



TOUGH TASK

Actor Adah Sharma says she never imagined that she would play a man on screen

LEISURE P2



BJP AT IT AGAIN: GEHLOT

Raj CM Ashok Gehlot claims BJP is once again playing the game of trying to topple the state government

TWO STATES P7



FIRST QUANTUM COMPUTER

Chinese scientists 'have created' world's first light-based quantum computer; far faster than a classical supercomputer

INTERNATIONAL P10

Children's fate lost in files

THE CASES OF MISSING CHILDREN FILED AT VARIOUS POLICE STATIONS IN THE STATE SOARED BY 75% BETWEEN 2015 AND 2019

GYAN RANJAN MOHAPATRA, OP

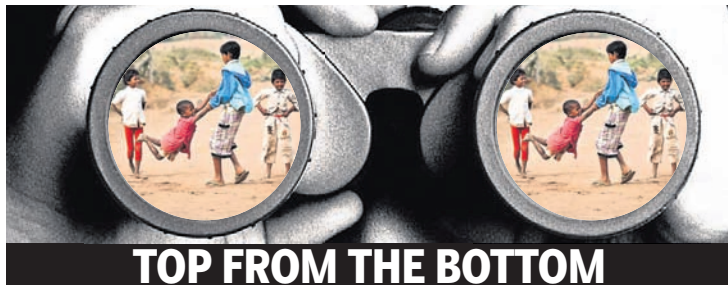
Bhubaneswar, Dec 5: The alleged kidnap and murder of Pari, a 5-year-old girl in Nayagarh district, has sparked widespread protests across the state, forcing the government to set up a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to find out the real culprit(s) of the ghastly crime. However, the cases of many other Paris have been gathering dust at various police stations across the state.

The murder of Pari grabbed public attention following the self-immolation bid by her parents before the Assembly building.

A perusal of data reveals the pathetic performance of the state police in tracing out the missing minors. As per National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, the state has been witnessing a steady rise in the number of missing children every year.

The number of such cases filed at various police stations in the state spiraled by around 75 per cent between 2015 and 2019.

The reports suggest that as many as 1,807 missing cases reported in 2015 rose to 3,151 till the end of 2019.



TOP FROM THE BOTTOM

■ IN 2016, THE TRACING RATE IN THE STATE WAS 10.2 PC— LOWEST IN THE COUNTRY

THIS YEAR, DUE TO COVID NO TRACING OPS COULD BE UNDERTAKEN

■ In 2018, the state cops cracked 1,139 cases out of a total of 3,491 untraced children; success rate of 32.6 pc, again the lowest in comparison to other states

■ The rate plummeted to 27.1 pc in 2019— again the lowest in the country



However, the police failed to achieve success in tracing out the children who went missing from 2015 to 2019, with 2017 as an aberration.

In 2015, the state police was tasked with a target to trace out 4,588 missing children including 2,781 untraced children of previous years. But, the police managed to find out only 698 kids.

As many as 1,901 children went missing in 2016. Meanwhile, the police succeeded in tracing out only 589 minors in 2016 out of a total of 5,791 cases that also included untraced 3,890 from the previous years. The tracing rate was 10.2 per cent— lowest in the country. The cops performed really well in 2017 registering a success rate of 84.4 per cent. The police managed to recover 6,281 kids including 1,747 boys and 4,534 females.

However, the success rate of Odisha Police started slowing down after 2017. As many as 2,326 cases in connection with missing of minors were reported in 2018. The cops cracked 1,139 cases out of a total of 3,491 untraced children registering a success rate of 32.6 per cent, again the lowest tracing rate in comparison to other states.

The rate plummeted to 27.1 per cent

in 2019 which was the lowest in the country. The state police managed to find out 1,490 missing kids out of 5,503 including 3,151 missing children in 2019.

Speaking on the issue, a top police official said that police will intensify their operations to trace more children after the slowing down of Covid-19 effect. "We will try to bring more awareness among people and urge them to inform about missing kids to the police force. This year, due to Covid no tracing operations could be undertaken."

The data indicated that Odisha Police has failed to achieve the desired results under schemes like 'Operation Muskan' and 'Operation Smile' to trace out missing children. In 2019, states like Kerala achieved tracing rate of around 94 per cent while Odisha has continuously been remaining at the lowest position in the country.

Various surveys by NGOs and other agencies sound an alarm that during the Covid-induced lockdown child trafficking could have increased. As families lost jobs, kids from the marginalised section were bound to work in unorganised sector, reports said.

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Oppn leaders meet Pari's parents in Nayagarh dist

BJP REMAINS ADAMANT ON CBI PROBE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 5: Leaders of the BJP and the Congress party Saturday thronged the village of the deceased minor girl in Nayagarh, who was allegedly abducted and murdered.

National spokesperson of the BJP Sambit Patra and Congress' Odisha in-charge A Chellakumar met the parents of the victim and demanded justice.

While the BJP reiterated its demand for a CBI probe into the matter, the Congress party asked for the SIT probe to be monitored by a sitting judge of

the Orissa High Court. Patra also demanded removal of state Higher Education minister Arun Sahoo. "We demand a CBI inquiry into the case. The SP and Collector must be summoned in the case," said Patra. Chellakumar said, "The SIT has to be constituted and monitored by a sitting High Court judge otherwise the state government may misuse it."

BJD spokesperson Lenin Mohanty said, "Odisha didn't see Sambit Patra and Chellakumar earlier in such sensitive cases. The government is committed to give justice to the victim. The SIT is working in good pace."

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



No water cannon on these protesters... only lathi charge

MAHANADI DISPUTE

Odisha wants to resume talks for interim relief

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Dec 5: The state of Odisha Saturday informed the Mahanadi water dispute Tribunal that it wants to restart negotiation with Chhattisgarh, in the interim application filed by it. Odisha is seeking 1.74 million acre feet (MAF) of Mahanadi water during non-monsoon months.

According to officials, Chhattisgarh had released around 1.9 MAF water to Hirakud dam during non-monsoon months in 2019. While between 2014 and 2019, Chhattisgarh had reduced the flow to Hirakud to 0.8 MAF. Odisha has been demanding 2.0 MAF flow of water to Hirakud dam from November to May.

The state has submitted in the Tribunal that it wants to hold another round of talks with Chhattisgarh to explore further possibilities of amicable settlement. The three-judge bench of the Tribunal, headed by Chairperson AM Khanwilkar and comprising Justices Indermeet Kaur and Ravi Ranjan, adjourned the matter for hearing January 16.

During the hearing, the Tribunal was also apprised by both states that the common format with regard to



■ Odisha seeks 1.74 million acre feet of Mahanadi water during non-monsoon months

■ Next hearing January 16

information related to Mahanadi basin has not been finalised by the assessor yet. It has been submitted that the assessor has fixed further meetings of engineers of both states from December 14 to 18.

Significantly, Odisha had earlier pleaded the Tribunal to pass order in the interim application.

It is to be mentioned here that Odisha in 2018 filed an interim application in the Mahanadi Tribunal seeking directions to Chhattisgarh to maintain 1.74 million acre feet flow of Mahanadi river water during the non-monsoon months, starting from November to May. The state had also urged the Tribunal to order stay on the operation and construction of barrages built by Chhattisgarh on Mahanadi till the adjudication of main petition.

Victim's body bore 16 injury marks

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, Dec 5: Giving startling revelations, the post-mortem report of K Ramesh, who allegedly died in the custody of Baselisahi police November 18, has stated that the victim's body bore as many as 16 injury marks.

Ramesh was allegedly beaten to death around two weeks ago by the Baselisahi police, a few hours

CUSTODIAL DEATH CASE

- Ramesh died due to severe injuries on his head
- A clot of around 250ml of blood was found in the brain of the victim

after he was picked up in connection with a case under investigation. The allegation is being probed in strict adherence to guide-

lines of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).

"The body of Ramesh bore as many as 16 injury marks. Ramesh had died due to severe injuries on his head. A clot of around 250ml of blood was found in the brain of the victim," said the postmortem report.

Doctors who conducted the post-mortem described the victim's death as 'fatal in nature'.

PETROL, DIESEL PRICES ON FIRE

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 5: Petrol price Saturday breached the ₹83 per litre-mark in Delhi for the first time in more than two years after a rally in international oil prices forced the 13th increase in rates in the last fortnight. Petrol price Saturday was raised by 27 paise per litre and diesel by 25 paise, according to a price notification of oil marketing companies.

Petrol price in Delhi rose to ₹83.13 per litre from ₹82.86. Diesel rates went up from ₹73.07 to ₹73.32 per litre. This is the highest rate for petrol and diesel since September 2018. In 16 days, the petrol price has gone up by ₹2.07 per litre and diesel rate has risen by ₹2.86.

PRICES IN BHUB
PETROL: ₹83.76 (+0.27)
DIESEL: ₹79.87 (+0.27)

Haryana Min, who participated in vax trial, tests +ve



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 5: Just hours after Haryana Health Minister Anil Vij confirmed he has developed Coronavirus symptoms, the Union Health Ministry clarified that Vij took only the first dose of the two-dose vaccine. Vij was administered a dose of Covaxin last month.

"The antibodies against the infection build up in a human being only after a specific number of days pass after the second dose of the vaccine is taken. Since, this is a two-dose vaccine. Minister in question has taken only one dose of the vaccine," the Ministry said in a statement, Saturday.

In the case of this vaccine, trial volunteers receive two intramuscular injections approximately 28 days apart.

Participants are randomly assigned to receive Covaxin or placebo. The trial is double-blinded, such that the investigators, the participants and the company are not aware of who is assigned to which group.

FEAST FOR YOUR EYES



The White Peace Pagoda of Dhaulvi stupa is a sight to behold against the backdrop of a setting sun in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

FARMERS' PROTEST

People have a right to demonstrate peacefully: UN

INDIA HAS CALLED THE REMARKS BY FOREIGN LEADERS ON PROTESTS BY FARMERS AS "ILL-INFORMED" AND "UNWARRANTED"

AGENCIES

United Nations, Dec 5: People have a right to demonstrate peacefully and authorities should let them do so, spokesperson for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has said on the farmers' protests in India.

India has called the remarks by foreign leaders on protests by farmers as "ill-informed" and "unwarranted" as the matter pertained to the internal affairs of a democratic country. "As to the question of India, what I would say to you is what I've said to others when raising these issues is that people have a right to demonstrate peacefully, and au-



Farmers burn an effigy during their protest march against the Centre's new farm laws at Singhu border, in New Delhi, Saturday

thorities need to let them do so," Stephane Dujarric, Spokesman for

the Secretary-General, said Friday. Dujarric was responding to a

question on the farmers' protest in India.

Reacting to the comments by the foreign leaders, External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava Tuesday said, "We have seen some ill-informed comments...relating to farmers in India. Such comments are unwarranted, especially when pertaining to the internal affairs of a democratic country."

In a terse message, the Ministry further added that "it is also best that diplomatic conversations are not misrepresented for political purposes." Friday, India summoned Canadian High Commissioner and told him that the comments made by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

and others in his Cabinet on the farmers' protest constituted an "unacceptable interference" in the country's internal affairs and these actions, if continued, will have a "seriously damaging" impact on the bilateral ties.

Thousands of farmers from Punjab, Haryana and several other states have been protesting for the last nine days at the borders of Delhi against three farm laws. Dubbing these laws as 'anti-farmer', these farmers claim that the newly enacted legislations would pave the way for dismantling of the minimum support price system, leaving them at the 'mercy' of big corporations.

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	31.8°C	31.5°C
MIN	16.9°C	14.8°C
Humidity	94%	82%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Fog/mist in morning, later clear sky





BILLIE ELISH CALLS OFF HER UPCOMING TOUR

Singer Billie Eilish has officially cancelled her upcoming When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go tour...

SELMA DIRECTOR DUVERNAY TO CREATE SUPERHERO SERIES

Filmmaker Ava DuVernay is working on her next television project, an adaptation of the teen superhero story Naomi...



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES: Joining a yoga class will be a good decision. You should try ayurvedic foodstuffs too.

TAURUS: Your monetary problems will continue to bother you, predicts Ganesha. You will not let small expenses get in the way of things.

GEMINI: You will propose, or get married today. Your family will be with you, trying to make sure that you don't let this opportunity go.

CANCER: Your natural talents will be rewarded at work, predicts Ganesha. Later in the day, your peers will fully co-operate to help you achieve your goals.

LEO: With your penchant for being almost surgical in your tasks, it seems there isn't a single blunder that escapes your trained eye.

VIRGO: The day will bring in innovation and ingenuity on your part today. Expect a probable visit to a museum or a historical place.

LIBRA: Money matters may cause you some concern, at least till the latter half of the day, foresees Ganesha.

SCORPIO: You may be at your creative best today. You may help out your siblings in all the creative activities.

SAGITTARIUS: Interaction and exchange of ideas with like-minded people will rejuvenate you today.

CAPRICORN: Scepticism and lack of faith in others may have prevented you from entering into a partnership.

