fresh fatalities pushed Odisha's coronavirus death toll to 1,744, a senior Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department official said.

As many as 219 new cases were reported in quarantine centres, while 159 infections were detected during contact tracing, said the official.

Angul district reported the highest number of new cases at 38, followed by Khurda 37 and Mayurbhanj 34, the official said.

Puri district registered three fresh fatalities while Khurda and Jagatsinghpur districts witnessed one death each, the H&FW department official said, adding that as many as 53 Covid-19 patients have so far died of comorbidities.

The state's positivity rate stands at 5.37 per cent.

Odisha has so far tested over 59.4

IIT-Bhub study confirms effectiveness of social distancing, face mask

Highlighting the importance of social distancing to contain the spread of Covid-19, a new study at IIT-Bhubaneswar has found that small droplets released during a sneeze can travel up to 25 feet without protective measures like a face mask and tiny particles can also escape through such gears.

The study said protective measures like face mask and face shield effectively reduce the leakage and reach of the sneeze within 1ft-3ft. However, they do not completely stop the leakage of smaller droplets, it said. Hence, social distancing is equally important. The study recommends using the elbow or hand to prevent droplets leakage even after wearing a mask during coughing and sneezing. IIT-Bhubaneswar said in a statement.

Noting that controlling the virus from spreading has been a major challenge, it said the study was conducted on the efficacy of various non-standard and standard face masks under the act of sneezing.

The study, conducted by Dr Venugopal Arumuru, Assistant Professor, School of Mechanical Science (SMS), and his team, confirmed that without protective measures like a face mask, the smaller droplets expelled during a sneeze can travel up to 25ft in a stagnant environment. It confirms and also recommends a social distancing of 6ft from all ori-



entiations to prevent transmission of Covid-19.

"In the Covid-19 scenario, the present study will improve the understanding of smaller droplets/particles dynamics in turbulent flows, which causes transmission of the virus. These visualisation results will bring awareness to wear a mask and maintain social distancing for the general public," it said.

Prof RV Raja Kumar, Director, IIT-Bhubaneswar, said the faculty and students groups of the institute have worked tirelessly during the Covid-19 pandemic by coming up with technology development and research studies of high societal relevance.

Congratulating the team for conducting such focused studies on present societal relevance, Prof Raja Kumar said that the current study is a step in this direction.

lakh samples for Covid-19, including 36,331 Monday, the official

pointed out. Meanwhile, another 669 Covid patients recovered in

Odisha, taking the total recoveries in the coastal state to 3,12,734.

Justice BK Patel assumes charge as OHRC chairperson

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: Justice Bijoy Krishna Patel Tuesday took the charge as the Chairperson of Odisha Human Rights Commission (OHRC) here.

Justice Patel has replaced Justice Bimala Prasad Das, who retired from the post November, 14 2020.



After joining the office, Patel told media persons that OHRC will take all the possible steps to safeguard human rights of citizens. The commission will also suo moto take notice of the sensitive cases and visit to the spot for enquiry. Patel was the judge of Orissa High Court from January 17, 2008 to January 23, 2015. Earlier, he served as Principal Secretary to Government of Odisha, Law Department between May 2, 2007 and January 16, 2008.

Bijoy was appointed as the Chairperson of OHRC November 26, after Governor Ganeshi Lal accorded seal of approval to the recommendation made by a committee headed by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I, Nilachala Tripathy, S/o. Basudev Tripathy, aged about 53 years, purchased a property from Anil Kumar Narula vide Regd. Sale Deed No. 11131102221, Dt.22.02.2011 under Mouza: Kalarahanga and handed over his Sale Deed No. 79, Dt.12.12.1994 in original and RoR in respect of Khata No. 725/795. Unfortunetly I have lost it at time of preparing Xerox copies at Laxmisagar Square. In spite of my best effort, I unable to trace out both documents I have not created any charge, mortgage, lien with any financial institutions. Now I am going to sell the property and if any unlawful act bond, I will be in criminal proceeding.

B_SCL signs MoU to revive water bodies of Temple City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited (BSCL), Tuesday, signed a MoU with Nagpur-based National Environment Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) for its technical support to revive water bodies and restore eco-sensitive areas of capital city.

Signed under City Investments to Innovate, Integrate and Sustain (CITIIS) programme, the MoU will help BSCL in system designing and modeling of water-related projects under the CITIIS.

Under the MoU, NEERI will extend technical expertise towards the management of drain water and will help create a Waste Water Park and Urban Agriculture projects.

Speaking on the occasion, BSCL CEO Prem Chandra Chaudhary said "NEERI's association will be



a great asset for the CITIIS Project as it will be responsible for all environmental, solid waste, water and sanitation related technical support including preparation of the overall masterplan and concept plan/zoning plan. It will also review the work produced by BSCL team and provide technical advice/feedback for similar best practices across the globe."

It can be mentioned here that under the CITIIS Programme, the Temple City through its Bhubaneswar-Active (B-Active) proposal has proposed to enhance the quality of Public Open Spaces for which it was awarded in February last year from among 67 Indian Smart Cities.

B-Active proposal will receive a grant of nearly Rs 80 crore in three-year time of its implementation.

The B-Active project focuses on demonstrating improvement of five major city components i.e. Streets, Water, Parks and Open Spaces, Sports and Playgrounds and Heritage.

Under the component Water in B-Active proposal from the city the city will improve the natural Drainage Channels No. 7 and 10 and revive heritage water tanks in the Old Town area.

DEMO OVER PARI'S DEATH



Police personnel take ABVP activists into custody as the latter demonstrate in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday, demanding resignation of Minister Arun Sahoo over death of a 5-year-old girl in Nayagarh

City driver arrested over blackmailing woman

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: The Commissionerate Police Tuesday arrested a person for allegedly blackmailing a woman by issuing threats to share her obscene photos on social media platforms.

The accused has been identified as Atanu Priyadarshi Senapati, 23, of Mahatab Road under Shri lingaraj police station.

According to the sources, the victim's husband, who has two cabs, employed the accused as a driver few years ago. Senapati allegedly took some

objectionable videos of the victim lady before leaving the job.

Later, he started asking for money and sexual favours from the victim by threatening her to make public the pictures. Senapati used to send the pictures to mobile number of a relative of the victim's husband.

Subsequently, she Monday lodged a complaint with Airport police station seeking help in this regard. Police later arrested the accused by registering a case (252/20) in this regard. The accused was sent to judicial custody Tuesday.

Online boat sailing ceremony in London

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: Odia Cultural Association of London hosted the first-ever 'Web Boat Sailing' (Kartik Purnima) celebrations in UK's capital.

Organised in collaboration with UK's Jagannath Temple Trust, the grand online ceremony was attended by the Odia diaspora across the globe. Speaker of Odisha Assembly Surjya Narayan Patro inaugurated the glittering festival by lighting the traditional lamp.

Addressing the virtual gathering, Chief Guest Patro narrated the rich tradition of boat sailing and Kartika Purnima in Odisha. He appealed to the Odia community of London to be the fame and fortune bearers for their mother state like

SCHOOL MERGER FLYED



NSUI activists demonstrate near Cuttack RDC (Central division) office demanding roll back of school merger decision by the state government, Tuesday

Robbers' gang busted in Cuttack, 3 arrested

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Dec 1: The Chauhaganj police here busted a robbers' gang and arrested three dacoits from an abandoned house near Nayabazar High School, Tuesday. The arrested dacoits have been identified as Dillip Bhoi, 30, Harihar Behera, 22, and Badal Kumar Sahoo, 23.

Police recovered gold and silver ornaments and Rs 5.89 lakh from them. Also a country-made pistol, ammunition, knife, two mobile phones and a Honda Aviator scooter were seized from their possession.

Police said the gang was planning to commit dacoity in Nayabazar area. They also said that other members of the gang managed to flee the spot. However, police are confident that on interrogation of those arrested, they would be able to locate the other criminals.

Sources said that the gang is involved in several cases of loot and burglary in Odisha and other states. Police said efforts are on to find out who the gang members were in contact with in other states.

WORLD AIDS DAY Relief for sex workers sought

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: World AIDS Day is an occasion for people to come together and strive for the eradication and management of the deadly disease. However, one section of the society which is marginalised in this regard is that of sex workers.

As per information, sex workers are 13 times more at risk of HIV compared with the general population, due to an increased likelihood of being economically vulnerable, unable to negotiate consistent condom use, and experiencing violence, criminalisation and marginalisation.

On the occasion of World AIDS Day, Odisha Patita Udhara Samiti organised a campaign to preserve the rights of sex workers who are always left behind. They were given masks, sanitizer and other relief material. Abaharani Choudhury, Secretary, Odisha Patita Udhara Samiti, said, "Today, we brought around 50 active sex workers from the city and gave them masks and sanitizer. We also created awareness on the Covid 19 situation and AIDS and how they can be safe during this time."

She said that the government had forgotten about them during the pandemic. We are in contact with more than 500 sex workers in capital city and many of them are from places such as Phulbani, Rayagada, Berhampur, Ganjam, Cuttack, Titilagarh, Sambalpur and other states such as West Bengal.

"According to Rule 7 (B) of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 they can do their business beyond 200m of inhabitants or public religious worship, educational institution, hostel, hospital, nursing home or such other public place of any kind. During this pandemic, they did not receive any help."

Sex workers in the city have lost their regular income due to the pandemic. Recently, the Odisha Human Rights Commission (OHRC) directed the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) commissioner to provide ration and other help to sex workers in Bhubaneswar after a petition filed by Namrata Chadha, a women rights activist and chairperson of non-profit Mahila Adhikar Abhiyan.

Parida dies in road mishap

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: Srikanta Parida, son of late Bhagwan Parida, a resident of Maidipur (Nahana) village in Jagatsinghpur died in a road mishap November 30.

Parida met with the accident while he was on the way to nearby Gopalpur haat in the evening. He fell down when a stray dog came in front of his bike suddenly.

Parida was rushed to Jagatsinghpur Hospital in a critical condition. However, doctors declared him dead-on-arrival.

Parida was working in Volvo Company in Bangalore and was known for his helpful nature in Maidipur-Gopalpur area. Parida's



File photo of Srikanta Parida death cast a pall of gloom in Gopalpur panchayat. Many locals condoned Parida's death and prayed for the eternal peace to the departed soul.

SAI Int'l School bags award

Bhubaneswar: In yet another feather in its cap, SAI International School has been conferred with the prestigious 'School of the Year Award 2020' under the 'K 12 school' category by renowned magazine Business World. SAI International Residential School, on the other hand, bagged the 'Leading Residential School in India Award 2020' under 'Residential Schools' category by the leading Indian business magazine. The international school was shortlisted for excelling in parameters like growth in academic excellence, sports, learning outcomes, teachers' training, parents and community perception and community outreach.

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TWO ELEPHANTS FOUND DEAD

POST NEWS NETWORK

Satamail/Shergad, Dec 1: Two elephants were killed in separate incidents in Dhenkanal and Ganjam districts, Tuesday. In the first incident, a male elephant without tusk aged about 37 years got electrocuted after getting ensnared in live wires laid for poaching wild animals near Benipatthar village under Hindol forest limits in Dhenkanal district.

A wild boar was also found lying dead near it. The incident occurred when the animal tried to stray into a farmland to eat paddy crops. On being informed, DFO Prakash Chand Gogoni, Wildlife PCCF Harishankar Upadhaya, RCCF Pradipraj Karate and Hindol ranger Lalit Kumar Rath rushed to the spot and conducted a probe into the animal's death. The accused will be arrested soon, the ranger said.

In the second incident, a three-month-old male elephant calf was found dead in a mud puddle near paddy field of Lauguda and Khirida under Shergad block and Aska Forest Range in Ganjam district, Tuesday. The incident occurred when the calf, part of a 13-member herd, was trying to cross a nullah after eating paddy crops on the farmlands near the Lauguda village. The rest of the members of the herd tried to pull it away from the mud puddle but in vain.

1 killed, 1 critical in bomb explosion

Khallikote: A youth got killed and another on pillion was rendered critical following explosion of a bomb that they were allegedly carrying on a motorcycle at Nirmaljar Square under Khallikote police limits in Ganjam district, Tuesday. The deceased was identified as Kalia Moharana, 22, alias Mantu and the injured pillion rider as Silu Pradhan, 19, of Nua Fasula under the Khallikote civic body. Pradhan was administered primary treatment at Khallikote hospital and later shifted to MKCG Medical College and Hospital as his condition remained critical. Reports said that the two youths riding a motorcycle were on their way towards Mathura when hit a roadside mandap and thrown off their vehicle. A bomb carried by Pradhan exploded as soon as they fell on the ground. It was unclear where the two youth were going carrying the bomb on the motorcycle.

HIV stings Bolangir hard; migrants worst-affected

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, Dec 1: Notwithstanding a host of prevention and awareness measures, the scourge of AIDS has not been brought under control in Bolangir district, which is known for labour migration in Western Odisha, a report said. As cases of HIV infection keep on rising in the district, most of the infections are detected among migrants, the report added.

According to the report, from 2003 till date, the district has recorded 1,572 HIV infection cases. This was stated by District AIDS Prevention Control Unit (DAPCU). Its data says 1,473 HIV cases were detected in 2019. In the current year till October, 99 new cases have been detected in the district.

