



SHARING SECRETS

Actor and fitness enthusiast Disha Patani reveals several secrets about her with fans on social media

LEISURE P2



TIME PERSON OF THE YEAR

US President-elect Joe Biden and Kamala Harris were jointly named Time magazine's 2020 'Person of the Year'

INTERNATIONAL P10



ROHIT IN FOR OZ TESTS

Rohit Sharma passes fitness test as he is set to leave for Australia December 14 for last two Tests

SPORTS P12

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 250 | www.orissapost.com

BHUBANESWAR | SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12 | 2020

12 PAGES | ₹4.00



Not bullet-proof, we need brick-proof vehicles. We are going to West Bengal.

SHORT TAKES

Five Pak soldiers killed in skirmish

Jammu: Five Pakistani soldiers were killed and three injured in an overnight retaliatory action by the Indian army along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, Defence sources said. "Pakistan initiated unprovoked firing and shelling targeting civilian facilities in Mankote sector. Damage was caused to civilian properties due to indiscriminate targeting of civilian facilities. This necessitated befitting retaliatory action by the Indian army in which five Pakistani soldiers were killed," sources said.

Factory output up 3.6% in Oct

New Delhi: Industrial production rose 3.6 per cent in October, mainly due to better performance of manufacturing and electricity generation sectors, official data showed Friday. According to the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) data, manufacturing and electricity generation sectors registered a growth of 3.5 per cent and 11.2 per cent, respectively. The mining sector witnessed a contraction of 1.5 per cent in October. The IIP had contracted by 6.6 per cent in October 2019. **P11**

1st mRNA vaccine approved for trial

New Delhi: India's first indigenous mRNA vaccine candidate has received approval from the Drug Controller General of India to initiate Phase I/II human clinical trial, the Ministry of Earth Sciences said Friday. The novel mRNA vaccine candidate, HGC019 has been developed by Gennova, a company based in Pune and supported with seed grant under the Ind-CEPI mission of Department of Biotechnology of Science and Technology Ministry. The mRNA vaccines do not use the conventional model to produce immune response. Instead, mRNA vaccine carries the molecular instructions to make the protein. **P8**

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX		VARIATION
SENSEX	46099.01	▲ 139.13
NIFTY	13513.90	▲ 35.60
DOLLAR	74.06	▲ ₹0.05
EURO	89.33	▼ ₹0.15
GOLD	₹49,136	▲ ₹59
SILVER	₹63,444	▼ ₹86

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
MAX	31.2°C	31.5°C
MIN	16.3°C	15.0°C
Humidity	94%	78%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Moderate fog	

Race on for strategic IOR bases

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 11: Over 120 warships of extra-regional forces are currently deployed in the Indian Ocean Region in support of various missions, Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat said Friday, referring to increasing maritime presence of various countries in the strategic sea lanes.

In an address at an online conference, Gen Rawat said there has been a race for strategic places and bases in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) which is only going to gain momentum in times to come.

The Chief of Defence Staff said an increasing number of countries are focusing on the IOR considering its geo-strategic importance.

At present, there are over 120 warships of extra-regional forces deployed in the Indian Ocean region in support of various missions. Till now the region, by and large, remained peaceful, Gen Rawat said at the Global Security Summit.

The Indian Ocean, considered the backyard of the Indian Navy, is critical for India's strategic interests. China has been making concerted efforts to increase its presence in the region.

Referring to India's aspirations to become a major global power, he said the country will have to achieve it despite living in a tough neighbourhood and



CHANGING GEOPOLITICS

THE INDIAN OCEAN, considered the backyard of Indian Navy, is critical for India's strategic interests

AN INCREASING NUMBER of countries are focusing on the IOR considering its geo-strategic importance

NEW CENTRES OF POWER and alliances based on geo-politics are putting pressure on the Bretton Woods institutions

We are witnessing a race for strategic places and bases in the Indian Ocean Region which is only going to gain momentum in times to come

GEN BIPIN RAWAT | CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF

in an increasingly contested region.

We are witnessing a race for strategic places and bases in the Indian Ocean Region which is only going to gain momentum in times to come. Based on challenges we face as a rising regional power, we require structured long-term planning for capability building and development of our defence forces, he said.

In our quest to build a stronger India, we need a peaceful and stable security

environment. We need to maintain our strategic autonomy and cooperative relations underscored by strong regional linkages, he said.

Delving into the evolving geo-political scenario, Gen Rawat said China's economic and military rise coupled with competition increased its influence and attracted a great deal of interest.