AQUARIUS: You have worked hard, and now you want to party harder. You catch up with some old friends.

PISCES: A good day for investments and speculations, especially in the real estate markets.

Never thought I'd play a man: Adah

Mumbai: Actress Adah Sharma plays a man in her new film, Man To Man. She says she never imagined she would play a man in life.



"This film is a romantic comedy. A boy falls in love with a girl and gets married to her but then he finds out that she is not a girl but she is a man. I am playing a man in this film. I can promise you that you haven't seen something like this before."



Tisca's jibe at people wearing mask on chin

Mumbai: Actress Tisca Chopra Saturday had a sarcastic take on people who wear their masks in an improper way, on their chin while their nose and mouth stays uncovered.

Tisca shared a few photographs of men wearing masks on their chin. Along with the images, she wrote: "Breaking news! #Covid19 in India has mutated to a form that no longer affects you through the mouth & nose, it enters through your chin..."

The actress has just made her debut as a director with the short film Rubaru, which she has co-written with her husband, Captain Sanjay Chopra.

Ayushmann opens up on choosing brand endorsement

Mumbai: Actor Ayushmann Khurrana has revealed his method of choosing films and brand endorsements. He says he feels responsible when he is personally reaching out to people across the country.

"When I choose my films, I only look at the story that it is trying to tell. I try and understand if the concept will be clutter-breaking," Ayushmann said.

"When I choose brands I end up endorsing, I'm most keen to know what is the story they are looking to tell the people of India through me and how innovatively are they going to convey this piece of communication so that it somehow stands apart," he added.



Making digital art accessible to the visually-impaired

AltMuseum is world's first digital art museum that helps bridge the gap between art and its accessibility for specially-abled people using technology

Instagram is one of the most popular social networks worldwide. This visual medium is not just a photo gallery anymore it has transformed into a platform for creative expression, engagement and even a source of income for many.



A representational image

According to Pradnya Upadhye, Director Education, National Association for the Blind, India, "This is simple but so powerful! It not only helps explore creativities but also enables an inclusive experience of a visual medium like Instagram."

Schbang for Good, the impact communications wing of Schbang, focused on driving social change, launched the Alt Museum handle on Instagram earlier this year.

Riya Parekh, Group Creative Manager, Schbang for Good, said, "With the world getting locked into their homes, we witnessed a rise in consumption of content across digital platforms, but why should entertainment and art be restricted to the abled population of the world? The Alt-Museum was the outcome of this simple question. We identified the Instagram feature and latched onto the most visually-celebrated, World Photography Day to talk to the visually impaired."

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



FUN post CROSSWORD puzzle grid with clues: 1 Winter pear, 4 Get hot under the collar?, 7 Listlessness, 8 Leaps, 9 Hang out awhile (5,6), 10 Trumpeter, in the military, 12 Piglets, 15 Scolded, 19 Manicurist's board, 20 Romantic, 21 Raw fish dish, 22 Part of an act, 5 Japanese dish, 6 Lives, 8 Cookie holder, 10 Casks, 11 Burrowing rodents, 13 Repulsive, 14 Hot condiment, 16 Frigid, 17 Pilotless plane, 18 Outmoded

SUDOKU

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

Sudoku grid with numbers and letters: E 8, 2 1, C 0, 1 A 6, C 0 4 8, A 7 B 5 D 6, A 5, 6 0 4 1, 9 1, D 8 7, C, 2, 0, A, 4 9 C D, D A 3 8 2 4 5, 0 C 6 A 7 3, 0 9 2, 7 2, 3 9 8, 4 7 B 9 A 0, 9 C 3 5 7 E D 4, B 9 6 0 3 C 5, E

SOLUTIONS

Sudoku solution grid: D I C E G O B I D O T, I A H D N U O, P E R F U M E C A B I N, O M A I E, A R M A M E N T C O W, R O U P U B, E B B C I R C A S P A, A L N K S S W, S U N P E R S O N A L, A E L A E, J I F F Y I N G R A T E, A I R R E R G, R A N A U K S O S L O, 5 3 A 2 9 6 E 0 D C 8 7 B 4 1, 9 2 D 4 5 E 8 1 B A 6 0 7 3 C, 7 6 1 C 0 B 4 3 5 2 E 9 A 8 D, 8 C 0 1 7 D 6 2 A 4 B 3 5 9 E, B 4 E 8 3 A 7 9 C D 5 1 6 0 2, D E 8 9 6 C A 5 0 1 2 B 4 7 3, 2 5 3 A B 4 9 C 1 0 7 E 8 D 6, A 7 4 0 1 5 2 8 3 6 D C 9 E B, 1 9 8 7 E 3 D 4 6 5 A 8 2 C 0, C 0 6 0 8 2 9 5 7 6 3 4 1 5 A, 0 0 7 9 A 1 3 B 5 E 8 9 6 C 2 4, E B C 6 D 8 1 7 2 3 4 5 0 A 9, 4 A 9 B C 0 5 D 8 E 1 2 3 6 7, 6 1 5 3 2 9 C A 4 7 0 D E B 8, 3 8 2 E 4 7 0 6 9 B C A D 1 5

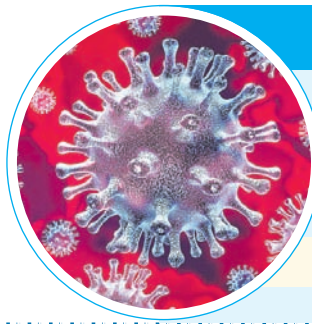
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



PLAYFUL MOOD

A girl playing on the swing alongside the NH-16 near Jayadev Vihar Square in Bhubaneswar, Saturday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	6,64,85,034	4,60,05,769	15,28,794
India	96,08,211	90,58,822	1,39,700
Odisha	3,20,803	3,15,270	1,765

SCB GOES GLOBAL DIGITALLY

THE STATE-OF-THE-ART WEBSITE LAUNCHED BY CHIEF MINISTER NAVEEN PATNAIK IS EXPECTED TO ENHANCE THE STATURE AND SERVICE DELIVERY CAPABILITY OF SCBMCH

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 5: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Saturday launched the state-of-the-art website of SCB Medical College and Hospital, Cuttack through video-conferencing.

SCB Medical College would now have a world-class digital presence through its website and a formal alumni association with its own website. "In today's digital world, the state-of-the-art website will significantly enhance the stature and the service delivery capability of the medical," Naveen said.

Stating that the medical college is a shining example of medical care for the poor and the needy, he said, "It is also the cradle of great medical talent. SCB is one of the oldest med-



Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launches the World Class Website of SCB through videoconferencing, Saturday

To the common man in the remotest parts of the state it is 'Bada Medical' the ultimate hope

NAVEEN PATNAIK
CHIEF MINISTER

ical institutions in the country, even older than many medical institutions in the world, with a glorious history of serving humanity for over 76 years."

During the current Covid-19 crisis, it has helped in building institutional capacity for the entire state. To the common man in

the remotest parts of the state, it is 'Bada Medical' the ultimate hope, he said.

True to its name in the folklore, it has served millions over the last 76 years and an astounding 17 million in the last decade. Every day, more than 20,000 people come to the hospital for their medical needs, he pointed out.

The Chief Minister further said his government has initiated the process of transformation under 5T

initiative to make it a world-class institute, an Ecosystem that will attract everyone to comeback and work in SCB.

He hoped that many of alumni members who have branched out globally to spread its message of service will return to build a greater future for this great institution. "You will all have a major role to play in transformation of SCB into a world class institution," he told the alumni members.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 5: Rice bran, once considered not of much use beyond cattle feed and fuel in Odisha, is emerging as boon for the farmers because of the agri-technology popularisation initiatives of the government.

Therefore, Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy has asked the officials concerned to make demand assessment of rice bran oil and present availability of the raw material for promotion of small and medium enterprises in this sector. Tripathy gave this direction while holding a high-level meeting in this regard, recently.

Considering the potential for production of rice bran oil in the state, Tripathy said, "Since rice bran oil contains immune supporting nutrients and unsaturated fat, it's production can be an attractive venture for young entrepreneurs."

Proper assessment of market demand and economy involved in the trade will be a reliable guide for the young entrepreneurs, he said.

Outlining the Covid response revised policies, Micro, Small and

FILLIP TO SMES



Since rice bran oil contains immune supporting nutrients and unsaturated fat, it's production can be an attractive venture for young entrepreneurs

Incentives like interest subsidy at 5 per cent per annum for 5 years on term loan from the date of commercial production, 75 per cent net SGST reimbursement for 5 years up to the limit of 100 per cent investment on plant and machinery are now available

Medium Enterprises (MSME) secretary Satyabrata Sahu said incentives like interest subsidy at 5 per cent per annum for 5 years on term loan

from the date of commercial production, 75 per cent net SGST reimbursement for 5 years up to the limit of 100 per cent investment on plant and machinery are now available. Further, exemption of electricity duty up to contract demand of 500 KVA for 5 years, assistance for quality certification, employment cost subsidy and technical knowhow are also made available for the sector.

According to Industries Director Reghu G, "At present, 12 rice bran units are operating in the state. Out of them, seven are in Bargarh district while two are in Koraput district and one each in Jajpur, Khurda and Balasore districts." Altogether ₹11.15 crore incentives/subsidies have been provided to the eligible units, he said.

Industries department's assistant director MM Patra said this type of enterprise is quite rewarding. Around 800 mg healthy edible oil can be extracted from the bran generated from one quintal of paddy. This oil is sold at higher price in market than that of the normal refined oil. There is potential for more such units through local entrepreneurs in paddy rich districts, Patra added.

'Akash was never a Tata Motors employee'



Suspended IFS officer AK Pathak and his son Akash being taken to jail, Saturday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 5: The TATA Motors authorities Saturday said that Akash Pathak, son of suspended IFS officer Abhay Kant Pathak, was never an employee of the company.

A Commissionerate Police official claimed before the media here that the company has sent a clarification to the Vigilance directorate in this regard.

The Commissionerate Police has been probing the cheating allegations against Akash of around ₹65 lakh. Akash impersonated the Managing Director of TATA Motors, booked rooms in luxury hotels and tickets for chartered flights worth

around ₹2.78 core. However, he paid ₹2.13 crore out of the total bill while denying payment of the remaining ₹65,16,233.

The father-son duo was produced before the court here by the Vigilance after the end of their three-day remand Saturday. The Vigilance officials said that they have collected enough evidence regarding the illegal activities of Abhay Kant and his son Akash.

The Vigilance sleuths are also conducting verification at Patna in Bihar to unearth assets and investments of Abhay Kant and his family members.

Meanwhile, speaking to media, Akash claimed all the allegations against him

are false and he would bring it before everyone after coming out of the jail.

In another development, the Crime Branch investigating into the job fraud involving Akash and Gopalpur MLA Pradeep Panigrahi, has been interrogating David Peter, the personal assistant of Akash in this connection.

Notably, Akash has duped several job aspirants from Gopalpur of lakhs of rupees on the pretext of employing them in TATA Motors. He identified himself as the MD of TATA Motors, Passengers Division, to cheat the gullible aspirants. Police have already arrested Panigrahi in the case for collecting money from the victims on behalf of Akash.

Helmet must for biker, pillion rider

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 5: Bikers, think twice next time when you come out with a helmetless pillion rider. A two-wheeler rider's driving licence would be suspended if he and the riding pillion are found without helmets. The State Transport Authority (STA) said this in a tweet, Saturday.

"Driving licence will be suspended if both the rider and person sitting do not wear helmets. Please wear helmets for your safety," the tweet read.

In Cuttack, 92 two-wheeler riders were penalised for not wearing helmets December 4, RTO Cuttack Saturday said on Twitter.



"In a joint check with Olatpur police, on 4th December, 92 MC riders penalised for not wearing helmets. 42 DLs suspended and ₹1,34,000 penalty imposed. Please wear helmet, save your life and escape from penalty," the tweet read. Notably, the STA has implemented the amended Motor Vehicles Act in the state March 1, 2020.

Don't commercialise BEd course: AISEC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Dec 5: The Cuttack district chapter of All India Save Education Committee (AISEC) Saturday urged the state government not to commercialise BEd course in Odisha.

"Immediate steps should be taken to start admission process for 14 government BEd colleges in Odisha. The state government should desist from providing BEd course through self-financing mode," said office-bearers of AISEC at a press conference here.

AISEC Cuttack district chapter president Akhaya Das said 14 government BEd colleges in state, including Radhanath Institute of Advanced Studies in Education in Cuttack, have been facing acute shortage of teaching staff and infrastructure for the last several years. As a result, the National Council of Teachers Education (NCTE) has withdrawn recognitions to these colleges. "The 14 government BEd colleges have been barred from enrolling students for this academic year," Das claimed. According to him, the government BEd colleges had 1,650 seats and 217 teaching staff. However, the staff strength has come down to below 50 in recent years.

"Some lecturers had been recruited for the BEd colleges in 1999. The state government has planned to commercialise the course in Odisha. Some universities and colleges have already launched BEd course through self-financing mode," Das said.