Among the infected are 753 males, 281 females and 93 children. Of them, 117 are pregnant women. Till date, 260 patients have died in the district of AIDS. Around 117 migrant labourers were infected with the deadly virus.

In Bolangir block, there are 226 AIDS patients while the municipality has 165 cases. Titlagarh block has recorded 178 cases and the municipality has 135 cases. Patnagarh block has reported 117 infections and Patnagarh NAC has recorded 13. In Turekela block, 85 people are



Cases of HIV are rising in the district owing to unsafe sex. The district has been bracketed in 'A' category as per National AIDS Control Organisation on the basis of prevalence

RAJENDRA MOHARANA | DPM, DISTRICT AIDS PREVENTION CONTROL UNIT

infected with HIV while the number of infections in Kantabanji NAC is 45.

The number of HIV positive cases in Bangemunda is 80; 81 in Saintala; 68 in Muribahal; 63 in Loisingha, 81 in Puintala, 50 in Deogaon; 40 in Khaprakhol; 47 in Belapada; 19 each in Agalpur and Gudbhela block.

Though the state and Central governments have taken a host of steps to rein in the spread of AIDS

in the district, the cases of infection have not been checked as expected, it was alleged.

HIV patients have alleged that they have been facing a lot of problem in availing treatment and medicines due to pandemic restrictions.

However, DPM of District AIDS Prevention Control Unit (DAPCU), Rajendra Moharana dismissed the allegation, asserting that medicine administrations and pension disbursements to HIV patients were carried on as usual even during the lockdown.

Free railway passes were issued to 265 HIV infected people and bus passes to 96, he added.

Moharana warned that cases of HIV infection are rising in the district owing to unsafe sex while the district has been bracketed in 'A' category as per National AIDS Control Organisation on the basis of prevalence.

Jajpur district is logging decline

JAJPUR: The district has been witnessing a decline in the number of AIDS patients with only 633 patients identified and 104 deaths registered during the last 17 years, a report said.

The matter came to fore as the chief district medical officer (CDMO) Sudhansu Sekhar Bala flagged off an awareness vehicle from the premises of the district headquarters hospital here on the occasion of World AIDS Day, Tuesday. The CDMO presided in an awareness meeting before the flagging off of the vehicle.

According to reports, the steady decline in the number of AIDS patients is attributed to rising awareness level among the people about the disease. The establishment of testing facilities in 2003 has helped in identifying AIDS patient. Since then, 633 persons (373 males and 260 females) were found HIV positive while 104 persons (70 males and 34 females) died during the period. This year two persons have died so far.



Reports said 44 persons in 2017, 39 in 2018, 35 in 2019 and 16 till November 2020 have tested positive for the virus. Among them, the maximum number of patients lives in Jajpur, Binjharpur, Bari and Dasarathpur blocks.

Traders & middlemen aren't letting paddy produce reach mandis



Aggrieved farmers say that the traders and middlemen are procuring their harvest at less than MSP

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargarh, Dec 1: Three weeks have passed since paddy procurement was started in Bargarh district, but the sales have not yet picked up pace, a report said. Only 31 per cent of the procurement target has been achieved while farmers alleged that a major portion of the paddy directly goes to the millers through traders and middlemen. Paddy is purchased for much less than the MSP, farmers alleged.

However, district civil supplies officer Rajanikant Das asserted that the paddy procurement is being carried out smoothly in the district. Reports said procurement has been started since November 9.

The Civil Supplies department is procuring paddy through PACs at the mandis under Attabira, Godabhaba and Padmapur RMCs. Around 122 millers have been roped in the process. The target is

to procure 44.75 lakh quintals of paddy from across the district.

As for procurement, Ekadasia Sahu, a farmer of Kalapani, said, "I have harvested paddy since November 5. By the time mandis had opened, I did not receive token. It got delayed, but I sold off the paddy."

Farmer leader Rabuindra Bisi of Attabira said that except the mandis at Attabira and Godabhaba, paddy is not being brought to other mandis.

"Traders in those areas are directly buying paddy from farmers at low price and supplying them to rice mills. But, false entry of the procurement is made into official records at those mandis," he alleged.

Amid such allegation, Ramesh Mohapatra of Jay Kishan Andolan pointed out that the Civil Supplies department is not regularly checking the stocks of the millers. Absence of monitoring has provided a chance to millers to take advantage of the situation.

"Paddy is purchased from outside at low price and is stocked at mills. There is a need for a Vigilance investigation into such fraud, which are promoted in a systematic manner," he added.

Wildlife trafficking racket busted, pangolin rescued

WHILE TWO SMUGGLERS WERE NABBED, TWO OTHERS MANAGED TO FLEE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, Dec 1: Amidst increasing cases of poaching, tiger and deer skin smuggling and wildlife trafficking, Dhenkanal forest department busted a wildlife trafficking racket, rescued a pangolin and arrested two smugglers for their involvement, Tuesday.

Fast disappearing pangolin, also known as scaly anteater, is coveted for its scales. In order to save this species from extinction, it has been kept under Schedule I species in the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.



The arrested smugglers and the rescued pangolin

The species is also considered as endangered under the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN).

Acting on a tip-off that a pangolin captured in Dhenkanal district had reached Cuttack and a deal was being finalised, the forest officials conducted a raid in Shankarpur area in Cuttack town and arrested the duo. However, two others managed to show them clean pairs of shoes.

The accused have been identified as Ghanashyama Behera (21), a resident of Gadahaladia village and Jitendra Pradhan (45) of Badatola village under Jatni police limits in Khurda district.

Since allegations of pangolin

smuggling and poaching have recently increased in Kapilas reserve forest, an 18-member team has been formed under the supervision of the divisional forest officer (DFO) Prakash Chand Gogini. The same team had conducted the raid in Cuttack.

During interrogation, the accused revealed that they were to sell the animal for Rs 40 lakh. DFO Goieni said their efforts are on to trace out other members in the racket. "Help of Odisha Crime Branch and Khurda DFO will be sought in this regard," he added.

Organic farming turns a cash cow for this Mayurbhanj lady

MALAKMANI HAS BEEN HARVESTING ABOUT 40 QUINTALS OF BASMATI RICE AND IS CLOCKING AN ANNUAL PROFIT OF ₹50,000 FOR THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS



POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Dec 1: If you visit Kisanhadi village under Balidiha panchayat in Shamakhunta block of Mayurbhanj district, you will be greeted with a ubiquitous aroma.

By the time you identify the aroma with Basmati rice, you must have also known one Malakmani Singh—a female farmer whose produce of labour is spreading the aroma.

Malakmani has been harvesting about 40 quintals of Basmati rice a year and earning Rs50,000 yearly for the last couple of years.

Ask her how she has scripted the success story and she narrates: "As a child, I remember having an inclination towards farming. As luck would have it, I was married into a farmer's family. My husband would grow paddy and green gram and vegetables in Rabi season on seven-eight acres of land. Once it came to my mind why not we start growing crops organically. My family supported me. I sought advice from the Agriculture department officers and hit the field."

Using organic manure and pesticides, she started growing green gram. Assistant agriculture officer Sudhanshu Panda provided seeds, organic manure and pesticides to her as per the government guidelines.

Despite no training at all, she reaped a good harvest in the first year itself. Then she was still using chemical fertiliser in paddy fields. As her interest in farming grew, she consulted Kanak Bioscience and Research Private Limited's managing director Deepak Sahu and assistant agri-

My husband would grow paddy, green gram and vegetables in Rabi season on seven-eight acres of land. Once it came to my mind why not we start growing crops organically. My family supported me. I sought advice from the Agriculture department officers and hit the field

MALAKMANI SINGH

culture officer Panda.

"They had advised me to try my luck in Basmati rice without using any chemical fertiliser. I was a little bit apprehensive regarding the yield as I had been growing paddy using chemical fertiliser. I took up the challenge," a visibly happy and confident Singh said.

Following the recommendation by the experts, Malakmani prepared organic manure from cow dung and pesticide from bell fruit, basil, neem and applying them, she reaped a good harvest of Basmati rice. As of now, she is imparting training to others in her locality on how to prepare organic manure and pesticide. She says she would achieve more success if training is provided to her.

Now, others in the locality are taking a leaf out of her book to become successful organic farmers.

Notably, the introduction of chemicals in farming got many delirious at the sight of what they could accomplish. Yields exploded. At the start, the soil was healthy. Any damage brought about by chemical fertilisers was hardly noticeable. Pests had not developed resistance to the chemicals. The technology spread across the world as it was considered the revolution in agriculture. Flash forward to today, and many people are marveling at organic farming again. This is after learn-

ing that conventional farming methods come with a host of problems including health-related diseases like cancer, pollution, degradation of soil and water, and impact on domestic animals.

Organic farming is a technique, which involves the cultivation of plants and rearing of animals in natural ways. This process involves the use of biological materials, avoiding synthetic substances to maintain soil fertility and ecological balance thereby minimising pollution and wastage.

TAPARIA advertisement: GO FOR "TAPARIA" TOOLS AND EXPERIENCE POWER IN YOUR HANDS EVERY INDIVIDUAL NEEDS HAND TOOLS. "TAPARIA" TOOLS LAST A LIFE TIME. HAND TOOLS ARE AN EXTENSION OF HUMAN HAND.

Corrigendum Notice: OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, KHORDHA. H&UD Department, Govt. of Odisha, Khordha - 752055. No. 3554 Date: 27.11.2020

NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, ASKA e-Procurement Notice

BID REFERENCE No. ASKA NAC/PUBLIC WORKS/02/2020-21 TENDER CALL NOTICE No. 2423/NAC/2020-21, Dated: 01.12.2020 TENDER ID: 2020_ORULB_31648

Bid documents consisting of specification, the schedule of quantities and the set of terms & conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in the Govt. website i.e. www.tendersorissa.gov.in.

- 1. Nature of Work : Civil construction works as mentioned in website
- 2. No. of Works : 08 Nos.
- 3. Bid Value : Varies from Rs.5.68 lakhs to Rs.17.85 lakhs
- 4. Period of Completion : 3 Months
- 5. Date and time of availability of the bid documents in the portal from : Dt.02.12.2020 at 10.00 A.M. to 14.12.2020 at 5.00 P.M.
- 6. Last date/time for receipt of bid in the portal : Dt.14.12.2020 at 5.00 P.M.
- 7. Last date & time of receiving of documents relating of tender Offline : 16.12.2020 before 5.00 P.M. through Speed Post
- 8. Bids received online shall be opened on : Dt.17.12.2020 after 11.00 A.M. onwards
- 9. Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid : Executive Officer, N.A.C., Aska (GM)
- 10. Further details can be seen from the procurement portal: www.tendersorissa.gov.in.

Sd./- Executive Officer, N.A.C., Aska

WORKS DEPARTMENT No. B-476 OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MAYURBHANJ (R&B) DIVISION, BARIPADA. Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice Bid Identification No. E.E.-15/2020-21

Government of Odisha No. B-473 "e" Procurement Notice OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, KORAPUT (R&B) DIVISION, KORAPUT. Bid Identification No. E.E. (R&B) KPT - 10/2020-21

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA O/o. THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, HEAD WORKS DIVISION, SAMAL. A/P.O.: Samal Barrage Township, Dist.: Angul (Odisha), PIN - 759037. Phone: 06760-266315, E-mail ID: ee.hwd.samal@gmail.com

In order to see, you have to stop being in the middle of the picture.
SRI AUROBINDO



Religion In Love

The fears about the consequences of the so-called love jihad ordinance and moves by three other BJP-ruled states to enact a legislation with similar intent have turned out to be not misplaced the day after the Uttar Pradesh government promulgated the Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance, 2020 after getting the nod from Governor Anandiben Patel. It was only natural that the Governor, a former chief minister of the BJP-government of Gujarat, would give her clearance without any delay. What is interesting is the speed with which the ordinance was implemented within 24 hours after its promulgation. Immediately thereafter, the UP police registered its first case under the new law. The case has been filed against a 22-year-old college student, Uvaish Ahmed, on Saturday, 28 November, under Section 3/5 of the Prohibition of Unlawful Religious Conversion Act along with Sections 504 (breach of peace) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the IPC. The case was registered at the Deoria police station in Bareilly district against Ahmed for forcibly trying to convert a 20-year-old Hindu girl for nikaah (marriage). Following the predictable pattern of abuse of the law, Tikaram, father of the girl who is a resident of Bareilly district, filed the case. The accused is stated to have gone absconding.

The ordinance, stated to be a prelude to a Bill to be brought by the UP government, reflects regressive, medieval mindset as it empowers the law enforcing agencies to pry into private lives and beliefs of citizens and hound them out for exercising their decision to choose their life partners. What is galling is that the Yogi Adityanath government went ahead with its Hindootva agenda in the teeth of an Allahabad High Court ruling overturning another HC judgement that questioned a 'conversion just for marriage.' In fact, the UP government used the fig leaf of 'that flawed judgement, declared by the Allahabad HC as bad in law, to buttress its argument in favour of the ordinance.

