

SUCCESS STORY

Actor Sanjana Sanghi has been selected as 2020's top Breakout Star of Indian Streaming Films and Web Series by IMDb

LEISURE P2

BLAME THE VICTIM

While addressing bamboo growers, K'taka agri minister says farmers who commit suicide are cowards

TWO STATES P7

MATTER OF CONCERN

IBM researchers say they've detected a coordinated global hacking campaign targeting the COVID vaccine 'cold chain'

INTERNATIONAL P10



Panigrahi arrested, sent to judicial custody

THE GOPALPUR MLA WAS PICKED UP FROM HIS OFFICIAL RESIDENCE IN BHUBANESWAR IN THE EVENING FOR QUESTIONING

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 3: Crime Branch officials Thursday arrested Gopalpur MLA Pradeep Panigrahi and sent him to Jharpara jail in connection with a job fraud case (No. 26/2020) lodged with the Cyber Police Station here by Tata Motors. He was picked up from his official residence in the City for interrogation in the evening.

After interrogating Panigrahi for several hours, Crime Branch sleuths produced him in the Bhubaneswar SDJM court. After hearing the prosecutors and Panigrahi's lawyers, the court sent the expelled BJD MLA to 14-day judicial custody for further interrogation.

JOB FRAUD CASE

Earlier, the Crime Branch sleuths picked up the Gopalpur MLA from his official residence in the City for questioning. The CB confirmed this on its Twitter handle saying, "Honble MLA Dr. Pradipt Kumar Panigrahi is being questioned in connection with CID CB Cyber Crime PS case no 26/2020." However, they did not reveal where he was taken.

On the other hand, Panigrahi's wife Sujata raised objections against the manner in which he was picked up by the Crime Branch sleuths. Speaking to the media, she alleged that Panigrahi was



treated like a Naxalite. "Some officials came to our house in four vehicles and informed us that my husband was being taken to the EOW office for questioning." Sujata alleged that her husband's arrest is part of a political conspiracy to keep him away from Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. She said that there was threat to her husband's life.

Notably, Tata Motors officials had lodged a complaint with the Crime Branch's Cyber Cell accusing Akash Pathak, son of suspended IFS officer Abhay Kant Pathak, of duping several job aspirants on the pretext of providing them employment in the automobile major. Pathak allegedly duped around 67 persons from Gopalpur by impersonating as the Managing Director of the company. Recently, a team from Crime Branch visited Pune in Maharashtra to probe the job fraud case.

In another significant development, the Enforcement Directorate has begun

HC ORDERS SECURITY TO PARI'S FAMILY

CUTTACK: The Orissa High Court directed Thursday the Nayagarh district Superintendent of Police (SP) to provide security to family members of 'Pari', the five-year-old was allegedly abducted and murdered in June this year. The High Court's observation came while hearing a PIL filed by the Bharatiya Bikash Parishad. The Odisha government has also been directed to submit the updated status report of the investigation into the case. In its PIL, the Bharatiya Bikash Parishad sought protection for Pari's family as some politicians and influential local persons are allegedly involved in the case. In their plea to the High Court they have asked for the order of a CBI probe into the case and ₹25 lakh compensation to the family. The Odisha government and the Nayagarh district administration have been made parties in the petition. The next hearing on the petition has been scheduled for December 16.

investigations into the money laundering charges against the father-son duo. Following the Vigilance department's request, the ED officials collected several documents and bank details related to the Abhaya Kant and his son. The father-son duo is currently being grilled at the office of Vigilance Directorate in Cuttack after they were taken on a three-day remand for interrogation related to the disproportionate assets (DA) case.

PETROL, DIESEL DEARER AGAIN

PRICES IN BHUB	
PETROL:	₹83.29 (+0.17)
DIESEL:	₹79.35 (+0.21)

PNN/AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 3: Oil marketing companies Thursday increased the prices of petrol and diesel after keeping the retail prices unchanged for the past couple of days.

The pump price of petrol increased by 17 paise per litre Thursday to ₹82.66 a litre in Delhi from a level of ₹82.49 a litre a day earlier. Similarly, the diesel price increased by 19 a litre to ₹72.84 a litre in the national capital as compared to ₹72.66 per litre on the previous day.

The prices of auto fuel have also increased across the country but the level of rise has been different depending on the taxation structure in each state. In the past 14 days, due prices have risen 11 days with petrol prices rising by ₹1.60 per litre and diesel by ₹2.38 a litre. The increase has been primarily on account of firming up of global oil and product prices following news of successful coronavirus vaccine.



1800 266 266 1 (tollfree)

Matric, Plus II exams to be held offline

The exams will be delayed and held after classroom teaching, says minister

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 3: The annual matriculation and Plus II examinations conducted by state government agencies will be delayed as schools have been closed due to Covid-19 pandemic, School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash said here Thursday.

However, taking a clue from the CBSE, the state government has decided to hold both the examinations offline.

Usually, Board of Secondary Education (BSE) conducts the matriculation examination in the month of February, while Council of Higher Secondary Education (CHSE) holds the Plus II exams in March.

The state government closed down all schools following the outbreak of Covid-19 in March and has

been holding classes in online mode, in addition to imparting education through TV & radio programmes.

"As online teaching is not reaching all students, we will conduct the examinations in offline mode after providing classroom teaching to the students," Dash said, adding, "The examinations will be delayed next year."

Meanwhile, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has said the board examinations of 2021 will be conducted in the conventional offline mode.

On reopening of schools, he said, the department is holding deliberations on the issue and the final decision will be taken soon keeping in view the interest of the students as well as the Covid-19 guidelines.

SHORT TAKES

MDH owner passes away at 97

New Delhi: Mahashay Dharampal Gulati, the owner of the spices brand 'MDH' passed away Thursday morning. Reports suggest that his health deteriorated recently and he was undergoing treatment at a Delhi hospital. On Thursday early morning, he suffered cardiac and passed away. Born in 1923 in undivided India in Sialkot, now in Pakistan, Mahashay ji, also popularly known as 'Dadaji', had a very humble beginning. Being a school dropout, he soon joined his father's spices business at a very young age.

Muribahal ranger in Vigilance net

Bolangir: Vigilance sleuths Thursday carried out simultaneous raids on houses and office of Muribahal ranger Prashant Nayak in Bolangir district on charge of amassing assets disproportionate to his known sources of income. Four teams of Vigilance officials of Bolangir, Sonepur, Sambalpur and Bargarh divisions conducted raids at the ranger's residence at Hatapada in Titilagarh, his office at Muribahal and a farmhouse near Belpadar. Around 25 anti-corruption wing officials led by Vigilance DSP Dasarathi Sethi conducted the raids at about 6 am and the raids were still underway at the filing of this report.

Rajinikanth to launch party in Jan

Chennai: Superstar Rajinikanth Thursday asserted that he would launch his political party in January 2021, ending years of suspense and in a big morale booster to his supporters and fans. The top star, promising his brand of spiritual politics, categorically said that his party would fight Assembly elections in 2021 and "emerge victorious." Assembly elections are due in Tamil Nadu during April-May 2021. P7

Govt opposes lifetime ban for convicted politicians

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 3: The Centre has opposed the life ban on convicted politicians from contesting MP/MLA elections, forming a political party or becoming an office bearer of a party, telling the Supreme Court that the life ban on bureaucrats cannot be equated with similar ban on lawmakers, if convicted in a crime, as the latter are not bound by service conditions, but an oath of office instead.

An affidavit filed by the Ministry of Law and Justice said: "It is stated that there are no specific service conditions laid down in respect of elected representatives, the fact that the people's representatives are public servants, the elected representatives are ordinarily bound by the oath that they have taken, to serve the citizens of their constituency in particular and the country in general."

The Centre said the public servants are debarred from their service for lifetime if convicted of offence punishable under provisions of various laws, but a legislator, who is disqualified for an offence, only for a period specified in the

Representation of Peoples Act. The affidavit added that lawmakers' conduct is bound by propriety, good conscience and they are expected to generally work in the interest of the nation, and they are not above the law.

"In so far, as the conditions of service of public servants, not being elected representatives, is concerned, the same is regulated by their respective service laws, including retirement rules etc. Thus, there is no justification for the challenge to vires of the said provision of the Representation of Peoples Act," said the affidavit. The response has come on a plea by advocate Ashwini Upadhyay who amended the prayer of the application urging the Supreme Court to issue direction to Centre regarding the same.

Talks with farmers deadlocked

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 3: Talks between three Union ministers and a representative group of thousands of agitating farmers failed to yield any resolution Thursday, as the union leaders stuck to their demand for the repeal of new farm laws and even refused the lunch, tea and water offered to them during almost eight-hour-long hectic parleys.

On its part, the government assured the group of nearly 40 farmer leaders that all their valid concerns would be addressed, but the other side flagged several loopholes and deficiencies in the laws, which they said were passed hastily in September.

The Agriculture Ministry tweeted that doubts of farmers were addressed by Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, who led the government side at the talks. Tomar later told reporters that the next meeting will take place Saturday at 2 pm.

A government source said the meeting would resume Saturday as no final outcome could be reached due to paucity of time. Union leaders, who came out of the meeting venue shouting slogans, said the talks remained deadlocked and some



of them threatened to boycott any further meetings if no solution was found at Thursday's meeting.

"Discussions are over from our side. Our leaders have said they will not attend further meetings if a solution is not given today by the government," said Pratibha Shinde, AIKSCC (All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee) working group member and president of Lok Sangharsh Morcha, which represents farmers of Maharashtra and Gujarat.

Another farmer leader Kulwant Singh Sandhu said the government made many proposals including on MSP and procurement system, which would be discussed among the farmer organisations on Friday, before the next meeting with the government on Saturday.

BADAL RETURNS PADMA AWARD

CHANDIGARH: Akali Dal stalwart and former Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal Thursday returned his Padma Vibhushan award in protest against the Centre's new farm laws. In a separate announcement, dissident Akali leader and Rajya Sabha member Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa also said he will return the Padma Bhushan conferred on him last year. Earlier, some former Punjab sportsmen too have threatened to return their awards. Badal's move follows over two months after his Shiromani Akali Dal pulled out of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) at the Centre, protesting against the three laws which deregulate the sale of crops.

MP Police lathi charge, arrest Covid warriors

AGENCIES

Bhopal, Dec 3: In a show of brutal might, Madhya Pradesh Police Thursday lathi charged a group of temporary healthcare workers, including women, who were protesting at Neelam Park here against their sacking after three months of service at different Covid care centres. Fifteen protesters were later arrested and taken into custody.

Over 500 healthcare workers, including nurses, para-medical staff, pharmacists and technicians, had assembled at Neelam Park to protest against the termination of Covid warriors.

The protesters have been demanding that a delegation be allowed to meet the Chief Minister Shivrang Singh Chouhan as they wanted to apprise him of their plights. Instead of granting them permission, the authorities directed the police to use force to remove the aggrieved healthcare workers from the protest site. Obliging their masters, the police beat them mercilessly.

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	44632.65 ↑ 20.10
NIFTY	13133.90 ↑ 20.10
DOLLAR	74.48 ↑ ₹0.10
EURO	89.72 ↑ ₹0.58
GOLD	₹49,093 ↑ ₹450
SILVER	₹61,903 ↓ ₹250

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	31.2°C	31.8°C
TEMP MIN	15.4°C	14.5°C
Humidity	96%	84%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Mainly clear sky

UN removes cannabis from list of most perilous drugs

THE MOVE IS EXPECTED TO OPEN DOORS FOR MORE RESEARCH INTO THE MEDICINAL AND THERAPEUTIC POTENTIAL OF THE DRUG

AGENCIES

United Nations, Dec 3: In a significant move, the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) Wednesday voted to take out cannabis from the list of drugs that are regulated most tightly regulated. Earlier, cannabis had been listed alongside deadly addictive opioids such as heroin.

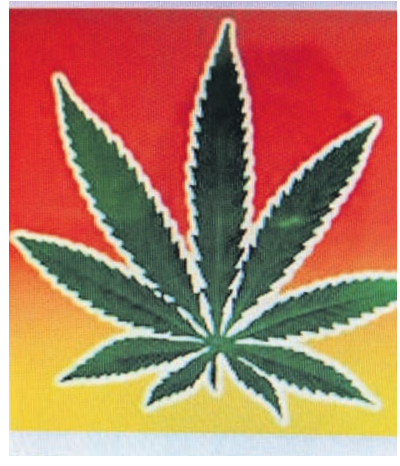
Twenty-seven out of the 53 member states voted in support, while 25 against the reclassification of the drug. Ukraine abstained from voting. The US and European nations were among those who voted in favour, while China, Egypt, Nigeria, Pakistan and Russia were among the nations that opposed.

It is expected that the historic move

will open doors to recognise the medicinal and therapeutic potential of cannabis. Moreover, it will now be easier for countries to conduct new research.

Cannabis had been categorised in the strictest control schedules for the past 59 years, which discouraged all uses of the drug, including for medicinal purposes. The development comes in the wake of the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommending the deletion of "cannabis and cannabis resin" from Schedule IV of the 1961 Convention on Narcotic Drugs in January 2019.

In its recommendation to CND, the WHO panel had noted that cannabis can have adverse effects and cause dependence. However, it further said that



the drug helps in reducing pain and nausea, in addition to easing symptoms of medical conditions like anorexia, epilepsy and multiple sclerosis. Different from other drugs like fentanyl, heroin and morphine, cannabis does not carry a significant risk of death, the WHO said.

Initially, the CND member states were supposed to vote on the proposal in a March 2019 session, but some countries requested more time to study the facts prior to approving the WHO position.

However, even after the cannabis is removed from Schedule IV of the 1961 Convention on Narcotic Drugs, the drug will continue to remain in Schedule I. Earlier, it appeared on both lists. Schedule I is the next strictest level of

control after Schedule IV. The WHO recommended that cannabis still be listed there, noting "the high rates of public health problems arising from cannabis use."

Experts are of the view that the vote will have no immediate impact on loosening international controls because the classification of cannabis is still under the jurisdiction of individual sovereign governments.

At present, more than 50 countries have adopted medicinal cannabis programmes, while 15 US states Canada and Uruguay have legalised its recreational use, with Mexico and Luxembourg on the brink of becoming the third and fourth countries to do so nationally.

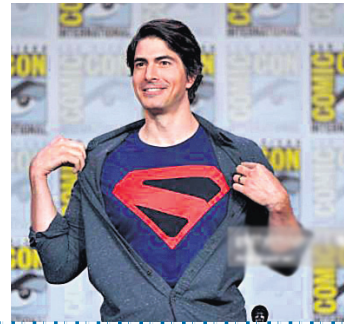


WONDER WOMAN 1984 TO RELEASE IN INDIA BEFORE US

The Gal Gadot-starrer superhero film, *Wonder Woman 1984*, will be releasing in India just ahead of Christmas on December 24. The film will release in India a day before the US release date of December 25.

BRANDON ROUTH JOINS CAST OF THE ROOKIE

Superman Returns star Brandon Routh has bagged a role in the show *The Rookie*. He has currently been roped in for four episodes of the show's upcoming third season. There is a possibility for more, reports *deadline.com*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
For you, it's creativity today and logic tomorrow, even where work is concerned. You seem determined to succeed, but Ganesh says this requires steadiness and dedication to work. You may want to spend a quiet evening with your spouse, or your book.

TAURUS
As concerns of your future grip you, you will start working on a method to improve things today. It is a day of moderation and there will be neither an insurmountable problem nor a eulogistic high to brag about by the end of it. Things might get dull around the evening, but be patient as the new sunrise will have more exciting prospects to offer, says Ganesh.

GEMINI
It is quite probable that your sweetheart will take most of your time either in person or in thoughts, predicts Ganesh. A casual conversation with someone special in the afternoon may lead to exhilarating moments later in the day. You may fill your wardrobe with new clothes.

CANCER
It is quite likely that both close and distant relatives will fill your heart with thrill and happiness, portends Ganesh. There may be a little misunderstanding with your peers at work. You will make quite a progress both at work and in personal life.

LEO
Humanity is something that is missing a lot these days, and you believe it to be your duty to ensure that you reach out to everyone around you, says Ganesh. But don't expect anything as revolutionary and emphatic in your personal life.

VIRGO
Handicrafts business will fascinate you today, predicts Ganesh. People will be left wondering what fuels all that dedication and commitment - at work and at home! Ganesh advises you to consummate those bonds of love and roll in the hay with your spouse.

LIBRA
An extended family is a boon, especially when it comes to charting out some success. Okay, maybe it's not Don Corleone calling the shots in your favour; but expect to get a favourable base from your relatives for the same. Bring your luck with you to work, and keep smiling.

SCORPIO
The Dons in the office may bypass your superiors and probably make you run around as an errand boy. You are likely to impress your superiors with your brilliance. Evening, though, will ring out the exhaustion of the morning. Ganesh advises you to delay bidding on sealed tenders for today.

SAGITTARIUS
All said and done, today Ganesh foresees you striking a fine balance between your profession and passion. Profession will win the hand during the course of the day. Your fitting in social circles is slated to take a back-seat as you tend to focus more on your work.

CAPRICORN
The usually high spirit that you display at work is likely to be dampened today by a trivial issue. So, try not to let too many thoughts trouble your mind today, advises Ganesh. Money matters may be pressing, forcing you to take risks. In the circumstances, keeping your cool will be the best thing to do, for a minor slip can cost you all that you may not be prepared to lose.

AQUARIUS
Who doesn't like to have a heavier pocket? You will be pleased to have little extra cash in your wallet. Also, you will pay attention to your financial planning and position, says Ganesh.

PISCES
An important day awaits you. Your spirits will be high, and your intuition uncanny. Guided by these, it is likely that you will make several significant decisions today in matters of finance and relationships. Your energy levels will be unflagging and you will find yourself at the peak of your abilities, says Ganesh.

Hina paints seaside pink in scorching bikini photo-op

Mumbai: Actress Hina Khan hit upon the perfect pose to grab her fans by the eyeballs Thursday. In her latest Instagram photo, Hina is a picture of oomph in pink bikini.

Going by her recent photos, Hina has been having the time of her life in Maldives. In her new bikini photo-op, she soaks up the sun in a pink bikini with pink, blue and white straps.

The comment section is not surprisingly flooded with fire and heart emojis, while many fans described the image simply as 'hot'. Earlier, Hina shared photos on a beach in easy-breezy dresses. Her fans aren't complaining. In fact, in October, Hina garnered a following of 10 million on Instagram.

The *Yeh Rishita Kya Kehlata Hai* star is known for participating in the popular reality show *Bigg Boss*. She also recently starred in the supernatural show *Naagin 5*. IANS



Neena, Kalki in international film Goldfish



Mumbai: Actors Neena Gupta and Kalki Koechlin will co-star in their first international project, *Goldfish*. Set in London, the Pushan Kripalani

directorial deals with memory, music, mental health and identity.

It starts when Anamika (played by Kalki) returns home to her estranged mother Sadhana (Neena Gupta) because she is suffering from the onset of dementia. Anamika returns to a neighbourhood she barely remembers, to a woman who sometimes doesn't remember her. It is about how they explore these complex emotions.

Talking about the film, Neena said: "When Pushan came to me with this *Goldfish* script, I was very excited.

Number one because it is a very challenging role and it's a beautiful script and I love the way Pushan works."

Kalki is equally excited about the project. "I've been wanting to work with Pushan, the director since I saw his first film *Threshold* and Neenaji is an amazing actor; I am looking forward to working with her," Kalki shared.

Sanjana is 'Breakout Star' of IMDb for 2020

Mumbai: Actress Sanjana Sanghi, who was seen opposite late Sushant Singh Rajput in *Dil Bechara* earlier this year, is the top Breakout Star of Indian Streaming Films and Web Series this year by IMDb. The list was released Thursday.

Sanjana is followed by Isha Talwar of *Mirzapur 2*, Harshita Gaur, Swastika Mukherjee and Aahana Kumra.

Fresh from the success of *Scam 1992: The Harshad Mehta Story*, Shreya Dhanwanthary is sixth in the list, with Tripti Dimri,

Jaideep Ahlawat, Nithya Menen and Niharika Lyra Dutt following her. The list is determined using data from IMDbPro STARmeter rankings, which are based on the actual page views of the more than 200 million monthly IMDb visitors.

"With the unprecedented popularity of streaming movies and web series this year, we are thrilled to highlight the Indian actors and actresses from these projects who saw a tremendous rise," said Matt Kum in the service. IANS



India is a wonderful place to engage in filmmaking, says Nolan

The Oscar-winning Hollywood maverick has shot portions of his new film *Tenet* in Mumbai, after filming crucial scenes of his 2012 global blockbuster *The Dark Knight Rises* in Jodhpur

Acclaimed British-American film director and screenwriter Christopher Nolan feels Hindi films happen to retain the fundamental reasons due to which we enjoy cinema, and that Hollywood has lost some of that essence.

In a recent interview, the Oscar-winning Hollywood maverick added that his trips to India made him aware of the thriving world of Hindi film industry. He loves everything about the Indian film affair - from the emotions and the drama, to the action and the music revelry.

"(With) my trips to Mumbai, I started engaging more and more with Bollywood and the broad strokes of those movies.