Cong to support Bharat Bandh

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 5: The state unit of Congress Saturday extended its support to the Bharat Bandh called by the farmers protesting at Singhu Border against the new farm laws brought by the Centre.

"Farmers are our

'Annadata' and backbone of our economy. They have called for a Bandh opposing Modi government's anti-farmer laws. Our party will support them to make the Bandh a success. I urge the people of Odisha to make the Bandh a grand success," said Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president,

Niranjan Patnaik.

The protesting farmers from various parts of the country have called 'Bharat Bandh' December 8 to put pressure on the Union government to accept their demands. Many left parties have also come together to extend support to the farmers.

Miraculous escape for 3 as car hits bull, catches fire

POST NEWS NETWORK

Choudwar, Dec 5: In a miraculous escape from the jaws of death, three persons including a woman were marked safe after the car they were traveling in caught fire on National Highway-16 here Saturday.

According to eyewitnesses, the car hit a stray bull and caught fire.

The occupants of the ill-fated vehicle have been identified as Nasima Khatun, her son and the driver. Nasima is a resident of Soro area in Balasore district. They were on their way to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack when the mishap occurred.



The occupants were on their way to SCB Medical College and Hospital when the mishap occurred

According to Nasima, they were heading towards Cuttack when a bull suddenly came in front of their car near Sardal, leaving little time for the driver to control the vehicle. As a result, the vehicle dashed against the animal and caught fire.

Seeing smoke and then flames coming out of the bonnet, the trio immediately got down from the car, nar-

COVID TOLL RISES TO 1,765; TALLY 3,20,803

Bhubaneswar, Dec 5: The state's Covid-19 caseload mounted to 3,20,803 Saturday after 409 fresh people tested positive for the virus, while five more fatalities pushed the death toll to 1,765, a health department official said.

FACT FILE

The fresh cases were detected in 27 of 30 districts, of which 234 came from quarantine centres and the remaining were local-contact infections

Sundargarh district recorded the highest of 53 positive cases, followed by Khurda (44) and Angul (35)

The state has 4,320 active cases, while 3,14,665 patients have recovered from the disease so far

The state has thus far conducted over 61.02 lakh sample tests, including 41,860 Friday

The fresh cases were detected in 27 of the state's 30 districts, of which 234 came from quarantine centres and the remaining were local-contact infections.

Sundargarh district recorded the highest of 53 positive cases, followed by Khurda (44) and Angul (35). Three districts - Gajapati, Kandhamal and Subarnapur - did not register any fresh coronavirus case during the last 24 hours, he said.

"Regret to inform the demise of

Government forms panels for vaccination

BHUBANESWAR: The state government has formed state and district level committees to monitor adverse events following Covid immunization programme to maintain confidence on the safety of vaccines.

Health and Family Welfare Department has issued a notification to this effect. "With around 250 vaccines in various stages of development, it is likely that vaccine against Covid-19 will be the earliest available intervention to protect the citizens of our country. Preparations are underway for conducting Covid-19 vaccinations in states and districts, starting with certain priority groups," the notification said.

Director family welfare has been appointed as the chairman of the state-level committee while the state immunization officer is the member secretary of the panel. The committee will hold review of cases and make field visits to inspect vaccination sites and cold chain stores, as per need. It will also make causality assessment, review the data periodically and share the minutes of meetings with the Centre.

Similarly, chief district medical officer will head the district-level panel which will investigate each adverse case within the timeframe and document the relevant information. The panel will ensure post modem/ verbal autopsy in case of deaths are carried out.

SCINTILLATING PERFORMANCE



Dancers performing on the concluding day of Konark Festival, Saturday

Tusker mowed down by express train

Sambalpur, Dec 5: A tusker was mowed down by a moving train on railway tracks near Hatibari on Sambalpur-Talcher rail route Saturday evening.

The tusker, part of a herd, was crossing the railway track when it was run over by the approaching Bhubaneswar-Rourkela intercity express train at around 6.30 pm, Saturday.

As a result, the elephant was thrown off the track and died soon after. On being informed, divisional forest officer Sanjit Kumar rushed to the spot with forest officials and started an investigation. The pachyderm is aged about 15, forest officials said. With this, four elephants have died due to various reasons this year.

Second wave of Covid 'unlikely' in state

Bhubaneswar, Dec 5: "Odisha is unlikely to witness a second wave of Covid," said technical spokesperson of Health and Family Welfare department Jayant Panda, Saturday.

"There is no possibility of a second wave because we are being very cautious and observing the guidelines strictly. All the festivals, including Dussehra and Diwali, were held without much fanfare while several other festivals were

cancelled this year," he told reporters in Cuttack.

Panda further said, "We had anticipated that the state may witness a second wave of Covid-19 in the month of December. But, now we think that it is unlikely."

However, he appealed the citizens to follow Covid norms and be cautious till February. Vaccine against the virus may also be available within a few weeks. After vaccination, herd immunity can be achieved, he added.

We had anticipated that the state may witness a second wave of Covid-19 in the month of December but, now we think that it is unlikely to happen

JAYANT PANDA | TECHNICAL SPOKESPERSON, HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE DEPT

The daily Covid-19 cases have been decreasing from 5,000 to 400

while the daily death cases also decreased to four-five from 17-18. This shows that the efforts of government to flatten the Covid curve, which began some eight months back, have been successful, said Panda.

"Our training, testing and treatment policy was also completely successful. Due to successful implementation of the policy, Odisha is able to control the spread of Covid in comparison to many states of the country," he claimed.

Basudevpur EO, JE suspended

Bhubaneswar, Dec 5: The state government Friday suspended Executive Officer (EO) Tapas Ranjan Jena and junior engineer (JE) Debakanta Nayak of Basudevpur municipality in Bhadrak district for dereliction in duty.

The Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) department has issued two different orders in this regard. The department said Jena was suspended for disobedience to government order, poor performance, non attainment of target and dereliction in government duty. Nayak has been suspended over poor governance and dereliction of duty.

During the period of suspension, the officials will be headquartered at the office of the project director, District Urban Development Authority (DUDA), Bhadrak.

BMC gears up to tackle sleeping in open spaces as temp drops

Bhubaneswar, Dec 5: With temperatures falling down every day and the city witnessing longer and colder nights, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has geared up to tackle sleeping in public areas and footpaths with an aim to rehabilitate the homeless.

As per the order of the commissioner, no person is allowed to sleep on roadsides or any open spaces. However, many are seen spending nights on the footpath, railway station, bus stand, under flyovers and market yards.

"We are motivating people not to sleep outside. They are also requested to stay in SUH (Shelter for Urban Homeless) of BMC. Mobilisation has been started and two service providing agencies OPUS and Vikash have already shifted six people to SUH. The process will continue and no person will be allowed to sleep outside," stated BMC Commissioner Prem Chandra Chaudhary.

The BMC has seven SUH in the city. They are at Ghatakia, Baramunda Bus Terminal, Unit VI, Ashok Nagar, Chandrashekarpur, Bhimpur and Kharvel Nagar. While the Ashok Nagar SUH is exclusively built for elderly people, the Chandrashekarpur SUH caters to female refugees only.



'The homeless or individuals sleeping in open are reluctant to stay in a shelter for urban homeless'

However, as per sources, the homeless or individuals sleeping in open are reluctant to stay in an SUH. While many have complained poor infrastructure, shortage of basic amenities, dismal sanitation and mafia raj are reasons for not staying in the SUH. Many others have cited restrictions to drug use as primary cause for abstaining the shelters.

"I cannot sleep until I consume some hemp. I am addicted to it and have withdrawal symptoms if I don't have it regularly. Moreover, the other drug addicts and sometimes criminals stay in those places because of which we fear for our safety. Sometimes it becomes overcrowded and there is always lack of amenities," complained a homeless man.

However, refuting all claims, a senior BMC official said all centres are properly managed and the management always keeps a check on needs of the inmates. Furthermore, the official also mentioned that the Bhimpur SUH has been exclusively made as a de-addiction centre.

Gaping holes in Aadhaar-less pension payments in state

Bhubaneswar, Dec 5: The department of social security and empowerment of persons with disabilities (SSEPD) has found discrepancies in disbursement of pensions in Kendrapara and Khurda districts.

After the government rolled back the decision to use Aadhaar for pension disbursement, the department found that disbursement of pension in favour of non-Aadhaar beneficiaries was made in excess of the reported total number of non-Aadhaar beneficiaries in these two districts.

In a latest communication to the District Social Security Officers (DSSOs) of the two districts, the department has asked them to inquire into the matter. "You are therefore instructed to make an inquiry and weed out undeserving beneficiaries. Your inquiry report should reach the office within seven days of the receipt of the letter," the letter to DSSOs said.

Earlier this year, the SSEPD department had issued a notification that those pensioners who have not seeded their Aadhaar with their pension accounts or do not hold Aadhaar cards would not be allowed pensions. However, after uproar the department had to roll back its order and allowed pensions without Aadhaar to receive their pension.

It was anticipated that if non-



The pensions given by the SSEPD department includes pensions for disabled, sick, elderly transgender and others

Aadhaar pensioners are deprived of pensions it could lead to discontinuation of pensions to around 11 lakh pensioners. However, later the department saw most of the non-Aadhaar pensioners not turning up for pensions despite their eligibility to get pensions.

The department over last few months noticed that many non-Aadhaar pensioners have received pensions whose details were not present in the computer generated lists of pensions. The pensions given by the SSEPD department included pensions for disabled, sick, elderly transgender and others.

Job offers for 460 Berhampur ITI students

Berhampur, Dec 5: The government Industrial Training Institute (ITI) here has received job offers for its students despite Covid restrictions in places

The matter came to the fore after 460 students of the institute were selected by Suzuki Motors at a one-day offline campus recruitment drive on its premises, Saturday. The offline campus recruitment was held for the first time in the ITI since imposition of restrictions in the state following outbreak of Covid-19. The Gujarat-based Suzuki Motors handed over appointment letters to the students hired at a monthly salary of ₹19,400.

Professor KV Achari of Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Gobind Chandra Chakrapani, vice-chancellor of Berhampur University, Ranjan Kumar Swain of Parala Maharaja Engineering College, RM Kilani, deputy director, employment and Rajat Kumar Panigrahi, principal of Berhampur ITI attended the campus recruitment programme.

NGT retains ban on illegal sand mining in Balasore

Bhubaneswar, Dec 5: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has declined to entertain the plea of a tainted sand miner in Balasore district who wanted to continue operations after serious allegations on environmental law violations were leveled against them.

The tribunal termed the charges as serious and batted for continuation of the ban on the illegal sand mining operations near Jaleswar in Balasore district. In its written order, the NGT said, "Considering the prima facie violations by the respondents, we are not inclined to allow this prayer. The most glaring of the illegality is to grant consent to operate for 20,000 cum against 5,000 cum as per the Environmental Clearance granted for the sand mining."

It also added, "There is also violation in respect of excavation of sand outside the demarcated area, mining close to the embankment of the river and portions of embankments of both sides of the river having been cut out for construction of roads."

The NGT said the order of halting of sand mining operations is subject to final consideration of the affidavits and documents filed by the parties and the final hearing. The tribunal however allowed the State Pollution Control Board time to file an additional affidavit on the issue.

Earlier, the tribunal had sought constitution of a committee to inspect the site. The Joint Inspection Committee after their visit to the site had given an adverse report to the NGT admitting serious violations on green rules during the process



The petitioners in the case had alleged that villagers of Panchughanta in the district had been affected by the rampant and illegal sand mining in the areas

ECO-CONCERN

The NGT said the order of halting of sand mining operations is subject to final consideration of the affidavits and documents filed by the parties and the final hearing

The Joint Inspection Committee had given an adverse report to the NGT admitting serious violations on green rules during the process of sand mining near Panchughanta village along Subarnarekha river near Jaleswar

of sand mining near Panchaguta village along Subarnarekha river near Jaleswar. "Having regard to the adverse finding of the Joint Inspection

Committee contained in the report, we direct that there shall be no min-

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Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech-Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri-Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookiemann-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

6 mega drinking water projects await nod

RWSS IS YET TO FIND SUITABLE SPOTS FOR INTAKE WELLS IN RIPARIAN AREAS OF JAJPUR

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, Dec 5: The state government has planned eight mega drinking water projects in Jajpur district to ensure safe drinking water to people, but approval has been given to only two projects while six are awaiting approval, a report said.

According to a report, these projects envisage lifting of water from Brahmani, Genguti, Baitarani and Kharasrota rivers.

A joint inspection report on lifting river water for drinking purpose has been submitted by RWSS to its chief engineer November 11, 2020.

The water resources department has given its stamp of approval to two projects only while six other projects are pending approval.

One of the two projects which has got approval is aimed at providing water to 43 villages under Barchana block and 45 villages under Dharmashala block. This project entails lifting 9.32 cusecs of water from Genguti.