Love jihad is a term used by the BJP and religious thinkers and groups aligned with it to spin the theory that Moslem men lure Hindu women, by hook or by crook, into marrying them and converting to Islam. The claim that this is an organised racket seems far-fetched and unfeasible. Successive probes have failed to find any evidence that such a conspiracy exists and the Home ministry under the Modi-government has admitted that the term has no credible definition. Moreover, there are existing laws that deal with offences such as forced conversion or marriage effected under false pretences or duress. The short-term need for the ordinance is, of course, the desperation of the UP government to deflect national attention from the farmers' unrest, terrible economic situation and incidents such as the Hathras gangrape that have received international traction. Instead of doing soul-searching and taking corrective steps, the government seeks to point the spotlight elsewhere. The truth is that this administrative fiat could be considered akin to the clan councils or khap panchayat system which can't claim the right to sit in judgement over personal choice of a life partner or a faith in any civilized society.

The long-term objective of the ordinance and the legislation three other BJP-ruled states - MP, Haryana and Karnataka - are planning to make is the mobilisation of Hindu majority votes by tapping anti-Moslem sentiments and the male paranoia about women asserting their freedom to choose their life partners and exercising their religious preferences. This is part of a larger agenda to consolidate vote banks by the BJP which is projecting itself as the only political outfit that openly and boldly talks about Hindu belief and sentiments. The bias of the government was revealed in the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the aggressive campaign on conducting the National Register of Citizens (NRC). These have also triggered hostile international reactions as the CAA and NRC are perceived to be geared to reducing minorities into second class citizens to garner majority votes. This government's silence on the ordinance shows the BJP is only testing waters.

Ideas of 'purity of blood' are intrinsically linked to ideologies that seek to establish the supremacy of one community over another. The Nuremberg laws of the 1930s were framed casting sinister aspersions over the citizenship of Jews and intermarriage between 'Aryan' people and Jews. The love jihad ordinance, though carefully drafted to dodge legal challenge, may not stand legal scrutiny for the simple reason that it violates the Constitutional right to profess one's religious freedom and choose one's life partner. What is being tried by male chauvinists through criminal acts like 'honour-killing' now gets the legal cover from the UP government ordinance. This kind of administrative adventurism is probably being experimented in with a view to divert attention from the BJP-led Union government's failure to check the country from plunging into an economic crisis of unprecedented magnitude due to its inept handling and plethora of promises that may prove impossible to fulfill.

WISDOM CORNER

- Great men are like eagles, and build their nest on some lofty solitude. **ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER**
- Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children. **SITTING BULL**
- Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?' **MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.**

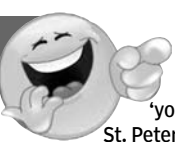
WORDSWORTH

Virescent

When it first appeared in the language, virescent was a poetic way of describing a greenish hue (it was taken directly from the Latin verb virescere, to become green, itself from virere, to be green). "Past the creamy reef the purple ocean glittered in the nooning sun, while the motionless waters of the lagoon were turquoise and bice near by and virescent in the distance." -- Mystic Isles of the South Seas, by Fredrick O'Brien, 1921. Bice is a dated term for a medium blue or blue-green copper-based pigment. Like so many colour words its hue has changed over time — when it came into English seven centuries ago, it meant a dark or brownish grey, from Old French bis, dark grey. The adjective has been used for a deathly hue: "Between them stood a table covered with green baize, which, reflecting upwards a band of sunlight shining across the chamber, flung upon his already white features the virescent hues of death." -- The Hand of Ethelberta, by Thomas Hardy, 1876. Virescent has since changed its sense, in particular among plant scientists. It refers to the normal green of chlorophyll that has been shifted towards yellow for some reason, often because of disease. Virescent mutants lack chlorophyll in their young leaves, which look yellowish in consequence. Conversely and confusingly, the related noun virecence can mean an abnormal development of a green colour in parts of a plant that normally aren't green. A few writers have used virescent where others would prefer verdant, meaning the rich green of flourishing plant life, which derives from a related Latin word: "County Kilkenny is a beautiful grassy wonderland of virecent pastures, purling waterways, winding roads and mossy stone walls." -- Ireland, by Fionn Davenport et al, 2006.

LOL

AT HEAVEN'S GATE
Three people die -- a doctor, a school teacher and the head of a large health maintenance organisation (HMO). When met at the pearly gates by St. Peter he asks the doctor 'what did you do on Earth?' The doctor replied: 'I healed the sick and if they could not pay I would do it for free.' St. Peter told the Doctor,



'You may go in.'
St. Peter then asked the teacher what she did, she replied, 'I taught educationally challenged children.' St. Peter then told her 'you may go in.'
St. Peter asked the third person, 'what did you do?' The man hung his head and replied, 'I ran a large HMO.' St. Peter replied, 'you may go in, but you can only stay three days.'

FOCUS EUROPE

GREEN OPPORTUNITY



Ann Mettler & Cyril Garcia

WE KNOW THAT ACHIEVING A LOW-CARBON FUTURE DEMANDS INNOVATION. IDENTIFYING THESE PROJECTS NOW LAYS DOWN THE LATEST MARKER ON OUR PATH TO NET-ZERO EMISSIONS BY 2050, AND TO ESTABLISHING EUROPE AS THE GLOBAL LEADER IN THE CLIMATE TECHNOLOGY MARKETS THAT THE WORLD WILL INCREASINGLY RELY ON

The COVID-19 crisis has presented Europe with a once-in-a-generation opportunity to launch a new era of economic growth. If the private sector and governments across the European Union work together on bold, innovative policies in the near term, they can address not only the current crisis but also foster steady business investment and the creation of good jobs well into the future.

The EU is moving forward with €750 billion (\$888 billion) of new stimulus spending as part of its Next Generation EU initiative, over one-third of which is earmarked for projects related to climate change, including research into low-carbon solutions. As this funding makes its way into the real economy, it will broaden understanding of how climate-related investments can positively affect the communities where we live and the businesses where we work.

To ensure maximum impact, Caggemini Invent recently released "Fit for Net-Zero," a first-of-its-kind economic analysis of the current investment opportunities on offer. Commissioned by Breakthrough Energy, a network of climate-oriented entities and initiatives backed by the philanthropist Bill Gates, the report identifies 55 low-carbon, real-world projects across Europe that are ripe for investment.

Each project is geared toward scaling up new technologies and business models that will help Europe achieve net-zero greenhouse-gas emissions by 2050, and all sit within one of five crucial sectors: energy, industry, buildings, transport, and agriculture. Moreover, each project is currently at a different level of maturity, representing the full spectrum of the innovation cycle, from early-stage demonstration to late-stage deployment, which helps diversify risk. Together, these projects have the potential to reinvent and transform Europe's economy.

According to our report, developing and deploying these projects can create a €12.9 trillion market opportunity, support 12.7 million jobs, and help the EU achieve its ambitious emissions-reduction goals by the middle of this century. To have such an outsize impact,

As the EU recovery money allocated to fight climate change starts flowing into the economy, we must ensure that political and industry leaders at all levels focus on commonsense, coordinated policymaking that promotes and adequately supports low-carbon research and innovation. Developing and scaling up new technologies is hard. More to the point, it takes time, which is a resource that we can no longer spare

each project requires its own mix of private-sector creativity and capital investment, in addition to public funding and an appropriately aligned policy framework from the EU and its 27 member states.

What do these innovative projects look like, and what policies are needed to support them? Consider floating offshore wind. Europe's nearshore shallow seas are already crowded with wind turbines. But until recently, it has been much too expensive to develop wind farms in the deep water where 80 per cent of Europe's offshore wind-generating potential is found. By building 100 large-scale floating wind farms by 2030 in the Baltic and North Seas and in the Atlantic Ocean, we can begin to unlock this vast potential and rapidly scale up renewable energy production in countries like Portugal, Sweden, and Estonia.

On the policy front, programs like Horizon Europe, the EU's primary funding vehicle for research and innovation, can accelerate advances in blade design, and ultimately drive down costs for turbines that don't need to be permanently fixed onto the seabed.

Another promising investment area is in 'Agriculture 4.0.' In Europe's agriculture sector, the rate of uptake of digital technologies currently lags behind what's happening in other major industries, owing to margin constraints on farm equipment and a relative lack of investment capacity.

If farmers, tech companies, universities, and others work together to identify best practices for farming technologies — such as satellite imaging, robotics, and blockchain — they could create a €10 billion market by 2050 that would also help drive down emissions. By bringing agriculture fully into the digital age, we can make the sector more appealing for a younger generation of farmers who want to maximise efficiencies in how we grow our fruits and vegetables, raise our livestock, and manage arable land and forests.

Finally, there are many opportunities in the renovation of public buildings. Schools, hospitals, and other public facilities are vital to any community, but in Europe, they tend to be among the oldest and least energy-efficient forms of infrastructure. All told, buildings

in Europe account for 40 per cent of EU energy consumption.

Aided by new digital-modeling techniques, renovating public buildings across Europe with cutting-edge materials like aerogel insulation and vacuum-glazed windows (which improve insulation while increasing penetration of natural light) could slash carbon dioxide emissions, reduce public energy costs, and support 660,000 local jobs. Policy measures to help increase EU-wide renovation rates to at least 3 per cent annually include the just-announced Renovation Wave, investments in workforce development, and measures to decarbonise the construction industry's value chains.

Even with all their potential, these three investment areas barely scratch the surface of what is possible in Europe. Other projects on our list include mega-factories to manufacture lithium-ion batteries, new forms of urban mobility like shared autonomous vehicles, insect proteins to lower livestock emissions, and 'green hydrogen' to cut emissions at Europe's roughly 500 steel plants.

We know that achieving a low-carbon future demands innovation. Identifying these projects now lays down the latest marker on our path to net-zero emissions by 2050, and to establishing Europe as the global leader in the climate technology markets that the world will increasingly rely on.

As the EU recovery money allocated to fight climate change starts flowing into the economy, we must ensure that political and industry leaders at all levels focus on commonsense, coordinated policymaking that promotes and adequately supports low-carbon research and innovation. Developing and scaling up new technologies is hard. More to the point, it takes time, which is a resource that we can no longer spare.

Ann Mettler, Senior Director for Breakthrough Energy, was head of the European Political Strategy Centre, the in-house think tank of the European Commission. Cyril Garcia, CEO of Caggemini Invent, is a member of the Caggemini Group Executive Board.

© PROJECT SYNDICATE

IN JEST THIS

Benefits of masks go beyond Covid



Melvin Durai

FOR PEOPLE WHO SUFFER FROM SOCIAL ANXIETY, THE MASKS ARE A GODSEND

The coronavirus pandemic has forced many of us to wear masks — mostly in public but sometimes even at home. While some people are wearing masks reluctantly, like they're accommodating a distant uncle temporarily in their homes, others have accepted and embraced masks, making that uncle feel so welcome and comfortable, he's beginning to wonder if he should ever leave.

Masks have become an accessory for many people, just like ties, belts, scarves and handbags. Many women have an assortment of masks in their wardrobes, and some even have a mask drawer. Whether they have just a few masks or a few dozen, they try to match their masks with the rest of their ensemble. And they enjoy giving and receiving compliments on masks.

Roger: "Lovely mask, Rani. Same pattern as your dress!"

Rani: "I love your mask, too. Same pattern as your freckles!"

Whether you've embraced masks or reluctantly wear them, the important thing is that you're doing your part to protect yourself and others.



Unfortunately, there are still many people who refuse to wear masks or cover their faces in other ways. Some do this because they believe that face coverings are ineffective against the virus. Others just want to assert their freedom to do whatever they want. "If I die, I die," they say, forgetting that they are not only putting other people at risk, they're also neglecting to arrange their own funerals.

Scientific studies indicate that wearing a mask reduces your risk of getting or spreading the virus by about 70 per cent. To put that in perspective, wearing a seat belt re-

duces your risk of getting killed in a car accident by 45 per cent, and wearing a seat belt reduces your risk of being injured at a party by 25 per cent (especially if you're a man).

But if the health benefits of wearing a mask aren't convincing enough, you may want to consider all the other positives. One of the biggest benefits is the anonymity a mask gives you, as Alyson Krueger explained in a recent New York Times article entitled "Cases of Mask-taken Identity."

Krueger shared the story of a 20-year-old Los Angeles woman who spotted her ex-boyfriend in a grocery store and started to panic. But the man walked right past her, failing to recognise her because of her mask. What could have been an awkward moment turned into a moment of relief.

Let's face it: there's a long list of people we'd like to avoid in public places, not just ex-boyfriends or ex-girlfriends, but also ex-spouses, ex-bosses, in-laws, and anyone to whom we owe money. There's also a list of people we don't mind running into, as long as we don't have to chat for long, especially when

we're in a hurry. A one-minute encounter won't delay us much, but it's hard to pull away from some people. This is where the mask is vital: it saves you from one-hour conversations in the supermarket aisle. Even if an acquaintance recognises you, you can alter your voice and say, "Sorry, I think you have mask-taken me for someone else."

For people who suffer from social anxiety, the masks are a godsend. They're also a welcome accessory for people who don't like to smile at everyone. People with straight teeth may miss the opportunity to flash their perfect smiles, but many others are relieved that they can hide their facial imperfections.

The masks are a great equaliser: they've made homely people less homely and attractive people less attractive. A typical supermarket is now full of average-looking people, although some have great taste in masks.