They happen to (have the) real fundamental reasons that we watch cinema, and I think Hollywood cinema has lost some of that in some ways," Nolan said, while opening up on his bond with India.

Nolan has shot portions of his new film *Tenet*, starring veteran actress Dimple Kapadia among others, in Mumbai, after filming crucial scenes of his 2012 global blockbuster *The Dark Knight Rises* in Jodhpur in the past.

"Shooting in India was fantastic. We had shot a section of *The Dark Knight Rises* in Jodhpur, some years ago. But we shot very briefly, and I always wanted to come back," said the filmmaker who has

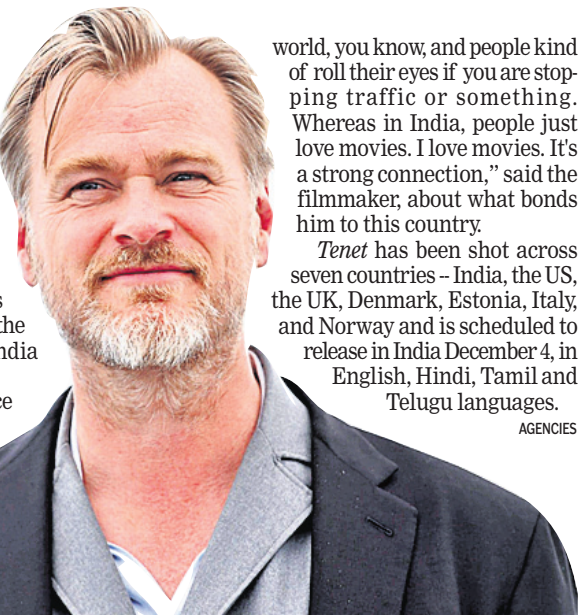


Christopher Nolan, Dimple Kapadia on the set of *Tenet*

been consistently re-defining and influencing the idiom of cinematic entertainment over the years with films such as *Memento*, *Inception*, *Interstellar*, *The Dark Knight* trilogy among others.

Nolan looks back at his experience of capturing the sights and sounds of India with fondness.

"It is a wonderful place to be in and engage with filmmaking. You film in other parts of the

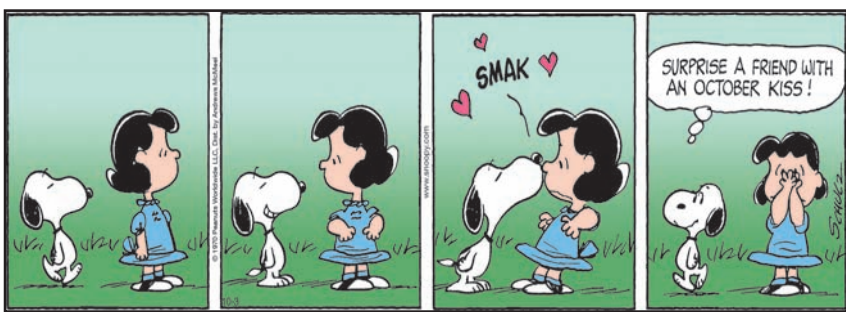


world, you know, and people kind of roll their eyes if you are stopping traffic or something. Whereas in India, people just love movies. I love movies. It's a strong connection," said the filmmaker, about what bonds him to this country.

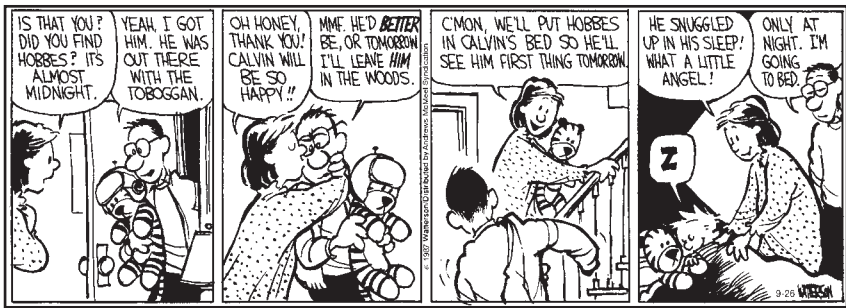
Tenet has been shot across seven countries - India, the US, the UK, Denmark, Estonia, Italy, and Norway and is scheduled to release in India December 4, in English, Hindi, Tamil and Telugu languages.

AGENCIES

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

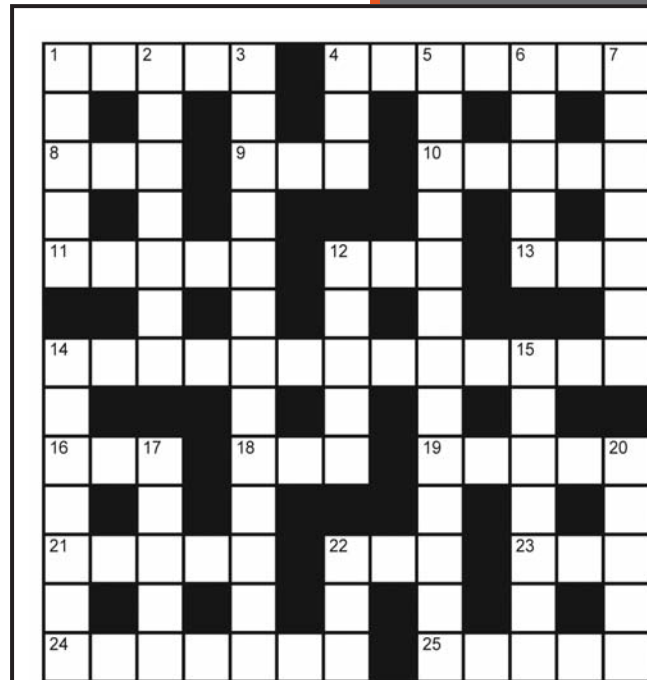


BREVITY



FUN post

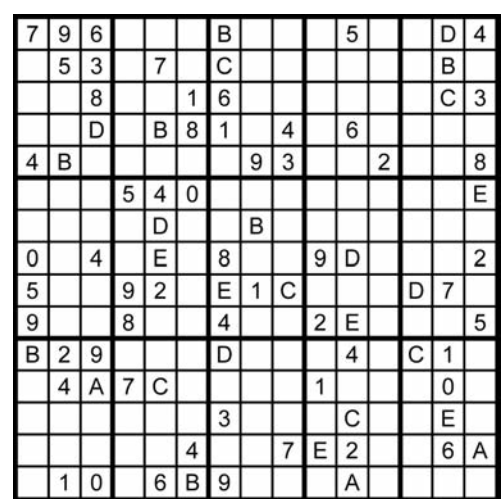
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Béarnaise
 - 4 Joyous
 - 8 Possess
 - 9 Jeu de mots
 - 10 Terrestrial lizard
 - 11 Welsh dog
 - 12 Honey maker
 - 13 Sixth sense, for short
 - 14 Cracker adornment? (7,6)
 - 16 Seek damages
 - 18 Coquettish
 - 19 Young pigeon
 - 21 Willow twig
 - 22 Antagonist
 - 23 Clamour
 - 24 Russian chess master
 - 25 Twilled fabric
 - 3 Team spirit (6,2,5)
 - 4 Flipper
 - 5 Theatre cues (5,8)
 - 6 Boiling mad
 - 7 Case in point
 - 12 Small edible fruit
 - 15 Andes land
 - 17 True heath
 - 20 Pig out
 - 22 Recipe direction

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

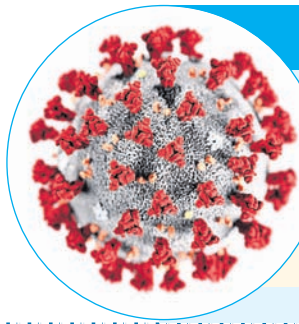
SUDOKU

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



NOBLE GESTURE

Girls feed gram seed to pigeons near AG Square in Bhubaneswar, Thursday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	6,50,56,088	4,51,29,016	15,03,278
India	94,99,710	89,31,798	1,38,159
Odisha	3,20,017	3,14,023	1,755

Artisans, weavers get timely filip

GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED MARKETING FIRMS PROCURE PRODUCTS WORTH ₹132.29 CRORE TO SUPPORT PANDEMIC-HIT WEAVERS, ARTISANS AND CRAFTSMEN

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 3: In a major boost to weavers, craftsmen and artisans, the state government has procured their products worth ₹132.29 crore through its agencies during the Covid-19 pandemic, an official said here Thursday.

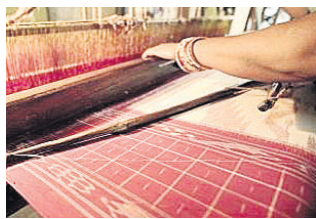
The development was announced at a high-level review meeting chaired by Chief Secretary Asit Kumar Tripathy here.

According to sources, various products worth ₹132.29 crore were procured from weavers and craftsmen through government-sponsored marketing organisations like Boyanika and Utkalika.

While Boyanika lifted ₹25.96 crore worth products from the weavers, Sambalpur Bastralaya procured products worth ₹26.22 crore. Serified bought ₹0.49 crore worth items and Utkalika procured products worth ₹2.06 crore from craftsmen.

It was decided at the meeting that the government would conduct another procurement drive in the coming months to provide another ₹30 crore to craftsmen who lost

LIVELIHOOD GENERATION



11 LAKH MGNREGS-MODELED MAN DAYS GENERATED FROM APRIL TO SEPTEMBER

4,400 WERE PROVIDED DIRECT EMPLOYMENT IN TEXTILE AND APPAREL SECTOR DURING THE PERIOD

1,267 AGED PERSONS WITH AT LEAST 20 YEARS OF WEAVING EXPERIENCE WERE ALSO PROVIDED WITH A FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OF ₹500 TO ₹800 PER MONTH

CHIEF SECRETARY DIRECTS CREATION OF MORE LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH SERICULTURE

6 Since sericulture is a labour intensive activity and sericocons have wider market demand, its expansion will create more employment opportunities for people
ASIT TRIPATHY | CHIEF SECRETARY

their livelihood due to the devastating pandemic.

Reviewing activities of the Handlooms, Textiles and Handicrafts department during the Covid period, Tripathy directed creation of more livelihood opportunities through expansion of sericulture in the state. "Since sericulture is a labour

intensive activity and sericocons have wider market demand, its expansion will create more employment opportunities for people," he said. Tripathy directed to scale up these activities in convergence with MGNREGS.

Development Commissioner Suresh Chandra Mohapatra said,

"Asana and Arjuna plants are the natural feed for sericulture. These are forest species and hence can be planted in forest areas." Mohapatra advised to take up more such plantation in convergence with Forest and Environment department.

Department secretary Subha Sharma said around 11 lakh mandays were generated through sericulture activities within April to September of the current year and the workers were paid around ₹24.53 crore in wages. Besides, around 4,400 people were provided direct employment in textile and apparel sector, particularly through Shahi Exports and Aditya Birla groups. Out of them, more than 87 per cent were women, she said.

Around 1,267 aged persons with at least 20 years of weaving experience were also provided with a financial assistance of ₹500 to ₹800 per month. Apart from these, weavers and artisans were also supported with work-shed, tools and equipment, credit linkage and raw material banks.

VIGILANCE DETECTS MORE DEPOSITS IN AKASH'S ACCOUNTS

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 3: The Special Investigation Team (SIT) of state Vigilance has claimed to have found evidence of another ₹1.28 crore cash deposited in the accounts of Akash Kumar Pathak, the son of senior IFS officer Abhay Kant Pathak.

With this, the total bank deposits in his accounts in Bhubaneswar and Pune detected so far has climbed up to ₹16.05 crore, said Vigilance statement.

Apart from the total cash, the Vigilance department has also traced bank accounts and insurance policies of Akash Pathak at Berhampur and Bolangir.

Contribute to growth as agri-entrepreneurs: CM

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 3: Launching 15 online services of Fisheries and Animal Resources Development department under 5T initiatives, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Thursday called upon the youth and farmers to contribute to the state's economic growth as agri-entrepreneurs.

"My government has identified the allied sectors as the growth propellers for state's farmers, women SHGs and entrepreneurs and thus doubled the allocation to the allied sectors during 2020-21," he said.

The state government provides financial assistance up to ₹50 lakh for various commercial agri-entrepises, including cage culture fisheries, he said.

Naveen said the growth in fisheries and livestock sectors during 2019-20

6 My government has identified the allied sectors as growth propellers for state's farmers, women SHGs and entrepreneurs
NAVEEN PATNAIK | CM

was over 19 per cent, which is much higher than other primary sectors.

The state government, under its 5T commitment, has brought out a new policy during March 2020, to promote cage culture fishery in large and medium reservoirs. Under the policy, the government Thursday signed agreements with many entrepreneurs for taking up cage culture in Hirakud reservoir.

"Cage culture can increase the annual fish production of the state by over 1.24 lakh tonnes, achieving self-sufficiency in meeting the demand. It will also promote entre-

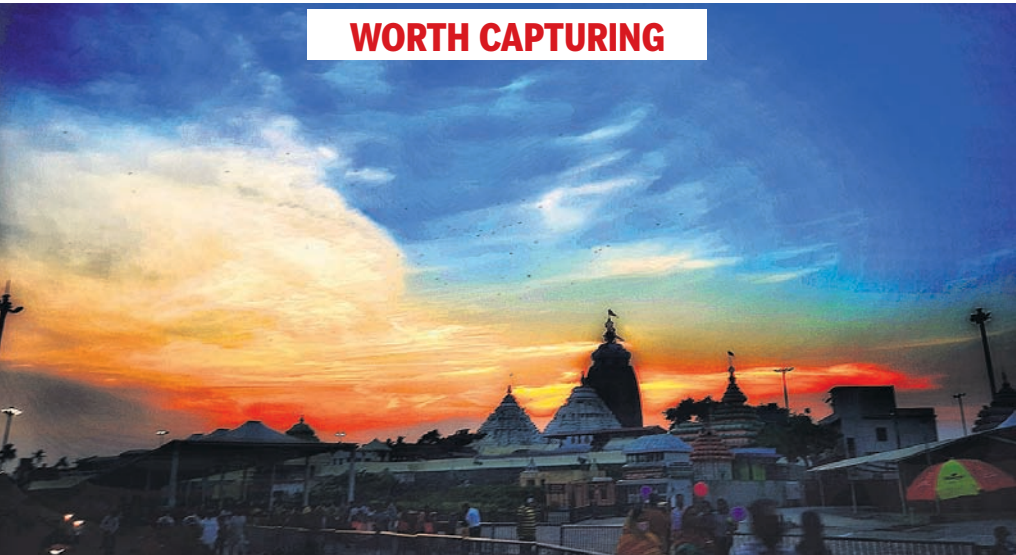
preneurship and create job opportunities," the chief minister said.

The royalty generated from lease of the reservoirs will immensely benefit the Primary Fishery Cooperative Societies too, he said.

Patnaik said, "Online applications will provide a number of useful services to fishers and farmers including registration of fishing boats and licenses, registration of brackish water farms and avail subsidy for setting up of new livestock and fishery units."

The state government has also launched a special Covid package of ₹173 crore to boost the allied sectors which will directly benefit over 44,000 farmers, he said, adding, "My government is committed to provide door step services to farmers so that they can access the benefit of our schemes, timely and efficiently. I wish the new initiatives all success."

WORTH CAPTURING



Srimandir silhouetted against the evening sky, Thursday

OP PHOTO

Mammal count drops in Bhitarkanika

As per the latest headcount, enumerators spotted nearly 8,000 mammals belonging to 16 species, while the census figure stood at 8,105 last year

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar/Kendrapara, Dec 3: The Bhitarkanika National Park and adjoining wetland sites along the Mahanadi deltaic regions have yet again emerged as a congenial home to mammals despite a marginal drop in their population as per the latest headcount, a Forest official said, Thursday.

According to the latest headcount report released by the Forest department, the enumerators have spotted nearly 8,000 mammals belonging to 16 species, while the census figure stood at 8,105 last year.

However, the population of some mammals such as leopard cat (2), sambar (4), hare (7) and hyena (10) was negligible and the diminishing population of these species is a matter of concern, the official said.

"The mammals' population continues to be quite substantial in the park due to adequate conservation measures besides vigil by an anti-poaching squad of the Forest de-



PC: pibindia.wordpress.com

6 The mammals' population continues to be quite substantial in the park due to adequate conservation measures besides vigil by an anti-poaching squad of the Forest department
BIKASH RANJAN DASH | DFO, BHITARKANIKA MANGROVE (WILDLIFE) FOREST DIVISION

partment," the Divisional Forest Officer, Bhitarkanika Mangrove (wildlife) Forest division, Bikash Ranjan Dash, said. Spotted deer, wild boars apart from monkeys formed a sizable chunk of the mammals' population. These itinerant species which stray into nearby human settlements on the periphery of the park destroy crop and agriculture fields, triggering man-animal conflict, the senior official said.

While 3,108 spotted deer were counted, the breakup population of other mammals stands at wild boar (1,811), sambar (4), rhesus macaque monkey (2,250), common

langur (61), jackal (366), fishing cat (44), hyena (10), otter (144), jungle cat (17), mongoose (24), fox (10), leopard cat (2), porcupine (23), Indian civet cat (13) and hare (7).

Depts to include feedback mechanism

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 3: To get a good score from Centre in implementation of reforms to ease doing business in Odisha, the state government has asked various departments to include feedback mechanism in online services provided for industrial houses.

Industries secretary Hemant Sharma has recently written letters in this regard to secretaries of the departments implementing State Reform Action Plan 2020-21.

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) of Union government will give scores for this year's SRAP as-

ONLINE SERVICES



essment basing on the feedback collected from users who have availed

the reformed services during the period November to March of the current financial year.

Therefore, Sharma requested the departments to include a feedback mechanism within the online portals for different services through which the users can provide feedback.

This will not only help in improving the service delivery processes but also ensure user satisfaction, he said, adding, it will also encourage Mo Sarkar initiative of the state government.

In its last report, the DPIIT has ranked Odisha at 29th position in the country under Business Reforms Action Plan.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



DISABILITY RIGHTS GET JUDICIAL BOOST

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 3: The State Commission for Disabilities Thursday decided to hold several camp courts in tribal areas of the state to resolve the woes of differently-abled population.

The commission is likely to start the courts soon in the tribal areas of Malkangiri district and later extend the same in rural areas across the state.

State Disabilities Commissioner Sulochana Das Thursday said that her office is now making plans for camps across the state in rural areas, keeping in mind the pandemic's impact on functioning of the office.

"During the COVID-19 outbreak, differently-abled people were affected severely; however, our online and telephone grievance system was on. Still, the issues of many could not come to the fore due to the pandemic," she said.

"We have decided to open camp grievance systems to reach out to

people now. We are all set to start camp court and awareness sessions to settle the issues," she added.

Talking about the 2021 Census, she also said that the number of differently-abled population is all set to rise owing to the new legislation on disability.

According to Das, the camp courts would comprise of the Collector, SP, BDO, DSSO and others to resolve issues faster.

"The state has a total of 12.44 lakh differently-abled people as per the 2011 Census

but if we go by the Disability Act of 1995 and the subsequent law in 2016 which added 21 types of disabilities, the number of differently-abled people is likely to touch 13 lakh to 14 lakh in the 2021 Census," she said.

The official also said that several differently-abled people from the state are often deprived of government assistance due to lack of awareness and disability certificates.

Two bike lifters' gang busted, 46 bikes recovered

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 3: In a major breakthrough, Commissionerate police here busted two bike lifters gang and recovered 46 stolen motor cycles from their possession Thursday.

The cops also succeeded in arresting five members of the gangs. Police arrested prime accused Sonu Pradhan, 29, of village Godipada, under Saranakula police station in Nayagarh and two members of the his gang identified as Chittaranjan Parida alias Tiba, 26, Deba Kolas (28) of Malipada, under Jankia police limits in Khurda.



Odissi, Kuchipudi make third day memorable

POST NEWS NETWORK

Konark, Dec 3: Spellbinding Odissi performances and an engaging act of Kuchipudi made the third day of Konark Festival here Thursday a memorable occasion.

Madhulita Mohapatra and her troupe Nrityantar from Bangalore were the first ones to impress with dance pieces like 'Ishwari', 'Malhar Pallavi', 'Varsha Avisar' and 'Hari Smarane' 'Mado.'

'Ishwari - an ode to Devi' is a dance piece in praise of the Goddess. Music for the dance piece has been composed by Sukanta Kundu and the rhythm composition is by Guru Dhaneswar Swain.

Written by Sanskrit scholar, Pandit Nityananda Mishra, this dance number, 'Ishwari' eulogises the Goddess in her three popular forms of Devi (the Goddess) - Ma Manikeshwari, Chamundeshwari & Durgeshwari. This dance presentation has an enjoyable choreographic freshness to it.

The second dance piece 'Pallavi' was a pure act of lyrical beauty that places an equal emphasis on the twin aspects of melody and

KONARK FESTIVAL



Performance by Madhulita Mohapatra and her troupe Nrityantar from Bangalore

rhythm. In Sanskrit, 'Pallavi' means 'to grow'.