Gen Rawat said the world appears to be on the brink of a new era as new centres of power and alliances based on geo-

politics are putting pressure on the Bretton Woods institutions.

He said the Indo-Pacific region in general and the Indian Ocean region in particular will remain vital for transit and world trade.

Therefore, there is a need to develop integrated structures to ensure modernisation programmes to be undertaken by our armed forces based on careful assessment of the nature of threats and challenges, he added.

Vigilance to probe graft allegations against MLA

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 11: The Lokayukta Friday directed the state Vigilance to probe into the corruption charges made against arrested Gopalpur MLA Pradeep Kumar Panigrahi.

The Lokayukta has also asked the Vigilance Directorate to conduct a preliminary inquiry against Panigrahi and submit a report within two months.

The anti-corruption ombudsman issued the direction after accepting the recommendation of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik who had referred the case of corruption charges levelled against the lawmaker on December 7.

This is the first such corruption allegation against any politician in Odisha referred by the state government to the Lokayukta after its creation.

Earlier December 3, the CID Crime Branch of Odisha Police arrested Panigrahi in connection with a case of cheating.

It is alleged that Panigrahi had collected money on behalf of Akash Kumar Pathak by falsely promising jobs in a reputed company. A case relating to impersonation, cheating, forgery, criminal conspiracy and other cyber offences are made against Panigrahi and his associate Akash Kumar Pathak,



This is the first corruption allegation against any politician in Odisha referred by the state government to the Lokayukta

also the son of suspended Indian Forest Service officer Abhay Kant Pathak.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik November 29 had expelled Panigrahi from the primary membership of the ruling BJD on charge of "anti-people activities". Panigrahi, however, rejected all allegations against him and claimed that he was a victim of political vendetta.

Meanwhile, Crime Branch sleuths Friday took Akash on a five-day remand for further inquiry into the job fraud scam. He reportedly duped many youths of crores on the pretext of providing them jobs in Tata Motors. He introduced himself as the Managing Director of automobile major to mislead the aspirants.

Top WB babus to skip MHA summons

AGENCIES

Kolkata, Dec 11: A defiant West Bengal government Friday decided not to send the state's chief secretary and police chief to New Delhi in compliance with Union Home Ministry's summons in the wake of a mob attack on BJP chief J P Nadda's convoy, the latest flashpoint between the state and the Centre.

Chief Secretary Alapan Bandopadhyay wrote to Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla, saying he has been directed to request to "dispense with the presence of the

state officials" in the meeting convened December 14, an obvious indication that he was just obeying the state government's order.

The MHA had Friday summoned Bandopadhyay and DGP Virendra asking them to present themselves December 14 for an explanation on the law and order situation in the state, following Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar's report on the attack on Nadda's convoy by alleged supporters of the ruling TMC.

The top bureaucrat of the state said as requested by the Union Home Secretary December 10, the state government had indeed made



A vehicle of JP Nadda's convoy damaged after stone-pelting by alleged TMC supporters

elaborate arrangements for security coverage of the protectees Thursday. "The incidents regarding Z-category protectees are already being

examined at our end. The West Bengal Police had provided a bulletproof car and a pilot to JP Nadda, which was in addition to the escort (vehicle by State, personnel by CRPF) and PSOs (CRPF) he is entitled as a Z-category protectee," he wrote.

The DIG (Police) of the range was stationed in the area to supervise the arrangements personally. At the same time, 4 Additional SPS, 8 DySPs, 14 Inspectors, 70 Sis/ASIs, 40 RAF personnel, 259 constables and 350 members of auxiliary forces were deployed. **MORE ON P7**

Steel City set for infra upgrade

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Dec 11: Ahead of Hockey World Cup 2023, Steel City Rourkela is set to undergo a significant infrastructural upgrade, officials said here Friday.

The sporting event is scheduled to be held at Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar and Biju Patnaik Hockey Stadium here.

President, International Hockey Federation (FIH), Narinder Dhruv Batra visited Rourkela and reviewed the preparations for the World Cup with Sports Minister Tusharkanti Behera, Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy, Sports Department

Double-decker train service soon

BHUBANESWAR: The Railway Ministry Friday decided to introduce an AC double-decker train between Bhubaneswar and Rourkela soon. The proposal was tabled during a meeting of Railway Board officials recently. Rakes of the double-decker train that were being used in the Bhopal-Indore route will be used. Services to that route have been suspended.

Secretary Vishal Dev, and Sports Department Director Vineel Krishna. ST Secretary VK Pandian took part in the review meeting

through video conferencing.