In a few months, hopefully, the virus will be under control and we won't need to wear masks for health reasons. But don't be surprised if some people continue to bask in their masks.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Bedtime stories

Sir, In his latest book 'A Promised Land', former US President Barack Obama has said that he has always held a special place for India due to his childhood years spent in Indonesia listening to the epic Hindu tales of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Even in his autobiography 'Wings of Fire', Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam has also stated that his grandmother and mother told him stories of the Ramayana and the life of Prophet Mohammad. It is also proven that bedtime stories gift students many ideas and give them enormous self-confidence. All parents and grandparents should start telling bedtime stories to their children. Even parents should sing lullabies and folk songs to make the children sleep happily. But, nowadays many parents do not tell their children bedtime stories and instead simply give them electronic gadgets. This leads to cruelty and strange behaviour in children. In many cases they maliciously intend to harm others. Scientists are now advocating for bedtime stories for children.

Kamal Lochan Dash, JAJPUR

Trust deficit

Sir, Apropos 'Modi govt authoritarian: Farmers', Orissa Post, December 1, farmers, mainly from northwest India, continued to blockade Delhi for the fifth day in a row. There is a significant trust deficit between the Centre and the farmers' representatives. It is time for wiser counsel to prevail before something snaps. But the government shouldn't back down from the farm legislations it passed in the last Parliament session. The legislations were hardly radical and promise to boost agriculture. Agricultural markets needed to be liberalised. Most states have headed in that direction over the last few years through legislative changes. Therefore, there can be no going back. The discontent has coalesced into one primary demand, some sort of guarantee over the minimum support price (MSP) mechanism. The government has promised that MSP will continue. But it can do more. The biggest challenge confronting Indian agriculture is an increase in risks, both from extreme climatic conditions as well as sharp price fluctuations. MSP is a catchword for stability in income. The Centre should hold talks with farmers and come out with concrete proposals to mitigate their anxieties. Also, farmers will have to recognise that the reality of the laws will not change. At the same time, the government must recognise the depths of farmers' sentiments, reach out to them sensitively, and find a mechanism to assure the farmers that their incomes will be protected.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

SC pulls up Gujarat over hospital fires

The top court took cognizance of the fire tragedy at a private Covid hospital in Rajkot which led to the death of five persons; earlier in August eight people died in fire tragedy at a Covid-19 hospital in Ahmedabad

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 1: The Supreme Court Tuesday pulled up the Gujarat government over 'attempts to suppress facts' in connection with fire tragedies in private Covid hospitals in the state. The top court in the last hearing took cognizance of the fire tragedy in a private Covid hos-

pital in Rajkot which led to the death of five persons.

A bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan and comprising Justices R. Subhash Reddy and M.R. Shah told the Gujarat government counsel, "We have seen your counter. According to you everything is good. So far state hospital is concerned all is well."

Justice Shah pulling up the Gujarat government said, "So far the commission is concerned (to probe the fire tragedy), it has also expired, and also the state government stand is contrary to your own chief electrical engineering officer in connection with the status of wiring in the hospital."

The bench cited the Ahmadabad fire tragedy in a Covid-19 hospital in August, where eight people died. The bench said no attempt should be made to suppress the facts. The



bench asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta to look into the matter and ensure a proper report is filed. The top court has listed the matter for further hearing Thursday. November 27, the Supreme Court

took cognizance of a fire incident in a Rajkot hospital in Gujarat, where five patients died in the blaze. Expressing anguish over the incident, a bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan and comprising

Justices R. Subhash Reddy and M.R. Shah termed it 'shocking.'

The bench said that the Gujarat government must be answerable and there can't just be an inquiry and report. Citing the fire incident as a wakeup call, the bench said the issues with fire safety in hospitals would not be resolved by merely appointing committee or commission, instead there must be a thorough inspection of the premises and the responsibility should be fixed.

The Rajkot hospital fire resulted in the death of five patients in the ICU of a Covid-19 dedicated hospital. The top court said fire incidents in hospitals killing patients are recurring in states and one hospital after another; and there is no action taken by the states to prevent fire. The top court sought response from the Centre as well as Gujarat by December 1.

8 infants die at MP hosp in 4 days, probe ordered

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal/Shahdol, Dec 1: As many as eight infants died during treatment at the district hospital at Shahdol in Madhya Pradesh in the last four days, prompting the state government to launch an inquiry, officials said Tuesday.



The infants had been admitted to the SNCU and PICU of the hospital, Shahdol's chief medical and health officer Rajesh Pandey said. The deaths took place between November 27 and 30, he said. Two of them, referred for treatment from Anuppur district, died Monday night, he said, adding that the oldest of the deceased infants was four months

old. Currently 33 children are admitted in the SNCU while eight are being treated in the PICU, Dr Pandey said.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan Monday night ordered an inquiry into the deaths, an official of the state public relations department said. The chief minister asked the officials to find out if negligence of the medical staff was responsible for the deaths, and instructed that if necessary, specialist doctors be sent from Jabalpur to Shahdol, he said. Health Minister Prabhuram Choudhary said the additional chief secretary health, has been asked to get the deaths investigated and submit a report.

Need law against 'love jihad', says BJP MLA from Gujarat

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Gandhinagar, Dec 1: A BJP legislator in Gujarat has demanded a law on the lines of the one enforced in Uttar Pradesh against illegal religious conversions to tackle what he called 'love jihad' cases in the state.

Dabhoi MLA Shailesh Mehta said in a public statement that he will shortly propose to the Gujarat government to bring forth a stringent law against 'love jihad'.

"A stringent law against 'love jihad' will be brought in every state where the BJP is in power. Gujarat is the first state to believe in Hindutva -- so obviously a law against 'love jihad' will be brought forth here too. There are so many 'love jihad' incidents happening in Gujarat. So a strict law should be framed in Gujarat in all circumstances," he told the media.

Later, he told a local news channel: "There are so many such incidents happening across the country. The Yogi government in UP brought a law regarding this issue.



On November 28, Gujarat UP Governor Anandiben Patel gave her nod to the ordinance on religious conversions promulgated by the Yogi Adityanath government

Similarly, a stricter law than the one in UP should be enacted in Gujarat. Shortly, I will meet Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, his deputy Nitin Patel and Minister of State for Home Pradeepsinh Jadeja and put forth the proposal in writing."

"For some time, underage Hindu girls have been lured into the trap through fake Hindu names... this has happened in Vadodara city and the district... I have not received any individual complaint as yet, but there are so many complaints registered with the police. Recently, a man named Taufiq impregnated a 15-year-old Hindu girl. A complaint in this regard was registered with the police," added Mehta.

He said that the under the proposed law, family of young women who wish to convert should be informed three months in advance to the inter-religion marriage. "The parents should get time to convince their daughters, and if girls are underage, the law should provide for hanging of culprits," the BJP MLA said.

November 28, Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel gave her nod to the ordinance on religious conversions promulgated by the Yogi Adityanath government, paving the way for its enforcement across the state with immediate effect.

12 yrs after 26/11, kin of 3 fishermen get damages

The Kuber trawler with five fishermen onboard had set sail three to four days before the Mumbai terror attack in November 2008; the boat was forcefully occupied in high seas by Pakistani terrorists

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Navsari, Dec 1: Twelve years after five fishermen were presumed to have been killed by Pakistani terrorists before they carried out the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack, the Gujarat government has given ₹5 lakh each as compensation to families of three fishermen, an official said Tuesday.

The families of two other fishermen, including their captain Amarsinh Solanki, who were onboard 'Kuber' fishing trawler which was occupied in the sea by the terrorists, had been given compensation by different authorities in the past. The kin of the other three fishermen, Natu Rathod, Mukesh Rathod and Balwant Tandel, belonging Vansi village in Jalalpore taluka of Gujarat's Navsari district, were waiting for the monetary benefit.

The compensation of ₹5 lakh each was last week given to the family members of the three fishermen in the form of fixed deposits.

Friday, documents pertaining to



the fixed deposits were handed over to family members of these deceased fishermen, Navsari district disaster management branch's mamlatdar (revenue officer) Roshni Patel said.

"As per government norms, the families of these three fishermen were given a compensation of ₹5 lakh each in the form of fixed deposits, having a lock-in period of three years," Patel said.

In February 2017, a civil court

boat on the shores of Mumbai, while bodies of the other four were never found.

Solanki's family members have already been provided compensation by the Maharashtra government, as the boat was found near Mumbai. His son was given a job in the police department by the Union Territory administration.

Besides, the Gujarat government in November 2019 gave a compensation of ₹5 lakh to the wife of fisherman Ramesh Bambhanja, a native of Simasi village in Gir-Somnath district, who was among the four whose bodies were not found.

The Kuber trawler with five fishermen onboard had set sail three to four days before the Mumbai terror attack in November 2008. The boat was forcefully occupied in high seas by Pakistani terrorists. Solanki's body was found on the boat by security agencies when they seized the vessel off the Mumbai coast after the attack. It is believed that he was kept alive by the terrorists to guide them to Mumbai.

Community service for mask breach hard to implement, says Guj



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, Dec 1: The Gujarat government told the High Court Tuesday that it is unable to figure out how those caught not wearing a mask can be made to do community service at COVID centres, as proposed.

It would be difficult to keep track of whether the person has been actually performing community service as directed, said Advocate General Kamal Trivedi.

A division bench of Chief Justice Vikram Nath and Justice J B Pardiwala, during the previous hearing of a public interest litigation on the coronavirus situation in Gujarat, had sought the government's reply on a proposal to send repeat offenders who are found to be not wearing a mask for community service at COVID centres.

The PIL has been filed by Advocate Vishal Awtani. "The position of the government is like Prince Hamlet in the Shakespearean play... We could not take any decision because the anxiety of government is not about implementation but post-implementation... To see if each one of them (offenders) have gone for (community) service, to track thereafter," Trivedi said.

"Government people are wondering how to see to it that effective implementation is main-

tained...Because we first need to identify places where they (offenders) can be sent to community service... We have to see that we have addresses of each of them caught not wearing masks," he said.

"We need to have some kind of machinery to see those people have in fact gone to those places for community service," the advocate general said.

"To put additional staff to see whether the decision is implemented is going to be a mammoth job," he added.

He also said that the government has put in place a system for stricter surveillance and implementation of the mask rule. There has been a marginal decline in indicators of the severity of the pandemic, such as the demand for medical oxygen, bed occupancy and usage of Remdesivir injections, which suggest that the situation is improving, Trivedi said, requesting the court to adjourn the matter to the next week.

But the court said it will pass orders Wednesday itself after considering the state's submission that it is unable to decide modalities and mechanisms for community service as penalty for not wearing a mask.

It was crucial to take decision now and not after a week when the pandemic situation worsens or improves, chief justice Nath said.

BJP raising contentious issues to divert attention: Digvijaya

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Damoh (MP), Dec 1: Senior Congress leader and former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Digvijaya Singh said the BJP was speaking on contentious issues like religious conversions through marriage to divert people's attention from problems they are facing.

There is no problem if laws for 'love jihad' would end unemployment, backwardness and poverty. The BJP government is trying to divert the attention of people from real issues

DIGVIJAYA SINGH | FORMER CM

His comments follow Madhya Pradesh minister Narottam Mishra's announcement last week that the state government was proposing a jail term of 10 years for anyone found guilty of using marriage to force someone to change religion.



"There is no problem if laws for 'love jihad' would end unemployment, backwardness and poverty. The BJP government is trying to divert the attention of people from real issues," Singh told reporters in Damoh Monday.

In recent weeks, BJP-run states like Uttar Pradesh and Haryana have revealed plans to enact laws to counter alleged attempts to convert Hindu women to Islam in the

guise of marriage, which party leaders often refer to as 'love jihad'. Singh also hit out at the Centre for the new farm laws which he said were aimed at ending the mandi and MSP mechanisms and handing over the agriculture sector to "multinationals and rich people".

He said the Congress would look into its defeat on a majority of the 28 MP Assembly seats that witnessed bypolls November 3.

When a fifth-grader shared life lessons with IAS trainees

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhopal, Dec 1: Mobina, a fifth-grader hailing from the Pandola village in Sheopor district of Madhya Pradesh has been sharing life lessons with trainees of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS). This may come as a surprise for many people but it is true that Mobina has been working to light up the lives of women from poor and economically weaker sections in her village.

Most of the members of Mobina's family earn their livelihood as daily-wage workers but she, along with her family, started a campaign to transform the lives of the disadvantaged under the Bismillah self-help group in 2005. Through this self-help group, 10 women joined this initiative which brought about a dramatic transformation in the lives of their families.

Mobina says that she, along with



10 women, had collected a small amount to begin with and started helping each other. Gradually, they began getting support at the government level and from banks. As a result, today the lives of these women have changed and each of them is en-

gaged in different businesses. Mobina says that her husband Mohammad Salim used to work as a daily wage. With a meagre income, she could barely grow one crop. As she started earning more, she bought a pump for irrigation and

Scindia-Shivraj meet sparks Cabinet expansion speculation

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhopal, Dec 1: Political circles in Madhya Pradesh are abuzz trying to understand the significance of a meeting between Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Rajya Sabha member Jyotiraditya Scindia amid discussions on a cabinet expansion and appointments in civic bodies. But Scindia has termed the expansion of the cabinet as the prerogative of the Chief Minister.

Rajya Sabha member Scindia arrived in Bhopal Monday. He is known to have met a number of politicians including BJP MLA Krishna Gaur. Along with this, Scindia met Chouhan at the Chief Minister's residence in what is being described as a courtesy meeting.

On the question of cabinet expansion and appointments to civic bodies, Scindia says these are the prerogative of the Chief Minister.

Scindia says the development of the state is his objective and he discussed it with the Chief Minister. Scindia and Shivraj went from



state capital Bhopal to Orchha and headed for Delhi after attending a marriage ceremony.