Like a creeper, the 'Pallavi' grows in pace and complexity, slowly yet surely. Hand gestures and body movements are not meant to tell a

story here. Rather, they are used to create and enhance beauty. Beautiful dance passages run parallel with rhythmic syllables sung musically.

Third dance item 'Varsha Avisar' is based on the excerpts from poet

Kalidas' 'Ritusamhar'. It is a celebration of the arrival of rain and the pangs of separation that lovers suffer, yearning for the beloved.

The Indian soil, dry with the prolonged heat of summer, eagerly welcomes the arrival of the rains. The cooling drops of the first rain arouse myriads of sensations in the Indian mind. It is a symbol of new life, regeneration, of the thrill and passion of romance, love, of unadulterated joy of living.

The last dance item was 'Hari Smarane Mado' which is in praise of Lord Vishnu and is based on the popular devanama, 'Hari Smarane Mado Niranthara' by Shri Purandara Dasa. It literally means: Constantly meditate on Hari to get salvation. He is the one who protects those who take his shelter. The dancers enacted popular stories where devotees sought shelter under the protection of Hari.

After Odissi performances, veteran Kuchipudi choreographer Vasanthalakshmi Narasimhachari and her troupe of Kalamamparna Foundation, Chennai performed classical acts late in the evening.

BMC feels students' role crucial in waste mgmt

POST NEWS NETWORK
Bhubaneswar, Dec 3: In a bid to educate students about management and disposal of plastic wastes, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), Thursday, organised a training programme for teachers of different schools here.
The BMC in collaboration with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) organised the training programme which saw participation of 40 secondary school teachers from 30 select schools joining as agents of first-level change.
"Plastic is energy. We need to dispose it at the right place so that it is recycled and reused for ensuring a clean and green environment. To ensure that students play a crucial role in this regard, special plans have been drawn and students are identified as key agents that will bring the change and help to keep the city clean," said Suvendu Kumar Sahoo, Deputy



Commissioner, Sanitation. Sahoo further said that special bins would be kept in several schools of the Smart City. Students will be encouraged with the help of teachers to dispose plastic wastes at designated points so that they can be easily disposed in a systematic manner. Once teachers are oriented, they will regularly train the students on plastic waste management at school level.
Sources said that BMC has chalked out orientation of 30 schools, success of which will be replicated

in other schools. The civic body further stated that there are plans to reward schools which will collect maximum plastic waste from their campuses to develop competitiveness and encourage students in the unique initiative. The initiative is likely to be undertaken after the schools reopens. Notably, the civic body has emphasized on control of plastic use in the city last week. Following a state government notification in October last year, the BMC had banned single-use plastics under its jurisdictions.

PLASTIC MENACE

Special trash cans would be placed in several schools of the Smart City for disposal of plastic waste
Students will be encouraged with the help of teachers to dispose plastic wastes at designated points so that they can be easily disposed in a systematic manner
There are plans to reward schools which will collect maximum plastic waste from their campuses to develop competitiveness and encourage students in the unique initiative
However, with the spread of Covid-19, the civic authority had shifted its focus on containing infection in the city. While Covid-induced lockdown had significantly reduced plastic usage, it resurfaced after gradual resumption of economic activities.

FARMERS' IRE



Activists of AIKM, AIKS and AIAKS trying to break the police barricade during a 'civil disobedience movement' at PMG Square in Bhubaneswar to protest against the new farm laws, Thursday

97 driving licences cancelled in 10 days

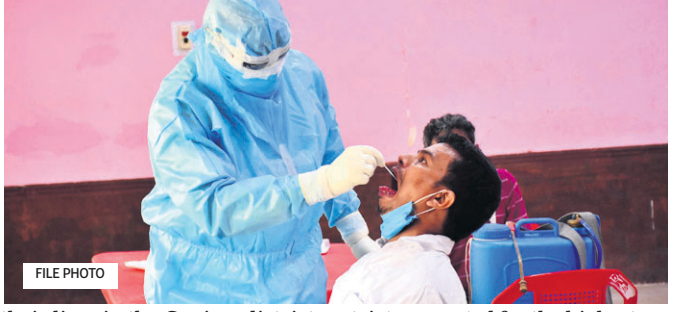
POST NEWS NETWORK
Bhubaneswar, Dec 3: The Regional Transport Office (RTO) Bhubaneswar has cancelled driving licences (DLs) of 97 persons in the last 10 days. According to sources, the RTO-I has cancelled DLs of 13 persons and RTO-II of 84 persons.
They said that 50 more cases of traffic violation are also being looked into by the RTO officials. Sources stated that the licences of most of these violators will also be cancelled.
Interestingly, most of the traffic rule violators were helmetless bik-

ers. In most cases, the two-wheelers did not belong to them also.
"If any traffic rule violator manages to flee during checking, the vehicle he or she was driving will be seized the next time. We will keep track of the vehicle and it will be seized when it is seen at another checking point," said Pradeep Mohanty, an RTO official.
The teams involved at checking points mostly issue challans if a vehicle or the person driving it is seen violating rules. Owners or drivers of the vehicles have to pay heavy fines for traffic rule violations.

State's Covid-19 tally goes past 3.20L

ODISHA REPORTS 434 NEW CORONAVIRUS CASES, 5 MORE DEATHS IN 24 HOURS

PNN & AGENCIES
Bhubaneswar, Dec 3: State reported 434 new Covid-19 cases Thursday, taking Odisha's tally to 3,20,017, a senior Health and family Welfare (H&FW) department official said.
On the other hand, five more people died of the disease in the coastal state, following which the toll rose to 1,755, said the official.
Of the new cases, 249 were reported from different quarantine centres. Khurda district, of which state capital Bhubaneswar is a part, recorded the highest 54 new cases, followed by Angul 45 and Sundargarh 41. Three persons lost



FILE PHOTO

their lives in the Ganjam district, and one person each in Khurda and Nayagarh districts. Two districts—Gajapati and Kandhamal—did not report any new cases during the last 24 hours, the official said. Of the total deaths, Khurda dis-

DECLINING TREND

The state has tested over 60 lakh samples for Covid-19 including 41,885 Wednesday
Khurda recorded the highest 54 new cases, followed by Angul 45 and Sundargarh 41
Three persons lost their lives in Ganjam and one person each in Khurda and Nayagarh
Odisha's Covid positivity rate stands at 5.32 per cent
The state has altogether tested over 60 lakh samples for Covid-19, including 41,885 Wednesday.

BJEM organises Fit India School Week in City



POST NEWS NETWORK
Bhubaneswar, Dec 3: Buxi Jagabandhu English Medium School (BJEM) inaugurated Fit India School Week 2020 on its premises Thursday.
The event was attended by the chairman, Raghunath Mishra, manager Pratap Kumar Jena, additional manager, Chhittaranjan Bairaisa, school Principal Sandhya Jena, physical education teachers (PETs), some senior teachers and officials.
The guests emphasised on the inclination of people towards staying fit both physically and mentally while complying with social distance and Covid-19 guidelines of the government. They believe that Covid-19 was an apt reminder about the value of staying healthy and fit on a regular basis. Development of one's immunity shouldn't be a matter of choice but rather a matter of lifestyle.
The PETs performed some basic exercises for the students. The programme was recorded and would be shared with the students for creating awareness. A week-long virtual celebration has been planned and the message of staying fit will be conveyed to students from lower kindergarten to higher secondary through various activities like quiz, poster making, drawing, video making on fitness & sports skills.

DRAMATIST FETED



Litterateur and dramatist Ramesh Prasad Panigrahi (C) being felicitated with Sahitya Bharati Samman by Gangadhar Rath Foundation in Cuttack, Thursday

Phulbani shivers at 8.8 degrees Celsius

POST NEWS NETWORK
Bhubaneswar, Dec 3: Cold wave condition intensified in the state with mercury falling below 15 degrees Celsius at 17 places Thursday. Phulbani recorded 8.8 degrees Celsius and was the coldest place of Odisha.
As per Bhubaneswar Meteorological Centre sources, Sonepur recorded the minimum temperature of 9 degrees and 10 degrees Celsius each at Daringbadi and Bhawanipatna. The temperature at Angul was 11 degrees, Talcher 12.3 degrees, Jharsuguda 12.8 degrees, Koraput 13 degrees, Keonjhar 13.2 degrees and Baripada 13.5 degrees. Similarly, Bolangir and Sundargarh recorded 14 degrees each while Boudh, Titlagarh and Cuttack recorded 14.5 degrees Celsius each. Other places that recorded below 15 degrees are: Hirakud (14.3) and Sambalpur (14.4). The prevailing weather condition is likely to continue for the next 4 to 5 days.

NHRC SEEKS CHIEF SECY'S PERSONAL APPEARANCE

POST NEWS NETWORK
Bhubaneswar, Dec 3: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has directed the Chief Secretary to appear in person before the commission in New Delhi January 28, 2021 in connection with the eviction of slum dwellers at Puri. The NHRC issued the direction while hearing a plea by human rights activist Akhand.
The activist had moved the rights panel requesting it to direct the state government and East Coast Railway to rehabilitate 5,000 slum dwellers, who mostly are SC/ST people, children and ailing leprosy patients, from Bali Upara slum in Puri before their eviction. Officials of East Coast Railway and Puri district administration allegedly threatened to evict the families who have been residing there for the last 40 years.

EVICITION IN PURI



"If the State of Odisha insists on carrying out construction of Rajiv Gandhi Awas Yojna on this land /Bali Upara slum at Puri, Odisha, why the State of Odisha is not providing land in exchange at Malatipatpur for the construction of the proposed Rly Coach Washing Complex," questioned the NHRC.
The railway authorities have told the commission that they would hand over the land to state government for construction of houses for slum dwellers under Rajiv Gandhi Awas Yojna after it is availed with an alternative land elsewhere.

Agri Education Day at OUAT

Bhubaneswar: Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) celebrated National Agriculture Education Day here, Thursday. The day was observed as Agricultural Education Day to commemorate the birth anniversary of first President of India and Union Minister of Agriculture, Bharat Ratna, Dr. Rajendra Prasad. On the occasion, OUAT Vice-Chancellor PK Agrawal said that the objective of this day was to expose students, including the schools, to various facets of agriculture and its relevance to country's development and attract them towards agriculture.

Puri seer's appeal to preserve ancient mutt

POST NEWS NETWORK
Puri, Dec 3: Gobardhan Peeth Shankaracharya Nischalananda Saraswati Thursday emphasised on collective effort to preserve Srishankarananda mutt in the Holy City here.
"Srishankarananda mutt has been reeling under neglect for last several years. We all should try our best to preserve the very existence and ideals of this institution," said Saraswati while inaugurating a seminar, jointly organised by Srishankarananda Mutt Trust Board and Aitihya Sangrakshyana Parishad here.
The seer also pleaded for formation of a committee to approach the state government for preservation of the mutt.
Speaking at the seminar, heritage expert Surendra Kumar Mishra claimed that the Holy City had altogether 752 mutts and

ashrams in ancient times. Now, one can find only 374 mutts and ashrams in Puri, he said.
"Five mutts of Shaivite sects, including Srishankarananda mutt, are among the oldest religious institutions in Puri. The authorities of Srishankarananda mutt had been assigned to manage the affairs of Srimandir long ago. They were also managing Lingaraj temple in Bhubaneswar and assisting in the organisation of festivals at Kapilash temple at Dhenkanal and Sriokanath temple in Puri," Mishra claimed.
Mishra further claimed that the then pontiff of Srishankarananda mutt, Swami Srinarasinha Saraswati, had also observed the construction of Konark Sun Temple. "Successive Gajapati kings were giving much importance to the pontiffs of this mutt. The state government should preserve this ancient mutt," he pleaded.

RD Univ to seek NAAC accreditation soon: VC

POST NEWS NETWORK
Bhubaneswar, Dec 3: The newly-appointed Vice-Chancellor of Ramadevi Women's University, Aparajita Chowdhury, Thursday said that the varsity's objective would be to get 12B and 2F UGC certificates and to apply for NAAC accreditation as the institution has completed the required six years.
She said this while addressing the 6th foundation day celebration of the university here. Chowdhury discussed her immediate goals for the university.
Regarding vacancy in several posts, she said the recruitment process will be completed soon after discussion with the department. She also talked about completing the pending works undertaken by previous VCs. She also spoke about setting short-term goals.
She said the Ramadevi University is currently providing higher education to more than 25,000 girl students in nine districts of the state, but our goal is to reach out to more

SIXTH FOUNDATION DAY



Vice-Chancellor Aparajita Chowdhury and other dignitaries release the annual report of Rama Devi Women's University during the 6th Foundation Day celebration of the varsity, Thursday

The new VC said efforts would be made to reach out to more girl students in faraway places of nine districts in state

Mohanty presented the annual report and said that in the academic session 2019-20, the university had achieved multiple milestones and had done good work in improving the infrastructure. It had collaborated with multiple international universities for enhancement of knowledge of the students. The university had inaugurated the Centre for Skill Development Training and Sarala Devi Centre for Gender Research. This apart, the university had also signed MoU with Miranda House, University of Delhi.
She also said, "Despite Covid-19 pandemic, imparting education was not affected as we had provided online education since the lockdowns began."

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MEGA IRRIGATION PROJECT

Fate of Lower Suktel pushed into uncertainty

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, Dec 3: The fate of the Lower Suktel mega irrigation project has been pushed into uncertainty as the government is yet to start the project work even as the year is coming to an end.

Reports said the project is dead for two and half years. The original plan outlay was ₹217.13 crore which was later revised to ₹2,448.09 crore in 2015. As five years have passed since then, the outlay must have crossed ₹3,000 crore, observers said.

The state government is blaming it on the opposition from the oustees to the delay. The government has failed to rehabilitate the oustees with compensation. 70 per cent of the spillway works and 40 per cent of the soil embankment works of the project have been completed.

The state government had announced to start works from November but the work is yet to start. Meanwhile, a high-level team visited Bolangir twice and reviewed the project. They promised people to start the dam works from November with simultaneous distribution of compensation to the oustees as well as also to start the rehabilitation work.

The team members were greeted with 'go back' slogans by the oustees as they arrived at the project site. The project oustees demanded to resolve their problems first and



then start the dam work.

The team comprising chief engineer of water resources department, director, rehabilitation and resettlement, officers of Odisha Construction Corporation (OCC), the implementing agency visited the dam site, talked to representatives of various outfits and the project oustees while reviewing the project.

The members of the Bolangir Action Committee, citizens' committee, district bar association also met the high-powered team and discussed about the early completion of the project.

The team members said that a senior officer will be deputed for the project to oversee and resolve the problems. However, November has passed but work is yet to start.

The issue came up in the State Assembly when Bolangir MLA Narasingh Mishra and Loisingha MLA Mukesh Mahaling questioned the stand of the state government on the project. Even Bolangir Lok Sabha MP Sangeeta Kumari Singhdeo demanded early completion of the project. Former Bolangir MP Kalikesh Narayan Singhdeo had also demanded early completion of the project.

Observers claimed that the project has become a knotty affair in last 20 years. People who are earlier supporting the project are now opposing it after no efforts were made to resolve their demands.

They alleged that the state government had no clear cut policy for the project. The project got caught in a legal tangle after the start

IN LIMBO

The state government had announced to start works from November but the work is yet to start. Meanwhile, a high-level team visited Bolangir twice and reviewed the project. They promised people to start the dam works from November with simultaneous distribution of compensation to the oustees as well as also to start the rehabilitation work

Project is dead for two and half years. The original plan outlay was ₹217.13 crore which was later revised to ₹2,448.09 crore in 2015. As five years have passed since then, the outlay must have crossed ₹3,000 crore, observers said

of land acquisition in 2013.

Now the state government is trying to implement two rules. The oustees who had earlier received partial compensation will not be given compensation for rehabilitation on the basis of 2013-Land Acquisition Act. They will only be given compensation with matching ex-gratia.

It was alleged that the state government is not coming clear on the matching ex-gratia to be disbursed. Efforts to contact project chief engineer Bibhuti Bhusan Mishra failed as he did not pick up the phone.

OSCPCR suspects sacrifice angle behind Pari murder

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh, Dec 3: Even as the Special Investigation Team is investigating the Pari murder case in Nayagarh district, the Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (OSCPCR) has started its probe into the case Thursday. Meanwhile, the main accused, Babuli Nayak, has broken his silence and pleaded his innocence.

According to chairperson of the OSCP, Sandhyabati Pradhan, it is suspected that Pari might have been murdered for sacrificial purpose or other reasons.

The chairperson of the OSCP visited the place where Pari's mortal remains had been recovered. She also inquired some of the villagers and questioned the main accused Babuli Nayak.

On the other hand, a video of Pari singing a song before her murder is going viral on social media. Her handwriting and sums worked out by her in notebooks have also gone viral. Her mother Soudamini said, Pari used to practice national anthem before January 26. She had done its video. "Pari was doing well in studies. She used to be active in play. Her death has left us in shock," her mother bemoaned.

On the other hand, the main accused, Babuli Nayak, told media he is innocent. "I am neither into ganja and brown sugar smuggling

Police offered us money to keep mum, allege parents

NAYAGARH: There is a new twist in the murder of five-year-old Pari. Parents of the girl Thursday alleged that they were being influenced by police to change their statements and the name of the accused in their complaint.

When the Special Investigation Team (SIT) is investigating the case, the parents of the girl are alleging police are also involved in the crime. The SIT team led by IPS officer Arun Bothra questioned prime accused Babuli Nayak at Nayagarh town police station.

Ashok Sahu, father of Pari, said he was offered money by police to change his statement. "Police offered me Rs 5 lakh and I was pressured into changing the name of the ac-



A file photo of Pari's mother

cused. They even said a statue of Pari would be installed in the village," alleged Pari's father.

"We came to know about Babuli Nayak only through police. Kalia Patra was sent as a messenger by Babuli to inform us that our child will be traced. We were tortured in a kangaroo court," he claimed.

nor was involved in human organ trafficking as alleged against me," he pleaded. He also asserted that minister Arun Sahu is not involved in the case but he is unnecessarily being dragged into it.

Babuli said, "The case should be investigated properly and the guilty punished. I welcome the SIT probe and am cooperating with it. If I am guilty, let me be arrested. I

am in the village. If I am found guilty, I will surrender."

OSCP chief said Pari's murder is a shocking and a deplorable incident. "We will talk to SIT which will be made a party. We are preparing a report which will be submitted to the government. It is suspected that Pari might have been murdered for sacrificial purpose or other reasons," Pradhan said.

Undertrial cuts ear after bail rejection

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput, Dec 3: In a bizarre development Wednesday evening, an under-trial prisoner, who was lodged at Koraput Circle Jail, slit his ear with a sharp weapon after his bail petition was rejected.

He was admitted to Koraput district headquarters hospital (DHH) in critical condition. His situation is said to be stable now.

According to official sources, Bikash Patra was lodged in the jail last October 1 on charge of peddling cannabis.

Following the rejection of his bail petition by the Additional District Judge (ADJ), Patra lost his cool and took the extreme step.

He managed to get a sharp weapon despite strict restrictions in the jail premises. The jail authorities have not yet made it clear as to how he got the weapon inside jail.

On the other hand, the prisoner maintained that he is innocent and he was intentionally put into a trap by police, saying, "The police did not listen to anything that I clarified to them. They lied about CCTV footage, medical bills and hotel register details pertaining to me."

Notably, Koraput district has been gradually turning into a haven for illegal cannabis. Owing to its demographic location, the contraband is smuggled to different parts.



3 killed, 4 hurt in Bargarh road mishap

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargarh, Dec 3: Three persons were killed and four others sustained critical injuries after the car they were travelling in met with an accident in Bargarh, Thursday. The Bolero collided with a truck near Kundatrai in Bargarh district.

The car was on its way to Bargarh town to attend a wedding when it collided head-on with the truck on its way to Raigada district in Chhattisgarh.

Following the collision, three persons died on the spot while four others sustained critical injuries. Police rescued all the injured and sent them to the Bargarh District Headquarters Hospital.

Later, two of them were sent to VIMSAR in Burla after their condition turned critical.

'Yugasagar' a victim of apathy

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dobal, Dec 3: Yugasagar, the oldest tank in Bhadrak district's Dhamnagar locality, is in a pathetic state with garbage and water hyacinths covering it. From a distance the pond appears like a filthy playground. Local people said the fisheries department's apathy has led to the tank's present condition.

The tank with its bund spreading over 12 acres has been under the fisheries department. Earlier, people used its water for their daily use. Fishes were also grown on a community basis.

However, with the passage of time, the department started neglecting the tank. It led to encroachment of the bund area. Now some people are living permanently on the bund, alleged locals. Several



buildings have also come up on two sides of the 'Yugasagar' tank.

At the same time people are dumping garbage into the tank on a daily basis. Also, the filth generated in some of the local markets nearby is being thrown into the tank.

Former Dhamnagar MLA Muktikant Mandal had once taken an initiative to resurrect the tank and restore it to its original glory. But nothing happened.

Now Muktikant's wife Manjulata Mandal is the MP of Bhadrak constituency. She paid a visit to the Dhamnagar locality. Then members of the 'Senior Citizen Council' and local residents met her. They requested her to restore the tank to its original glory. Before leaving the spot, Manjulata promised she would do whatever it would take to ensure that 'Yugasagar' gets back its lost sheen.