Plans are afoot to set up an astro-turf practice pitch and upgrade the changing rooms for players as well as match officials. Moreover, modern floodlights will come up at the stadium and seating capacity will be doubled. Sources said that enough space is available for the expansion.

"Seating capacity of the Biju Patnaik Hockey Stadium will be increased to 25,000. Flight services to and from Rourkela, roads and hotels will be improved in view of the event. Tourism in the city will also get a facelift," said minister Tusharkanti Behera.

Breweries colluded to fix beer prices for 11 years

REUTERS

New Delhi, Dec 11: Top executives of Carlsberg, SABMiller and India's United Breweries (UB) exchanged commercially sensitive information and colluded to fix beer prices in India over 11 years, according to a government antitrust investigation report seen by Reuters.

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) in 2018 raided the offices of the three brewers and started an inquiry. The investigation's findings - which are not a final judgment of wrongdoing - cast a shadow on the brewers, which account for 88% of India's \$7 billion beer market.

Senior CCI members will consider the report, drafted in March, as they decide on fines, which could exceed \$250 million, two sources familiar with the case said. The CCI members could agree with or



dispute the findings of its investigation team. Executives' conversations, WhatsApp messages and e-mails contained in the report show the companies regularly and collectively strategised in seeking price increases in "several states", forging a cartel which gave them more

bargaining power with state authorities.

The companies also used the All India Brewers Association (AIBA) as a "common platform" to decide collectively on prices; and the local group then lobbied on the companies' behalf for price increases, the

'AVOID GETTING CAUGHT'

"We should avoid getting caught," AIBA's director general wrote in an e-mail in 2016 to executives of three companies

The brewers coordinated to "manipulate the government machinery" and "were well aware that their collective approach was violating" competition law, states CCI

CCI report found. At least three times, executives exchanged messages urging one another to keep their plans quiet, the report showed. "We should avoid getting caught," AIBA's director general wrote in an e-mail in 2016 to executives of the three companies. The brewers coordinated to "manipulate the government machinery" and "were

well aware that their collective approach through the association (AIBA) was violating" competition law, the 248-page CCI report said.

The report concluded the cartel existed between 2007 and October 2018. The CCI did not respond to Reuters queries. Lobby group AIBA and Carlsberg declined to comment, citing ongoing CCI proceedings. United Breweries, part-owned by Heineken, said it had cooperated with authorities and would make submissions to the CCI. Heineken did not respond to requests for comment.

In this case, 19 beer executives engaged in anticompetitive practices, the CCI's investigation report says. "The collusion has been mostly through the highest level of management in these companies," the report said, including managing directors, vice presidents, and sales and marketing heads.

POLICE TO TAKE D-BROTHERS IN FRESH REMAND



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 11: Twin City Police Commissioner Sudhansu Sarangi said here Friday that gangster Dhalasamanta brothers will be remanded once again to elicit more information about their crime syndicate.

This comes after the Commissionerate Police seized 16 guns, 1095 ammunitions and 24 magazines in connection with illegal firearms trade involving jailed gangsters Dhalasamanta brothers.

Police also claimed to have arrested seven persons in connection with the illegal firearms trade.

According to police, a team of Choudwar police station arrested Prakash Behera of Sheikh Bazar near Birupa barrage and found two illegal firearms from him Thursday. Later, police arrested Sarat Sethi of Deulasahi who was supposed to procure the guns from Behera. Interrogating Behera and Sethi, police came to know that huge amount of arms and ammunitions had been hidden at the residence of Sushil and Susanta Dhalasamanta in CDA area of Cuttack.

The duo also informed police that they have delivered guns and ammunitions to several other persons as per the instruction of the gangster brothers. Police had arrested Dhalasamanta brothers during a special operation in 2016. They have been lodged in jails since then.

FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshaSpeaks.com
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES

Today you may try to make your loved one happy, and perhaps even try to woo the person in a fresh manner. You may not be too satisfied with your friends and relatives, but, Ganesha says, you can expect to go to a party in the evening and make new friends.

TAURUS

You may feel that you woke up on the wrong side of the bed today, says Ganesha. The day is filled with a fair share of jittery moments and lingering worry. Stand firm and remember that every night has a dawn. The law of averages will make your evening more enjoyable.

GEMINI

Lady Luck is likely to smile on you, foresees Ganesha. You are generally shy, but today is a different day. You will remain outgoing and will be able to freely express your feelings. This temporary change will do a lot of good to your ego, says Ganesha.