Even though Scindia has linked the meeting to development, it is politically significant. Sources said, MLA Govind Rajput and Tulsiram Silawat can be administered the oath of office for minister.

Both of them resigned from the post of minister on completion of a period of six months without being an MLA, so there is a possibility that both can soon be sworn in as ministers.

At the same time Aidal Singh Kansana who lost the assembly bypolls, Imarti Devi and Girraj Dandotiya can be given greater responsibilities.

Mobina along with her colleagues, has carried out many new innovations that have earned accolades. They are becoming financially independent

now has started growing two crops. Along with this the income is increasing steadily. Now she has also started giving employment to other people as well.

Jugal Soni of the National Livelihood Mission says that Mobina along with her fellow colleagues, has carried out many new innovations that have earned accolades. They are also becoming economically independent. This is why Mobina and her fellow women were invited to Mussoorie to share their experi-

ence with those training for the Indian Administrative Service.

Mobina says that there were many questions in her mind before going to Mussoorie and she was wondering how she would share her experiences with the people from big cities. She further said that she benefited immensely from this experience.

On reaching there she saw that many girls older than her were still studying and when she returned to her village, they made sure her daughter completed her studies. The women associated with the self-help group are also ensuring an education for their daughters.

Mobina says that she explained to the officials undergoing training in Mussoorie about the genesis of the self-help group, its functioning and the income generated from it in great detail. Here experiences were heard with great enthusiasm by the IAS trainees.



Many of the people in (the) pictures do not appear to be farmers
VK SINGH | UNION MINISTER OF STATE

HAL DELIVERS BIGGEST EVER CRYOGENIC PROPELLANT TANK TO ISRO

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited said it has delivered the biggest cryogenic propellant tank (C32 LH2) ever fabricated by the company to ISRO, much ahead of the contractual schedule



of the day quote

All he (Prime Minister) has to do is look at my farmers. Have a dialogue, it is long overdue. You must have a dialogue. Because it is very important for the nation

KAMAL HAASAN | MAKKAL NEEDEHI MAIAM CHIEF AND ACTOR

The Indian national flag and Constitution are the pride of the people of India. The Government of India is absolutely clear that there is and there shall be only one national flag and Constitution in India

RN RAVI | NAGALAND GOVERNOR

In the last few years, there is emergence of blue-eyed class of political police and administration and favourites in trade and business in Bengal

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR | WEST BENGAL GOVERNOR

SHORT TAKES

Man hacks 4 children to death

Siwan (Bihar): In a fit of rage, a man allegedly hacked to death his three sons and a daughter here besides critically injuring another girl child and his wife whom he had attacked with the same axe, police said on Tuesday. The incident took place late Monday night in Bhagwanpur police station area of the district where the accused Awadhesh Chaudhary, said to be "mentally unstable", picked up a quarrel with his family members at their residence in Balaha Ali Gardanpur locality.

Rape victim kidnapped in UP

Fatehpur (UP): A rape victim was allegedly kidnapped from a village here when she had gone to fields for some work, police said Tuesday. The 18-year-old was also kidnapped in 2019 and raped, following which three people were arrested. Station House Officer Ravindra Shrivastava said. The accused, Kuldeep Lodhi, Jai Singh and his wife Meena, were arrested in the case and all of them are out on bail, he said. The woman went missing Monday.

Man killed in celebratory firing

Sambhal (UP): A 24-year-old man was killed in celebratory firing during a marriage function in Delhi village here, police said Tuesday. The incident had also left the father of the groom injured, they said. Santosh was killed in celebratory firing during the marriage ceremony of Aman November 29. The groom's father was also injured in the incident, Circle Officer Arun Kumar Singh said.

Cyclone to hit Tamil Nadu Dec 4

New Delhi: A cyclone is very likely to hit Tamil Nadu on December 4, the second time in a week, the Cyclone Warning Division of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Tuesday. The deep depression in the Bay of Bengal is likely to intensify further into a cyclonic storm by late Tuesday night, the IMD said. It is very likely to cross the Sri Lanka coast close to Trincomalee during the evening or night of December 2 as a cyclonic storm with a wind speed of 75-85 kilometres per hour gusting to 95 kmph, the IMD's Cyclone Warning Division said. It is very likely to move nearly westwards thereafter, emerge into Gulf of Mannar and adjoining Comorin area on 3rd December morning. It would then move nearly west-southwestwards and cross south Tamil Nadu coast.

We never said we'd vaccinate entire population: Centre

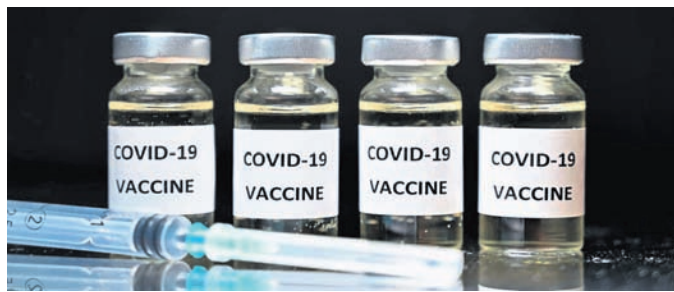
INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 1: In the wake of reporting of two adverse events which occurred with the volunteers during the vaccine trial, the fear and hesitation among the people to take the vaccine is growing. However, the Union Health Ministry Tuesday said that the government doesn't intend to immunise each individual with the Covid-19 vaccine. "There is an inherent issue of vaccine hesitancy which may have nothing to do with adverse events. A section of population thinks that it does not require vaccination,"

stated Rajesh Bhushan, Union Health Secretary during a press briefing.

Prof Balram Bhargava, Director General (DG) of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) also said that the government aims to break the chain of the virus first by vaccinating a critical mass of the population. "Our purpose is to break the chain of the virus. If we are able to vaccinate a critical mass of people and break virus transmission then we may not have to vaccinate the entire population," he added.

However he also added that the efficacy of the vaccine is an issue



leading to hesitancy among the people to undergo the vaccination since it may remain 60% effective in some individuals while it may reach 70% efficacy in others.

However, Bhushan stated that it is the responsibility of the Union and the state government to allay fears among the people regarding the vaccine. "It is the states and

union government's responsibility to educate the people about the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine while countering the disinformation," he said.

The Union Health Secretary also informed that the government is preparing detailed guidelines regarding vaccine administration which may come within the next two weeks. "One of the issues mentioned in the guidelines deals with the aspect of vaccine safety. Our aim is to tell people what would be the effect and benefit of taking a vaccine to a person and at large," Bhushan said.

DELHI GOVT NOTIFIES ONE FARM LAW

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 1: The Delhi government has notified one of the three Central farm laws and is examining the remaining two, officials said Tuesday.

The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Ordinance, 2020 was notified November 23, said a senior Delhi government official.

"The remaining two laws are under examination by the development department of the Delhi government," he said.

The ruling AAP said the notification allows farmers to sell their crop anywhere, including outside mandis. Selling of fruits and vegetables was already deregulated in Delhi many years ago, now this holds for grains too, it said. The party has openly supported the farmers' demands to scrap the laws. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had also demanded withdrawing of the laws in a protest by AAP at Jantar Mantar last month.

Officials said that vegetables and fruits were deregulated in 2014 enabling trading beyond agricultural produce marketing committee managed mandis. The notified law adds foodgrains and poultry to the list, they said.

Opposition BJP and Congress attacked the AAP for its support to farmers agitation while notifying the farm law.

"The notification exposes duplicity of AAP and the Kejriwal government. They want to share the benefits of the new farm laws while misguiding the farmers," charged BJP MP and former Delhi unit president Manoj Tiwari. The AAP hit back at the BJP over the issue saying it was trying to divert attention of people from the nationwide protest by the farmers.

Low turnout shocks all parties

Despite a high decibel campaign the turnout at the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation polls was abysmally low as no party addressed the electorates' concern

AGENCIES

Hyderabad, Dec 1: The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) election, which became a prestigious battle among major political parties, was taken lightly by the voters.

People of the fifth largest metropolitan city in the country have been exhibiting lack of interest for the last few elections. In the last election in February 2016, the turnout was as less as 45.29 per cent. As one of the social media comments aptly read, "The queues at polling stations are not even one tenth of the serpentine queues at E-Seva centres for registration for flood aid."

Most of the polling stations had very thin crowds. Visuals of polling staff taking a nap on tables surfaced from some booths. Analysts blame it on parties for their politics away from the people's issues. Noted political analyst Telakapalli Ravi said, "Voters had uncertainty of choice. Political tempers were running high. There is general disinterest and the communal agenda failed to cut ice. Declining faith in system, logistics, irregularities in voter lists are the other factors. People were not particular about defeating ruling party. The Covid-19 pandemic sent many people home."

Chalasanani Narendra, another analyst, pointed out that all the political parties had drifted away from people's issues and created



GHMC POLLS

hype on their own agendas centered on communal and emotional issues. "All parties should take the responsibility for the dying interest among people on election process," he said. Work from home too has had a great effect on the turnout. A large number of techies and corporate executives did not participate in the election.

Telangana Information Technology Association (TITA), a body of techies, pointed out that most of the software engineers had gone to their hometowns. Majority of the 5.82 lakh techies in Hyderabad have their votes here but were out of stations during this period. Locals are below 25 per cent. TITA global president Sandeep Makthala assessed that almost 80 per cent of techies were not seen in polling.

MANY EX-SPORTSPERSONS TO RETURN AWARDS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Dec 1: Several former sportspersons including Padma Shri and Arjuna awardees have extended their support to the agitating farmers and said they will return their awards in protest against the "force" used against the peasants en route to Delhi.

Among them are Padma Shri and Arjuna awardee wrestler Kartar Singh, Arjuna awardee basketball player Sajjan Singh Cheema and Arjuna awardee hockey player Rajbir Kaur.

They said they will proceed to Delhi December 5 and will place their awards outside the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

They slammed the Centre and Haryana government for using water cannons and teargas against

the protesting farmers to stop them from going to Delhi.

"We are the children of farmers and they have been holding peaceful agitation for the last several months. Not even a single incident of violence took place."

"But water cannons and teargas shells were used against them when they were going

to Delhi. If turbans of our elders and brothers are tossed, then what will we do with our awards and honour? We are in support of our farmers. We do not want such awards and that is why we are returning the same," said Cheema Tuesday.

Farmers had faced water cannons and teargas when they were heading towards the national capital as part of their 'Delhi Chalo' march against the farm laws.

FARMERS' PROTEST

AHEAD OF ASSEMBLY POLLS

Mamata launches 'Duare Sarkar' campaign

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Dec 1: With an eye on the 2021 assembly elections, the Trinamool Congress administration in West Bengal Tuesday launched its massive outreach campaign 'Duare Sarkar' (government at doorsteps) to ensure that people avail the benefits of 11 state-run welfare schemes and also to hear out their grievances related to the programmes.

Elections to the 294-member state Assembly are due in April-May next year.

People were seen queuing up in at least 20,000 camps set up in all the panchayats and municipal wards in the state to avail the benefits of the schemes. The outreach programme will continue till January 30.

With slogan "jar jekhane darkar, asche apnar duare sarkar" (government will be at your doorsteps whenever you need it), the programme will be conducted for two months in four phases.

The first phase of the programme will be held from December 1-11, the second from December 15-24, the third from January 2-12 and the last from January 18-30.

The camps will be functional from 10 am to 4 pm every day. "GoWB's initiative #DuareSarkar brings govt services at people's doorstep! Happy to see that the camps have started in full-swing.



I urge people to get their grievances redressed & avail other services at these camps," Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee tweeted.

"This is a revolutionary step taken by our government to ensure that no one is left out. All those who are eligible for the schemes will get the benefits. For example, Swastha Sathi (health scheme) will cover the entire population of the state," Municipal Affairs Minister Firhad Hakim said while inaugurating a ward office here.

The schemes include globally acclaimed 'Kanyashree', a cash transfer programme aimed at retaining girls in schools and preventing their early marriage, 'Khadya Sathi' which aims at ensuring food security for 90 per cent of the population and 'Sikshashree', a one-time grant to SC and ST students studying in classes 5-8 to reduce their dropout rates.

NEW NORMAL



A couple, wearing masks, perform rituals during their marriage ceremony amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic in Patna, Tuesday

List of farmers' demands not just limited to farm laws

The farmers are not only demanding withdrawal of the new agricultural laws, but also relaxations over penalties associated with stubble burning

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 1: The farmers protesting along the borders of the national capital are not just demanding withdrawal of the new agricultural laws implemented by the Central government but also relaxations over penalties associated with stubble burning, including others.

The farmers also want withdrawal of the Electricity Bill Amendment Bill 2020. Though the list of the demands of farmers is quite long, five of them are deemed as important. The first and foremost demand of the protesting farmers' organisations is the repeal of three new agricultural laws.

The three new agricultural laws include the Farmers Produce Trade

and Commerce (Promotion and Simplification) Act 2020, the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Price Assurance and Agreement on Agricultural Services Act 2020 and Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act 2020. Farmers' organisations say that these laws will benefit the corporate, but not the farmers. However, the government claims that farmers will benefit from these three laws and the agriculture sector will grow.