Manjulata has already held discussions with the urban development department. Rs 1 crore has been sanctioned for revamping the 'Yugasagar' tank. Manjulata has also written to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik requesting his intervention in this regard.

Local residents have urged the administration to do its bit for resurrection of the 'Yugasagar' tank.

Electrification of Nayagarh-Khurda rly line by March

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh, Dec 3: Electrification of Nayagarh-Khurda Road railway tracks will be completed by March 2021. This was stated Thursday by Nayagarh railway station manager Sanjay Kumar Pradhan. Three trains are plying at present from and to Nayagarh railway station.

Among them is the 'Sewa Express' which runs from here to Bhubaneswar and back. "After completion of the Nayagarh-Khurda Road railway line electrification, commuters will reach their destinations quicker as no changing of engines will be required," he added.

SHARP VIGIL



Even as migratory birds throng Chilika area under Krushnaprasad block, forest officials keep a close watch on poachers

SCAM IN ALLOTMENT OF LAND PATTAS

LANDLESS TRIBALS REMAIN DEPRIVED

POST NEWS NETWORK

Mahakalpara, Dec 3: The state government is implementing the Vasundhara Yojana to provide land to the landless especially those from the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe sections, but scores of tribals living in some parts of Mahakalpara block of Kendrapada district have not been provided land pattas.

People living at Sabarapada in Petachella panchayat alleged that even though they had been living in the village for over 100 years, the administration has not taken any steps to give them pattas for the land. On the other hand, influential people have managed to grab pattas.

Upset over being deprived of their rights, 30 families of the Sabarapada submitted a memorandum to tehsildar Soubhagya Ranjan Panda Wednesday and demanded immediate steps for providing pattas for their dwelling places.

They also pointed out that some influential families, who are ineligible for Basundhara Yojana, have grabbed land pattas in Ramnagar Mouza, faking them as landless families.

"We have been living here over years, but are deprived of pattas," lamented Paidra Bhakta and Chhabi Ahadi, residents of Luniamati village.

They alleged that without land records, they are ineligible to get various government benefits.

"Without permanent address, our children can't get caste certificates and scholarships. Housing units will not be provided without valid land records, they lamented.

They wondered how some Bengali-speaking people living nearby for a few years could get land pattas while the administration could not know of such illegality.

The tehsildar has assured that the allegation of land grabbing will be investigated and action will be taken. Landless tribals will be provided with pattas, he added.



Tribal dwellers of Sabarapada submit a memo to Mahakalpara tehsildar

Jafra farming picks up in Swabhimman Anchal

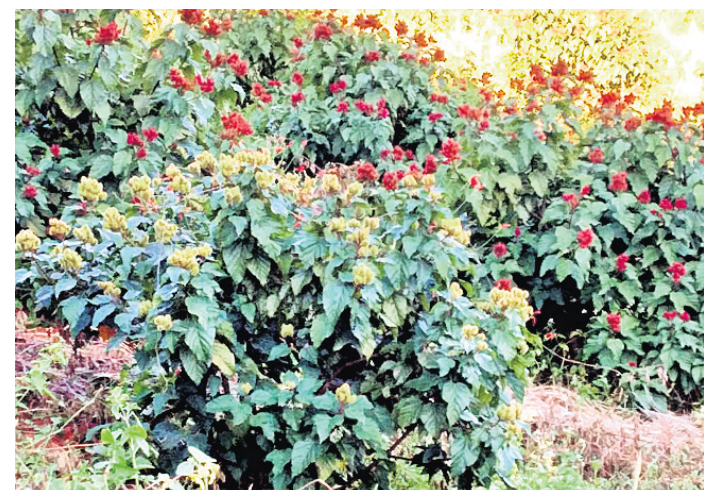
POST NEWS NETWORK

Chittrakonda, Dec 3: Many farmers in the hilly and fringe areas under Swabhimman Anchal (once the cut-off area) in Malkangiri district have started cultivating Jafra. It has given them a source of earning. Given its marketing potential, Jafra farming is picking up in the region, a report said.

According to the report, scores of tribal farmers usually raise ginger, turmeric, millets, suan, alasi and kangu in Kaurmanur and Papulur panchayats under Chittrakonda block.

Now, they have taken interest in Jafra farming. Jafra is a highly valuable plant. Some call it Sinduri (Bixa orellana) too. They have planted the trees in forest lands.

Sinduri plant has a red orange pigment known as Bixin. It is extracted from the coat of its seeds. This dye is used mostly in dairy industry for colouring butter, cheese, ghee, chocolates and ice creams. It is also



used for dyeing cotton, silk clothes and leather; in coloration of medicines and in making shoe polishes. So it has good commercial viability.

Significantly, Jafra farming is making an impact on the life and livelihood of poor tribals. Those

who have taken up this farming have set an example for others as to how they could augment their earning and promote their livelihood.

Jafra plants have been raised aplenty on the foothill villages of these panchayats. Hundreds of families earn

INCOME SOURCE

Farmers collect its flowers and seeds and sell them to traders from Sileru and other areas of Andhra Pradesh

A kg of Jafra is sold for ₹100 or even more as per the market demand. Experts say, these plants have a good market potential. Its domestic demand is quite large

anything between ₹25,000 and ₹30,000 annually from this farming.

Locals said, their volume of earning depends upon the number of plants they have grown. Its flowers are red. Particularly people of Kondadora community are into this farming.

Farmers collect its flowers and seeds and sell them to traders from Sileru and other areas of Andhra Pradesh. A kg of Jafra is sold for

₹100 or even more as per the market demand, farmers said.

They said the red colour extracted from its flowers is used in vermilion, other colour and oil.

Some parts of Jafra plants are used in medicines especially in Ayurveda. The leaves of Sinduri are used as blood purifier. In traditional practice, the paste made from its seeds keeps mosquitoes away. By and large, it is a multi-purpose plant as its bark, leaves, roots and seeds are used for medicinal, pharmaceutical, cosmetic and edible colouring purposes.

Experts say, these plants have a good market potential. Its domestic demand is quite large. As the production is meagre in India, domestic market has a lot of potential.

Chittrakonda ranger Chandan Gamang was apprised of Jafra farming that has been providing an additional earning scope for the tribals. He assured that Jafra plants will be provided to the people of the two pachayats.

यूनियन बैंक Union Bank of India
Regional Office, Balasore : Block-4, Wing-3, 1st floor, BMC Bhawani Enclave, Saeed Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751007

CORRIDGENDUM OF INTERIOR FURNISHING AND ELECTRICAL WORK
Corrigendum of tender document for Interior Furnishing and Electrical & Data cabling work of newly acquired Regional Office, Balasore has been uploaded in the website of Union Bank of India & in e-tender portal on 01.12.2020 for our Tender Dt: 23.11.2020. Empanelled contractors are advised to go through the same before applying. **Regional Head**

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR SUPPLY OF MEDICINES
Notice No.CMS/SBP/LPurchase/2020/2311 Dated : 23.11.2020
EAST COAST RAILWAY INVITES EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FROM THE VENDORS/ DRUG STORES FOR SUPPLY OF MEDICINES WHICH ARE NOT AVAILABLE IN THE STOCK OF DIVISIONAL RAILWAY HOSPITAL, SAMBALPUR AS PER DAILY REQUIREMENT.
Period of Contract : 02 (Two) years from the date of commencement of work.
Expression of Interest Closing Date and Time : 1500 hrs of 28.12.2020
Address for Submission of Manual Expression of Interest in prescribed format sent by post/courier or in person : Chief Medical Superintendent, Divisional Railway Hospital, Sambalpur, Post - Khetrajpur, Dist - Sambalpur, Odisha, Pin - 768003
For Procurement value during the year 2019-20, Eligibility Criteria, Supply Conditions, Selection Procedure, Application Format and other terms and conditions please visit website : www.eastcoastrail.indianrailways.gov.in
PR-387/L/20-21 **Divisional Railway Manager (Medical), Sambalpur**
EAST COAST RAILWAY



What the soul sees and has experienced, that it knows; the rest is appearance, prejudice and opinion.

SRI AUROBINDO



Onus on govt

The three farm laws enacted by the NDA government for the purported benefits of farmers have kicked up a massive stir in the country. Farmers from agriculturally advanced states such as Punjab and Haryana have taken the lead in opposing the government and demanding immediate repeal of the said Acts. The Opposition has thrown its weight behind the farmers. Thousands of protesters have reached the doorsteps of Delhi and have blocked some of the entry and exit points of the national capital. The government seems utterly clueless on finding a way to handle the crisis. It has sent its best faces to negotiate with the farmers but to no avail. The farmers' unions Tuesday rejected the Centre's offer to set up a committee to look into their issues. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's assertion a day before that his government would never back out from the new farm laws has aggravated the crisis. Now, the protesters claim nothing short of a complete repeal of the new farm laws will placate them. Farmers from some other important states such as Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh are beginning to join the ranks of the agitating farmers. First, the Centre erred by not taking the farmers into confidence. It did not show much empathy with their cause when they were beginning to organise themselves for a bigger challenge. It did not react till the farmers reached the doorsteps of Delhi. Therefore, it follows that the Centre cannot escape the blame for letting the issue blow up into a crisis. Unleashing of paramilitary forces on peaceful marchers and use of violent means to tackle the protesting farmers aggravated the situation. Worse, some worthies in the government used insensitive words at farmers like 'Khalistani terrorists'. This must have further antagonised the community. The government kept reiterating that the new laws are in the best interest of the farmers. But the latter refuse to buy that. They fear the laws will end the time-tested mandi system and the minimum support price regime – the mainstay of farmers in India. The rancour among farmers was evident when they blatantly refused Home Minister Amit Shah's request to shift to an alternate venue for their protest. Agriculture continued to grow right through the pandemic even as the recession-hit economy has seen a contraction in growth in the range of a conservative 7.5 per cent. Agriculture contributes nearly 15 per cent to India's GDP. Though small in terms of its value, the sector has been providing income stability to three quarters of the country's population. During the pandemic when people's moral is at the rock bottom and there are massive uncertainties in jobs and rural distress is at a record high, there was no reason why the government thought it fit to tinker with agriculture policies. This is not to say that the farm sector is kosher or does not need reforms. But the time was not ripe to bring in such sweeping changes in policies. If at all the government was to implement them, things should not have been done in a hurry. The Centre should have taken all the stakeholders into confidence and tried to hammer a consensus. At present, the farmers want an assurance from the government that it would never tinker with the MSP. Only assurance won't do, this should be drafted into the law as an inalienable right of farmers. The government should do this pronto. Both sides should try to do some adjustments and reach a common ground. And the government should make the first move. The deadlock must go. The crisis, if allowed to fester longer, will not only impair the farm sector which is in the middle of the harvesting season, but will delay the economic recovery. The onus is on the government to bring the agitating farmers to the discussion table and resolve the issue. It must shun obduracy, a hallmark of this government.

WISDOM CORNER

- The secret of getting ahead is getting started.** MARK TWAIN
- It's hard to beat a person who never gives up.** BABE RUTH
- Your passion is waiting for your courage to catch up.** ISABELLE LAFLECHE

WORDSWORTH

Big Bang II

This happened on Monday 20 October 1997, on which day the London Stock Exchange introduced a new computerised dealing system. The term is derived firstly from the original financial Big Bang of 11 years earlier, when the Stock Market was deregulated and a new electronic dealing system called SEAQ (Stock Exchange Automatic Quotation System) was introduced. Both terms are punning references to the cosmological Big Bang because of the fundamental changes that deregulation has brought to the traditional structure of share trading in the City. The new system, which the Chancellor of the Exchequer formally inaugurated, takes electronic trading a step further by implementing an order-driven approach, automatically matching buying and selling orders for shares of the 100 largest firms, bringing London's dealing systems in line with others around the world.

Big cheese

The big cheese is the most influential or important person in a group, though it has often been used in a derogatory way to refer to somebody self-important. These days, it's more than likely to appear as a joking reference to a real cheese, since its slang use is rare and definitely outdated. There's no shortage of expressions invoking cheese: one may be cheesed off (miserable, annoyed, fed up), or something may be cheesy (cheap, unpleasant or blatantly inauthentic). These refer to the unhappy habit of ripe cheese making its presence known to anyone within sniffing distance. But big cheese has a quite different origin, based on the only positive slang sense of cheese that seems ever to have existed. This was first recorded in London in the nineteenth century, in forms like he's the cheese, it's quite the cheese, just the cheese, or simply the cheese, with the sense of a thing that was "good, first-rate in quality, genuine, pleasant or advantageous".

Big shot

Ah, another of those "simple" questions. People in the US started to use big shot for a celebrity or for an important or influential person around 1926-7. Within a year it had blossomed into a fashionable slang term with examples appearing everywhere, especially to describe the bosses of criminal gangs – in April 1930, the Lincoln Star of Nebraska remarked, "Unless the memory plays us a trick, Al Capone is the 'big shot' of Chicago gangland." Where it comes from is a surprisingly long story. From about 1400 on, the newly invented gun was divided into two types: small guns that could be carried by soldiers, such as the early types of musket, and the big guns or great guns, which were the heavy wheeled pieces like cannon. Though the terms are long since obsolete in formal terms, the phrase "big gun" remains common for a large piece of ordnance.

LOL

MEMORISING STATE CAPITALS

There was a blonde who just got sick and tired of all the blonde jokes. One evening, she went home and memorized all the state capitals. Back in the office the next day, some guy started telling a dumb blonde joke. She interrupted him with a shrill announcement, "I've had it up to here with these blonde jokes. I want you to



know that this blonde went home last night and did something probably none of you could do. I memorized all the state capitals." One of the guys, of course, said, "I don't believe you. What is the capital of Nevada?" "N," she answered.

CHINA'S PATH TO NET ZERO

FOCUS ENVIRONMENT

China is aiming to halt the rise in its carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and to achieve carbon neutrality before 2060. If it succeeds, the country will have gone, in less than 40 years, from being the world's largest CO2 emitter to bringing its emissions into balance.



Erik Berglöf

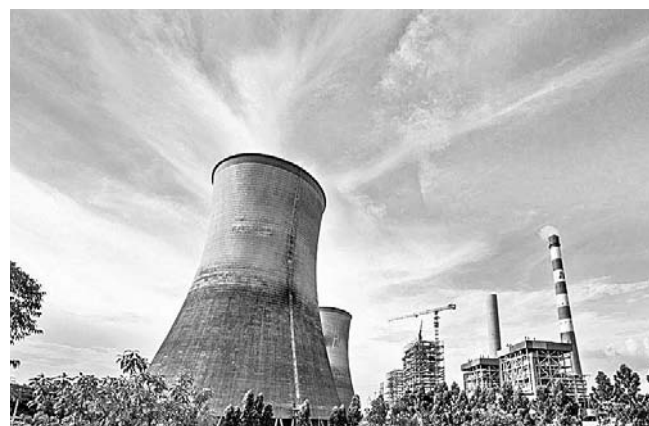
CHINA IS FAR FROM BEING THE ONLY COUNTRY TO HAVE DECLARED ITS INTENTION TO REACH NET-ZERO CO2 EMISSIONS – OVER 120 COUNTRIES ARE ACTIVELY DISCUSSING ACHIEVING THAT GOAL EVEN SOONER, BY 2050 – BUT IT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ONE BY FAR

China is far from being the only country to have declared its intention to reach net-zero CO2 emissions within that time frame – over 120 countries are actively discussing achieving that goal even sooner, by 2050 – but it is the most important one by far. In fact, President Xi Jinping's announcement of China's 2060 commitment at the recent United Nations General Assembly was doubly significant, given that the 2015 Paris climate agreement is being actively challenged by leaders of major governments, and undermined by inaction elsewhere, partly as a result of Covid-19.

But is China's ambition credible? Although Xi did not elaborate in his speech on how the zero-carbon goal will be reached, China has a track record of delivering on major initiatives in areas such as energy efficiency, renewables, pollution reduction, and poverty alleviation. But Xi's carbon-neutrality pledge is on a very different scale and must be fulfilled in a different global context.

A recent report by the Group of Thirty, an international association of leading global thinkers, aims to help countries accelerate their transition to a net-zero economy. Above all, the G30 stresses that achieving carbon neutrality requires extensive collaboration between government and the private sector, with public policy at the core. Invoking recent innovations in fiscal and monetary policy, the report argues that effective communication and so-called forward guidance can make policy frameworks more predictable.

Specifically, the report calls on governments to phase out explicit and implicit fossil-fuel subsidies, and advocates border-adjustment taxes to prevent countries and



China is aiming to halt the rise in its carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and to achieve carbon neutrality before 2060. If it succeeds, the country will have gone, in less than 40 years, from being the world's largest CO2 emitter to bringing its emissions into balance

firms from undercutting each other by not reflecting carbon costs in their pricing. Although it is unclear how widely these levies will be applied, part of the proceeds should go to low-income countries to help them access the opportunities offered by the transition to carbon neutrality. The job creation resulting from green and sustainable growth must benefit them, too.

Furthermore, corporations need to have clear green transition plans and publish regular progress reports that boards actually review. Significant investments are needed to strengthen financial institutions' capacity to assess the climate impact of investments and shift resources from laggards to companies leading the low-carbon transition. Within financial and non-financial firms alike, incentives must reflect net-zero objectives.

Governance is critical. As the G30 and others have suggested, governments must ensure independent policy reviews by establishing mechanisms such as Carbon Councils, modeled on fiscal and monetary-policy councils. Likewise, special board commit-

tees can ensure that private-sector lending and investment decisions properly account for climate risks. Transparency regarding these risks will encourage peer review and allow markets to identify leaders and laggards. Ongoing work to develop appropriate accounting standards should help to increase the quality and thus the value of disclosure.

Companies will incur costs by moving first, before competitors have implemented carbon prices and the price of alternative fuel sources has come down. But the benefits are greater. Many institutional investors already face pressures to incorporate climate and other sustainability goals in their investment criteria, while regulators are increasingly accounting for climate-change risks. First-movers can benefit from these trends.

The same principle applies to countries. Over time, peer pressure to achieve net-zero CO2 emissions will increase and national strategies will have to converge. Early movers can spread their adjustments over a longer period and avoid the costs of disruptive last-

minute changes. But all economic actors must move together, and governments will need the support of the private sector in making the transition. Every day of delay will add to the eventual stock of "stranded assets" once carbon prices have fully adjusted.

Multilateral development banks (MDBs) should be at the forefront of these developments. Many are leading by example. The recent statement by the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank's president, Jin Liqun that he will not consider projects related to coal-fired power generation sent an important signal in a region where CO2 emissions are still rising. The bank also set a target to reach or surpass a 50% share of climate finance in its investments by 2025. All of the MDBs can further leverage their joint capital and clout to reduce risk, ensure the use of state-of-the-art green technologies, and accelerate the policy shift toward climate-change mitigation and adaptation.

We still do not know the most cost-effective and just pathway toward achieving a zero-carbon economy, but there is no lack of potential solutions. Xi has launched one of the most important policy initiatives of the last 40 years. His approach reflects a key feature of Chinese reforms since the 1970s: announce a bold vision and then figure out how to realize it through structured experimentation and careful iterations – or, as Deng Xiaoping famously said, "Crossing the river by feeling the stones."

But, as China's leaders are acutely aware, climate change is already flooding Chinese rivers and pulling away stones, while other countries, including the United States, are battling historic wildfires in the midst of a pandemic. To reduce the risk of further havoc, there is no alternative: China and the world must urgently make the transition to carbon neutrality.

The writer is Chief Economist of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

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SPECTRUM THE UNITED STATES

Who still loves Trump?



Ian Buruma

APART FROM 74 MILLION VOTERS IN THE UNITED STATES, WHO STILL APPROVE OF PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP, MOST ARE OVERJOYED TO SEE THE BACK OF HIM

Apart from 74 million voters in the United States, who still approve of President Donald Trump, most are overjoyed to see the back of him. But he has been popular with a number of right-wing strongmen and demagogues, and many of their followers. His admiration for autocrats, his disdain for immigrants, racial minorities, and Muslims (except for a few Saudi princes), and his contempt for liberal democratic norms boosted authoritarian governments in Hungary, Poland, Brazil, India, and the Philippines. His esteem for Russian President Vladimir Putin was never in doubt.

Trump's election defeat is a setback for the global populist right. While many of its leaders will survive him, an already-rampant anti-liberal movement probably would have grown even stronger with a triumphant champion of its cause in the White House.

Trump also found support among a majority of the population in two democratic countries, Israel and Taiwan, where he was seen as the most powerful enemy of their enemies, Iran and the People's Republic of China, respectively.

Israel's right-wing Prime Minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, got everything he wanted from the

Trump administration. The Palestinians got nothing. Israel's most fanatical supporters in the US are also, by and large, Trump's supporters; not American Jews, who mostly voted for Joe Biden, but evangelical Christians, who believe that God gave the Holy Land to the Chosen People, at least until the second coming of Christ, after which Jews will have to become Christians.