The other project is going to be set up in Dasharathpur block to



TARDY PACE

A report said, these projects envisage lifting of water from Brahmani, Genguti, Baitarani and Kharasrota rivers

A joint inspection report on lifting river water for drinking purpose has been submitted by RWSS to its chief engineer November 11, 2020

The water resources department has given its stamp of approval to two projects only while six other projects are pending approval

Aother project is going to be set up in Dasharathpur block to provide 7.75 cusecs of safe drinking water to 33 villages

been brought under RIDF scheme from Basudha scheme.

The other drinking water projects had been proposed three years ago for Danagadi, Rasulpur, Binjarpur, Sukinda and Jajpur blocks.

Two mega drinking water projects are going to be set up in Sukinda block. Fund to the tune of ₹79.104 crore has been sanctioned under the Odisha Mineral Bearing Area Development Corporation (OM-BADC).

The RWSS has submitted its report in which it was stated that spots for three intake wells at Chuali near Brahmani river have not been decided. Their approval is pending.

Besides, the spots for the intake wells at Badabant, Bankipal and Sribantpur for the drinking water project near the Kharashrota river have not been identified. It was stated that their approval is being awaited.

The chief engineer of the RWSS has directed the executive engineer of the Jajpur RWSS division to take necessary steps in this regard within a week.

Bhadrak man held for duping job aspirants in Delhi

Bhadrak: Delhi Police Saturday arrested a man from his in-law's house at Naraharipur village under Dhusuri police limits in Bhadrak district for duping people by promising them jobs at Delhi airport. He had duped the victims of over ₹1 crore, police said.

The arrested man has been identified as Rajendra Mallick, a resident of Bari in Jajpur district. According to sources, Mallick owned a travel agency. He used to make train and flight tickets using fake IDs. He was also in the illegal business of duping job aspirants. On the pretext of getting them jobs at Delhi Airport, he used to collect money from glibble youths. He has duped youths of over ₹1 crore. However, one among them lodged a complaint against Mallick with Delhi Police. On the basis of the complaint, Delhi Police launched an investigation. Tracing him to Bhadrak, a team of Delhi Police reached there and arrested him. A detailed investigation is underway.

Dead child exhumed 4 days after death in Jharsuguda

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jharsuguda, Dec 5: That superstitions still prevails in today's modern society was once again confirmed when a woman exhumed the body of her four-month-old son who was buried four days ago.

She did so believing a black magic practitioner from Bihar and following his instructions over her mobile phone.

Such a bizarre and heart rending incident was reported from Chandmari area in Jharsuguda town.

A couple staying at Chandmari area had their son fall sick five days ago. They got him admitted to the district headquarters hospital. While undergoing treatment the child died December 1, following which the family members buried the body at a cremation ground.

Four days later, a sorcerer from Bihar told them that their son was alive. This telephonic message was enough to make the couple run madly towards the cremation ground. There the body was not

A sorcerer from Bihar told a couple that their son was alive. The telephonic message was enough to make the couple run madly to the cremation ground

Fall in cotton farming in Ganjam

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur, Dec 5: Cotton farming in Ganjam district has been declining due to lack of government support, marketing and absence of a processing unit in the district, a report said here Saturday.

Farmers cultivating cotton make good earnings from it. Cotton has a high demand in the market due to a boom in handloom and textile industries.

It is said that the government should create scope and facilities for farmers to carry on with cotton farming in the district.

According to reports, scores of farmers had cultivated cotton in 858 hectares in Sanakhemundi, Digapahandi, Chikiti, Patrapur, Shergad, Sorada, Dharakote, Jagannathprasad and Bhanjanagar areas in 2019-20.

In the current year, the target was to raise cotton farming to 1,000 hectares. Sadly, cotton farming has drastically declined as it has come down to 557 hectares. It is expected that 8,466 quintals of cotton will be produced, which is much less than the target for this year.

It was alleged that farmers fail to get much return from cotton every year, resulting in lower cotton acreage.

The district level cotton promotion committee headed by Collector Vijay Amruta Kulanga expressed concern over the fall in cotton farming. He held a meeting in this regard Friday and underscored the need for procuring cotton at right price from farmers.

He also laid stress on taking measures to promote cotton farming among farmers. The Collector wanted registration of cotton farmers, steps to encourage farmers for this farming, to procure their produce at right price. Significantly, a ginning and processing mill is being set up on the premises of Digapahandi regional marketing regulatory committee.

It was learnt that the ginning mill will be made functional January 26, 2021. It was decided that cotton will be processed and seeds separated. Bales of cotton fibre will be sent to textile companies.

In the current year, cotton will be procured for ₹5,515 per quintal. He directed the official to set up a similar mill on Hinjilicut RMC premises. He directed the officials to start cotton procurement from December 15.



In the current year, the target was to raise cotton farming to 1,000 ha, but it has come down to 557 ha in nine major areas of Ganjam district

7 injured in Jajpur group clash

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, Dec 5: As many as seven persons sustained injuries in a group clash over road construction work in Balungabandi village under Jajpur Road police limits here Saturday. Out of the seven persons, three were critically injured and they have been sent to SCB Medical College and Hospital for treatment.

The other four are undergoing treatment at District Headquarters Hospital, Jajpur. According to sources, a road was being constructed in Balungabandi village under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana.

Some villagers alleged that the materials used by the contractor for the road construction were substandard. But some villagers of the same village had supported the contractor as well. Saturday morning some villagers protested awarding the tender of the road construction to another contractor. This led to a dispute between the protesters and the villagers in favour of the contractor.

Later, the situation escalated with arguments and clashes between the two groups.

The two groups have lodged complaints at the Danagadi police outpost. Police have started an investigation into the incident.

3 poachers held for electrocuting tusker

Sambalpur: In a major crackdown here, the Sambalpur forest division arrested three poachers Friday evening in connection with the alleged killing of a tusker by electrocution in the district.

According to forest department sources, the three arrested were identified as Dilip Bhoi, Baikuntha Lal Mirzha and Nandlal Bhoi. The poachers are natives of Jadulisingh village under Dhama police limits in Sambalpur district. The wrongdoers had laid a trap of high tension live wire inside the dense forest. They had intended to hunt wild boar and other wild animals under this forest division. However, an elephant fell into the trap and got electrocuted. The heinous crime was committed November 30. The three arrested were forwarded to local court and were later remanded to judicial custody following rejection of their bail plea. Assistant Conservator Forest (ACF) ML Sharma has been designated as the inquiry officer. The officials have registered a case and launched a detailed probe, Sambalpur divisional forest officer (DFO) said.

Efforts on to save wildlife from electrocution in Dhenkanal dist

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, Dec 5: Incidents of elephants and other wild animals dying due to electrocution in Dhenkanal district are a huge cause of concern for the forest department. Officials of the department, however, have blamed it on the power department.

Referring to the electrocution of an elephant and two wild boars at Benipathar village under Hindol range some days ago, divisional forest officer (DFO) Prakash Chand Gogineni said they had the information about the presence of a herd in the locality a day before the incident.

They had also passed the information to the junior engineer of the power department asking him to snap supply to the area where the pachyderms were moving around.

"The junior engineer did not pay heed to our request. Had he followed the instruction, the elephant and the wild boars could have been saved," Gogineni informed. Gogineni also said that they had a meeting with the officials of Tata Power at the divisional forest office Thursday. They discussed in detail the method to be implemented to save wild animals from electrocution.

"From now on, if the engineers of the power department do not heed to our requests we will inform the central control room in Bhubaneswar. Then they will ask the engineers to follow the orders," said Gogineni.

There will be a review meeting every week between the DFO and executive engineer of the power department regarding the power trip feeder so that steps can be taken accordingly, said Gogineni. "If there is coordination between departments concerned, then there will be a substantial decrease in the electrocution of wild animals," DFO added.

Farmer trampled to death, angry locals block road

Dhenkanal: Tension prevailed in Barapada area in the district here Saturday morning following the death of an elderly farmer who was allegedly trampled by elephant Friday night. The deceased has been identified as Rabinarayan Biswal. According to reports, enraged villagers blocked the Dhenkanal-Bhubana stretch of the road near Barapada demanding compensation and alleging callous attitude of the forest department in curbing elephant menace. The reports said Biswal encountered the jumbo menace near his native village Mugupada under Sadangi Forest Range limits Friday night when he was returning home from his paddy field.

Boudh: Old collectorate to be turned into museum

POST NEWS NETWORK

Boudh, Dec 5: The old collectorate building in Boudh is to get a facelift and will be turned into a museum, the process of which has already begun. This was informed by the administration Friday.

The old collectorate building which was built in 1921 is going to complete 100 years in January

The museum will showcase ancient artifacts, heritages, art and culture of Boudh through different objects of historical importance. Visitors and tourists will also gain knowledge on the glorious past of the district.

Boudh administration has appealed to local denizens to contribute objects of olden times if they possess any.

The district occupies a special place in the history of ancient Odisha as a Gadaj area. The old collectorate building which was built in 1921 is going to complete 100 years in January.

The district has Gandharadi-Charisambhu temple built by the erstwhile Bhanja rulers which dates back to the seventh century AD. It also has the famous Rameswar temple built by rulers of the Som dynasty during ninth century AD.

Boudh got its independent status as a district in January 1, 1994.

EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender No.: 32-KUR-TRD-OT-2020-21 Dt.: 01.12.2020

Name of the Work : OPERATION OF ISOLATORS ON ALL LOADING SPURS OF SOUTH BALANDA (SB) SIDING AND DEULABEDA (DB) SIDING OF MAHANADI COALFIELDS (MCL) AT TALCHER (TLHR) STATION FOR TWO YEARS THROUGH OUTSIDE AGENCY.

Approximate Value: ₹ 36,22,997.30, EMD: ₹ 72,500/-, Cost of tender document: ₹ 3,540/-

Tender closing date & time: upto 1300 hrs of 23.12.2020.

Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.

Complete details & tender documents will be available at website www.reps.gov.in

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRD),
PR-392/L/20-21
Khurda Road

LOST

I, Ambuja Charan Sahu, Age-45 years, S/o. Satyabadi Sahu of Lanjipalli, Chanakya Nagar, Berhampur, P.S.: Baidyanathpur, on Date: 18.10.2020 at 8.30 P.M. while I came from Lanjipalli to Kamapalli somewhere on the road I had lost C.B.S.E 10th Board Marks Statement cum Certificate which stands in the name of my son Sambitosh Sahu. If anyone received above document kindly contact in following:

Mobile No. : 9777924204, 9437262227

DETAILS OF THE MARKS STATEMENT CUM CERTIFICATE

Name of the School : Army Public School
K.Kamaraj Road, Bangalore
Karnataka - 560042

Roll No : 4066263

Year of passed : 2019

Board : C.B.S.E

Uttam Mallick is an inspiration for many

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhuban, Dec 5: Physically-challenged Uttam Mallick of Bhubana block in Dhenkanal district does not let his misery affect him. In fact, he has become an inspiration for many for beating the odds stacked against him.

Uttam is a resident of Chandipali village. He got affected by polio when he was just one year old leading to crippling of his left leg. The movement of his right leg was also hampered. So he became fully dependent on crutches.

"I was good in studies. When I was a student of Class IX at Navodaya Vidyalay in Sarang, I had a chance to go to a reputed school in Bihar. However, I couldn't as the responsibility of the entire family was on



me after my father's death. So it was my duty to look after my mother and four sisters," stated Uttam.

It was desperate times for Uttam. However, Chintamani Behera, a carpenter, came to his aid. He offered a job to Uttam. "I was good at painting

Uttam started a furniture shop with only ₹10,000. Now, his shop has furniture worth lakhs of rupees. His products are being sold at Dhenkanal, Jajpur, Kendrapara and Angul

shop. Today my shop has furniture worth lakhs of rupees. My products are being sold at Dhenkanal, Jajpur, Kendrapara and Angul," Uttam said.

"I have employed seven persons also. They see to it that deliveries are made on time. Today I make a profit of approximately ₹30,000 a month after all expenses," added

Uttam. In the past Uttam spent sleepless nights thinking about the future of himself and his sisters. He has managed to get all his four sisters married off.

He also has got married and has a son and a daughter. With his mother, they are a happy family.

Uttam had applied for a loan of ₹25 lakh under PMEGP scheme with the aim of opening a big furniture showroom.

He was selected and underwent the required training. However, after that the bank rejected his application. "If banks provide some financial assistance, there are many physically-challenged persons who can benefit. Like me, they also deserve respect and not pity," Uttam asserted.

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement

Tel. No. 0675222092, e-mail id: eerwpru@gmail.com

No:- 7869 (Online-08) /Date. 27.11.2020

No.0-645:- The Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Puri on behalf of Government of Odisha invites percentage rate tenders through e-procurement for 4 Nos. of work for the year 2020-21 in the district of Puri.

1.Total No. of works: 4 Nos. 2. Tender cost of packages: Amount varies from Rs.59.78 lakhs to 88.55 lakhs. 3. Class of contractor: As per DTCN. 4.Period of completion: 2 (Two) calendar months. 5. Period of availability of tenders on-line/ Date & time of bidding on-line/ last date of seeking clarification/ Date of opening of tender papers.