The second demand of farmers is the guarantee of MSP to ensure procurement of crops at minimum support price (MSP). Farmers' organisations want a guarantee of MSP from the central government. However, the government has assured to continue procurement on



Farmers are seen with their trucks parked on a national highway as they protest against the newly passed farm bills at Singhu border near Delhi

MSP and is also presenting an example of the record procurement of other crops, including wheat and rice during the tenure of the current government. The third demand of farmers is the withdrawal of the Electricity (Amendment) Bill, as they feel that they won't get free electricity due to this.

Harendra Singh Lakhwal, general secretary of the Bharatiya Kisan Union (Lakhwal), told this news agency that farmers in Punjab get free electricity, but the same won't happen if power distribution is privatised. The farmers' fourth demand is to end the fine and jail sentence for stubble burning.

Harendra Singh said that a provision of five year-jail sentence and ₹1 crore fine has been made for

stubble burning. The farmers are demanding that it should be withdrawn. They are demanding the withdrawal of cases filed against farmers for burning stubble.

In addition, they also are demanding MSP as recommended by Swaminathan Commission.

The farmers also alleged that the new agricultural law has created two markets for the crops.

While the Central government said that with the new law, farmers have got the freedom to sell their produce anywhere in the country, the farmers who are demanding the withdrawal of the new agricultural laws, believe that there no restrictions earlier too when it came to taking the agricultural produce from one state to another.

of the day quote

Farmers are protesting on the streets and a 'lie' giving speeches on television. Wake up, get down from a position of arrogance and think, and give the farmers their rights

Ours is Mahatma Gandhi's Hindutva, Vivekananda's Hindutva... Hinduism is no one's property... India's tradition, culture is the wealth that belongs to all of us

People like us involved in farming clearly understand the conspiracy of grabbing lands of farmers under the guise of farm laws by giving 'Jumla' (false promise) of doubling the income



Some people paid more attention to their family's legacy than to their country's heritage

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

LOW-INTENSITY QUAKE HITS HARIDWAR

A low-intensity earthquake hit Haridwar in Uttarakhand Tuesday. The earthquake hit Haridwar at 9:41 am, according to the National Centre for Seismology



EC suggests postal ballots for NRIs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 1: The Election Commission has proposed to the government to extend the Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS) facility, so far available to service voters, to eligible overseas Indian voters.

In a letter to the legislative secretary in the Law Ministry November 27, the Commission said with the successful execution of ETPBS in case of service voters, it is now "confident" that the facility can also be extended to the overseas electors.

Elections in these states are due sometime in April-June next year. It said the poll panel has been receiving several representations from Indian diaspora residing abroad to facilitate voting through



postal ballots since such overseas electors are not in a position to be present in their polling area as travelling to India for this purpose is a costly affair and otherwise also, they cannot leave the country of their residence owing to specific compulsions of employment, education or other engagements.

"Due to protocols associated with Covid-19, problem further gets compounded," the letter to the law ministry said.

The Commission observed that Section 62 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 envisages

The Commission said with the successful execution of ETPBS in case of service voters, it is now "confident" that the facility can also be extended to the overseas electors

The Commission is technically and administratively ready to extend this facility in general elections to legislative assemblies of Assam, West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry: EC

right to vote for every citizen registered in the electoral roll who is not subject to disqualification for voting.

As of now, overseas Indians are free to cast their votes in constituencies they are registered. Unofficial data with the EC shows that only 10,000 to 12,000 overseas voters have exercised their franchise because they do not want to spend foreign currency to come to India and vote.

Under ETPBS, postal ballot is sent electronically to a service voter. The service voter downloads it and uses a specific envelope to return it to the returning officer of his constituency. The postal ballot should reach the returning officer by 8.00 am on the day of the counting. Counting of votes begin with counting of postal ballots at 8.00 am. Personnel of armed forces posted outside their constituencies in forward areas, personnel of central armed police forces posted in outside their constituencies state police personnel posted on poll duty, embassy staff are considered as service voters.

The EC has suggested amending the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961 to extend ETPBS for overseas electors. The rules were amended in October, 2016 to allow service voters use ETPBS.

ETPBS has nearly halved the time in sending and receiving postal ballots from far-flung areas. The Conduct of Election Rules were also changed to allow those who

are 80 years of age or above and those with disabilities to use postal ballot to cast vote. The same facility was extended for COVID-19 patients. But this postal ballot facility is different from ETPBS.

For overseas electors, EC has said the voter will have to intimate the returning officer that he/she wants to use postal ballot. The returning officer will then electronically transmit the ballot paper to the voter by means specified by the EC. The Commission requested the government to make necessary amendments at the earliest "which will go a long way in not only facilitating exercise of right of overseas electors but also further boosting image of the country internationally."

A Bill to extend the facility of proxy voting to overseas Indians had lapsed following the dissolution of the 16th Lok Sabha in 2019. The Bill had proposed that overseas Indians, who are entitled to vote in India, can appoint a proxy voter to cast the ballot on their behalf.

SC dismisses pleas seeking action against AP CM



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 1: The Supreme Court Tuesday dismissed a batch of PILs seeking action against Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy for his statements against a top court judge and the judiciary.

The apex court also said that prayer in a PIL filed by advocate GS Mani seeking direction for removal of the Chief Minister from his office for his remarks was "not maintainable".

A bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Dinesh Maheshwari and Hrishikesh Roy refused to grant liberty to the petitioners from intervening in one other matter, pending before another bench.

"That court has to take a decision. We cannot allow hundreds of petitioners to file intervention applications on the same issue. You pick up something from the newspaper and file whatever you want under Article 32. If we allow one advocate to do so, tomorrow some other advocate will come forward with his intervention application," the bench observed when one of the petitioners sought liberty to intervene in the matter.

The top court also dealt with the prayer of a CBI probe or an enquiry by a retired high court judge against the Chief Minister for making such statements.

It said, "A statement was undoubtedly made and it's in public domain. What is there to probe into the statements? What will the CBI or any retired High court judge enquire in it? The issue of making statements is already being dealt by a different bench and it has the gag order placed by the High Court. Now what remains?"

IMA to protest against Centre's medical reforms



After farmers, the Indian Medical Association - which represents doctors practising modern system of medicine in the country - has now opened a front against the Centre

The apex association of private practitioners of modern medicine plans to hold public demonstrations by its members, nationwide withdrawal of health services from non-emergency and non-Covid areas

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 1: After farmers, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) - which represents doctors practising modern system of medicine in the country - has now opened a front against the Centre and announced a series of protests and other steps to oppose government actions and policies in the field of health and medical education.

The apex association of private practitioners of modern medicine plans to hold public demonstrations by its members, nationwide withdrawal of health services from non-emergency and non-Covid areas and a legal recourse.

Its move comes after the government brought about amendments and introduction of policies in medical education which it believes would lead to "catastrophic" effect in the world of modern medicine.

"Demonstrations in small groups of 20 will be held between noon and 2 pm December 8 by following Covid protocols. Withdrawal of all non-essential and non-Covid services between 6 am and 6 pm will be done December 11. Further operational guidelines will follow soon," an IMA document read. The IMA directed its members "to seek the help and support of sister professional organisations, government doctors' and hospital associations, RDAs, medical college teachers' associations, and medical students to participate in the protest."

The decisions were taken in an emergency meeting Monday. IMA President Dr Rajan Sharma confirmed that protest demonstrations were planned but did not divulge the details. "The modalities are being worked out," he added.

Commenting on the need for such actions, Sharma said that the situation has arisen wherein the doctors have to fight to "save the honour of the profession".

"We represent the community which provides 70% of the healthcare to this nation. The government is aiming to create a 'mixopathy' of all the streams of medicine, which will finish off all of them. We cannot let that happen. We will fight against it tooth and nail," he said.

The IMA plans agitation over three issues whose repercussions they plan to bring forth in the public domain - latest amendment by the Central Council of Indian Medicine (CCIM) that allowed Ayurvedic postgraduate students to receive formal training to perform 66 types of medical procedures.

Another issue is National Education Policy 2020, which proposes to phase out all institutions offering single streams and that all universities and colleges must aim to become multidisciplinary by 2040.

CREATING AWARENESS



Nurses take part in an awareness programme on World AIDS Day in Guwahati, Tuesday

PTI PHOTO

SHORT TAKES

Three arrested for killing scribe

Balrampur: Three people have been arrested in connection with the murder of a 35-year-old journalist and his friend, police said. Lalit Mishra, Keshvanand Mishra alias Rinku and Akram Ali were arrested for the murder of journalist Rakesh Singh and his friend Pintu Sahu from a jungle near Bahadurpur crossing, Superintendent of Police, Balrampur, Devranjan Verma said. The trio has confessed to their crime, he added.

Anti-ship version of BrahMos test-fired

New Delhi: India Tuesday successfully test-fired the anti-ship version of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands territory. The test was the part of the trials conducted by the Indian Navy, sources said. The test-firing of the anti-ship version of the BrahMos missile took place at 9:25 am. During the test held Tuesday around 9.25 a.m., the DRDO-developed BrahMos supersonic cruise missile with a strike range of 300 km was launched from the Navy's INS Ranvijay.

Man fatally stabs four children

Siwan: A man fatally stabbed his four children and critically injured his wife and fifth child in Siwan district of Bihar, following which he was arrested, police said Tuesday. Accused Awadesh Chaudhary from Balha Alimardanpur village attacked his family with a sharp object on Monday night, Bhagwanpur police station in-charge Vipin Singh told IANS. While four of the couple's children - three sons and a daughter - died on the spot the woman and their fifth child were critically injured. The reason behind the crime is still not known.

2 injured as Naxals blow up vehicle

Raipur: Two civilians were injured in an IED blast in the Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh, IG Bastar P Sundarraj said. Both the injured civilians are out of danger and are being treated in CRPF Hospital in Basaguda. The incident took place near Rajpenta village between Basaguda and Tarrem villages around 9 a.m. when the two victims were heading towards Tarrem in a multi-utility vehicle (MUV), the official said. The vehicle was damaged due to the impact of the blast, he said.

BSF officer killed in ceasefire violation by Pak

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Dec 1: A sub-inspector of the Border Security Force (BSF) was killed Tuesday in a ceasefire violation by the Pakistan army along the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said.

In November, 15 people, including nine security personnel, were killed in multiple ceasefire violations by Pakistani troops in various sectors in the Union Territory. The latest casualty took place on a day when the BSF is celebrating its Raising Day. An army spokesperson said, "The Pakistan army resorted to unprovoked ceasefire violation in Rajouri sector on the LoC again, in which BSF Sub-Inspector Paotinsat Guite who was deployed at Forward Defence Location attained martyrdom while displaying conspicuous act of bravery."

MUSLIM MAN CONVERTS BEFORE MARRYING A HINDU

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Yamunanagar (Har), Dec 1: A Muslim man, who converted to Hinduism before marrying a Hindu woman, and his wife are under police protection here following the intervention of the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij had last week said the state government has set up a three-member committee to draft a law against 'love jihad', a term used by BJP leaders to describe religious conversions in the guise of marriage.

The 21-year-old man, who has also changed his name, married the 19-year-old woman November 9 as per Hindu rituals. Yamunanagar Superintendent of Police, Kamaldeep Goyal said Tuesday. The couple had approached the



high court stating that they feared a threat to their lives and personal liberty from the girl's family, while further submitting that opposition to their marriage was a serious abuse of their rights provided under Article 21 of the Constitution. The police later lodged the duo in a protection home here for several

days, while acting on the high court's directive to evaluate the threat perception and provide them security.

The police also met the girl's family and tried to convince them that the two were legally wedded and they should allow them to live together.

Yogi covets biz, Hindi films and big bucks from Mumbai

ON HIS SECOND TRIP IN THREE YEARS, THE CM WILL SPECIFICALLY EYE BIG MONEY, BIG BIZ AND BIG GLAMOUR

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, Dec 1: Taking a break from the farmers' agitation in north, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath arrived here late night Tuesday for a mega-shopping blitzkrieg in the country's commercial and entertainment capital Tuesday.

On his second trip in three years, the CM will specifically eye big money, big biz and big glamour as his take-away, presenting a brand-new face for UP as an 'investor-friendly' state.

Yogi, 48, has a packed diary with engagements that include India's leading industrialists, bankers, and finance-wizards and of course,

Hindi film personalities, advance teams of officials inform.

Yogi hopes to herald a new era for UP by ringing the bell at the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) for the prestigious listing of bonds of Lucknow Municipal Corporation (LMC) Wednesday.

It is the first civic body of UP and the first city in north India to issue bonds, with municipalities of other cities like Agra, Varanasi and Kanpur likely to follow in the Bharatiya Janata Party-ruled state.

The LMC's Rs200-crore pre-Diwali 10-year bond issue for 8.50 per cent interest was oversubscribed 4.5 times, indicating India Inc. has viewed it credibly and given a 'Thumbs Up' to Yogi's development-



oriented politics, as he prepares for Assembly elections after 15 months. At his meetings with the dark-

suited movers and shakers of business and Hindi films, the saffron-clad Yogi will enlighten them on the conducive atmosphere in UP. 'Ease of Doing Business' by simplifying policies with a single-window for most clearances, ample manpower with necessary infrastructure and of course, a good law-and-order situation.

Putting their best foot forward, officials explain how, under Yogi's rule, UP has transformed in terms of infra, highways-expressways, air links, the proposed Film City near Noida, the Defence Corridor, developmental projects in the interiors like Poorvanchal or Bundelkhand, and the upcoming Grand Temple of Lord Ram in

Ayodhya which will give a mega-boost to tourism in the state.