But it is in East Asia where Trump's popularity is most interesting, especially because many of his supporters are neither right wing nor anti-liberal – often quite the opposite. True, some people in China share Trump's fear of Muslims, but that is not the main reason for pro-Trump sentiment. Earlier this year, I spoke to pro-democracy activists and politicians in Hong Kong and Taiwan, who saw Trump as a coarse but powerful leader of the free world against communist tyranny. The US flag was rarely absent from public demonstrations in Hong Kong and election rallies for the Democratic Progressive Party in Taiwan.

Here, too, the influence of Christianity plays a part. One of the bravest democracy activists in Hong Kong is the entrepreneur and newspaper tycoon Jimmy Lai.

Ever since the handover of the former British colony to China in 1997, Lai has been at the forefront of the struggle for greater civic freedom. He is also a fervent Catholic convert who believes that the battle between democracy and Chinese Communist dictatorship is a clash of civilizations between the Christian free world and an atavistic, despotic China.

Quite a few Christian Chinese dissidents share Lai's view. They believe that liberal democracy is a product of Western civilization, which is true. Their view that democracy would not have been possible without the Christian faith is more debatable. The notion that Asians can't be true democrats if they aren't Christians is demonstrably false.

But there is more to the Chinese infatuation with Trump. As Ian Johnson recently wrote in the New York Times, some liberal dissidents in China are disturbed by the culture wars in the US. They view zealotry on the American left through the lens of their own far more violent history. When they see people hounded for ideological impurity, they see the ghosts of Mao's Red Guards. To them, Trump's boorish political incorrectness is a refreshing counterblast.

Still, the main reason why people admire Trump in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, and also China, is fear of the Chinese regime. Despite his sporadic fawning over Chinese President Xi Jinping, Trump is seen as the man who stood up to China. South Korean and Japanese attitudes to the US are more ambivalent. Trump has his supporters in those countries, but, unlike in Taiwan, not among the majority of people. While Chinese power is often felt as a threat in both countries, dependence on the US for security has both been a necessity and an irritant. President-elect Joe Biden will almost certainly be a more popular bearer of the American burden in East Asia.

Biden's relations with China will also likely be less erratic and more diplomatic. But the basic tensions between a democratic superpower and an autocratic one will remain – and worsen if China sustains its economic success. In an age of rising disillusion with democratic government, China is a seductive model to many people.

The writer is the author of most recently published 'A Tokyo Romance: A Memoir'.

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Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Evasive admittance!

Sir, It's amazing to learn that the state government has admitted before Orissa High Court that it has no control over the private schools running in the state. It would be surprising if some days later the government show its vulnerability saying that it also has no control over private medicare sector or for that matter private motor vehicle sector or the mining sector. All the important public activities are found 'slipping out of the government control'. Now see the working pattern - the government gives NoC, recognition to run private schools, it gives license to run hospitals, public transport, leases mines from which it collects revenue worth billions but when it comes to control, regulation or administration, our leaders plead helplessness. It would not be surprising if some year down the line we find our PRI, ULB, Assembly even Parliament are handed over to private entities and when anything goes wrong our elected government may come up with excuses like 'we have no control!'

Janaki Ballav Dash, MAYURBHANJ

Border disputes

Sir, Satellite images from Western and Indian sources reveal that the Chinese have built a village a few kilometres inside Bhutanese territory in the Doklam plateau area. While Bhutan has rejected the alleged Chinese encroachment, it is difficult to find the truth. China had offered Bhutan a deal on settling the un-demarcated boundary between them but Bhutan rejected it on grounds of Indian security interests. By building and populating a village, China is giving a message that if Bhutan does not settle the border issue, such incursions will keep happening. Chinese incursions and encroachments have caused disruption of the status quo all along its southern Himalayan boundary. Chinese encroachment was reported from the north of Nepal as well. It is difficult to judge the likely impact of India's efforts to strengthen the strained relations between India and Nepal amidst Nepal's fast-moving, China-dominated politics. India, tied down by its own military crisis with China, is not in a position to offer a solution to Chinese encroachment in Nepal. According to a survey by Nepal, China grabbed 36 hectares of Nepali territory. As for Bhutan, India cannot expect it to always act in India's security interest. India needs to devise plans and adopt strategies to counter Chinese activities in the region. Only sustained political engagement by the highest level in India can rescue India's special engagement with these neighbouring countries.

Venu GS, KOLLAM



BANGALORE RIOTS

Cong leader held for 'instigating mob'

THIS IS THE SECOND HIGH-PROFILE ARREST BY THE CCB IN THE LAST FORTNIGHT AFTER THE POLICE ARRESTED FORMER BANGALORE MAYOR AND CONGRESS LEADER R SAMPATH RAJ

AGENCIES

Bangalore, Dec 3: The Bangalore Central Crime Branch (CCB) in the wee hours of Thursday arrested Congress party leader and former corporator, Abdul Rakeeb Zakir in connection with the Bangalore riots case.

This is the second high-profile arrest by the CCB in the last fortnight after the police arrested former Bangalore mayor and Congress leader R Sampath Raj.

Former BBMP corporator Zakir had been off the police radar since October after he was questioned.

Joint police commissioner (Crime) Bangalore, Sandeep Patil said that they arrested him past midnight Wednesday and the police will seek his custody as they need to question him at length.

The CCB is probing violence in parts of Bangalore after an alleged insidious social media post by Naveen Kumar (who is out on the bail) the nephew of Pulikeshinagar Congress MLA, Akhanda Srinivasa Murthy went viral August 11.

The CCB that has filed 850-page preliminary charge sheet furnished in the court has named former Congress mayor R Sampath Raj as



We arrested him past midnight Wednesday and will seek his custody as we need to question him at length

SANDEEP PATIL | JOINT POLICE COMMISSIONER (CRIME) BANGALORE

an accused in the Bangalore Riots.

Besides, Raj, former Congress corporator of Pulakeshinagar, Abdul Rakeeb Zakir, was also named as an accused.

In this charge sheet filed in a local court two months ago, the police have named Sampath Raj and Zakir as accused number 51 and

52 in the Bangalore riots case. A CCB official said Sampath Raj, who is the DJ Halli Congress corporator, was among those who had information about the violence and did not share it with police.

Raj and Zakir had been questioned earlier, but have not yet been arrested.

Another Congress leader Kaleem Pasha has already been arrested in the case. Sampath Raj, his personal assistant Arun Kumar and Zakir allegedly instigated local

Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) leaders to intensify the riots on the day, according to the chargesheet.

Raj allegedly used Arun Kumar's phone to instigate SDPI and Congress workers to attack legislator Srinivasa's residence.

Arun was arrested on September 5 after the CCB claimed that he had made over 10 calls to local SDPI leader Muzammil Pasha and others.

Four persons were killed after police opened fire on the night of

August 11 to quell a mob that went on a rampage in a city locality, irked over a social media post.

Several including around 50 policemen were injured in the violence. Besides this, Pulakeshi Nagar MLA Akhanda Srinivasa Murthy's residence and police stations at DJ Halli and KG Halli were among those targeted by the angry mob.

The house of the MLA, who was not at home at the time, was allegedly set on fire.

The rioters also torched many police and private vehicles, badly damaged the house and looted the belongings of MLA Murthy and those of his sister.

So far, 421 people have been arrested, including the Social Democratic Party of India leader Muzammil Pasha.

The National Investigation Agency is also probing the matter and has nabbed the prime accused in the case.

Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai had claimed that the internal strife in the Congress, coupled with the coming BBMP elections, had resulted in the violence in Pulakeshinagar.

Dismissing his statement, state Congress chief DK Shivakumar had charged the government with trying to 'cover up' its failure to prevent the riots by giving misleading statements.

Karna min discusses anti-cow slaughter bill with UP CM Yogi



Image from Twitter

AGENCIES

Bangalore, Dec 3: Karnataka Animal Husbandry Minister Prabhu Chavan met Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Thursday and held discussions about the implementation of the anti-cow slaughter legislation there and on the proposal to enact a similar law in the state.

The minister, who has already announced that the anti-cow slaughter bill will be introduced during the state legislature session starting from December 7, is currently on a visit to Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat to study and gather information on implementation of the law there.

According to a release from Chavan's office, Adityanath, expressing happiness over Karnataka's plans to enact the legislation, pointed out that prohibition of cow slaughter has been strictly implemented in Uttar Pradesh and hoped that the state would follow a similar model.

It said, the minister during his visit held discussions with Uttar Pradesh government officials on the implementation of anti-cow slaughter legislation, and also gathered information regarding the management 'gaushalas' (cow shelters) and care given to cows.

Chavan discussed with UP Animal Husbandry department officials regarding development of good local cow breeds, and the officials have consented for sending two Sahiwal breed bulls and ten cows to the state, the release added.

The minister is scheduled to tour Gujarat tomorrow, to gather information from the authorities about the implementation of the law there.

Chavan had recently said if the law was enacted, along with prohibition on slaughter, sale and use of beef, also illegal transportation of animals for slaughtering will be stopped.

KARNA'S ANIMAL HUSBANDRY MINISTER PRABHU CHAVAN IS ON A VISIT TO UP AND GUJ TO STUDY AND GATHER INFORMATION ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LAW THERE

THE MINISTER GATHERED INFO REGARDING THE MANAGEMENT 'GAUSHALAS' (COW SHELTERS) AND CARE GIVEN TO COWS

THE BJP IN ITS MANIFESTO AHEAD OF THE 2018 ASSEMBLY ELECTION HAD PROMISED PROHIBITION OF COW SLAUGHTER

DESPITE RESISTANCE FROM OPPOSITION, THE THEN BJP GOVERNMENT LED BY BS YEDIYURAPPA IN 2010 HAD GOT THE CONTROVERSIAL PREVENTION OF SLAUGHTER AND PRESERVATION OF CATTLE BILL PASSED



PIC FROM INTERNET

The BJP in its manifesto ahead of the 2018 Assembly election had promised prohibition of cow slaughter.

Despite resistance from opposition, the then BJP government led by BS Yediyurappa in 2010 had got the controversial Prevention of Slaughter and Preservation of Cattle Bill passed. It proposed to replace the Karnataka Prevention of Cow Slaughter and Cattle Preservation Act, 1964.

The bill had widened the definition of 'cattle' and imposed a blanket ban on cattle slaughter, coupled with stringent penalty clauses for violation.

However, the Congress government headed by Siddaramaiah that came to power in 2013, withdrew the bill that was before the President for his assent.

After the BJP came back to power in the state, several party leaders have been making a pitch to re-enact the anti-cow slaughter law.

Components for upcoming Kudankulam N-plants are en-route from Russia

AGENCIES

Chennai, Dec 3: Russia's integrated nuclear power player Rosatom Thursday said a ship with the 21st consignment of equipment for the upcoming nuclear power plants in Tamil Nadu's Kudankulam has left for India.

According to Rosatom, the vessel Elke set sail for India November 28. In total, two vessels left for the Indian NPP in November.



Pic from internet

4, the cargo includes housings and gate valves of air supply system for passive heat removal, trestle crane and passive core flooding system tank.

These apart, the components for both the units shipped include: busbars, hydraulic shock absorbers, tank equipment, pumps, valves, first-priority pipelines, tubular electric heater units of the quick boron injection system tank.

Arrival of equipment to the Indian port is expected in December. India's atomic power company, the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd (NPCIL) is building four more plants - Units 3, 4, 5 and 6 - of 1,000 MW each in Kudankulam.

The first two units of similar power generation capacity have been functional for some time now.

FARMERS WHO COMMIT SUICIDE 'ARE COWARDS'

Karnataka Agriculture minister was explaining to bamboo growers of Ponnampet how profitable the business is, but some cowards do not realise that and commit suicide

AGENCIES

Bangalore, Dec 3: Karnataka Agriculture minister BC Patil Thursday said the farmers who commit suicide are cowards.

"The farmers who commit suicide are cowards. Only a coward who can't take care of his wife and children commits suicide. When we have fallen (in the water), we have to swim and win," Patil said addressing farmers at Ponnampet in Kodagu district of Karnataka.

The minister was explaining to bamboo growers of Ponnampet how profitable the agriculture business is, but some cowards do not realise that and commit suicide.

To buttress his point, Patil cited an example of a woman who was wearing gold bangles.

"When I enquired with her how her hands were full of gold bangles, you know what she said? She said, 'This mother earth has given me for my 35 years of toil.'"

"Doesn't this please you all after listening to this?" Patil told the



A protest underway in Bangalore to express solidarity with farmers protesting Centre's farm bills

PTI PHOTO

It's a disrespect to the farmers. He (BC Patil) should apologise for it. No farmer wishes to end life... Instead of understanding the gravity of the problem, the Minister gives such an irresponsible statement

VS UGRAPPA | SPOKESPERSON, CONGRESS' KARNATAKA UNIT

spokesperson VS Ugrappa condemned the Minister's statement,

gathering. He said when a woman who had depended herself entirely on agriculture and achieved big why other farmers cannot do it.

Reacting to this, Congress Karnataka unit

saying he has shown disrespect to the farming community.

"It's a disrespect to the farmers. He should apologise for it," Ugrappa told PTI.

He said the Minister should have gone into the subject to find why some farmers commit suicide.

"No farmer wishes to end life. There are many reasons such as floods and droughts, which have not been understood and solved yet. Instead of understanding the gravity of the problem, the Minister gives such an irresponsible statement," Ugrappa said.

Burevi's impact likely over south TN & adjoining Kerala dists: IMD

CYCLONE BUREVI TO CROSS PAMBAN-KANNIYAKUMARI COAST THURSDAY NIGHT

AGENCIES

Chennai, Dec 3: Cyclonic storm Burevi is expected to cross the south Tamil Nadu coast between Pamban and Kanniyakumari, during late Thursday night/early Friday morning, with wind speed of 70-80 gusting to 90 kmph, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.



Heavy to very heavy rainfall expected at isolated places in north Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry and Karaikal Thursday, and isolated heavy rainfall Friday

Thoothukudi-Chennai and Thoothukudi-Mysore trains between Thoothukudi-Madurai cancelled for Friday

Madurai and Sivagangai districts) Thursday and isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall likely over rest of south Tamil Nadu Friday.

The IMD said heavy to very heavy rainfall at isolated places is very likely over north Tamil Nadu,

Puducherry and Karaikal Thursday and isolated heavy rainfall Friday.

Fishermen were advised not to venture into southwest Bay of Bengal and along and off east Sri Lanka coast Thursday, Comorin Area, Gulf of Mannar and south Tamil Nadu-Kerala and west Sri Lanka coasts from Thursday to Friday, and over Lakshadweep-Maldives area and adjoining south-east Arabian Sea from Thursday to Saturday.

Meanwhile the state government has taken precautionary steps like setting up of relief camps in Kanniyakumari and the fishermen who had gone into the sea have been informed to reach nearby shores for safety.

The Southern Railway has announced cancellation of the Thoothukudi-Chennai and Thoothukudi-Mysore trains between Thoothukudi-Madurai Friday. The two trains will be operated from Madurai, Southern Railways said.

Ahead of TN polls, Rajini's political plunge

THE ACTOR SAID ON TWITTER THAT HE WILL LAUNCH HIS POLITICAL PARTY IN JANUARY NEXT YEAR

AGENCIES

Chennai, Dec 3: Actor Rajinikanth Thursday said he would float his political party in January and an announcement in that regard will be made December 31, 2020.

With this Rajinikanth puts an end to various speculations about his plunge into Tamil Nadu politics.

Announcing this in a tweet he added: "In the upcoming Assembly polls, with people's massive support, in Tamil Nadu, an honest, transparent corruption less, secular and spiritual politics is sure to happen."

"Miracle, Wonder will happen," he added.

November 30, Rajinikanth told the District Secretaries of Rajini Makkal Mandram that he would announce his political plunge decision.

Speaking to reporters here, couple of District Secretaries said the actor had told them that he would decide on floating a political party and plunge into politics.



The actor addresses the media



Fans of Rajinikanth celebrate after he announced the launch of his political party in January 2021, in Chennai, Thursday

According to the Mandram officials, they also expressed concern at Rajinikanth's health condition and contesting the 2021 Tamil Nadu assembly polls will be the ideal time.

The meeting lasted for about two hours. After the meeting he waved at the crowd assembled outside his Raghavendra Kalyana Mandapam sans mask and also mingled with the others without any hesitation.

It is also said Rajinikanth had told

the District Secretaries that it is not possible for anyone to make money in politics with him.

Last month Rajinikanth tweeted that he would consult with the officials of Rajini Makkal Mandram his health condition and announce his political stance to the people.

At that time, denying a statement purported to be issued by him announcing his decision to quit politics Rajinikanth said some of the contents in that statement relating to

his health and the medical advice given by the doctors were true.

"After discussing the matter with the officials of Rajini Makkal Mandram at an appropriate time will announce my political stance to the people," Rajinikanth had said.

As per the alleged statement, Rajinikanth's doctors had voiced out their reservations on his political entry since he had undergone a kidney transplant sometime back. Further there is no vaccine for Covid-19.

national

of the day quote

PM -- Everyone will get vaccine. BJP in Bihar elections -- Everyone in Bihar will get free vaccine. Now, GOI -- Never said everyone will get vaccine. Exactly what does the PM stand by?

India has taken numerous measures to ensure a positive change in the lives of persons with disabilities

The winter session of the House must be convened with all the COVID-19 protocols in place to help the people understand the important issues the country is facing at present

SHORT TAKES

Smuggler killed
Kolkata: A suspected cattle smuggler was shot dead by Border Security Force when clashes erupted between the smugglers and the border guards near the India-Bangladesh border in West Bengal's Murshidabad district, an officer of the paramilitary force said Thursday. The clashes broke out between a BSF patrol and a group of 150 cattle smugglers, near Sagarpara outpost area in Berhampore in the early hours of Wednesday, while they were trying to smuggle 50-60 cattle heads to the neighbouring country.

Boy dies
Koderma (Jharkhand): A 4-year-old boy has died after coming under the wheels of a truck in Jharkhand's Koderma district, police said Thursday. The accident took place when he was travelling on a motorcycle with his parents through a hilly road in Koderma police station area on Wednesday, its officer-in-charge Dwarka Ram said.

3 killed in MP
Sehore: A couple and their daughter died and another person was seriously injured when their car hit a stationary milk tanker on the Bhopal-Indore highway in Madhya Pradesh's Sehore district on Thursday, police said. The accident took place near Asha town around 2 pm when the victims, hailing from Bhopal, were on their way to Indore, Additional Superintendent of Police Samir Yadav said.

Two arrested
Ahmedabad: The Gujarat Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) has arrested a town planner and a middleman for allegedly demanding and accepting a bribe of Rs 2,000 in Modasa town of Arvali district, an official said Thursday. According to the ACB, the main accused Kirit Raval, a class-1 state government employee, worked as a town planner with the town planning and valuation office in Modasa. The other accused Pratik Jaiswal is a middle man who worked for Raval, it was stated.

Man beaten to death
Azamgarh (UP): A 40-year-old man was allegedly beaten to death by some persons over an old enmity in Allipur market of Tahbarpur area in the district, police said Thursday. Jagdish Yadav was attacked by a group of men with sticks and rods on Wednesday evening when he had gone to purchase some household goods from the market, said an eyewitness of the incident. The attack triggered panic in the market.



We will have to focus on decentralised planning, capacity building of local bodies and large-scale promotion of cottage industries so that our villages and towns emerge as growth centres
M VENKAIHAH NAIDU | VICE PRESIDENT

NADDA TO VISIT UP

BJP president JP Nadda will be visiting Uttar Pradesh from December 25-28 and hold talks with party leaders on strengthening the party's organizational structure in the run up to the Panchayat elections next year and the Assembly elections in 2022



Ready to tackle any challenge: Navy chief

Press Trust of India
New Delhi, Dec 3: Navy Chief Admiral Karambir Singh Thursday said the Indian Navy is moving towards procuring a number of key assets including six more submarines, and pitched for a third aircraft carrier even as he asserted that the force is fully ready to deal with any challenge including from China. Admiral Singh also said the COVID-19 pandemic and attempts to change the status quo at India's northern borders have thrown up challenging situations, adding the Indian Navy aimed to stand steadfast as a "combat ready, credible and cohesive force", furthering the country's national and maritime interests. Addressing a press conference on the eve of Navy Day, he said the Navy has put in place a standard operating procedure in the event of any infringement of its maritime domain in the Indian Ocean region by China. Asked about the rapid expansion of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) and possible challenges from it for India, the Chief of Naval Staff said the Indian Navy was cognisant of it, and was focusing on boosting its overall combat prowess including by procuring niche capabilities and unmanned solutions with available resources. "As a primary manifestation of India's maritime power, the Indian Navy stands ready to fulfil its mandate to protect our national interests in the maritime domain," Admiral Singh also said the Navy was looking at establishment of maritime theatre command in the near future which would further buttress joint planning and appli-

cation of force in the maritime domain. "The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted and permeated every aspect of our lives. The near simultaneous attempt to change the status quo at our northern borders has significantly increased the complexities in our security situation. This dual challenge scenario continues as we speak and the country collectively continues to battle the pandemic and tackle the security challenges," he said. On acquisition of a third aircraft carrier, Admiral Singh said the Navy considers it as an absolute necessity and that it will make a formal case to the government after collating technical details. India currently has one aircraft carrier -- INS Vikramaditya, and a second one -- INS Vikrant -- is under construction. The construction of INS Vikrant is at an advanced stage and its sea trials are expected to commence in early 2021. Admiral Singh said the Navy will soon take forward the process of acquiring six more submarines as well as a plethora of other assets including six P-8I maritime surveillance aircraft. On the Navy's overall focus, Admiral Singh said it has established a persistent foot-print in its areas of interest including at various choke points in the Indian Ocean. "Naval deployments also serve as a deterrent to inimical interests, really signalling the Navy's reach, capability and intent." Referring to the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, the Naval chief said Indian Navy's surveillance aircraft P-8I and Heron drones were deployed in the region.