Procurement Officer	Bid identification No.	Availability of tender on line for bidding		Last date & time of seeking tender clarification	Date, time & venue of opening of tender
		From	To		
1	2	3	4	5	6
Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Puri.	Online-08	08.12.2020 at 11.00 A.M.	22.12.2020 upto 3.00 P.M.	21.12.2020 upto 1.00 P.M.	23.12.2020 at 11.00 A.M. Office of the E.E., R.W. Division, Puri.

6. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents, which is available in website ["https://tendersodisha.gov.in"](https://tendersodisha.gov.in).

Sd./- Executive Engineer, R.W. Division, Puri
O/PR-25065/11/0008/2021

BJP trying to topple our govt: Gehlot

RAJASTHAN CM ALLEGES THAT UNION HOME MINISTER AMIT SHAH MET REBEL MLAs AND TOLD THEM THAT HE HAD TOPPLED FIVE GOVERNMENTS AND WILL SOON TOPPLE THE SIXTH GOVERNMENT AS WELL

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, Dec 5: Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot Saturday surprised one and all by claiming that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is once again playing the game of trying to topple the state government and accused union home minister Amit Shah of meeting rebel MLAs during the political crisis in the state earlier this year.



started right from the time Congress government was formed. Deputy CM Sachin Pilot was ignored since the government was formed due to which this situation of political crisis emerged.

Taking names of veteran leaders such as Amit Shah and Dharmendra Pradhan without any proof is beyond the dignity of politics, said state BJP president Satish Poonia.

“BJP is a party of workers and has taken the responsibility of building an office on its own. For 50 years the Congress party built their homes instead of building offices and today they are questioning us,” he added.

It may be recalled that a political crisis was reported in Rajasthan in July

when rebel MLAs under former deputy CM Sachin Pilot went to Delhi demanding a change in leadership in the desert state.

were embarrassed to see people like Shah are occupying the position of home minister once held by Sardar Patel.”

“Overall, a scene was created that they were experienced in toppling governments of four states and they will topple the government in the fifth state too. Veteran leaders like Ajay Maken, Randeep Surjewala, KC Venugopal and Avinash Pandey came here and their decisions to suspend our own party MLAs helped save our gov-

ernment,” he said.

Gehlot also announced that Congress offices will be made in different districts and new offices will not be collected by funds coming from Delhi as was the case in BJJ.

Meanwhile, leader of opposition Gulab Chand Kataria said that Congress leaders’ parade to Delhi

These MLAs told me that they were embarrassed to see people like Shah are occupying the position of home minister once held by Sardar Patel

ASHOK GEHLOT | CM

Former sportspersons to return awards in support of farmers today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Dec 5: Several former sportspersons from Punjab including Padma Shri and Arjuna awardees left for Delhi Saturday to return their awards in support of the farmers’ protest against the Centre’s three agriculture reform laws.

They will join the farmers camping at the national capital’s Singhu border before returning their awards to the president the next day.

Farmers from Punjab and Haryana have been camping at five Delhi gateways for the past nine days to press their demand for a repeal of the recently enacted farm laws. “We have left for Delhi today and will join the farmers’ protest,” said former wrestler Kartar Singh, who is a Padma Shri and Arjuna awardee. “Many former players like Sajjan Singh Cheema who could not join us because of health or other issues have given their sports awards to us,” he said. The sportspersons said they have sought time from President Ram Nath Kovind to return the awards.

“If we are not allotted a time to meet the president, we will place our awards outside the Rashtrapati Bhavan Sunday,” said former hockey



player Rajbir Kaur.

Other former sportspersons who are headed to the national capital are Dhyana Chand awardee hockey Olympian Gurmail Singh, Arjuna awardee Kabaddi player Hardeep Singh, and Arjuna awardee weightlifter Tara Singh.

Friday, former national boxing coach Gurbax Singh Sandhu, during whose tenure India won its maiden Olympic medal in the sport, Padma Shri boxer Kaur Singh and Arjuna awardee boxer Jaipal Singh had announced that they would return their awards.

Enacted in September, the three

farm laws are anticipated to bring “reforms” in the agriculture sector by removing middlemen and allowing farmers to sell their produce anywhere in the country.

Farmers worry these laws will eliminate the safety net of the Minimum Support Price (MSP) and do away with mandis that ensure earning. But the government says the MSP system will continue and the new laws will give farmers more options to sell their crop.

The government is holding talks with farmers, who have called for a ‘Bharat Bandh’ December 8 and threatened to occupy toll plazas.

RED ALERT SOUNDED IN RAJ RESERVES & SANCTUARIES

The order comes against the backdrop of a camera trap footage showing a Ranthambore tiger, T-108, with a wire snare around its neck



Picture used for representation.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, Dec 5: The forest department of the Rajasthan government Saturday sounded a ‘Red Alert’ at all reserves, sanctuaries and parks in the state as incidents of hunting, poaching and animal traps have come to the fore.

The order comes against the backdrop of a camera trap footage showing a Ranthambore tiger, T-108, with a wire snare around its neck.

Under the ‘Red Alert’, all forest officials have been directed to intensify search operations and seek

local police assistance to nab hunters and criminals. The department has cancelled leaves of all field officers, and directions have been issued for effective patrolling against illegal activities in protected areas.

The order said reports had earlier been received from Ranthambore Tiger Reserve about animals such as cows and buffaloes getting caught in traps laid by hunters. “Recently, five hunters were arrested in Mount Abu for hunting a sambar deer, looking to

which red alert is announced till February 2021,” it stated.

The sub-adult Ranthambore tiger T-108 was spotted twice on camera traps - 12.50 am Thursday and 6 am Saturday - with a wire around his neck which looks like a trap.

The department sought a permission to tranquillise the big cat from the NTCA Friday. The tiger was tranquillised at 11 am Saturday, and released in the wild at 11.45 am after removing the wire, officials said.

FOR A CAUSE



Rajasthan policemen ride on elephants during the ‘No Mask, No Entry’ campaign against Covid-19 at Badi Chaupar in Jaipur, Saturday.

PTI PHOTO

At 33 degree C, Churu has highest Dec temperature



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, Dec 5: At a time when North India is witnessing an early setting of a severe winter registering some of the coldest days in October and November in decades, Rajasthan’s Churu and Barmer town saw a sudden surge in the mercury, surpassing maximum temperatures in last decade and more.

Friday, Churu registered a temperature of 33.6 degrees Celsius which was the highest in last 17 years in December. In 2003, the temperature registered on the same day was 33.5 degree, confirmed met officials.

Barmer also registered a temperature of 34.4 degree Celsius which was again the highest in the last 12 years.

The state is witnessing a sharp increase in temperature.

Many districts in the state have registered a maximum temperature of over 30 degrees Celsius on Friday. Ajmer (32.1), Jaipur had 30.9 degrees Celsius, Jaisalmer 33, Chittorgarh 32.6 and Bhilwara 32.4 degrees Celsius.

THE SINGING FIELDS OF PUNJAB

FARMERS’ AGITATION GIVES BIRTH TO VIRAL TUNES OF PROTEST

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh/New Delhi, Dec 5: The fields are alive with the sound of music, not wedding ditties or soulful melodies but songs of resistance born in the farmers’ protest against the new farm laws and echoing all the way from Punjab to Delhi.

As thousands of farmers, mostly from Punjab and Haryana, braved water cannons and teargas to camp at the national capital’s borders to demand a rollback of the laws and their representatives held talks with the government, the songs flowed, speaking of pride of the land, strength in unity and the rights of the people fighting a hostile establishment.

Shared on YouTube, WhatsApp and other social media platforms, the protest music has found a wide audience. Several singers said it is also an assertion of their Punjabi identity that they say is deep rooted and comes before caste or creed.

“This is a big issue for us. We are all connected with the soil,” said singer Kanwar Grewal, the voice behind the popular protest songs ‘Ailaan’ and ‘Pecha’ that support the farmers’ agitation.

He is planning a third song ‘Jawani Zindabad’ to highlight the participation of youth in the protest.

“Pecha”, which has been written by Harf Cheema and sung by both Cheema and Grewal, has got more than 30 lakh views on YouTube. While the song speaks of the rift between Punjab and Delhi, farmers’ suicides, the Centre’s ‘kaliya niti karde laagu (bad policies) and rouses people to wake up, the accompanying video has long shots of convoys of trucks and tractors blocking highways and men and

women, young and old, shouting slogans and holding flags.

“The song is about common people fighting against the government for their rights. It is a democratic country. Everyone has the right to express their views. Farmers are protesting and we are using music as a tool,” Cheema told PTL.

He said the protest has become a mass movement with not just farmers but traders and small shopkeepers from 18 states also joining the protests.

Cheema estimates that 70-80 protest songs have been composed and circulated in the last two to three months since the farmers have been protesting - before gathering at Delhi’s gateways, farm-

ers from Punjab had been staging numerous protests, including ‘rail roko’ agitations.

“All this is for farmers who feed us day and night. This is all we can do for them,” said Cheema, who has also penned and voiced the songs

“Sarkare” and “Punjab” spotlighting the current stir. Take away agriculture from Punjab and there is not much left, said Grewal, adding that 75 per cent of the population is connected to farming in one way or another.

Noted Punjabi singer and actor Harbhajan Mann, who has been supporting farmers’ protests for the last several months, also came out with a new song Wednesday.

Famous singer Jasbir Jassi, best known for his hit “Dil Le Gayee”, said it is good that Punjabi artists are supporting the farmers.

Punjabi musicians Sidhu Moosewala, Babbu Maan, Jass Bajwa, Himmat Sandu, R Nait and Anmol Gagan have also come up with their own songs hailing the fighting spirit of the Punjabis in songs such as “Jatta Takda Ho Ja”, “Asi Vaddange”, “Delhi Aa Punjab Nal Pange Thik Nahi” and “Kisaan vs Rajneeti”. Bhartiya Kisan Union (Ekta Ugrahan) general secretary Sukhdev Singh Kokrikalan thanked Punjabi artists and singers for standing in solidarity with the protesting farmers against the “black laws”.

“It is a historical fact that artists are very important for the success of any struggle. We hail the singers for standing with the farmers,” he said.

All this is for farmers who feed us day and night. This is all we can do for them

HARF CHEEMA | WRITER



NIA files charge sheet in Khalistan narco-terror case



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 5: The NIA has filed a supplementary charge sheet against Dharminder Singh aka Dhana for smuggling heroin from Pakistan and selling and using the drugs money to further activities of the banned Khalistan Liberation Force (KLF) in connection with a narco-terror probe case.

An NIA spokesperson Saturday said that the agency filed a supplementary charge sheet in the NIA Special Court in Punjab’s Mohali under several sections of IPC and Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, against narco-terrorist Dhana, a resident of Moga.

The official said that Dhana used to receive heroin smuggled from Pakistan from accused Jabir Singh Samra and further distribute or sell it to local traffickers.

The proceeds so generated used to be deposited with Samra for further strengthening the activities of KLF,” the official said.

The NIA filed first charge sheet May 29 against 10 accused per-

sons namely - Samra, Harpreet Singh aka Happy, Varinder Singh Chahal, Nirmal Singh aka Neeldhari, Satpal Singh, Hiralal, Harjit Singh aka Bagga, Jasmeet Singh Hakimzada, Harmeet Singh aka Ph.D. and Jasbir Singh aka Shera.

The NIA case was registered in January after the Punjab Police registered a case over the seizure of 500gm of heroin and drugs money worth Rs 1.20 lakh from Samra and two others in December last year.

Role of Pakistan-based KLF chief Harmeet Singh aka Ph.D., who is believed to be dead and Hakimzada, a Dubai-based international drugs smuggler and money launderer, has prominently emerged in running a Narco-terror network to strengthen the terrorist activities of KLF.

The investigation has revealed that a network of persons consisting of narco-traffickers, militant elements and hawala operatives based in Punjab, Delhi and Dubai was operating at the behest of Harmeet Singh and Hakimzada.

of the day quote

The Prime Minister held an all-party meeting and now they are saying State and Centre will decide the price, how can it be? In Bihar, they have given the assurance that vaccination will be free. We demand vaccine should be given to each Indian free of cost

Followers of Nathuram Godse arrived in Patna and compassionate CM Nitish Kumar held the statue of Mahatma Gandhi inside Gandhi Maidan captive to please them so that followers of Gandhi ideology would not take oath to support farmers

When Congress opposed the anti-farmers Bills, the ruling party accused us of undermining the interest of farmers, and even suspended our members in Parliament when division was sought before clearance of the legislations

SHORT TAKES

DGGI sleuths arrest two for GST fraud
Nagpur: The Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI) has arrested two proprietors of trading firms from Aurangabad in Maharashtra in connection with alleged fraudulent transactions of over ₹170.35 crore, as per an official release. Prima facie, input tax credit of ₹18.66 crore was availed on fake invoices and such invoices of ₹14.10 crore were issued.