They said during the Covid-19 pandemic, over four dozen Indian and foreign companies have come to invest around Rs45,000-crores, and the state has extended bank loans of Rs20,000-crore to over half-a-million MSMEs.

Handling the stupendous task of nearly five million jobless migrants who trooped back home to UP during the pandemic, the state helped rehabilitate them with Rs1,000-each ration kits, maintenance allowances and around half of them were given local employment.

The ruling Maharashtra Congress has slammed Yogi's Mumbai trip as a cunning ploy to induce "flight of

capital" from Maharashtra by intimidating business and film personalities.

"This was done by the BJP in Gujarat since 2014... Yogi made efforts to discredit Maharashtra and Hindi filmdom in the wake of actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death. Now, he will create fear in Mumbai to force businessmen and Hindi films to invest in UP," Congress state spokesperson Sachin Sawant said.

Sawant advised Yogi that instead of creating panic among entrepreneurs in an advanced state like Maharashtra, UP must first tackle the growing atrocities on women, minorities, the rapes in broad daylight, an atmosphere of hatred, etc, before talking of progress.

international



The new wave of the epidemic is very severe and every citizen has to strictly uphold discipline. The upcoming two weeks is very critical
CARRIE LAM | HONG KONG LEADER

NADIA MURAD WARNS OF INCREASED TRAFFICKING

Nobel Peace Prize laureate Nadia Murad said the coronavirus pandemic has increased trafficking of women and gender-based violence, leaving the health and safety of women "on the line"



of the day quote

The number of increasing cases and deaths in Mexico is very worrisome
TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS | WHO DIRECTOR-GENERAL

The SCO has immense potential for fostering a conducive environment for regional stability, security and comprehensive economic development
ANDLEEB ABBAS | PAKISTANI POLITICIAN

In every part of the world, we are seeing that Covid has worsened the plight of at-risk women and girls, while also hindering criminal justice responses and reducing support to victims
GHADA WALY | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE UNODC

DELHI SCO MEET SENT POSITIVE SIGNALS: CHINA

The SCO is an economic and security bloc in which India and Pakistan were admitted as full members in 2017. Its founding members included China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan

AGENCIES

Beijing, Dec 1: China said Tuesday that the virtual meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) hosted by India has sent "many positive signals" with leaders reaching consensus on several issues.

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang Monday attended the virtual meeting of the eight-member bloc which was also addressed by Vice President Venkaiah Naidu. Asked how China viewed the outcome of the SCO heads of the government meeting, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying told a media briefing here that the meeting was about implementing the outcomes reached at the recently concluded SCO Summit and discuss measures to enhance cooperation in areas such as the fight against COVID-19, trade, investment and culture sectors. Earlier this month, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Prime



Vice President Venkaiah Naidu virtually addresses the meeting

Minister Narendra Modi participated in the SCO Council of Heads of State (SCO-CHS), the highest forum of SCO, meeting hosted by Russia in a virtual format.

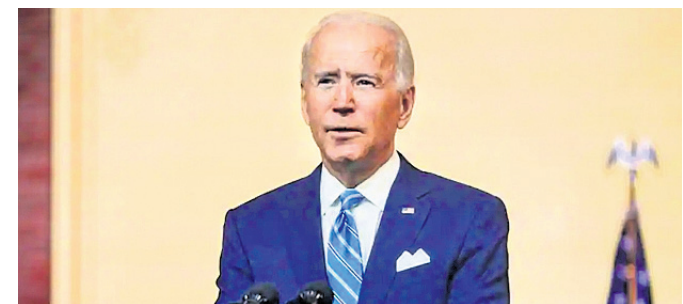
"Many consensus were reached. The leaders also released a joint communique as ratified many cooperation documents. There are many positive signals," Hua said, while talking about Monday's meeting. Parties spoke highly of the

SCO countries' joint efforts to fight COVID-19. They all expressed readiness to uphold Shanghai spirit and continue to fight the virus, she said. "They are opposed to stigmatising the virus and they all support the WHO's role in upholding regional and international global public health security," she said. "They believe in taking a host of measures to boost economic recovery. China pointed out that we

need to advance our cooperation agenda, build a safe and stable development environment and consolidate the basis for integrated development and promote innovation-driven development," she said. China will launch a trade index for the SCO countries and deepen cooperation in agriculture, poverty alleviation and other areas, she said. In his address at the meeting, Premier Li made a strong pitch for greater counter-terrorism cooperation among the SCO countries to foster a secure and stable environment for development.

Li said members of the SCO grouping should actively foster a secure and stable environment for development. "With uncertainties and destabilising factors growing in the region, we need to work together to uphold regional peace and stability," he said. "Joint counter-terrorism exercises must continue to be held in order to forestall sabotages by terrorist, separatist and extremist forces exploiting the pandemic," Li said.

Biden to introduce top economic advisers



AGENCIES

Wilmington, Dec 1: US President-elect Joe Biden will formally introduce his top economic policy advisers Tuesday as his administration prepares to take power amid a slowing economic recovery hampered by the resurgent coronavirus pandemic.

Biden will appear at an event in his hometown of Wilmington, Delaware, alongside his selections for senior roles, including his nominee for US Treasury secretary, former Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen.

The team's makeup reinforces Biden's view that a more aggressive approach to the pandemic is required. The advisers have all expressed support for government stimulus to maximize employment, reduce economic inequality and help women and minorities, who have been disproportionately hurt by the economic downturn.

Other picks include Cecilia Rouse, an economist at Princeton University, as chair of the Council of Economic Advisers; economists Heather Boushey and Jared Bernstein as council members; and Neera Tanden, chief executive of the liberal Center for American Progress think tank, as head of the Office of Management and Budget.

The transition to a Biden administration has proceeded despite Republican President Donald Trump's false claims that he lost the election as a result of voter fraud. On Monday, Biden received his first full classified intelligence briefing since winning the Nov. 3 election, after Trump's refusal to concede delayed the formal transition process for weeks. Arizona and Wisconsin, two bat-

Trump's nCoV adviser resigns

US President Donald Trump's controversial special adviser on the coronavirus, Dr. Scott Atlas, has resigned. During his four months in the role, Atlas, who had no formal experience in public health or infectious diseases, questioned the need for masks and other measures to control the pandemic that has killed over 268,000 people in America. While questioning the usefulness of masks he was against lockdowns and promoted the idea of herd immunity. The 65-year-old the Stanford University neuroradiologist resigned Monday at the end of his 130-day temporary assignment, according to US media reports.

Chinese spacecraft to collect samples touches down on Moon

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Beijing, Dec 1: China's Chang'e-5 mission, intended to bring back around 2 kg of lunar soil and rocks to the earth, touched down on the Moon Tuesday.

Unlike the launch of the mission a week ago, the robotic mission's landing was not covered live by Chinese TV channels and only after the touchdown, did they interrupt scheduled programming to flash the news, the BBC reported.

The probe, which descended on the volcanic Mons Rumker area in the Oceanus Procellarum region, could spend the next two days examining its surroundings and gathering up the samples with the help of its camera, spectrometer, radar, scoop and a drill. The lander will convey the samples to an orbiting vehicle that can bring them back.

SHORT TAKES

Biden speaks with UN chief

Washington: US President-elect Joe Biden Monday spoke with United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres as the two leaders discussed the need to strengthen their partnership on urgent global issues including combatting COVID-19, the transition said. They also talked about building resilience to future public health challenges, confronting the threat of climate change, addressing humanitarian issues, advancing sustainable development, upholding peace and security, resolving conflicts, and promoting democracy and human rights, it said.

Nirav's remand extended in UK

London: Nirav Modi, wanted in connection with the estimated \$2-billion Punjab National Bank (PNB) scam case, was further remanded in custody Tuesday by a court in London hearing India's extradition request for the diamond merchant. The 49-year-old appeared Tuesday via video link from Wandsworth Prison in south-west London, dressed in a maroon sweater and sporting a full beard, for his regular 28-day "call-over hearing" at Westminster Magistrates' Court, where Chief Magistrate Emma Arbuthnot extended his remand for another 28 days until December 29.

4 killed in SK apartment fire

Seoul: A fire broke out at an apartment building near the South Korean capital Tuesday, killing four people and injuring six others, officials said. The blaze on the 12th floor of the 25-story building in Gunpo took firefighters about 30 minutes to extinguish, said Kwon Hyeok-ju of the Gyeonggi Provincial Fire and Disaster Headquarters. One of the six residents who was injured in the fire was in critical condition, while the others were being treated for minor injuries and smoke inhalation, he said.

nCoV situation 'back under control' in UK

London: UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock said that the coronavirus situation is "back under control" as the month-long lockdown in England, the second of its kind since the onset of the pandemic, is due to end Wednesday. "We've got this virus back under control," Xinhua news agency quoted Hancock as saying during a virtual press briefing at the Downing Street Monday.

SHARP FLYING



A female Coeligena helianthea hummingbird flies up to the flower in in The Paramuno corridor on Monserrate hill in Bogota, Colombia

'China gave vaccine candidate to Kim'

REUTERS

Frankfurt, Dec 1: China has provided North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and his family with an experimental coronavirus vaccine, a US analyst said Tuesday, citing two unidentified Japanese intelligence sources.

Harry Kazianis, a North Korea expert at the Center for the National Interest think tank in Washington, said the Kims and several senior North Korean officials had been vaccinated. It was unclear which company had supplied its drug candidate to the Kims and whether it had proven to be safe, he added.

"Kim Jong Un and multiple other high-ranking officials within the Kim family and leadership network have been vaccinated for coronavirus within the last two to three weeks thanks to a vaccine candidate supplied by the Chinese government," Kazianis wrote in an article for online outlet 19FortyFive. Citing US medical scientist Peter J. Hotez, he said at least three Chinese com-



panies were developing a coronavirus vaccine, including Sinovac Biotech Ltd, CanSinoBio and China National Pharmaceutical Group (Sinopharm), an unlisted Beijing-based company.

Sinopharm says its candidate has been used by nearly one million people in China, although none of the firms have unveiled results of Phase 3 clinical trial of their experimental COVID-19 vaccines, which are under way outside China.

Hua Chunying, a Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman, neither

denied nor confirmed when asked about the reported vaccines for North Korea at a regular briefing, saying she had not heard about them. Some experts doubted that Kim would use an experimental vaccine. "Even if a Chinese vaccine had already been approved, no drug is perfect and he would not take that risk when he has numerous shelters which can ensure almost complete isolation," said Choi Jung-hun, an infectious disease expert who defected from North Korea to the South in 2012.

New tech can get oxygen, fuel from Mars' salty water

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Dec 1: A team led by an Indian-origin scientist in the US has developed a new system that can extract oxygen and hydrogen fuel from the salty water on Mars, and may radically change the logistics of future missions to the Red Planet and beyond.

The researchers noted that Mars is very cold, and water that is not frozen is almost certainly full of salt from the Martian soil, which lowers its freezing temperature.

Using electricity to break the briny water down into oxygen and hydrogen fuel requires removing the salt, which is a cumbersome and a costly endeavour in a harsh, dangerous martian environment, they said. The team, led by Vijay Ramani, examined the new system in a simulated Martian atmosphere at minus 36 degrees Celsius. "Our Martian brine electrolyser radically changes the logistical calculus of missions to Mars and beyond. This technology is equally useful on Earth where it opens up the oceans as a viable oxygen and fuel source," said Ramani. In 2008, NASA's Phoenix Mars Lander "touched and tasted" Martian water, vapours from melted ice dug up by the lander. Since then, the European Space Agency's Mars Express has discovered several underground ponds of water which remain in a liquid state thanks to the presence of magnesium perchlorate salt.



nCoV could lead to more HIV cases, AIDS-related deaths: UN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations, Dec 1: The rapid spread of the novel coronavirus has created additional setbacks for the global AIDS response and there could be an estimated 123,000-293,000 additional new HIV infections and 69,000-148,000 additional AIDS-related deaths between 2020 and 2022 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic's long-term impact, according to a new report.

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) said in its new report 'Prevailing against pandemics by putting people at the centre' that as COVID-19 pushes the AIDS response even further off track and the 2020 targets are missed, countries must learn from the lessons of underinvesting in health and to step up global action to end AIDS

and other pandemics. The UNAIDS is calling on countries to make far greater investments in global pandemic responses and adopt a new set of bold, ambitious but achievable HIV targets. If those targets are met, the world will be back on track to ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.

"The global AIDS response was off track before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, but the rapid spread of the coronavirus has created additional setbacks. Modelling of the pandemic's long-term impact on the HIV response shows that there could be an estimated 123,000 to 293,000 additional new HIV infections and 69,000 to 148,000 additional AIDS-related deaths between 2020 and 2022," the report said.

Executive Director of UNAIDS Winnie Byanyima lamented that the collective failure to invest suf-



AP PHOTO

ficiently in comprehensive, rights-based, people-centred HIV responses has come at a terrible price. "Implementing just the most politically palatable programmes will not turn the tide against COVID-19

or end AIDS. To get the global response back on track will require putting people first and tackling the inequalities on which epidemics thrive."

The report notes that in some

low- and middle-income countries, health officials are bracing for a surge in new births due to interruptions to contraceptive access during the pandemic.