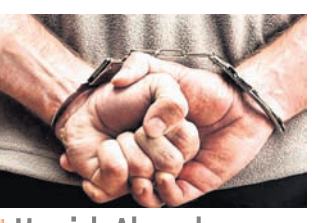
Navy Chief Admiral Karambir Singh addresses a press conference on the eve of Navy Day, in New Delhi, Thursday



Disaster Management personnel take part in a mock drill at Islamia Inter College in Gorakhpur, Thursday

First arrest under 'love jihad' law in UP

Indo-Asian News Service
Bareilly (Uttar Pradesh), Dec 3: Three days after registering the first case under the newly-promulgated anti-conversion law, the Bareilly police have made the first arrest in the case. Uwaish Ahmad, 22, was booked Sunday, hours after the ordinance against "forced" religious conversion came into effect. Ahmad was booked under the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance, 2020, for "threatening to kidnap" and convert a 20-year-old married woman in Deorania area of the Bareilly district. The accused had been in hiding since. He said he "feared being shot in an encounter". "He may be under this impression, but police never intended to do any such thing as he is not a history sheet," Additional Superintendent of Police (Rural)



Uwaish Ahmad was booked Sunday, hours after the ordinance against "forced" religious conversion came into effect

Sansaar Singh said. "We were only searching for him and several teams were deployed in neighbouring districts as well. He was produced before a magistrate on Wednesday who sent him to judicial custody for 14 days. "We will now record the statement of the complainant and the witnesses and complete the investigation in this case." Ahmad and the woman were school friends. The girl's family had registered a case against him last year also when she had gone missing. Later, it turned out that she had left the home at the instance of the youth. They later said they wanted to live together. She was "recovered" from Bhopal while they were on their way to Mumbai. A few months later, she was married to another man. But Ahmad started stalking the woman, the complainant alleged. The woman's father, in his complaint, had alleged that Ahmad had been stalking and threatening her for the past three years. Ahmad has been booked under Section 3/5 of the ordinance, along with Sections 504 (breach of peace) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the IPC.

SC STAYS GUJ HC ORDER

Indo-Asian News Service
New Delhi, Dec 3: The Supreme Court Thursday said sending people, who do not wear masks, for community service at Covid centres may cause health issues, as it stayed the directions in the Gujarat High Court order. However, the top court noted that the Gujarat government should enforce mask and social distancing norms. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Gujarat government, said the harm of not wearing the mask is much lesser than sending the person to a Covid centre. A bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan and comprising Justices R. Subhash Reddy and M. R. Shah told Mehta: "You are correct, it is difficult to implement. The High Court has passed several orders regarding this and there is a lack of will to implement this." Justice Shah pointed out that thousands of people are gathering, what is the Gujarat government doing? Mehta replied this is a nationwide problem, which needs to be dealt on a war footing. Justice Shah added that marriage ceremonies are happening with thousands of people and everybody is in either the market or mall. Mehta submitted that some people enjoy being undisciplined. The bench noted that people who are not wearing masks are violating fundamental rights of other persons. Mehta informed that the police was authorized to charge a fine of Rs 1,000 for not wearing a mask. Justice Bhushan queried: "Suppose a social gathering takes place, do they have to inform authorities?" Mehta replied, "Yes, permission is required." Earlier in the day, Mehta had sought permission from a bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan to circulate a Special Leave Petition challenging the Gujarat High Court verdict which mandates those who don't wear masks to serve in the Covid centres.

Interpol warns of fake vaccines

THE WARNING CAME ON THE DAY THE UK BECAME THE FIRST WESTERN NATION TO APPROVE A COVID-19 VACCINE, VAULTING PAST THE US AND THE EUROPEAN UNION IN THE RACE TO APPROVE A VACCINE

Press Trust of India
New Delhi, Dec 3: The Interpol has warned law enforcement agencies across the globe that organised criminal networks could try to advertise and sell fake COVID-19 vaccines physically and on the internet. In an Orange notice issued to all 194 member countries on Wednesday, the Lyon-based international police cooperation body warned agencies to prepare for potential criminal activity in relation to "the falsification, theft and illegal advertising of COVID-19 and flu vaccines". "It also includes examples of crimes where individuals have been advertising, selling and administering fake vaccines," a statement from the Interpol said. The Interpol issues an Orange notice to warn of an event, a person, an object or a process representing a serious and imminent threat to public safety. The CBI, which is the national central bureau for India, is tasked with coordination with the Interpol. The warning came on the day the UK became the first Western na-



tion to approve a COVID-19 vaccine, vaulting past the US and the European Union in the race to approve a vaccine. The Interpol has asked police organisations to ensure "the safety of the supply chain" and said "identifying illicit websites selling fake products will be essential". "Criminal networks will also be targeting unsuspecting members of the public via fake websites and false cures, which could pose a significant risk to their health, even their lives," Interpol Secretary General Jurgen Stock said in a statement. "It is essential that law enforcement is as prepared as possible for what will be an onslaught of all types of criminal activity linked to the COVID-19 vaccine, which is why INTERPOL has issued this global warning," the official said. The Interpol cybercrime unit has analysed that of 3,000 websites associated with online pharmacies suspected of selling illicit medicines and medical devices, around 1,700 contained cyber threats, especially phishing and spamming malware making such operators even more potent of causing financial and health harms.

Coats for UP cows this winter

Indo-Asian News Service
Prayagraj (Uttar Pradesh), Dec 3: Cows in Uttar Pradesh will now get special coats to save them from the winter chill. The Animal Husbandry Department of the state has asked veterinary officers in various districts to ensure proper protection for cows in state-run cow shelters during the winter months. Officials are now making arrangements for the cow coats that will be made of jute bags and will keep the cows warm. The cow shelters are also being covered with thick polythene curtains or 'tarpaulin' so that cold winds do not enter. Jute bags are being sewed together to make thick curtains and covers. The same jute bags will be used to make cow coats which the cows will wear to stay warm during winters. The jute bags will be provided by the district supply department. In some districts, the gram panchayats will make cow coats and will cover the cow shelters with polythene and other material with the MGNREGA budget. In Ayodhya, for instance, the cow shelters will also have bonfires to save cows from extreme cold.



In some districts, the gram panchayats will make cow coats and will cover the cow shelters with polythene
Cow shelters have been made in rural areas to keep stray cattle where they are being taken care of and are provided fodder. The arrangements at cow shelters are under supervision of village panchayats, and caretakers are being employed for the task. The Veterinary Department keeps a close watch on the health of cows and carries out regular medical examination and treatment of the cows. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is particularly concerned about the well-being of cows -- considered sacred for Hindus -- and makes regular inspection of cow shelters in the districts.

Re-wilding big prey animals help restoring tiger habitat: Study

Indo-Asian News Service
New Delhi, Dec 3: A new Wildlife Conservation Society-led first-of-its-kind study shows how to fully restore a key tiger landscape by re-wilding it with big, juicy prey animals. Publishing their results in the Journal for Nature Conservation, the authors looked at factors affecting populations of three large ungulates in Thailand's Western Forest Complex (WEFCOM), a contiguous network of 17 protected areas that together form the largest remaining forest block in mainland Southeast Asia. The 18,000 sq km (6,900 square mile) forest is considered a stronghold where tigers have made a come-

back due to conservation measures. However, depletion of prey species has prevented a full recovery of these iconic big cats. The prey animals in the study included gaur, a massive wild cattle species that can weigh over a ton; banteng, another species of wild cattle with a top weight of over 1,900 pounds; and sambar, a huge deer that can reach well over 1,000 pounds. Across WEFCOM, these large ungulate populations are the preferred prey of tigers, but are threatened by human activities such as poaching and habitat fragmentation. Using occupancy models, the researchers found that gaur and sambar occupied just 28 and 50 per cent of suitable habitat respectively in WEFCOM.



Habitat use by both the gaur and the sambar was lowest in areas closest to human settlements. The banteng have largely vanished from WEFCOM and are now only found in Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary where they occupied 57 per cent of suitable habitat. The authors then modeled the impact of decreasing human activities around nine villages in the core of WEFCOM. This increased predicted suitable habitat to 68 per cent for gaur and 75 per cent for sambar. In addition, they modeled the extent of potential banteng

habitat that still remains in the other 16 protected areas in WEFCOM and found that re-wilding could result in a four-fold increase. The authors say the options for increasing large ungulates near communities inside and on the periphery of WEFCOM include increasing SMART patrolling, and providing incentives to local communities to reduce poaching. Thailand's Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plants Conservation has continually increased investment and training to improve SMART patrolling, but without local support from local people living in WEFCOM, it is not sufficient. Globally, it is increasingly recognized that recovering

large wildlife in large ecosystems needs effective law enforcement complemented by local engagement. Local stakeholder involvement in participatory conservation is gaining wide acceptance as an essential component of ecosystem management. Said Pornkamol Jorbnburom of WCS's Thailand Program and the lead-author of the study: "Big cats need big food. This first-of-its-kind study determines where large prey species can be restored to increase the distribution of tigers, and potentially fill a half-full tiger landscape. "This critical research will have a significant impact to the future management and recovery of large mammals in WEFCOM and beyond."

national



When elections are held in a state, the central government stabilises the prices of diesel and petrol but increases the prices again as soon as the elections are over

MP HOME MINISTER READY TO VOLUNTEER

In Madhya Pradesh, even as the third phase of corona vaccine trial is underway, state Home Minister Dr. Narottam Mishra has expressed his willingness to become a volunteer for the vaccine trial



of the day quote

The winter session of Parliament must be convened at the earliest in view of the farmers' unrest, Chinese aggression, COVID crisis and the sliding economy

We will have to wait for the vaccine (for COVID-19). There must be some long-term plan on how to survive. Need to focus on the right priorities and in inclusive growth rather than polarization

98 per cent of the work related to the forthcoming Kumbh Mela in Haridwar will be over by the end of December

SHORT TAKES

Two booked
Muzaffarnagar (Uttar Pradesh): Two more persons have been booked under the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance in Muzaffarnagar district. According to Station House Officer, K.P. Singh, a case has been registered against Nadeem and Salman, who work as labourers in a factory in Haridwar on Tuesday. He said that the complainant in the case alleged that Nadeem would frequent his place in Haridwar in connection with the work and gradually got acquainted with his family, particularly his wife.

Suicide bid
Gurugram: An undertrial prisoner allegedly attempted suicide by hanging himself from a window pane at Bhondsi jail in Gurugram, police said. The inmate has been identified as Surjeet Kataria, a resident of Tek Chand Nagar in Gurugram. Surjeet's wife however, has alleged harassment by the jail authorities. The prisoner has been undergoing treatment.

Soldier ends life
Srinagar: An army man shot himself with his service rifle Thursday in Jammu and Kashmir's Shopian district. Police sources said soldier Chandra Patil of 62 headquarters shot himself with his service rifle in the Zawoora village of Shopian district. Police said an FIR has been lodged in this incident.

Two arrested
Thane: Two persons were arrested for alleged possession of close to 5 kg of ganja and cash of over Rs 10 lakh in Maharashtra's Thane district Thursday, police said. The police intercepted Abdul Kadar Abdul Jabbar Shaikh and Akbar Hussain Abdul Aziz Shaikh on the intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday and recovered contraband worth Rs 49,700 from them, said P B Dhole, assistant commissioner of police Bhiwandi East.

India keeping close watch: MEA

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 3: Amidst reports that China plans to build a major dam on the Brahmaputra, India Thursday said it "carefully monitors" all developments relating to the river, and that it intends to remain engaged with China on the issue of trans-border rivers to safeguard its interests.

The Brahmaputra river, known as the Yarlung Tsangpo in China, originates from Tibet and flows into Arunachal Pradesh and Assam. At a media briefing, External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said the Chinese side has conveyed to India on several occasions that it was only undertaking run-of-the-river hydropower projects, which do not involve diversion of the waters of the Brahmaputra.

He was asked about media reports that China will build a 'super dam' on the lower reaches of the Yarlung Tsangpo river in Tibet. "We have taken note of some media reports in this regard. Government carefully monitors all developments on the Brahmaputra river," Srivastava said.

Noting that issues relating to trans-border rivers are discussed with China under the ambit of an institutionalised expert level mechanism which was established in 200 as well as through diplomatic channels, the MEA spokesperson said, "We intend to remain engaged with China on the issue of trans-border rivers to safeguard our interests." The MEA spokesperson also said that "as a lower riparian State with



considerable established user rights to the waters of the trans-border rivers, the government has consistently conveyed its views and concerns to the Chinese authorities and has urged them to ensure that the interests of downstream States are not harmed by any activities in upstream areas."

In Beijing, the Chinese foreign ministry said there is no need to have "any anxiety" over the project and that China will continue to have "good communication" with lower riparian states - India and Bangladesh.

On China's plans to build the dam over the river near the Line of Actual Control (LAC) near Arunachal Pradesh where the Brahmaputra enters India, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying told a media briefing that the "hydropower develop-

ment in the lower reaches of Yarlung Zangbo river is China's legitimate right. When it comes to use and development of cross border rivers, China always acts responsibly."

"We have a policy featuring development and conservation and all projects will go through science-based planning and assessment giving full consideration to impact downstream and accommodating the interests of upstream and downstream regions," Hua said.

"The development of lower reaches of Yarlung Zangbo is in the early stages of planning and assessment. There is no need to read too much into that," she said, and added that "going forward China, India, Bangladesh and other concerned countries will continue to have good communication. There is no need for any anxiety on this matter."

BOLLYWOOD DRUGS NEXUS PROBE

2 NCB officials suspended

The role of the two investigating officials - whose identities were not disclosed - came under a cloud after accused Harsh Limbachiya and suspect Karishma Prakash got bail and interim bail, respectively, in November, an official said

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, Dec 3: In a big embarrassment, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has suspended two officials of its Mumbai Zonal Unit for their alleged suspicious role which enabled two persons in the ongoing Bollywood-drugs mafia investigation get relief, official sources said here Thursday.

The role of the two investigating officials - whose identities were not disclosed - came under a cloud after accused Harsh Limbachiya and suspect Karishma Prakash got bail and interim bail, respectively, in November, an official requesting anonymity said.

Limbachiya is the husband of high-profile television comedian Bharti Singh while Karishma Prakash is the manager of leading Bollywood actress Deepika Padukone. Some other officials are likely to be under the NCB scanner for their questionable lapses in the matter that has shaken up the organisation which is probing the high-profile cases since the past nearly four months.

Both - Limbachiya and Karishma Prakash - had been raided by NCB teams last month and certain quantities of drugs recovered in the actions. While Bharti Singh and Limbachiya were arrested and later got bail, Karishma Prakash had



ignored the NCB summons to join the probe and later secured an interim bail - and in both the developments, the alleged role of the two IOs is now under the scanner.

The NCB move follows the preliminary report of an internal probe ordered by the Zonal Director Sameer Wankhede, and the suspensions precede a full departmental enquiry in which the possible involvement of some others, including lawyers, could also come up, indicated the official.

In a serious transgression, the two officials, along with a lawyer, did not appear during scheduled court hearings in the two cases which enabled them get bail.

Following a tip-off from an arrested drug peddler, the NCB had raided Karishma Prakash when she was away from her home, and later a case was lodged along with

summons issued to her. While she ignored the summons, she also applied for an anticipatory bail which she got through the court directed her to appear before the NCB, which she complied with. The NCB sought custodial interrogation for her as she was not cooperating in the probe and during the final hearing of her anticipatory bail plea, the official and lawyer did not appear in the court, after which the court granted her bail plea. Bharti Singh and Limbachiya were arrested after raids at their homes and office on November 22 and sent to judicial custody for 13 days each.

They moved a bail plea in the court on November 23 which was granted ex-parte as the investigating officer and the NCB lawyer against remained absent, leaving the NCB teams aghast.

ED searches 26 places linked to PFI

The PFI, formed in 2006 in Kerala and headquartered in Delhi, called the raids a gimmick and an attempt to divert attention from the farmers' issue



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 3: The ED Thursday raided 26 locations in nine states linked to the Popular Front of India (PFI) including those of its chairman O M Abdul Salam and Kerala state chief Nasarudheen Elamarom as part of a "larger" money laundering probe against the organisation, official sources said.

The PFI, formed in 2006 in Kerala and headquartered in Delhi, called the raids a gimmick and an attempt to divert attention from the farmers' issue.

The nationwide searches are being conducted at Chennai, Tenkasi and Madurai (Tamil Nadu); Bengaluru; Darbhanga and Purnee (Bihar); Lucknow and Barabanki (Uttar Pradesh); Aurangabad in Maharashtra; Kolkata and Murshidabad (West Bengal); Jaipur; Shaheen Bagh area in Delhi and in Kochi, Malappuram and Thiruvananthapuram districts of Kerala under provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), they said.

The central probe agency is investigating PFI's "financial links" on alleged charges of fuelling the anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) protests in the country; the Delhi riots that took place in February and few other instances.

Official sources said the action against PFI was aimed at collecting evidence in multiple money laundering cases that have been clubbed into one as part of a "larger" probe against it.

The ED has also brought under its scanner, sources said, the activities of PFI operatives in criminal cases like the Kerala gold smuggling case, the conspiracy and attack on two police stations during the Bengaluru riots in August, suspect movement of funds in the aftermath of an alleged gangrape and death of a Dalit woman in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras district, and some other instances.

The premises of Salam and Elamarom, also PFI's national secretary, in Kerala are also being covered apart from some other office bearers of the organisation, they said. The ED had earlier recorded the statement of Salam, a senior assistant in the Kerala State Electricity Board, and a number of other PFI office bearers in Delhi and had said they were "not able to explain specific sources of their funds and their specific disbursements."

The PFI said its activities are "transparent" and out in the public and that they had nothing to hide. "Simultaneous raids were carried out by ED at the houses of Popular Front national leaders across the country. We believe this to be a politically motivated action from the part of the agency. Such raids usually happen in our country whenever the government in power comes under the pressure of popular anger and it wants to divert national attention from it."

OUR DAY OUT



Children ride bicycles along the shore of Juhu Beach in Mumbai, Thursday

Fight over mutton curry at wedding claims man's life

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad, Dec 3: A fight over mutton curry not being served properly at a wedding claimed the life of a man and left another critically injured in Telangana's Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district, the police said.

Suraram Parusharamulu (35) died and his brother Nagaraju was injured when they were attacked with axe and sticks by Praveen and Kishtaiah. According to a report, the incident occurred in Dacharam village in Mothkur mandal of the district late on Tuesday night.

Tatipamulu Mahesh of Dacharam village married a girl from Pakala village of Jangaon district. The bridegroom's relatives went to Pakala. Suraram Venkataiah, a resi-



dent of Dacharam who was part of the marriage party, complained that the bride's family did not treat the guests properly. He was unhappy that mutton pieces were not served with the curry during the wedding.

He had an argument over the issue with one Chandraiah, an elder of Dacharam village. Other guests intervened to pacify them. After returning to the village, Venkataiah again picked up an argument with Chandraiah. During the alter-

cation, Venkataiah's sons Praveen and Kishtaiah got angry and attacked Chandraiah's sons Parshuramulu and Nagaraju with axes.

Parshuramulu and Nagaraju both sustained critical injuries and they were shifted to government hospital at Bhuvanagiri. However, Parshuramulu succumbed on the way while Nagaraju was later shifted to a private hospital in Hyderabad.

MANIPUR HAS INDIA'S BEST POLICE STATION

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Imphal/Itanagar, Dec 3: Northeast has three of India's Top 10 police stations with Manipur securing the top spot, besides Arunachal Pradesh at third and Sikkim at seventh, according to the 2020 rankings announced by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) Thursday.

The police stations were selected on the basis of their performances, including the manner in which their personnel dealt with crime against women and weaker sec-

tions of society and also property disputes, officials added.

According to the police officials, the Nongpok Sekmai in Thoubal district of Manipur secured the first position, Kharsang police station in Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh the third and Pakyong police station in Sikkim's East District bagged the seventh position. Police officials in Imphal and Itanagar said they are successful in dealing with most of the missing persons reports - unidentified found person and unidentified



bodies. Manipur Chief Minister N.Biren Singh and his Arunachal Pradesh counterpart Pema Khandu

have congratulated their police personnel for their policing prowess. The others in the list are: Tamil

Nadu (2nd), Chhattisgarh (4th), Goa, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Uttar Pradesh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Telangana among the ten.