4 held for gangrape of minor girl
Kolkata: Four persons have been arrested for allegedly gangraping a minor girl in Kolkata's adjoining New Town area, a police officer said Saturday. The girl, along with a friend, was taking a stroll Friday night, when the four accused allegedly attacked the duo, took the girl to an isolated place by force, and raped her, he said. Her friend fled the scene, the officer said.

Pak Rangers open fire on forward posts
Jammu: Pakistani Rangers opened fire on forward posts and villages along the International Border in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district, officials said Saturday. Firing from across the border started around 9.50 pm Friday in the Hiranagar sector's Pansar Border Outpost area, drawing a strong and an effective retaliation by the Border Security Force (BSF).

Minor dies after falling into pit
Ballia (UP): A three-year-old boy died after he fell into a water-filled pit in Uttar Pradesh's Ballia district, police said Saturday. The incident took place at Bahadurpur village Friday evening, when Advai fell into the pit while playing outside his house. The child was taken to the district hospital where doctors declared him brought dead, police said.

Delhi's air quality 'severe'
New Delhi: Delhi's air quality turned "severe" Saturday with slow wind speed allowing the accumulation of "locally generated" pollutants, according to India Meteorological Department (IMD) officials.



He (MJ Akbar) himself says he was in a consensual relationship (with one of his juniors, who accused him of rape) which was hampering his family life. Is this the conduct of the man with a sterling reputation?
PRIYA RAMANI | JOURNALIST

INDIAN JEWELLER'S 12,638-DIAMOND RING SETS WORLD RECORD

An elaborate floral-shaped ring sporting 12,638 tiny diamonds called "The Marigold - The Ring of Prosperity" has earned a place in the Guinness World Records - but its Indian creator has no plans to sell his priceless design just yet



India biggest buyer of Covid-19 vaccine

EXPERTS SAY THAT 1.6 BN DOSES PURCHASED BY INDIA COULD COVER 60 PC POPULATION



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 5: India is the largest buyer of Covid-19 vaccines in the world with 1.6 billion doses, according to a global analysis, a number some scientists say could cover 800 million people, or 60 per cent of its population, and will be enough to develop 'herd immunity'. India has purchased 500 million doses of the Oxford University-AstraZeneca vaccine candidate, one billion from the US company Novavax and 100 million doses of the Sputnik V candidate from Russia's Gamaleya Research Institute, according to the US-based Duke University Global Health Innovation Center. The 'Launch and Scale Speedometer' analysis, which is updated every two weeks, shows India has confirmed 1.6 billion doses of three vaccines as of November 30 while the US and the EU have purchased doses of six candidates. According to the analysis, India is the top Covid-19 vaccine buyer followed by the European Union which has confirmed 1.58 billion doses and the US, the worst affected country so far, that has managed to purchase just over a billion doses.

- India is the top Covid-19 vaccine buyer followed by the European Union which has confirmed 1.58 billion doses and the US has managed to purchase just over a billion doses
- Since all the vaccine candidates that are being discussed as purchased have two-dose vaccine regimens, the current number for India would vaccinate, at best, 80 crore people

As countries strategise to secure more shots to protect their populations against the novel coronavirus infection, Duke University has released a new global assessment of purchasing agreements for Covid-19 vaccines, even before any candidates are in the market. "Countries with manufacturing capacity, such as India and Brazil, have been successful in negotiating large advance market commitments with leading vaccine candidates as part of the manufacturing agreements," the Duke researchers noted in their analysis. "The data is based on what is in the public domain and after speaking to government officials, especially in India," explained noted virologist Shahid Jameel.

In November, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said 400-500 million doses of Covid-19 vaccines were estimated to be made available for 250 to 300 million (25 crore to 30 crore) people in India by July-August 2021. Jameel told this news agency that all the vaccines 'pre-booked' by India are manufactured by Indian companies - Oxford-AstraZeneca and Novavax by Serum Institute of India (SII) in Pune and Sputnik V by Dr Reddy's Lab in Hyderabad. India's domestic vaccine candidate by Bharat Biotech also entered Phase 3 clinical trials this week. "Bharat Biotech and Zydus-Cadila would also add about 400 million doses annually. In brief, the numbers appear reasonable over 2021 and 2022," said Jameel, director of the Trivedi School of Biosciences, Ashoka University. "We can expect the first 250 million to be vaccinated in 2021; the remaining in the following years. The problem will not be vaccine doses, but the ability to deliver them," Jameel explained. He noted that 1.6 billion doses would cover 800 million people or 60 per cent of India's population. This, the virologist said, should be enough to develop herd immunity, a form of indirect protection from infectious disease that occurs when a sufficient percentage of a population has become immune to an infection. "Since all the vaccine candidates that are being discussed as purchased have two-dose vaccine regimens, the current number for India would vaccinate, at best, 80 crore (800 million) people. This, of course, does not account for logistical losses, which can be substantial," Rath, from the National Institute of Immunology (NII) in New Delhi, told this news agency.

PLAYFUL MOOD



A giraffe calf with her mother at Alipore Zoological Garden in Kolkata, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

Gurugram serial killer wanted to show what he could do

AGENCIES

Gurugram, Dec 5: A 22-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly murdering three people on three consecutive nights last week in Gurugram. The accused has been identified as Mohammad Raji, a resident of Bihar. Police said the accused, Razi, during questioning admitted that he committed three murders November 23, 24 and 25. The accused revealed that he killed strangers as he enjoyed committing the crimes and he wanted to show world what he can do, police said. According to police, the accused would allegedly lure victims into



drinking alcohol and would then stab them to death. On November 23, the accused had allegedly stabbed a man to death in Gurugram's Leisure Valley Park. The next day, November 24, the accused went on to commit another murder - stabbed a security guard to death in Gurugram's Sector 40. The accused, who allegedly com-

mitted the third murder November 25, had beheaded his third victim identified as 26-year-old Rakesh Kumar. The decapitated body of Rakesh Kumar was found in Gurugram's Sector 47. Police said his head was recovered only after Razi's arrest. During questioning, Razi said, "I did not understand anything since childhood. Everyone used to say that you are so weak and what would you be able to do. I just thought that I want to show the world what I can do." Police said the accused may have been involved in at least 10 murders in Delhi, Gurugram and Bihar and further probe is underway.

CANADA COVID CONFERENCE

MEA to skip meet after diplomatic row

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 5: External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar will skip Canada-led meetings to formulate strategies on the coronavirus pandemic amid the fresh row between the two nations over remarks made by Canadian PM Justin Trudeau on the ongoing farmers' protest in India. New Delhi has informed Ottawa that Jaishankar will not attend the meeting that is to take place December 7 due to "scheduling issues". The government sources said the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) told the Canadian government that Jaishankar is not available to attend the December 7 meeting organised by Canadian Foreign Minister Francois-Philippe Champagne because of "scheduling" issues. Jaishankar had participated in



a virtual meet last month of the Ministerial Coordination Group of Covid-19 (MCGC), led by Canadian foreign minister Francois-Philippe Champagne. The minister has tweeted, "Pleased to participate in the Group of Foreign Ministers Meeting to exchange experiences on Covid-related challenges. Thank FM @FP_Champagne of Canada for convening the meeting."

BJP leader Mukul Roy named conspirator in CID chargesheet

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Dec 5: BJP senior leader Mukul Roy has been named 'conspirator' in the second supplementary chargesheet filed by West Bengal CID Saturday in the murder of Trinamool Congress MLA Satyajit Biswas, sources in the agency said.

TMC LEADER'S MURDER

The second supplementary chargesheet was filed in a court at Ranaghat in Nadia district Saturday afternoon. The BJP leader has been found to have been "very actively involved primarily as a conspirator" in the killing of Biswas in February 2019, they said. When contacted, Roy rubbished the charges and said that he had "never believed in violence in politics". "There are at least 45 cases pending against me. I do not believe in the politics of violence and never indulge in such kinds of



things. I challenge Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who is also the police minister to say it in public that I have such kind of taste. I was never involved in such things when I was with her party and now when I am a member of another political party. I have total faith in the judiciary of our country," Roy told this news agency. BJP's national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya termed the CID's action against Roy as a "conspiracy of Chief Minister

Mamata Banerjee". "Mamta Banerjee's conspiracy continues. The false murder chargesheet against Mukul Roy shows how she is trying to suppress the opposition by her conspiracy. When Mamata Banerjee herself is a guest for (a) few days she should think what is going to happen after this," Vijayvargiya said. The BJP's Bengal minder was referring to the state polls due in April-May 2021. The saffron party is upbeat after the 2019 Lok Sabha polls when it bagged 18 of the 42 parliamentary seats in the state. The state investigating agency had named BJP MP Jagannath Sarkar in the first supplementary chargesheet it had filed in September in connection with the killing of the TMC leader. Biswas was shot dead during a Saraswati Puja programme in Nadia district in February 2019. The state agency had filed its chargesheet in connection with the murder in May that year.

Woman hacked to death for 'witchcraft'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Ranchi, Dec 5: A woman was hacked to death in Jharkhand's Gumla district on suspicion of practicing witchcraft, police said Saturday. Police said the crime occurred at Koenara village in Sadar police station area late Friday night. The body was recovered by police Saturday and sent for post-mortem. "On Friday afternoon, my mother Karmi Oraon had gone to wash clothes at the Manager dam situated at some distance from the village. She did not return home till late night. When we went to search for her, we found her blood-stained body," her son Veer Oraon told police. He said that on November 26, one Chaitu Oraon had died of some disease but his father Chunda and other family members accused Veer's mother of witchcraft. "Chunda and his sons Sawan and Feku killed my mother. They were seen near the dam before her death," Veer claimed.

After 58 years, Cong snatches BJP's crown on RSS turf

DISPROVING ALL POLITICAL PREDICTIONS, CONGRESS LEADER ABHIJIT WANJARRI BAGGED THE PRESTIGIOUS NAGPUR DIVISION GRADUATES' CONSTITUENCY

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, Dec 5: For the Congress, ally of the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi, it was double celebrations as the Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray-led government completed its one year in office one week ago. Disproving all political predictions, after a gap of 58 years, the Congress' youth leader Abhijit Wanjarri, 47, bagged the prestigious Nagpur Division Graduates Constituency seat in the biennial elections, the results of which were declared Friday. The MVA partners - Shiv Sena-Nationalist Congress Party-Congress - spared no efforts in the polls and succeeded in defeating the

Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party nominee and Nagpur Mayor Sandeep Joshi. In the biennial polls held December 1 for 6 seats, the MVA bagged 4, the BJP one and an Independent one in the hotly contested elections. However, the Nagpur Division victory outshines all others as the Congress grabbed the BJP's crown - bang on the home-turf of its ideological mentor, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) - after 58 long years! An exhilarated Wanjarri gratefully acknowledged the efforts by the MVA partners, the support of the people and his own hard work that helped in completing the 'mission impossible'.



The seat was previously held by the former Jan Sangh and later the BJP with stalwarts like a close aide of the late Prime Minister Atal

Bihari Vajpayee, the late Gangadharrao Fadnavis - the father of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis - and four times (since 1989-2014) by current Union Minister Nitin Gadkari before he migrated to national politics. There were several factors that spurred the tide against the BJP in the 2020 biennial polls - delayed by several months owing to the pandemic. "The voters list was not updated for 42 years and did not have the pictures of the voters leading to possibility of mischief. I vigorously followed up with State Election Commission to make it up-to-date, with addition of around 70 per cent new graduates with their photos," Wanjarri said.

He also campaigned tough, vowing to raise the issues faced by graduates unlike in the past when they were largely ignored, and hence the graduate voters were disenchanted with the polls, leading to a poor turnout. This time, the caste factor worked in favour of Wanjarri who hails from the OBC category, compared with the past MLAs who were mostly Brahmins or upper castes. "Owing to its policies, the BJP had already received a drubbing from the OBCs in the 2019 Assembly elections and the sentiments continued even for the MLC polls," said a NCP leader from Nagpur, preferring anonymity. RSS circles hinted that the debacle was mainly on account of

"BJP infighting among the pro-and-anti Fadnavis factions" - with the alleged role of some prominent defeated former state and union ministers adding fuel to warm the Congress' fires. Shiv Sena leader from Vidarbha Kishore Tiwari was more forthcoming saying, "it's time for the RSS to rein in the current feuding state BJP leaders, or even a heavy-weight like Gadkari could bite the dust in 2024". Thumbing the nose at BJP which lampoons the MVA as "an autocratic shaw" the Sena invoked Thackeray's observation that it was a "four-wheeler 'Rath' with people's faith", and said the results clearly show where the public confidence lies.

international



We will not transfer a corrupt bureaucrat but will sack him
IMRAN KHAN | PAKISTAN PM

ON A MISSION

A Japanese capsule is on its way to bring a precious sample from asteroid Ryugu which is expected to help in better understanding of the origin and evolution of the solar system



of the day quote

You (Border Guards Bangladesh) must love the country and its people. Remember, the better this country is economically, the better off your families will be
SHEIKH HASINA | BANGLADESH PM

If we don't have anything really important to do, let's not go out into the streets
ANDRES MANUEL LOPEZ OBRADOR | MEXICAN PRESIDENT

Many people ask me about what India's priorities are for the India-US relations in the days ahead. I tell them about five main baskets. One of course strategic: two, COVID related, as it is an immediate priority for both countries - pharma, healthcare, vaccine come under this basket; third, the ICT-digital-start up space which has the ability to transform our lives forever; where many of you are leaders; fourth, climate change, environment, and renewables especially solar; and last but not least, education
TARANJIT SINGH SANDHU | INDIA'S AMBASSADOR TO THE US

SHORT TAKES

25 Taliban militants killed

Kabul: At least 25 Taliban militants, including two commanders, were killed and eight others injured during a raid in Afghanistan's Helmand province, the Army said Saturday. "The Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) launched an operation in Naway-i-Barakzai of Helmand on Friday, leading to the above mentioned casualties," Xinhua news agency quoted the Army's Corps 215 Maiwand as saying in a statement.