"In India, for example, it is estimated that COVID-19 interrupted contraceptive access for more than 25 million couples," it said.

The report said insufficient investment and action on HIV and other pandemics left the world exposed to COVID-19. "Had health systems and social safety nets been even stronger, the world would have been better positioned to slow the spread of COVID-19 and withstand its impact," it said, adding that the COVID-19 has shown that investments in health save lives but also provide a foundation for strong economies. Health and HIV programmes must be fully funded, both in times of plenty and in times of

economic crisis. Highlighting bright spots amid the crisis, the report said leadership, infrastructure and lessons of the HIV response are being leveraged to fight COVID-19. The HIV response has helped to ensure the continuity of services in the face of extraordinary challenges and the response by communities against COVID-19 has shown what can be achieved by working together.

In addition, the report underscores that the world must learn from the mistakes of the HIV response, when millions in developing countries died waiting for treatment.

Even today, more than 12 million people still do not have access to HIV treatment and 1.7 million people became infected with HIV in 2019 because they did not have access to essential HIV services.

PRIDE ON LINE FOR TEAM INDIA

NATARAJAN OR SHARDUL COULD REPLACE SAINI AS MEN IN BLUE LOOK FOR CONSOLATION WIN IN ODI SERIES AS THEY FACE AUSTRALIA IN THE THIRD MATCH TODAY

Iyer 'overwhelmed' with Oz's plan



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Canberra, Dec 1: Left chasing shadows in the first two games, a listless Indian team would most certainly tweak its bowling combination in order to avoid a second successive clean-sweep when it takes on Australia in the third and final ODI here on Wednesday.

A 0-3 defeat against Australia would be their second rout in consecutive ODI series having met the same fate in New Zealand earlier this year.

The first two games turned out to be run-fests in which Australia out-batted Virat Kohli's men and before they switch over to the T20 series, a win at the picturesque Manuka Oval could do their confidence a world of good.

Skipper Kohli has been the first to admit that they have been 'outplayed' in the two games and it is expected that some corrective measures will be taken in order to get their campaign back on track.

Navdeep Saini, India's fastest bowler, like a lot of others on his first tour of Australia, has looked clueless. Such has been his plight that Kohli was forced to bowl a half-fit

(bowling wise) Hardik Pandya and even Mayank Agarwal to complete Saini's spell after he gave away 70 runs in seven overs.

It could well be possible that one among Shardul Thakur, with an experience of 27 international games, or the 'yorker sensation' rookie left-armed Thangarasu Natarajan will be seen replacing Saini.

In case of Natarajan, it could be his international debut and a chance to test himself in an inconsequential game before the start of the T20 series where he is sure to play a part.

It could well be a case of both Shardul and Natarajan being given a go in case Kohli decides to rest both Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami, who need to remain fit and fresh for the big-ticket Test series.

Natarajan, with his clever variations and change of pace, could provide a different dimension, as the cutters might work well and a bit of swing may be on offer on a ground which is not exactly a closed concrete jungle and may aid a bit of swing.

Never had an Indian attack looked so out of sorts as it did in the two games - hit for 69 boundaries and



Thangarasu Natarajan could make his ODI debut, Wednesday

19 sixes. Kohli said that switching of formats from T20 to ODIs can't be an excuse for a team whose core has remained pretty much the same for a considerable period of time.

The bowlers have had no idea where to bowl to Steve Smith, who has decided to single-handedly torment the opposition with back-to-back 62-ball-hundreds.

Add to it, Glenn Maxwell's power-packed finishing at the end of the innings is giving them those extra 30 runs which are creating the dif-

ference from India's perspective as the margin of defeats of 66 and 51 respectively would suggest.

The Indian captain's hasty bowling changes, including a two-over opening spell to his main bowler Bumrah, had invited criticism from one of his staunchest critics Gautam Gambhir as well as Ashish Nehra.

If the pacers have had their share of woes, the spinners have only compounded worries with their inept performances.

Yuzvendra Chahal has been the most expensive bowler in the first two games with 160 runs conceded in 19 overs and just one wicket to show for his efforts.

Ravindra Jadeja, on the other hand, has looked flat despite a decent economy rate of 6.15. The result, wicketless in both games.

In case of batting, Kohli and Rahul looked in good touch during the second game but the inability of Rahul to rotate the strike during the second Powerplay was glaring.

Still, India can take solace from the fact that in both matches, the batting looked the part and maybe, a target of 335 to 340 could have been chased on both occasions.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Canberra, Dec 1: Overwhelmed that the Australians devised a short ball strategy against him, Indian batsman Shreyas Iyer says it can best be tackled by adopting a counter-offensive approach and taking advantage of the field placing.

Josh Hazlewood got Iyer into a tangle with a well-directed bouncer in the first ODI while he gave a better account of himself in the second game where he scored 38 off 36 balls.

"I am really happy that they are coming up with a plan (against me)," Iyer said on the eve of the inconsequential third ODI when asked about the home team peppering him with short-pitched stuff.

"I feel overwhelmed and take it as a challenge. But I thrive under pressure and it motivates me to go against them. I feel it (a short leg and leg gully) helps to take advantage and score more runs and make best use of it," said India's No.4 batsman.

Playing the short stuff is all about mind-set for Iyer along with the adjustment while batting at the nets. "It's all about mind-set that you need to adjust. How you need to place yourself on the wicket. Rather than bending down too much (dur-



ing stance), you stand upright. It easier to pick up the short one.

"I have set a pattern for myself. Every time I play, I give myself a little bit of time and get set. If they come up with that field (for short ball), I get aggressive as well. Because that kind of field is easy to manipulate."

He agreed that confusion about the shot selection brought about his downfall against Hazlewood in the first game.

"I knew that short ball was going to come. I got in two frame of minds,

thinking of pulling and at the same time I had this upper cut shot. I got stuck in between two thoughts and couldn't play the shot."

In the second game, he just watched the ball and reacted accordingly. "It was easy to do that rather than thinking about what the bowler is going to do. I like to give myself some time at the beginning. In that way, if you are set, you can predict what the bowler is trying to bowl."

Iyer also spoke about the challenges of adapting to different type of pitches - like two months of IPL in UAE where it was low bounce and then the spongy tennis ball bounce Down Under.

He said that one of the issues was different nature of training-wickets at Blacktown International Park, compared to tracks at the SCG.

"The wickets at practice was different (in terms of bounce) from the match. It's taking time to acclimatise but it's a challenge. I am enjoying that challenge."

Another issue has been the bowlers switching from four-overs in T20 to 10-over per innings in the ODI format. Iyer feels that bowlers are having a tough time since most of them had tremendous workload during IPL.

Finch throws weight behind struggling Starc

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Canberra, Dec 1: Top pacer Mitchell Starc's patchy form is among the few worries for a rampaging Australia in the ongoing series against India but skipper Aaron Finch Tuesday threw his weight behind the seasoned campaigner, saying there is no need to panic just yet.

The left-arm seamer, who has an outstanding record with the new ball in white-ball cricket, has been far from his best in the ongoing series against India. In the two ODIs, Starc has managed to claim just one wicket while giving away 147 runs in 18 overs. Australia won both the games.

"He hasn't been at his very best, and you have to understand his standards are a lot higher than what you expect from most other people because of how dominant



he's been over the last eight or nine years, especially in the white-ball formats," Finch said at the pre-match press conference ahead of the third ODI.

"He'd love to be swinging the ball and getting it right early on, but

the reality is when you're defending big totals and playing against good players, they're coming hard at you," he added.

With star pacer Pat Cummins rested for the final ODI, Finch said there will be discussions on how to

use Starc. "So, there'll be conversations today about what we can do slightly different. Whether it's a tactical thing or when we're using him through the innings. We'll chat about that today. But, definitely no panic stations here from my point of view," Finch said.

Since the World Cup last year, Starc has endured a dip in form. The Australian quick has picked just 12 wickets while bleeding runs at an economy of 6.28 in 11 matches.

"From my point of view, and chatting to other guys about his technique and little things that his fellow bowlers and the fast-bowling cartel really monitor, they seemed to think that he's going really well," Finch said.

"So it's just a matter of time. There's nowhere to hide in one-day cricket when you're playing on some really flat wickets with quality opposition," he added.

Chappell calls for ban on switch-hit



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sydney, Dec 1: Former Australia captain Ian Chappell has suggested the ICC to ban switch-hitting, saying the shot is 'blatantly unfair' to the bowler and the fielding team.

In the ongoing ODI series between India and Australia, Glenn Maxwell and David Warner have caught the Indian bowlers off guard a number of times by playing the switch-hit.

A switch hit involves effectively changing from a right-hander to a left-hander just before the ball is delivered by the bowler for the purpose of executing the shot.

"The Australian batting has been exceptional. They've made it look pretty easy... Particularly Smith and Maxwell, some of the shots he plays are hard to believe. (Switch-hitting) is amazingly skillful - but it's not fair," Chappell told Wide World of Sports.

"It's very simple. Maxwell hit a couple of (switch-hit) shots and Warner did (Sunday) night. All you've got to say is that if the bats-

man changes the order of his hands or his feet (as the bowler runs in), then it's an illegal shot," he said.

Chappell said if the batsman, like the bowler, notifies of his intention to play the switch-hit before hand then it is okay but otherwise it 'blatantly unfair and annoying'.

"If the batsman is right-handed and wants to play switch-hit (in advance of the bowler running in), any bowler worth his salt will say, 'Go for your life, mate, I'll take my chances'. But when he completely becomes the opposite-handed batsman to what he faces up as, then it's not fair."

"If he's good enough to do it by excellent footwork or whatever other means he can devise, I don't have a problem with it. But when it's blatantly unfair, it annoys the hell out of me," he added.

The Australian said it is unfair that a bowler has to inform the umpire how they are going to bowl while a batsman can easily become 'opposite-handed' without any notification and take advantage of the field placing.

MCFC thrash East Bengal

AGENCIES

Goa, Dec 1: Mumbai City FC (MCFC) outclassed East Bengal in their third match of the Indian Super League (ISL) season at the GMS Stadium in Bambolim, Tuesday. Adam Le Fondre scored a brace (20th and 48th minutes) and Hernan Santana (58th) was on target as the Islanders cruised past the Kolkata giants.

The Red and Golds received an early blow when skipper and central defender Danny Fox had to leave the pitch after a clash with Le Fondre in the air. Fowler brought in central midfielder Mohammed Rafique and tweaked the formation from 3-4-3 to 4-3-3.

Mumbai were in control of the game right from the off and commanded proceedings. They got their first chance to score in the ninth minute when Mandar Rao Dessai took advantage of Surchandra's mistake on the right side of the box and found Le Fondre who set it up for Hugo Boumous to fire but thanks to a quality save from Debjit Majumder, Boumous failed to break the deadlock.

The Islanders finally scored the opening goal in the 20th minute from an excellent counter-attack. Rowllin Borges sent a long ball for Boumous and who first beat

Surchandra in pace and then went past Irshad inside the box before squaring the ball for Le Fondre who converted a routine tap-in.

The Red and Golds never looked comfortable with the ball throughout the first half and their backline was extremely shaky which allowed Mumbai to constantly pose threat on them.

Mumbai picked up things from where they had left in the first half and continued with their dominance. They scored the second goal three minutes into the second period from a penalty. Boumous followed the through ball down the

middle from Jahouh and entered the box but before he could pull the trigger, Majumder came out of his line and committed a foul resulting in the penalty. Le Fondre comfortably converted the spot-kick.

The Islanders piled on more misery on the Red and Golds 10 minutes later. Jahouh's out-swinging free-kick was kept in play by Boumous and Santana sent the ball in with a quality volley.

Mumbai climbed to the top of the league table with six points from three games while East Bengal languished at the rock bottom position without registering a point.



Adam Le Fondre points towards a teammate after his first goal against East Bengal, Tuesday

HFC look to continue unbeaten run against JFC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Vasco, Dec 1: Hyderabad FC (HFC) will look to continue their unbeaten run when they play their third game in 10 days, taking on Jamshedpur FC (JFC) in an ISL match at the Tilak Maidan here, Wednesday.

While the league has seen a series of draws over the weekend, Hyderabad and Jamshedpur are coming into the game on the back of contrasting form.

While Manolo Marquez's Hyderabad are unbeaten in two games to be currently placed at the fourth position, Owen Coyle's Jamshedpur are ninth in the table.

Jamshedpur played two eventful games so far - a season opening 1-2 loss to Chennaiyin FC followed by a 2-2 draw against Odisha FC, Sunday.

Interestingly, they played both these games at the Tilak Maidan, while HFC will step foot on the ground for the first time this season.



Coyle has some highly-talented names like Amarjit Singh, Narender Gahlot, Jitendra Singh and Isaac Vannalsawma at his disposal.

The additions of Peter Hartley, Stephen Eze, Laldinliana Rentlei, Jackichand Singh and Ricky Lallawmawma bring in some solidity. But the form of Nerijus Valskis, the top goalscorer in the league, with three goals in his first two games, could be the biggest threat for HFC in this clash.

Hyderabad FC come into this game on the back of a goalless draw against Bengaluru FC. While Marquez's men put in a strong performance on the night, injuries to Lluís Sastre and Joel Chianese dampened a spirited outing from the club.

However, there were plenty of positives to take from the game, as HFC registered consecutive clean sheets and were comfortable in keeping Bengaluru's attack at bay for most of that game.