CANCER

Those around you have always thought that there is something different about you, but could never put their finger on what exactly it was. You always knew. You are better than them, and today is the day to make them realise that. How? The best course of action is to do your job in the best possible manner.

LEO

One way to assure success is by believing in oneself and one's abilities. Let this confidence and your high spirits take you to newer heights today, says Ganesha. Remain cheerful all day long, and you will see your hardships disappear as you tackle them with consummate skill.

VIRGO

Sense and sensibilities will prevail today as you address relationships. On the emotional front, you may be unclear and oscillate between what you feel and what you really expected of you. But in the end, you may well end up following your inner voice than depend on others. Your intuition is invincibly strong, says Ganesha.

LIBRA

The theatrical you comes to the fore. Ganesha expects you to put up a show in all that you do today, be it a display of devotion to your work, or dedication to your family. You may give the best in the business a run for their money as you prove to be the perfect choice for all tasks assigned to you.

SCORPIO

Signs indicate you may face unexpected expenses today. But this spending is likely to be on family and friends – especially in entertaining them. But keep track of every penny. To be on the safer side, Ganesha advises you not to have any pockets at all today.

SAGITTARIUS

Pack your bags today for a long business trip, which will bear rich fruits. Be ready to pick up important business pointers and learn your way into your trade. Ganesha predicts pleasant surprises in store later in the day.

CAPRICORN

Everything you do today will be driven by the desire to meet the expectations of your family members, says Ganesha. For those of you pursuing studies, pending projects will finally get completed, and you will look forward to taking up new assignments. Giving free reign to your imagination will help you excel in areas of your interest, but don't go overboard or else you may lose touch with reality.

AQUARIUS

Fortune favours the brave, and who knows it better than you? Your performance may come under scrutiny, but your bosses will come away pleased as punch. Want to make some money? Ganesha points to real estate and the construction business.

PISCES

The focus today is on touching base with your near and dear ones, says Ganesha. It is likely that you will renew some old associations in a social function, or in matters related to business. You are likely to surge ahead of your competitors when it comes to work related matters.



AMY ADAMS SET FOR A NEW 'ENCHANTED' OUTING

Actress Amy Adams will be reprising her role as Princess Giselle in the sequel of *Enchanted*. The six-time Academy Award-nominated star will return to role in the sequel titled *Disenchanted*. The series will stream on Disney+. The company shared the news during its Investor Day, reports *variety.com*.

MEGHAN SAYS SHE IS 'CRUSHING' PREGNANCY

Singer Meghan Trainor says she has gestational diabetes, but is still crushing pregnancy. She admitted that she enjoyed being pregnant while in quarantine. "I am so pregnant," she said during an appearance on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*.



Wishes pour in as Dilip Kumar turns 98

Mumbai: Bollywood legend Dilip Kumar turned 98 Friday, and wishes poured in from colleagues on social media for the veteran actor who is referred to as Yusuf sahab or Dilip sahab.

"To the one and only, who amazed and inspired the world by just being himself. Wishing the legendary @TheDilipKumar a Happy Birthday. I cherish & remember every time we've met in vivid detail & you have always loved me like your own. Love you too much. Have a good one Dilip Sahib," Shah Rukh Khan tweeted. Dharmendra posted on Instagram: "Happy Birthday Dilip Sahab. Love you my darling brother."

Kamal Haasan wrote: "To my dearest Yusuf Khan Saheb/Shri. Dilip Kumar Ji @TheDilipKumar My salute to one of the greatest living Indian artistes in Cinema. Happy birthday sir and I place my gratitude for setting a benchmark half a century ago, for today's artistes to follow."

Madhuri Dixit shared: "Happy birthday @TheDilipKumar saab. I wish you good health and a long life ahead. I feel fortunate re-

membering the times we spent together while shooting for #Izzatdar & #KanoonApnaApna. Sending you my best wishes. Take care."

Ajay Devgn posted: "Happy birthday Yusuf Saab. You're an amazed and inspired the world by just being himself. And, you've always been my steady source of inspiration over the years. Respects to you Sir today and always."

"When all the words in the world fail to describe a human being, an Actor, an Era, a Legend, an Institution and all the joy, light n sheer magic he brought on celluloid each time he enlightened it. Happy Birthday #DilipKumar saab. #HappyBirthdayDilipKumar," Urmila Matondkar tweeted.