13 killed in flash floods

Bangkok: Thirteen people have been killed due to flash floods in Thailand's Nakhon Si Thammarat province, disaster management officials said Saturday. According to a report of the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM), the 13 villagers drowned due to flash floods and torrential waters, following heavy downpours in Nakhon Si Thammarat over the last few days, reports Xinhua news agency.

Afghan SC judge assassinated

Kabul: A judge of the Afghan Supreme Court has been assassinated in the country's capital, a local media report said Saturday. Abdul Jamil was shot dead after Friday prayers outside a mosque in Rahman Mina neighborhood Police District 8, Xinhua news agency quoted the report as saying. No group has claimed responsibility for the killing, the latest in a string of targeted attacks in the country.

Ghana heads to polls next week

Accra (Ghana): Ghanaians head to the polls for general elections December 7 that many contend will be a close race between the current head of state and a former president who have faced off twice before in one of the continent's most politically stable countries. The vote is also seen as a test of democracy for the West African nation whose regional neighbours Guinea and Ivory Coast saw leaders hold onto power for third terms after constitutional changes.

TRUMP PLAN JUNKED

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Dec 5: Reversing the decision of the outgoing Trump administration, a federal court has ordered full reinstatement of an Obama-era programme that protects undocumented immigrants brought to the US as minors from deportation, a ruling that will help a large number of Indian migrants.

The Trump administration tried ending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) in 2017, but the US Supreme Court blocked its attempt in June. On Friday, US District Judge Nicholas Garaufis in the Eastern District of New York directed the Department of Homeland Security to extend the two-year renewals to DACA recipients and start accepting applications from first-time applicants beginning Monday.

This means that the first time since September 2017, new applicants who were not previously eligible may now apply for the programme which shields undocumented immigrants who came to the US as children from deportation. "The court believes that these additional remedies are reasonable. Indeed, the government has assured the court that a public notice along the lines described is forthcoming," Judge Garaufis said in his order.

The DACA is an immigration policy that allows some individuals with unlawful presence in the US after being brought to the country as children to receive a renewable two-year period of deferred action from deportation and



The Trump administration tried ending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) in 2017, but the US Supreme Court blocked its attempt in June

On Friday, US District Judge Nicholas Garaufis in the Eastern District of New York directed the Department of Homeland Security to extend the two-year renewals to DACA recipients and start accepting applications from first-time applicants beginning Monday

become eligible for a work permit in the US. DACA recipients are often referred to as Dreamers. To be eligible for the programme, recipients cannot have felonies or serious misdemeanours on their records. Approximately 640,000 immigrants are enrolled in the DACA programme.

According to a 2019 report by South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT), there are at least 630,000 Indians who are undocumented, a 72 per cent increase since 2010. There are currently at least 4,300 active South Asian DACA recipients. As of August 2018, there are approximately 2,550 active Indian DACA recipients. Only 13 per cent of the overall 20,000 DACA eligible Indians have applied and received DACA, SAALT said.

The Trump administration can now appeal to a federal appeals court or go to the Supreme Court for temporary relief from enforcement of the judge's order.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said the court has upheld the Obama-era programme initiated under the presidency of Barack Obama, which respects American values and the will of the American people.

"Dreamers need and deserve real, permanent action to ensure that they can continue to contribute to our nation. In the 117th Congress, our Democratic House Majority will once again pass bipartisan legislation to protect Dreamers, which will be signed into law by the Biden-Harris Administration," she said.

Chinese scientists make first quantum computer



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, Dec 5: Chinese scientists claim to have created the world's first light-based quantum computer which can solve problems far faster than a classical supercomputer, an advance hailed by experts as a "major achievement" that provides a fundamentally different approach to designing such powerful machines, the official media reported Saturday.

Jiuzhang, the quantum computer, can reliably demonstrate "quantum computational advantage", a milestone in computing, state-run China Daily quoted a study published in the journal Science. Quantum computers excel at running simulations that are impossible for conventional computers, leading to breakthroughs in materials science, artificial intelligence and medicine.

Jiuzhang takes its name from an ancient Chinese mathematical text. It can perform an extremely esoteric calculation, called Gaussian boson sampling, in 200 seconds. The same task would take the world's fastest classical supercomputer Fugaku around 600 million years, the report said.

It is the second such milestone after Google declared its 53-qubit quantum computer had achieved

such a breakthrough last year. Jiuzhang used a new method of manipulating 76 photons to do calculations instead of Google's, which uses superconductive materials, the report said.

Experts hailed China's quantum computer as a "state-of-the-art experiment" and a "major achievement" in quantum computing, as it proves the feasibility of photonic quantum computation, thus providing a fundamentally different approach to designing such powerful machines, it said.

China has been investing heavily in mastering the quantum technology in recent years. In 2017, China had launched quantum communication satellite boosting hack proof and ultra-high security features, the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) said.

The Quantum Experiments at Space Scale (QUESS) satellite is the first-ever space-ground test platform for quantum communication, Wang Jianyu, executive deputy chief engineer of the project had told the official media earlier.

Chinese officials claimed that the quantum satellite was expected to provide a full proof hack-free communications which make foreign powers to monitor or intercept China's communication systems.

Moscow starts mass COVID vaccination

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Moscow, Dec 5: Thousands of doctors, teachers and others in high-risk groups have signed up for COVID-19 vaccinations in Moscow starting Saturday, a precursor to a sweeping Russia-wide immunization effort.

The vaccinations come three days after President Vladimir Putin ordered the launch of a "large-scale" COVID-19 immunization campaign even though a Russian-designed vaccine has yet to complete the advanced studies needed to ensure its effectiveness and safety in line with established scientific protocols.

The Russian leader said Wednesday that more than 2 million doses of the Sputnik V jab will be available in the next few days, allowing authorities to offer jobs to medical workers and teachers across the country starting late next week. Moscow, which currently accounts for about a quarter of the country's new daily infections, moved ahead of the curve, opening 70 vaccination facilities on Saturday.

Doctors, teachers and municipal workers were invited to book a time to receive a jab, and Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said that about 5,000 signed up in a few hours after the system began Friday.

Russia boasted that Sputnik V was the world's "first registered COVID-19 vaccine" after the government gave it regulatory approval in early August. The move drew criticism from international experts, who pointed out that the vaccine had only been tested on several dozen people at the time.

Putin has shrugged off doubts about it, saying in August that one of his daughters was among the early vaccine recipients. Over the past months, Sputnik V has been offered to medical workers and teachers even as it was still in the middle of advanced trials.

Bahrain okays Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dubai, Dec 5: The island kingdom of Bahrain said Friday it has become the second nation in the world to grant an emergency-use authorisation for the coronavirus vaccine made by Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech.

The state-run Bahrain News Agency made the announcement on Friday night, following an earlier announcement by the United Kingdom on Wednesday, making Bahrain the first in the world. "The confirmation of approval by the National Health Regulatory Authority of the kingdom of Bahrain followed thorough analysis and review undertaken by the authority of all available data," the kingdom said on its state-run Bahrain News Agency.

Bahrain did not say how many vaccines it has purchased, nor when vaccinations would begin. It did not immediately respond to questions from The Associated Press.

Pfizer later said that the details of its sales agreement with Bahrain, including the "timing of delivery and the volume of doses," was confidential and declined to comment. "We have developed detailed logistical plans and tools to support effective vaccine transport, storage and continuous temperature monitoring," Pfizer said. "Our distribution is built on a flexible just in time system which will ship the frozen



vials to the point of vaccination." The immediate challenge for Bahrain would be the conditions in which the vaccine must be kept. They must be stored and shipped at ultra-cold temperatures of around minus 70 degrees Celsius (minus 94 degrees Fahrenheit). Bahrain is a Mideast nation that regularly sees temperatures in the summer of around 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) with high humidity.

Bahrain does have a state-owned carrier, Gulf Air, that it could use to transport the vaccines. In the nearby United Arab Emirates, the Dubai-based long-haul carrier Emirates has already said it is preparing its facilities to distribute vaccines at ultra-cold temperatures. The vaccine also requires two doses be given three weeks apart.

Bahrain had already granted emergency-use authorisation for a Chinese vaccine made by Sinopharm and has inoculated some 6,000 people with it. That vaccine, an "inactivated" shot made by growing the whole virus in a lab and then killing it, also is in use in the UAE.

18 miners killed in China

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, Dec 5: Eighteen people have been killed due to an excessive level of the poisonous carbon monoxide gas in a coal mine in China, officials said Saturday, the latest mining disaster in the world's largest coal producing country.

One person was rescued from the closed Diaoshuidong colliery situated in Yongchuan district in Chongqing Municipality, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

The accident took place on Friday evening when workers were dismantling equipment in the pit, trapping 24 workers underground, it said.

Eighteen miners were confirmed dead due to the excessive level of carbon monoxide, the report said. The mine was suspended and shut down two months ago.

The cause of the accident was not immediately known. A rescue operation was underway. The Diaoshuidong coal mine, which was established in 1975 and became privately-owned in 1998, has an annual production capacity of 120,000 tonnes of coal, according to the local emergency management department.

In March 2013, hydrogen sulfide poisoning in the mine left three dead and two injured.

Though safety improvements have reduced deaths at coal mines in recent years, mining accidents are common in China, which is the world's largest coal producer.

SURFING SANTA



Aurelien Bouche-Pillon, of Rochester, wears a Santa costume while surfing waves on Lake Erie in Hamburg PTI PHOTO

US urges nations to make law over access to Tibet

The Act, signed into law by President Donald Trump in December 2018 calls for denying access to the US for Chinese officials known to be involved in restricting visits to Tibet

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Dec 5: Slamming China for its alleged repressive regime in Tibet, a top American diplomat has urged other countries to pass their own versions of a US law that calls for denying access to the US for Chinese officials known to be involved in restricting visits to the remote Himalayan region.

Robert A Destro, Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, Friday said that together with partners around the world, the US has and will continue to call on China to provide unhindered access to foreigners travelling in Tibetan areas, including for diplomats and journalists, just as other



countries give Chinese diplomats, journalists and citizens access to their respective countries.

"The US adopted the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act to press for greater access and transparency. Today, I call on our likeminded friends and partners to pass their own versions of the Act," he said in his remarks at a virtual event: "Religious Freedom in Tibet: The Appointment of Buddhist Leaders and the Succession of the Dalai Lama."

The Act, signed into law by President Donald Trump in December 2018 calls for denying access to the US for Chinese officials known to be involved in restricting visits to Tibet.

The Dalai Lama, Tibet's exiled spiritual leader has been demanding meaningful autonomy for Tibetans.

The 85-year-old Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959 following a crackdown on an uprising by the local population in Tibet. India granted him political asylum and the Tibetan government-in-exile is based on Dharamsala in Himachal Pradesh since then.

China views the 14th Dalai Lama as a "separatist" working to split Tibet from China.

Biden plans scaled-down ceremony to avoid spreading COVID

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Dec 5: US President-elect Joe Biden has said the presidential inauguration on January 20 will not be a "gigantic" event, but something closer to what the Democratic convention was like, with a lot of virtual activity across America and an emphasis on safety due to the raging coronavirus pandemic.

Biden said he expected to be sworn in on January 20 on the platform already being constructed on the steps of the US Capitol, but plans to avoid the crowds that typ-

ically gather on the National Mall and along Pennsylvania Avenue to view the ceremony and parade that attracts millions of people.

"My guess is there probably will not be a gigantic inaugural parade on Pennsylvania Avenue, but my guess is you'll see a lot of virtual activity in states all across America engaging even more people than before. That's in train now and I'm not in a position to give you an example of exactly what it will look like," he said when asked about the inauguration planning at a news conference on Friday in his hometown



of Wilmington, Delaware. "But, I promise you, it'll be available either virtually or in-person for

many and my guess is, there will still be a platform ceremony, but I don't know exactly how it's all going to work out. The key is keeping people safe," he said.