They have secured the position among 750 police stations initially selected from all the states and Union Territories. An official statement on Thursday said that the list was compiled on the basis of a survey conducted under challenging circumstances by the Home Ministry.

"It was difficult to access police stations located in remote areas during the Covid-19 pandemic due

to various restrictions on movement. Consequently the survey was conducted in accordance with the guidelines of the Government," the statement said.

The Union Home Ministry took this step following the directions of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while addressing the Directors General of Police during the 2015 police conference at Kutch in Gujarat. The Prime Minister had directed that parameters should be laid down for grading police stations and assessing their performance based on various feedbacks.

Domestic flights upped to 80% of pre-COVID levels

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 3: The cap on the number of domestic flights that Indian airlines are permitted to operate was increased from 70 per cent to 80 per cent of their pre-COVID levels Thursday, said Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri.

The minister had said November 11 that the Indian airlines can operate up to 70 per cent of their pre-COVID domestic passenger flights due to the prevailing demand amid the coronavirus situation. Puri tweeted Thursday, "Domestic operations recommenced with 30K passengers on 25 May & have now touched a high of 2.52 lakhs on 30 Nov 2020."

"Ministry of Civil Aviation is now allowing domestic carriers to increase their operations from existing 70% to 80% of pre-COVID approved capacity," he stated.

MP announces memorial for Bhopal gas tragedy victims

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, Dec 3: A memorial would be built for those who lost their lives in the 1984 Bhopal gas leak tragedy, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said Thursday.

Speaking on the 36th anniversary of the incident, Chouhan also announced immediate resumption of a pension of Rs 1,000 for the women who lost their husbands due to the gas leak from the now-defunct Union Carbide plant.

"A memorial will be built to commemorate the people who lost their lives due to the toxic gas leak from a pesticide plant on the night of December 2-3, 1984," Chouhan said at an all-religion prayer meeting held here. "Besides, pension to the widows which had stopped in 2019 (during the Congress government) would be given forthwith," he said.

Many of these women were suffering from various ailments themselves and needed help as they had suffered a lot, he noted. The memorial would remind people that "no city in the world should become another Bhopal," the chief minister said. "We need to save the world that God has given us for the next generation," he said.

The tragedy survivors led by four NGOs working for the gas leak victims formed a human chain near the abandoned Union Carbide plant, said Rachna Dhingra of the Bhopal Group for Information & Action.



We have been waiting and hoping for the day when the searchlights of science would pick out our invisible enemy and give us the power to stop that enemy from making us ill – and now the scientists have done it
BORIS JOHNSON | UK PRIME MINISTER

CHANG'E-5 COMPLETES SAMPLING ON MOON

China's Chang'e-5 probe has completed sampling on the Moon, and the samples have been sealed inside the spacecraft, the China National Space Administration (CNSA) announced Thursday



of the day quote

Christmas is going to be a lot harder. You cannot be traveling during these holidays, as much as you want to
JOE BIDEN | US PRESIDENT-ELECT

Families all across the country are experiencing the unthinkable, unbearable losses of their loved ones and many are falling into financial ruin because of the economic fallout of the pandemic
NANCY PELOSI | US HOUSE SPEAKER

Culture of peace cannot be only for Abrahamic religions. And as long as such selectivity exists, the world can never truly foster a culture of peace
ASHISH SHARMA | FIRST SECY IN INDIA'S PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UN

SHORT TAKES

China's population may decline

Beijing: China's total fertility rate has fallen below the warning line and the population growth has entered a critical turning point, Chinese Minister of Civil Affairs Li Jihong has said amid demographers warning that the country's population will soon start to decline.

Jimmy Lai denied bail in fraud case

Hong Kong: Hong Kong media tycoon and pro-democracy activist Jimmy Lai was denied bail Thursday on a charge of fraud related to the lease of a building that houses his Apple Daily, an anti-government tabloid. Hong Kong authorities have intensified a crackdown on key opposition figures in the Chinese-ruled city since Beijing circumvented the local legislature and imposed sweeping national security legislation on the global financial centre June 30.

Nepal's foreign min to visit India

Kathmandu: As bilateral ties between Nepal and India have seen a thaw in recent days, the stalled high-level visits and exchanges have resumed. After three back to back high-level visits from India -- Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla, Army Chief General MM Naravane and Chief of R&AW Samant Goel -- Kathmandu is sending its foreign minister Pradeep Gyawali to New Delhi on a return visit, Nepali and Indian officials told IANS.

Pizza Hut co-founder dies

Wichita: Frank Carney, who with his brother started the Pizza Hut empire in Wichita, died Wednesday from pneumonia. He was 82. Carney had recently recovered from COVID-19, but had Alzheimer's disease for more than a decade, the Wichita Eagle reported. He died at 4:30 a.m. At an assisted living facility in Wichita, his wife and brother told the Eagle.

Quake hits Turkey

Istanbul: Turkey's disaster authority and the US Geological Survey say a 5.0 magnitude earthquake has struck Sirt in southeastern Turkey. The Disaster and Emergency Management Authority, or AFAD, said Thursday there were no immediate reports of casualties or damage from the quake that hit at a depth of 20 kilometers (12 miles) at 8:45 a.m. (0545 GMT).

Potential life on Mars likely lived below the surface

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Dec 3: If life ever existed on ancient Mars, it would have lived up to several miles below the surface of the Red Planet, likely due to subsurface melting of thick ice sheets fuelled by geothermal heat, according to a study.

The research, published in the journal *Science Advances*, examined various Mars datasets to see if heating via geothermal or underground heat would have been possible 4.1 billion to 3.7 billion years ago or in the Noachian era. They showed that the conditions needed for subsurface melt-

ing would have been ubiquitous on ancient Mars.

Even if Mars had a warm and wet climate 4 billion years ago, with the loss of the magnetic field, atmospheric thinning and subsequent drop in global temperatures over time, liquid water may have been stable only at great depths, the researchers found.

Therefore, life, if it ever originated on Mars, may have followed liquid water to progressively greater depths, they said.

"At such depths, life could have been sustained by hydrothermal (heating) activity and rock-water reactions. So, the subsurface may

represent the longest-lived habitable environment on Mars," said lead author Lujendra Ojha, an assistant professor at Rutgers University-New Brunswick in the US.

The study may help resolve what is known as the faint young sun paradox -- a lingering key question in Mars science.

"Even if greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide and water vapour are pumped into the early Martian atmosphere in computer simulations, climate models still struggle to support a long-term warm and wet Mars," said Ojha. "I and my co-authors propose



that the faint young sun paradox may be reconciled, at least partly, if Mars had high geothermal heat in its past," he said in a statement.

The researchers noted that our Sun is a massive nuclear fusion reactor that generates energy by fusing hydrogen into helium. Over time, they explained, the Sun has gradually brightened and warmed the surface of planets in our solar system.

According to the researchers, about 4 billion years ago, the Sun was much fainter so the climate of early Mars should have been freezing.

However, the surface of Mars has many geological indicators, such as ancient riverbeds, and chemical indicators, such as water-related minerals.

VISA RESTRICTIONS

China hits out at US

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beijing, Dec 3: China Thursday accused critics in the US government of "an escalation of political suppression" against Beijing following a report of new visa restrictions on members of China's ruling Communist Party and their immediate family members.

Foreign ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said China would "make representations" to the US following the report Thursday in the *New York Times* that such people would be limited to one-month, single-entry visas.

Hua called Washington's approach "totally inconsistent with the US' own interests," and said it would damage America's global image.

"I think it is obvious to all that this is an escalation of political suppression by some extreme anti-China forces in the US Out of strong ideological prejudice and deep-rooted Cold War mentality against China," Hua said at a daily briefing. The Times report could not immediately be confirmed, but follows earlier hints that Washington was planning such a move, possibly even including a total ban on all 92 million Communist Party members. It wasn't clear how the restrictions would be enforced since many members do not play active public roles in the party's institutions. The restrictions would be the latest punitive measure taken against China's leadership and economy amid sharpening disputes over human rights, the coronavirus pandemic, trade,



technology, Taiwan and a host of other issues.

The US Wednesday said it would block imports from a major Chinese producer of cotton goods because of its reliance on workers detained as part of a crackdown on ethnic minorities in China's northwest.

Washington has already slapped travel bans and financial sanctions on officials connected to the crackdown on Uighurs and other Chinese Muslim groups in Xinjiang, as well as on Chinese and Hong Kong officials it accuses of restricting social and political rights in the semi-autonomous Chinese city through the implementation of a harsh new national security law. Washington had been loosening restrictions on travel by Chinese to the US, seeking to take advantage of the lavish spending habits of China's newly wealthy. Chinese who make up the single largest group of foreign students at American universities have already complained of tougher conditions for obtaining or extending visas. Chinese academics have also faced greater scrutiny, while dozens of journalists with state media have been forced to return home and visa restrictions placed on those remaining, prompting retaliation from Beijing.

Hackers target COVID-19 vaccine distribution effort

AGENCIES

Boston, Dec 3: IBM security researchers say they have detected a cyberespionage effort using targeted phishing emails to try to collect vital information on the World Health Organisation's initiative for distributing COVID-19 vaccine to developing countries.

The researchers said they could not be sure who was behind the campaign, which began in September, or if it was successful. But the precision targeting and careful efforts to leave no tracks bore

"the potential hallmarks of nation-state trade-craft," they said in a blog post Thursday. The campaign's targets, in countries including Germany, Italy, South Korea and Taiwan, are likely associated with the development of the 'cold chain' needed to ensure coronavirus vaccines get the nonstop sterile refrigeration they need to be effective for the nearly 3 billion people who live where temperature-controlled storage is insufficient, IBM said.

"Think of it as the bloodline that will be supplying the most vital vaccines globally," said Claire Zaboeva, an IBM analyst involved in the detection. Whoever is behind the operation could be moti-



vated by a desire to learn how the vaccines are best able to be shipped and stored -- the entire refrigeration process -- in order to copy it, said Nick Rossmann, the IBM team's global threat intelligence lead. Or they might want to be able to undermine a vaccine's legitimacy or launch a disruptive or destructive attack, he added.

In the play, executives with groups likely associated with the initiative known as Covax -- created by the Gavi Vaccine Alliance, the World Health Organisation and other UN Agencies -- were sent spoofed emails appearing to come from an executive of Haier Biomedical, a Chinese company considered the world's main cold-chain supplier, the analyst said. The phishing emails had malicious attachments that prompted recipients to enter credentials that could have been used to harvest sensitive information about partners vital to the vaccine-

delivery platform. Targets included the European Commission's Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union and companies that make solar panels for powering portable vaccine refrigerators. Other targets were petrochemical companies, likely because they produce dry ice, which is used in the cold chain. Zaboeva said. The EU agency has been busy revising new import and export regimes for coronavirus vaccines and would be a gold mine for hackers seeking stepping stones into partnering organizations, she said.

Covax has struggled to raise enough money to compete for vaccine contracts against the world's wealthiest nations in the race to secure doses as fast as they can be produced. But the UN and Gavi have invested millions in cold-chain equipment across Africa and Asia. The investment, in the works well before the pandemic, was accelerated to prepare for an eventual global rollout of coronavirus vaccines.

HOPES ALIVE



An Ethiopian girl stands at the window of a temporary shelter near the Sudan-Ethiopia border, Sudan. REUTERS

Pets played life-saving role during pandemic

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Sydney, Dec 3: In the absence of human-to-human contact, in millions of households worldwide, animals or pets have provided much-needed comfort via cuddles, pats and a constant physical presence, say researchers.

The study, published in the *Journal of Behavioural Economics for Policy (JBEP)* outlined how pets have a crucial role to play in an era where human-human contact can be life endangering.

According to the researchers, physical touch is a sense that has been taken for granted - even overlooked - until Covid-19 visited our door earlier this year.

"To fill the void of loneliness and provide a buffer against stress, there has been a global upsurge in people adopting dogs and cats from animal shelters during lockdowns," said study author Janette Young from the University of South Australia. Spending on pets was already hitting record levels, topping \$13 billion in Australia and in the region of US \$260 billion globally in 2020, but this is bound to be surpassed.

It is estimated that more than half the global population share their lives with one or more pets. The health benefits have been widely reported, but little data exists regarding the specific benefits that pets bring to humans in terms of touch.

Saeed's spokesman gets 15 years in jail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lahore, Dec 3: Mumbai terror attack mastermind and Jamat-ud-Dawa (JuD) chief Hafiz Saeed's spokesman Yahya Mujahid has been sentenced to another 15 years in jail by a Pakistani anti-terrorism court in a terror financing case.

Mujahid was last month handed down 32 years jail term by the anti-terrorism court (ATC) in two terror financing cases.

Besides Mujahid, the ATC Lahore Wednesday also handed down 15 years imprisonment to JuD's senior leader Zafar Iqbal and six months jail term to Saeed's brother-in-law Hafiz Abdul Rehman Makki. Earlier, the ATC Lahore had sentenced Iqbal for 26 years imprisonment in three such cases. Judge Ijaz Ahmad Buttari announced the verdict under different provisions of the Anti-Terrorism Act 1997. The three convicts were present in the court when the judge announced the



Hafiz Saeed

verdict. The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of Punjab police had registered as many as 41 FIRs against JuD leaders, including Saeed in different cities. The trial courts have so far decided 25 cases.

The ATC has sentenced Saeed for a collective imprisonment of 21 years on terror financing charges under sections 11-N of Anti-Terrorism Act 1997 in four cases so far. Saeed-led JuD is the front organisation for the Lashkar-e-Taiba which is responsible for carrying out the 2008 Mumbai attack that killed 166 people, including six Americans.

Saeed, a UN designated terrorist whom the US has placed a \$ 10 million bounty on, was arrested July 17 last year in the terror financing cases.

The 70-year-old JuD chief is lodged at Lahore's high-security Kot Lakhpat jail.

VIRUS KEEPING MOST SANTAS AT A DISTANCE

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Miami, Dec 3: Brad Six becomes Santa Claus, pulling his black boots over his red pants in the office of a Miami outdoor supply company.

It's hot, so he forgoes the traditional heavy jacket for a lightweight vest and grabs his Santa hat. But before sliding it on, the gray-bearded 61-year-old dons a plastic face shield and then takes his chair positioned behind a plexiglass sheet.

"Getting paid is nice, but to get your battery recharged and to really get something lasting out of it requires interacting with the kids -- you don't get a lot of that this year," said Six, who first portrayed Santa 35 years ago.

This is Santa Claus in the Coronavirus Age, where visits are conducted with layers of protection or online. Putting hundreds of kids daily onto Santa's lap to talk into his face -- that's not happening for most. The physical attributes that make the perfect Santa align perfectly with those that make COVID-19 especially deadly.

"Most of us tick all the boxes: We are old, we are overweight, we have diabetes and if we don't have diabetes, we have heart disease," said Stephen Arnold, the president of IBRBS, an association formerly known as the International Brotherhood of Real Bearded Santas.

That has spurred creativity in Santa's workshops. Santas con-



ducting in-person visits are using some combination of masks, the outdoors, barriers and distance for safety.

Others are doing virtual visits,

where children chat with Santa online for prices typically ranging from \$20 to \$100, depending on the length and extras, such as whether customers want a recording. Some

Santas are taking the season off.

"Santa safety is our No. 1 concern" and negotiated into every contract, said Mitch Allen, president of HireSanta, one of the nation's largest agencies. He said the pandemic initially dried up his business, but it bounced back, especially online. The average Santa makes \$ 5,000 to \$10,000 during a normal season, Allen said. That's a welcome bonus for men often retired on a fixed income, but many Santas say revenue is down as corporate parties and other lucrative gigs evaporated. Jac Grimes, a Santa in Greensboro, North Carolina, gave up home visits, about a third of his business. He did it not just for his own health, but to prevent becom-

ing a superspreader, fearing he'd pass the virus from one family to the next. At a farmers market he annually works, Grimes and his wife dress up as Santa and Mrs Claus and sit in a parking lot where they talk to people who remain inside their cars. Some homeowners associations are moving their annual Santavisitation parties outdoors; Grimes will arrive in his red convertible to greet the crowds from afar.

One of the hardest adjustments Santas have made is wearing masks that hide their painstakingly grown beards. The virus has many Santas and parents turning to virtual visits, which are booked through each Santa's personal website or agencies like Allen's.



India Inc is on a gradual recovery path. Though we are yet to reach the pre-COVID levels, the economy is rebounding and this cautious optimism is reflecting in the hiring scenario as well

RITUPARNA CHAKRABORTY | CO-FOUNDER AND EXEC VP, TEAMLEASE

DEALERS ASSOCIATION DEMAND 'FAIR DEAL'

Harley-Davidson's dealers association has demanded a "fair deal" of compensation from the American cruiser bike major, before it exits India. The dealer partners who represent 33 outlets, have been facing a problem since Harley-Davidson announced withdrawal of independent operations in India



of the day quote

Efforts are underway to operationalise vital infrastructure links between CLMV countries and India for better economic integration. Our aim is to reach our friends in SE Asia through India's NE frontier and in turn achieve development for our people and partners

GURUPRASAD MOHAPATRA | SECRETARY, DPIIT

Biofuel is not just science but also a Mantra that will provide new energy to not only India but also the entire world. It has the power to create a balance between our environment and economic development

DHARMENDRA PRADHAN | OIL MINISTER

We have launched FTH Daily to ease the lives of millions of consumers with their daily essential needs. We aim to become our customers' daily nutrition partner, catering to their food needs at competitive prices

SHAN KADAVIL | CO-FOUNDER AND CEO, FTH DAILY

Service sector recovery weakens in Nov: PMI

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 3: India's services sector recovery weakened in November despite further upturn in new work supported business activity growth. However, the sector reported the first rise in employment for nine months. Moreover, the overall level of positive sentiment climbed to the highest since February amid predictions that market conditions would normalise once a vaccine for the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) is rolled out.

Accordingly, the seasonally adjusted India Services Business Activity Index reading remained above the critical 50 mark that separates growth from contraction for the second month in a row during November.

Despite falling from 54.1 (index reading) in October to 53.7 (index reading) in November, the latest reading was still indicative of a solid pace of expansion.

Companies that signalled output growth commented on better demand conditions and a relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions.

"New business inflows likewise rose for the second straight month and solidly, despite growth easing from October. According to survey participants, the increase in sales stemmed from a pick-up in demand, marketing efforts and the loosening of Covid-19 controls," the IHS Markit report said.

"Underlying data suggested that the upturn in total new work was driven by the domestic market, with new export orders decreasing sharply again in November."

Resultantly, the overall Indian private sector activity rose for the third straight month in November; but the pace of growth softened



CRAWLING BACK

THE SECTOR REPORTED THE FIRST RISE IN EMPLOYMENT FOR NINE MONTHS

THE OVERALL LEVEL OF POSITIVE SENTIMENT CLIMBED TO THE HIGHEST SINCE FEBRUARY

COMPANIES THAT SIGNALLED OUTPUT GROWTH COMMENTED ON BETTER DEMAND CONDITIONS

THE OVERALL INDIAN PRIVATE SECTOR ACTIVITY ROSE FOR THE THIRD STRAIGHT MONTH IN NOVEMBER

Both goods producers and services firms registered slower increases in sales.

As per reading, the Composite PMI Output Index was down from 58 in October to 56.3 November, a reading that was still consistent with a marked rate of expansion.

"Output and sales across the private sector have held up well, but there were some signs of growth losing momentum among goods producers and service providers.

As has been the case in most nations worldwide, the manufacturing sector outperformed its services counterpart as the latter was hit harder by the Covid-19 pandemic," said Pollyanna De Lima, Economics Associate Director at IHS Markit.

"When reporting growth constraints, travel restrictions and low footfall as consumers opt to stay home and avoid catching the disease remained key themes of the services PMI survey."

from October's near nine-year high. The report said that rates of increase eased at manufacturers and service providers.

Flipkart to spin-off PhonePe, digital payments biz

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bangalore, Dec 3: E-commerce marketplace Flipkart Thursday announced a partial spin-off of digital payments platform PhonePe in a bid to help it access dedicated, long-term capital to fund its growth ambitions over the next three to four years.

Flipkart said that PhonePe is raising \$700 million in primary capital at a post-money valuation of \$5.5 billion from existing Flipkart investors led by Walmart. The e-commerce marketplace will remain PhonePe's majority shareholder.

"This partial spin-off gives PhonePe access to dedicated long-term capital to pursue our vision of providing financial inclusion to a billion Indians," Sameer Nigam, Founder and CEO at PhonePe, said in a statement.

The partial spin-off also provides PhonePe an opportunity to constitute a new Board of Directors focused on supporting its development.

Airtel pips Jio in monthly mobile subscriber addition



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 3: Bharti Airtel pipped Reliance Jio in new mobile subscriber addition in September after a gap of four years, according to data published by telecom regulator Trai Thursday.

Reliance Jio had maintained the leadership position in monthly mobile subscriber addition since the launch of its commercial operations in September 2016. It had added 15.97 million new customers when it commenced commercial operations.

Bharti Airtel led mobile subscriber growth in September 2020 with a net addition of 3.77 million new customers. It was followed by Reliance Jio with net addition of 1.46 million and BSNL with 78,454 new customers.