Biden, 78, suggested that the festivities could end up looking like the virtual convention Democrats held in August, with online activity in the states. "We are in discussion with the House leadership and the Senate leadership as to what they plan for the inauguration, particularly those 200,000 spots they control. But I think you're going to see something that's closer to what the conven-

tion was like than typical inauguration," he said.

The former vice president said that his first and foremost objective was to keep people safe but also allow them to celebrate, to celebrate and see one another celebrating. "So, we're in consultation. My team is in consultation with the folks who help us put on the convention, as well as with our colleagues, Republican, and Democratic colleagues, in charge of the inauguration," he said.

Asserting that he can't do a super version of the president's an-

nouncement in the Rose Garden nationwide, Biden said it will have to be more imaginative.

"But, the convention we put on really opened up avenues that we never thought existed and I doubt there will be another at least the Democratic Convention, that it's straight like it always has been," he said. The swearing-in ceremony and a lunch for the new president and vice president are held at the Capitol. Recent American presidents have been sworn in at an outdoor ceremony at the US Capitol attended by their predecessor:

INDIA EYE SERIES

India prepare for Tests



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sydney, Dec 5: The chatter around the concussion substitute will remain as a resurgent India, unlikely to be alarmed by all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja's absence, seek a series win in the second T20I against Australia here Sunday. A series win will be an ideal confidence booster for India before the visitors hit Test match mode. Some of the Indian team players are treating the white-ball leg as a six-match composite series instead of two separate formats. Having won two white-ball games in Canberra, the Indians under Virat Kohli will hope that the next two matches at the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) pan out better for them. Following their victory on the back of India's first concussion substitute Yuzvendra Chahal's terrific bowling display, India will enter the second game with a lot more confidence even though

Jadeja's batting lower down the order will be missed. It can't be denied that his unbeaten 44 off 23 balls made the difference between a winning score and a sub-par one. However for Kohli, he would expect that he wouldn't need contributions from lower-middle order and the top five batsmen would be good enough to put up a good total on board or may be chase down a tricky target. It will only help India that rival captain Aaron Finch, who has been in fantastic form, may not be fully fit. And with David Warner already absent due to a groin tear, the momentum that Australia had during the ODI series may not be there. D'Arcy Short looked out of place during the first T20I and Chahal rightly exposed his chinks, bowling wide of off-stump because he had a limited range of strokes on the off-side. Steve Smith, for all his greatness, isn't exactly the best T20

player around and is more at ease playing the second fiddle to an enforcer. Glenn Maxwell has limitations which both Jasprit Bumrah and Thangarasu Natarajan had exposed in the last ODI and first T20 respectively. What India would aspire is a better effort from the top-order, especially senior opener Shikhar Dhawan, who has gone off the boil after the half century in the first ODI. Skipper Kohli has been decent without being extraordinary and that has affected the team. A solid knock from Kohli can go a long way in solving half of India's worries. It will be interesting to see if Manish Pandey gets a second game. Ideally, he should get one more game but his discomfort against Adam Zampa was quite visible and the Indian innings lost the moment when he started wasting deliveries.

Between Pandey and Shreyas Iyer, there isn't much of a difference as they are same type of players, who need some time before they counter-attack. For Sanju Samson and the in-form Hardik Pandya, the job will be to utilise the last six overs even though Samson's temperament in the few international matches that he has played hasn't been impressive. For Australia, one interesting aspect is veteran Test specialist Nathan Lyon being drafted into the T20 squad and it remains to be seen if he replaces Mitchell Swepson in the playing XI. Although he got lucky with Kohli's wicket, Swepson mostly bowled short in his two overs and on a flat Sydney deck, he could increase Australia's worries. Lyon, on the other hand, could be used in Powerplay just like India successfully used young off-spinner Washington Sundar in the first six overs.

Sydney, Dec 5: India will look to figure out their playing XI as the Test squad gets into the groove by taking on Australia 'A' in a three-day warm-up game at Drummoyne Oval from Sunday. With India and Australia playing the second T20I on the same day, the visiting Test squad has been named India 'A' for the first of the two practice games scheduled ahead of the much-anticipated four-Test series. The tour games will be a chance to sort out India's combinations both in the batting and bowling departments ahead of opening Day-Night Test scheduled at Adelaide from December 17. In batting, Mayank Agarwal is set to open the innings but there is a question mark over his partner with the choice being between Prithvi Shaw and Shubman Gill. While Shaw was preferred in the New Zealand series, he struggled for consistency in the IPL. Gill, on the other hand, has scored 440 runs for Kolkata Knight Riders and also looked in good touch in the third ODI.

The other option is KL Rahul, who has been in rampaging form and also formed a formidable pair with Mayank for the Kings XI Punjab, but the last time he had played a Test was in September 2019. In the wicketkeeper's slot, it will be Wriddhiman Saha versus Rishabh Pant. For Saha, who had injured both his hamstrings during the IPL, it will be a test to show his fitness after getting back at the nets recently. Pant has been India's number one choice in overseas Tests but he was dropped from the limited over series and will have to deliver the goods to seal the keeper's slot. With skipper Virat Kohli going on paternity leave after the opening Test and the injured Rohit Sharma too uncertain, the onus will be on Ajinkya Rahane, Cheteshwar Pujara and Hanuma Vihari to show the way. Rahane, the man likely to lead India in the absence of Kohli, will look for a good outing. Pujara and Vihari too will be itching to go out in the middle having last played a competitive game in the pre-COVID-19 days.

In the bowling department, Jasprit Bumrah, who was rested for the opening T20I, is expected to play the practice match as he looks to get into Test mode. While Bumrah and Mohammed Shami will share the new ball in the Tests, the third pacer's spot will be up for grabs and Mohammed Siraj, who looked good in the IPL, will be keen to seal it. Umesh Yadav, with an experience of 46 Tests, is also an option but he was erratic in the two games that he had played in the IPL. Ravindra Jadeja has been ruled out of the next two T20I matches after suffering concussion and it remains to be seen if he is fit for the Tests. Ravichandran Ashwin's form will be key if Jadeja is unavailable and it will also open the door for Kuldeep Yadav, who was once proclaimed as India's number one overseas spinner by coach Ravi Shastri, following his exploits in Sydney last year. While the first three-day game will be a red-ball affair, the second tour match, scheduled to begin from December 11, will be played with a pink ball.



Cheteshwar Pujara at the nets

Blackwood, Joseph delay Kiwis' victory



Alzarri Joseph raises his bat after completing his maiden Test fifty as Jermaine Blackwood looks on

Hamilton, Dec 5: New Zealand's push for an innings victory over the West Indies in the first cricket test was stalled on the third day Saturday by a bold, counter-attacking partnership for the tourists' seventh wicket between Jermaine Blackwood and Alzarri Joseph. New Zealand seemed to be coasting to a win within three days when captain Kane Williamson enforced the follow-on with a 381-run lead after dismissing the West Indies for 138 in reply to its first innings of 519/7 declared. When the West Indies were reduced to 30/4 at tea, then 89/6 in their second innings it seemed they were fated to become only the fifth team in Test history to be dismissed twice in one day. Their position was more dire because wicketkeeper Shane Dowrich could not bat in either innings because of a broken finger and they have only nine wickets. But Blackwood and Joseph combined in an unbroken partnership

which broke the dominance of the New Zealand bowlers and was worth 107 runs at stumps. While New Zealand still lead by 185 runs, the seventh-wicket pair brought respectability to an otherwise bedraggled West Indies performance. Blackwood, the West Indies' last recognized batsman, led the stubborn resistance and was 80 not out at stumps, having hit nine fours and two sixes. Joseph, attempting to establish himself as an allrounder, achieved his maiden Test half century and was 59 not out. The pair played aggressively and managed to hit the New Zealand bowlers off the lengths which had been so successful throughout the day. Their 100 partnership came up from only 111 balls. **BRIEF SCORES** New Zealand 519/7d; West Indies 138 (Tim Southee 4/35) & 196/6 (Jermaine Blackwood 80 batting, Alzarri Joseph 59 batting; Neil Wagner 2/62). Match to continue.

Odisha FC seek first win as they face MCFC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bambolim, Dec 5: With a well-oiled unit at their disposal, inform Mumbai City FC will be eyeing their third successive win when they take on Odisha FC in an Indian Super League (ISL) game here Sunday. Mumbai first registered a 1-0 win against FC Goa and then routed SC East Bengal 3-0 in their last game. Much will again depend on how strikers Adam Le Fondre and Bartholomew Ogbeche fare. Le Fondre scored a brace in the game against East Bengal and would be raring to go one more time. The team have utility mid-fielders like Ahmed Jahouh, Cy



Odisha FC players go through their training drills ahead of their matchday

PIC: ISL

Goddard and their role as feeders will be important in the larger context of the game. The head coach Sergio Lobera has multiple options to choose in mid-fielders Farukh Choudhary,

Hugo Boumous, Hernan Santana, Raynier Fernandes, Rowlin Borges and Pranjal Bhumij among others. Santana is also in prime form having netted in the game against East Bengal.

Mumbai's defence have not conceded any goals in the last two matches and they have Mandar Rao Dessai, Sarthak Golui, Mohamad Rakip and Mourtaada Fall to choose from at the back.

FOOTBALL ROUND-UP

Real beat Sevilla

Seville: Zinedine Zidane could breathe a sigh of relief as an own goal from Yassine Bounou gave Real Madrid a 1-0 win at Sevilla. The Real manager, known as Zizou, has come under mounting pressure after an unsteady start to the season in La Liga and in the Champions League. In the 55th minute, Ferland Mendy's low cross looked sure to be turned home by Vinicius Junior, but he made only the slightest of connections and the ball deflected in off Bounou.

Man City victorious

Manchester: Pep Guardiola celebrated victory in his 250th game in charge of Manchester City as goals from Raheem Sterling and Kevin De Bruyne gave them a 2-0 win over Fulham in the Premier League. Sterling opened the scoring for City Saturday with a clinical finish as he ended a run of six games without a goal. De Bruyne added a second from the penalty spot after Sterling had been clumsily brought down by Fulham's Joachim Andersen.

ISL: NEUFC move up to 2nd spot



Rochharzela wheels away in celebration after scoring NEUFC's second goal as East Bengal custodian looks dejected, Saturday

PIC: ISL

Goa, Dec 5: NorthEast United FC (NEUFC) moved up to second position in the 11-team standings of the Indian Super League 2020-21 season as they defeated East Bengal 2-0 in their match, Saturday. An own goal by Surchandra Singh gave NEUFC the lead before the half-time break and Rochharzela completed the scoring with a goal in the

second half stoppage time. NEUFC now have eight points from four games, with a couple of wins and two draws, while bottom-placed East Bengal yet to open their account. East Bengal were in control of the game right from the off and were looking hungry to pick up an early goal. They could have won a penalty in the 20th minute when Ashutosh Mehta nudged Jacques Maghoma inside the box with his knee but the

referee chose not to award the spot-kick to the Red and Golds. The Kolkata giants conceded the first goal in the 33rd minute in comical fashion. Idrissa Sylla flicked the ball in the air with his head towards Kwesi Appiah on the right flank who beat Mohammed Irshad and crossed into the box. Scott Neville failed to clear the ball and it ricocheted off Surchandra's knees and went in. East Bengal showed more intent than NEUFC in the first half and created more chances but were not lethal in the attacking third. The Highlanders looked more positive in their approach compared to the first half and created quite a few chances to increase their lead. East Bengal too raided the NEUFC goal time and again but Belgian defender Benjamin Lambot stood firm on his ground and dealt with every single cross that came in. NEUFC sealed the fate of the match in the stoppage time from a counter-attack. Suhair ran down the right flank and squared the ball for Rochharzela inside the box and the winger converted a simple tap in confirm three points for his side.

On the other hand, Odisha FC are still winless in the tournament. They have drawn one and lost two of the three games they have played this season. Odisha coach Stuart Buxar would be hoping that his team put up an improved show. OFC have history on their side against Mumbai City FC as they had beaten them in both the games last season. Although the team from Bhubaneswar lost their previous game, they had a lot of positives to take from that match, including creating more scoring opportunities than their opponents. On paper, Mumbai certainly have the upper hand, but Odisha can spring a surprise.

Neeraj, others begin training in Bhubaneswar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 5: The Indian team of elite javelin throwers including Neeraj Chopra, Shivpal Singh and Annu Rani led by coaches Uwe Hohn and Dr. Klaus began their one-month long training camp at the Kalinga Stadium here from Friday. The team has shifted base from NIS Patiala. The other two athletes in the group are Rohit Yadav and Rajinder Singh. Fondly remembering his experience in the city during the Asian Athletics Championships 2017, where he won gold, star javelin thrower Neeraj said, "We are here for the training for Olympics 2021. In 2017, I won gold here and have fond memories of the city. With our best efforts we are hoping to do well at the Olympics." Safety of squad being priority, detailed Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has been prepared for the team training, which lays down numerous COVID-19 protocols and guidelines.