Vodafone Idea was the biggest loser as it lost 4.65 million subscribers during the reported month. MTNL and Reliance Communications lost 5,784 and 1,324 customers, respectively.

Reliance Jio led the market in terms of overall mobile subscriber base with 404.12 million customers. It was followed by Bharti Airtel with 326.61 million subscribers, Vodafone Idea with 295.49 million customers, BSNL with 118.89 million subscribers and MTNL with 3.33 million customers. The total telecom subscriber base in the country increased marginally to 1,168.66 million in the reported month from 1,167.81 million in August. The total wireless or mobile telephony subscriber base increased to 1,148.58 million in September 2020 from 1,147.92 million in August 2020.

RBI bars HDFC Bank from digital launches

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 3: In an unprecedented move, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has temporarily barred HDFC Bank from launching new digital banking initiatives and issuing new credit card after taking a serious view of service outages at the country's largest private sector lender over the last two years.



The RBI's order came Wednesday, less than two weeks after the last instance of service outage across its digital banking channels, including internet banking, mobile banking and other payments, the bank informed the exchanges. The outage November 21 had severely inconvenienced customers.

HDFC Bank's MD and CEO Shashidhar Jagdishan, who is facing his biggest challenge after taking over the reins in October, Thursday apologised to customers for not living up to their expectations at times. A statement from Jagdishan was posted on the bank's website during the day.

In December 2018, the bank's new mobile application crashed within hours of its launch in what was attributed to the inability of the servers to handle the heightened traffic. Exactly a year later, its online channels were down during the salary time. After the second incident, the RBI had said that it was looking into the glitches.

Jagdishan, in the statement, said that after the first two outages, the

bank took help from external expertise to strengthen its IT infrastructure and systems, and added that it is working on "war footing" to ensure there is no impact through setbacks like power outages.

HDFC Bank, Thursday said the latest incident November 21 was a result of a power failure in its primary data center.

"The RBI has advised the bank Bank's MD and CEO Shashidhar Jagdishan, Thursday apologised to customers for not living up to their expectations

to temporarily stop all launches of the digital business generating activities planned under its programme - Digital 2.0 (to be launched) and other proposed business generating IT applications, and sourcing of new credit card customers," the bank informed the stock exchanges in a filing.

"Interest rates likely to remain unchanged" The RBI is likely to keep the benchmark interest rate unchanged at its bi-monthly monetary policy review outcome to be announced Friday, but may revise growth estimates in view of the September quarter GDP turning out to be better than RBI's earlier projections.

According to experts, the stubborn retail inflation, which has remained above the comfort level of the RBI of around 4%, will refrain the central bank from reducing interest rate Friday.

The RBI, however, is expected to revise its growth projections as the second quarter GDP numbers at (-) 7.5% worked to be better than its projected contraction.

Roshni Nadar tops list as India's richest women



AGENCIES

Mumbai, Dec 3: IT major HCL Technologies' Roshni Nadar Malhotra has topped a list of the richest women in the country with a net worth of ₹54,850 crore, followed by Biocon's Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw at ₹36,600 crore, a report said Thursday.

A total of 31 women in the list of 100 having a net worth of at least ₹100 crore, prepared by Hurun India and Kotak Wealth, are "self-made", it said. This includes six professional managers and 25 entrepreneurs.

Shaw leads in the self-made category, followed by Radha Vembu of Zoho (Rs 11,590 crore net worth) and Jayshree Ullal of Arista Networks (Rs 10,220 crore), it said.

Interestingly, all the three -- Shaw, Ullal and Vembu -- also feature in a global rich list prepared by Hurun.

The average age of women on the list, whose cumulative wealth is pegged at ₹2.72 lakh crore, is 53 and 19 of the 100 women are under the age of 40, it said.

Two of the women have promoted unicorns -- retailer Nykaa's Falguni Nayar who has a wealth of ₹5,410 crore and 34-year-old Divya Gokulath of Byju's with a net worth of ₹3,490 crore.

Some families contributed more than one person to the women's rich list. Apollo Hospitals Enterprise leads with four entrants, followed by three from the Godrej Group.

UltraTech to invest ₹5,477cr to raise capacity by 12.8 MT

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 3: Aditya Birla Group Cement Flagship Company, UltraTech Cement Thursday announced ₹5,477 crore of investment towards 12.8 MTPA capacity expansions at its plants in India.

The Board of Directors approved increasing capacity by 12.8 MTPA with a mix of brown field and green field expansion. The additional capacity will be created in the fast-growing markets of the east, central and north regions of the country.

The cement industry has been witnessing healthy volumes post relaxation of lockdown, on the back of the government's thrust on infrastructure

This expansion includes the existing approval for the cement plant at Pali in Rajasthan, in addition to the company's 6.7 MTPA capacity expansions currently underway in Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Bihar and West Bengal, that has picked up



pace and is expected to get commissioned by FY22, in a phased manner.

Commercial production from the new capacities is expected to go on stream in a phased manner, by Q4 FY23. This capacity addition will not impact the ongoing deleveraging programme which is on track to make UltraTech debt-free by the time the expansion programme is completed. Upon completion of the latest round of expansion, UltraTech's capacity will grow to 136.25 MTPA, reinforcing its position as the third largest cement

company in the world, outside of China.

Kumar Mangalam Birla, Chairman, Aditya Birla Group said "This significant investment in a core infrastructure sector will accelerate the wheels of economic activity and aid the kickstart of the private investment cycle.

The cement industry has been witnessing healthy volumes post relaxation of lockdown, on the back of the government's thrust on infrastructure, underlying demand from the rural economy and individual home builders."

Economy witnessing V-shaped recovery: FinMin

THE GROWTH DRIVERS HAVE OBTAINED THE LARGEST SUPPORT FROM AGRICULTURE FOLLOWED BY CONSTRUCTION AND MANUFACTURING

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 3: The Indian economy is witnessing a V-shaped recovery as the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has recorded a quarter-on-quarter growth of 23% in the July-September quarter of this fiscal, according to the Finance Ministry's latest Monthly Economic Review.

The decline in the GDP narrowed to 7.5% in the second quarter of this financial year; over 23.9% in April-June quarter.

"The year-on-year GDP contraction of 7.5% in Q2 of 2020-21 underlies a quarter-on-quarter surge in GDP growth of 23%.

"This V-shaped recovery, evident at the half-way stage of 2020-21, reflects the resilience and robustness of the Indian economy. The fun-

damentals of the economy remain strong as gradual scaling back of lockdowns, along with the astute support of Atmanirbhar Bharat Mission has placed the economy firmly on the path of recovery," the Monthly Economic Review for November said.

The growth drivers have obtained the largest support from agriculture followed by construction and manufacturing, it said, adding, the contact-sensitive services sector has also contributed although mainly through logistics and communication.

The recently celebrated festive season contributed to a rise in fresh COVID-19 positive cases in India, although numbers have started to decline again, a trend seen in many other countries, it said.

Consequently, it said, worldwide,



the months of October and November, 2020 have been of economic uncertainty with global composite PMI and goods trade activity showing a tepid increase while energy and metal prices around the world have moved in dif-

ferent directions further adding to the uncertainty.

In general, it said, inflation has softened in advanced economies while climbing up further in emerging market economies reflecting a relatively larger impact of sup-

ply-side disruptions on economically more challenged countries in the world.

"High optimism among investors however continues unabated as seen in equity markets the world over. With further weakening of the US dollar in November, prospects of growth in the rest of the world have become stronger," it said.

Sharing the outlook about the third quarter, the report said there is cautious optimism that global economic uncertainty does not mirror itself in India notwithstanding moderation of a few high frequency indicators late in the month of November. Overall increase in Rabi coverage with adequately filled irrigation reservoirs bodes well for the growth of agricultural output in 2020-21, it said.

Further, sustained demand for

labour arising from increase in Rabi sowing has also contributed to growth in rural wages additionally propped up by increase in wages and employment generation under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

The additional allocation of ₹10,000 crore in the latest package for Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Rozgar Yojana would give a further boost to job creation in the rural sector and supplement rural incomes.

Increase in minimum support prices for both Kharif and Rabi crops in 2020-21, and progress in rice procurement, has already been supplementing rural incomes in the country, it said. Talking about the downside risk, the report said, the spread of a second wave of COVID-19 is a challenge.

EXPECTATIONS HIGH AS INDIA TAKE ON AUSTRALIA IN THE 3-MATCH T20I SERIES BEGINNING TODAY

TIME TO CHANGE GEARS

THE SQUADS

INDIA: Virat Kohli (C), Shikhar Dhawan, Mayank Agarwal, KL Rahul (wk), Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey, Hardik Pandya, Sanju Samson (wk), Ravindra Jadeja, Washington Sundar, Yuzvendra Chahal, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami, Navdeep Saini, Deepak Chahar & T Natarajan.

AUSTRALIA: Aaron Finch (C), Sean Abbott, Ashton Agar, Alex Carey (wk), Cameron Green, Josh Hazlewood, Moises Henriques, Marnus Labuschagne, Glenn Maxwell, Daniel Sams, Kane Richardson, Steven Smith, Mitchell Starc, Marcus Stoinis, Matthew Wade (wk), D'Arcy Short & Adam Zampa.

that Hardik can roll his arm over for a brief spell like he did from the second ODI onwards.

Yorker specialist Natarajan, who was a late addition to the ODI squad, could also make his T20 debut Friday having shown enough promise in his maiden international appearance.

Unlike the SCG, the Manuka Oval surface had enough for both the spinners and pacers. It will be interesting to see who opens up the bowling alongside Jasprit Bumrah with the toss-up being between Mohammad Shami and Deepak Chahar. Yuzvendra Chahal, who had a forgettable outing in the ODIs, will also be looking to bounce back.

In batting, KL Rahul, who batted at five in ODIs, is expected to go

back to his preferred opening slot alongside Shikhar Dhawan.

The in-form wicketkeeper batsman had also opened in the previous series against New Zealand and would be expected to bat the bulk of the 20 overs like he did so well in the IPL.

Skipper Kohli looked in good touch in ODIs and will be aiming to build on that while number four Shreyas Iyer will be targeting big scores from great starts like he did in the preceding three-match series.

As Kohli mentioned, the win in the inconsequential third ODI was just the kind of result they needed ahead of the T20 series, else the tour would have gotten harder.

Australia, after naming the same squad for ODIs as well as T20s, would be backing themselves to beat India after a clinical display over the last one week despite injury concerns.

Star batsman David Warner is unavailable due to a groin injury and it remains to be seen if Marnus Labuschagne comes alongside skipper Aaron Finch on Friday like they both did a night ago.

Marcus Stoinis would have been another good opening option with Finch but he too is a doubtful starter due to a side injury he suffered during the ODIs.

Mitchell Starc, who was rested Wednesday, is expected to return to bolster the attack even as the side misses the services of Pat Cummins, who has been rested as part of the his workload management.

Odisha FC fail to contain ATKMB

AGENCIES

Goa, Dec 3: Odisha FC's patchy form continues as they concede a stoppage-time goal Thursday to suffer a 0-1 defeat against ATK Mohun Bagan (ATKMB) in their third Indian Super League (ISL) game.

After three games, the Bhubaneswar-based side now have only one point as they have lost two while drawing one in three matches.

ATKMB, meanwhile, continued their all-win start in the tournament following the narrow win at the Fatorda Stadium. The teams fought toe-to-toe right until Roy Krishna's header decided the fate of the game in the final minute.

Antonio Lopez Habas and Stuart Baxter made a change each to their lineups. Manvir Singh replaced David Williams and Diego Mauricio came in for Manuel Onwu for ATK Mohun Bagan and Odisha respectively.

The first major goal-scoring chance fell to Roy Krishna in the 24th minute when he found himself one-on-one with Kamaljit Singh after receiving a long ball from Tiri inside the Odisha box. The Fijian blasted the ball over the crossbar.

The easiest chance of the half was squandered by Jacob Tratt in the 35th minute. Premjit Singh played a short corner to Marcelinho who found Cole Alexander at the

edge of the box. Alexander lobbed a cross into the box for Tratt who headed wide with an empty net available.

The first half was a cagey affair and an evenly poised contest as both teams adopted a safety-first approach. ATKMB were unlucky not to get a penalty in the 50th minute when Hendry Antony brought down Prabir Das. The tackle was just about inside the box as the replay suggested but the referee gave a free-kick instead on the left edge of the box.

In the 56th minute, Prabir's cross inside the box was halfheartedly cleared by Steven Taylor which hit Manvir on his left arm and went to Cole Alexander who mistakenly headed the ball into his own net in a bid to clear. Manvir was charged with a handball and the own goal stood cancelled.

The Kolkata giants shifted momentum and commanded proceedings but they were not able to create any major chance in the attacking third as Baxter's men defended resolutely.

But the Mariners finally broke the deadlock and sealed the fate of the game in the dying minutes of the match as Roy Krishna proved to be their saviour yet again.

Tiri floated a long free-kick inside the box and Sandesh Jhingam headed the ball back in the middle. Krishna pounced above Alexander and found the back of the net with a clinical header.



ATK Mohun Bagan players celebrate Roy Krishna's goal against Odisha FC



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Canberra, Dec 3: Short of resources in ODIs, India will have enough options to choose from to pose a stiffer challenge to Australia when the two sides clash in a three-match T20 series beginning here Friday.

The 1-2 ODI series loss reaffirmed that India have a lot of work to do in the 50-over format but they possess a much more balanced squad in the shortest format.

Before the pandemic suspended sporting activities around the world, India had blanked hosts New Zealand in a five-match series and they will be taking a lot of confidence out of that result into the contest against Australia.

The presence of Washington Sundar, Deepak Chahar and T Natarajan, who did well on his ODI debut Wednesday, lends much-needed balance to the bowling department.

Sundar will be high on confidence after a solid IPL where Royal Challengers Bangalore and India skipper Virat Kohli used him effectively in the powerplay and middle overs.

With Hardik Pandya not bowling regularly, India had only one specialist all-rounder in Ravindra Jadeja in the ODIs. However, in the T20s, Kohli will also have the services of Sundar in both the departments and there is a possibility

Neymar strikes down Man Utd



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Manchester, Dec 3: Neymar scored twice to lead Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) to a 3-1 victory at 10-man Manchester United in the Champions League, leaving both teams' hopes of reaching the knockout stage uncertain heading into their final group games.

United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer was left to rue not bringing off Fred after he escaped with only a booking for a first-half head butt.

The midfielder was sent off in the 70th minute for a second yellow card after his challenge on former United midfielder Ander Herrera just after United had gone 2-1 down when Marquinhos scored.

Marcus Rashford had equalised in the 32nd minute after Neymar had taken only six minutes to put last season's beaten finalists in front. The Brazilian struck again in stoppage time at an empty Old Trafford.

While United remain top of Group H, PSG and Leipzig are only behind on goal difference. United only needs a point in Leipzig Tuesday when PSG hosts Istanbul Basaksehir, which is six points behind the top three.

The visitors led early in Manchester when Kylian Mbappe's

deflected shot bounced into the path of Neymar to score from the near post.

It took David de Gea's save, palming away Alessandro Florenzi's shot, to prevent the deficit from growing bigger for United.

Good fortune came in the form of Fred not being sent off for pushing his head toward Leandro Paredes, despite a VAR review.

After the reprieve, United drew level when Anthony Martial's shot was parried by Kaylor Navas and Rashford's strike deflected off Danilo past the goalkeeper for his sixth goal in five European games.

PSG were back in front in the 69th. De Gea pushed Mitchel Bakker's low shot wide but from the resulting corner Herrera passed to Abdou Diallo, who squared across in the six-yard box for Marquinhos to knock the ball under the goalkeeper.

It was then a less contentious challenge on Herrera from Fred that earned the second yellow card. This time there was no VAR review, even as Fred lingered.

The game was getting away from United and it was killed off when Neymar began a move around the halfway line that led to the third goal. The Brazilian sent a long-range pass to Mbappe and Rafinha then teed up Neymar to sidefoot into an open net.

4-STAR GIROUD HELPS CHELSEA ROUT SEVILLA

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Seville (Spain), Dec 3: Striker Olivier Giroud became the oldest player to score a hat-trick in the Champions League era, finishing with four goals to help Chelsea comfortably beat Sevilla 4-0 and secure first place in Group E.

At age 34, Giroud is the oldest player with a hat-trick in the competition since Ferenc Puskas scored three goals in a European Cup match in 1965.

The French international scored with neat shots from inside the area in the eighth and 54th minutes, then added to the lead with a header in the 74th and a penalty kick converted in the 83rd.

The only other time Giroud had scored four goals was with Tours in Ligue 2 in France. Giroud's hat-trick was only Chelsea's second in the Champions League, after Didier Drogba in 2006.

Both teams had already qualified for the knockout stage in advance and rested several regular starters in Seville. The victory gave Chelsea 13 points, three more than Sevilla.

The result Wednesday ended Sevilla's 14-match unbeaten streak in European matches at home. The Europa League champion hadn't lost since a 1-2 defeat against Bayern Munich in the first leg of the Champions League quarter-finals in 2018.

Chelsea had advanced as the second-place team in their last two participations in the Champions League. This is the 12th time Chelsea have won the group out of the 15 occasions they have reached the knockout stage. Chelsea's last four Champions League campaigns all ended in the round of 16.



CR750 classic lifts Juventus

ASSOCIATED PRESS



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Turin, Dec 3: Cristiano Ronaldo scored his 750th career goal to help Juventus beat Dynamo Kyiv 3-0 and leave his team with a chance of securing top spot in their Champions League group.

Ronaldo scored Juve's second goal and also hit the bar after Federico Chiesa opened the scoring in the first half. Alvaro Morata completed the scoring in a game that saw Stephanie Frappart become the first female referee to officiate a men's Champions League match.

Juventus remained second in Group G, three points behind Barcelona after the Catalan club won 3-0 at Ferencvaros. Both clubs had already sealed qualification to the round of 16 but a win for Juventus at Barcelona in the final round next week could see the Bianconeri snatch top spot.

The result and performance will ease some of the pressure on Juventus coach Andrea Pirlo. The 41-year-old former Juventus player is a few months into his first coaching job and has come in for criticism after several disappointing displays from his team.

Juventus had rested Ronaldo this past weekend and were held to a disappointing draw at Benevento in Serie A but made a big impact on his return. Juventus broke the deadlock in the 21st minute when Chiesa rose high at the far post to head in Alex Sandro's cross from the left.

Juventus almost conceded at the end of the first half as goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny had to come flying off his line to deny Viktor Tsyhankov.

BARCA EASE PAST FERENCVAROS 3-0

BUDAPEST: Antoine Griezmann scored for the third straight game to lead an experimental Barcelona team to a 3-0 win at Hungarian champion Ferencvaros in the Champions League. With progression to the last 16 already secure with four wins from four games, Barcelona coach Ronald Koeman could afford to rest stars like Lionel Messi, Philippe Coutinho and goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen. Griezmann and Martin Braithwaite got the chance to impress up front, aided by inconsistent French winger Ousmane Dembele on the left and 20-year-old Portuguese forward Francisco Trincao on the right.

Juventus coach Andrea Pirlo. The 41-year-old former Juventus player is a few months into his first coaching job and has come in for criticism after several disappointing displays from his team.

Juventus had rested Ronaldo this past weekend and were held to a disappointing draw at Benevento in Serie A but made a big impact on his return. Juventus broke the deadlock in the 21st minute when Chiesa rose high at the far post to head in Alex Sandro's cross from the left.

Juventus almost conceded at the end of the first half as goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny had to come flying off his line to deny Viktor Tsyhankov.

Ronaldo did get on the scoresheet in the 57th for his 750th goal for club and country — and one of the easiest. Chiesa raced down the right flank and whipped in a cross which the goalkeeper pushed onto Morata's leg before the ball bounced toward Ronaldo, who was left with the simplest of tap-ins at the far post.

Chiesa was also involved in Juve's third goal as he burst into the box and picked out Morata, who coolly slotted it into the bottom right corner. It was Morata's sixth goal in the competition this season.

'Bharat Ratna for Dhyhan Chand' call continues

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 3: The demand for Bharat Ratna for Indian hockey legend Dhyhan Chand is growing year by year. Odisha great and former India captain Dilip Tirkey once again appealed for the same to the government during the observation of the hockey great's 41st death anniversary at the Bhubaneswar club ground, Thursday.

The legendary Hockey wizard, during his era, played 128 international matches for India scoring 570 goals in total and winning three Olympic gold medals in the process.

"This event is the reiteration of the appeal made since 2015. Dhyhan Chand's talent, achievements, commitment towards India played an instrumental role in promoting hockey around the globe. The appeal to felicitate with Bharat Ratna is not just from the field of sports but also from diverse fields, including the State Legislative Assembly," said the state Olympian Tirkey.



Diba Shankar Mishra, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Energy, Industries and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) and eminent Odia sand artist Padma Shri Sudarshan Pattnaik along

with few others were also present. On this occasion, the dignitaries paid their homage to Dhyhan Chand and expressed the need of felicitating him with Bharat Ratna. A massive hockey stick was made to

sign in for the initiative and all eminent personalities, media people and dignitaries signed it. The signature campaign was also organised, which in the coming days will be open for the public.