Raj Babbar wrote: "Happy Birthday Wishes to the living legend @TheDilipKumar Saheb. Through his sterling performances he wrote Indian cinema's grammar book on Acting from which so many like me benefit-

ted. Feel blessed to have worked with him. May the almighty always

grant him good health." "The KING & I Happy Birthday Dear @TheDilipKumar Sahab !!! May god grace you with good health and long life. #HappyBirthdayDilipKumar Every generation loves you!!!" Riteish Deshmukh wrote.

Actor Shekhar Suman posted: "Happy bday to the greatest actor of India, now n forever. Dilip Kumar. I'm like others, his hugest hugest fan. I Remember once when I met him, he held my hand and asked, itna fast kaise bolte ho? That was indeed one of the greatest moments of my life."

"My most adorable Person Who taught me not only d grammar of dignified cinema but also the dignity of being human. #DILIP KUMAR Enters today his 99 th years with highest respect as greatest actor of indian cinema. A big salute from all of us sir," tweeted filmmaker Subhash Ghai. IANS

Films that made Dilip Kumar 'The Tragedy King' of Hindi cinema

While the superstar has worked in over 65 movies in his five decades-long glorious career, here is a look back on the few films that gave him the tag of 'The Tragedy King'.

Devdas
Deddas - the painful saga of love and romance, which was based on Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyay's novel of the same name was till date regarded as one of the finest works of the superstar. The Bimal Roy directorial saw Kumar acing the role of a die-hard lover on the road of destruction at hands of love and alcoholism.

Babul
The musical drama that emerged out as the second highest-grossing film of the year 1950 saw a tragic love-triangle between his character the late dazzling diva Nargis and late actor Munawar Sultana. The heartwarming film that saw Dilip Kumar in the role of a postmaster hailing from a

rich family was directed by director SU Sunny.

Daag
The social drama *Daag*, produced and directed by Amiya Chakravarty brought Dilip Kumar the first ever Filmfare Award in the main category of best actor. The film sees the rise of a poverty-stricken and alcoholic Shankar (Dilip Kumar's character) to a wealthy man who again moves towards the path of self-destruction as the family of the love of his life decided to marry her elsewhere. The film, however, ends on a good note with Shankar marrying his love interest and quitting alcohol thereafter.

Mughal-E-Azam
The ultimate love story of Mughal prince Salim and a court dancer Anarkali was one of the most

tragic films by the legendary superstar. His epic portrayal of the spoiled, self-indulgent and mad-in-love prince won the film several accolades including the National Film Award for Best Feature Film in Hindi in 1961.

Though the 98-year-old actor tried to work in a different genre of movies to do away with the tag of 'The Tragedy King', his epic portrayal in these films have been etched

in the hearts of his fans and he is hence, to date remembered with the tag. Some other tragedy movies by the superstar including *Deedar*, *Sairat*, *Tarana*, *Yahudi* and *Kumati*. He was last seen on the big screen in *Qila* in 1998 and was honoured with the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 1994, and the Padma Vibhushan in 2015. AGENCIES



Disha shares her secrets with fans in Q&A session

Mumbai: Bollywood actress and fitness enthusiast Disha Patani has revealed several secrets about her with fans on social media, and has also shared what she learnt during lockdown.

During an Instagram question-

answer session a fan asked Disha what lesson had she picked up during the months of lockdown. "Less is more," she replied. The actress also shared that she 'loves' Korean drama and that *Avengers* is her favourite Hollywood film. Talking about her

favourite hero, Disha wrote: "Jackie Chan". Disha also revealed that her "Most dreaded subject in school" was chemistry and botany.

Asked what her fantasy profession would be, she replied: "To work in discovery channel." IANS

ANUSHKA ON THIRD ANNIVERSARY:

Three years of us and very soon, three of us

Mumbai: Bollywood actress Anushka Sharma Friday shared a post on social media wishing hubby Virat Kohli on their third wedding anniversary.

Anushka, who is expecting her first child with her cricketer husband, also reminded that they are going to turn three very soon!

Anushka shared a photograph on her verified Instagram account where she can be seen hugging Virat from the back side.

"3 years of us & very soon , 3 of us. Miss you," the actress wrote on Instagram.

Virat Kohli also took to Instagram to share a wish for his wife on their third wedding anniversary. "3 years and onto a lifetime together," he wrote. Virat shared a black and white photograph from their wedding day.

Virat and Anushka tied the knot on December 11, 2017. The couple had a hush-hush destination wedding in Italy.

"Today we have promised each other to be bound in love forever. We are truly blessed to share the news with you. This beautiful day will be made more special with the love and support of our family of fans and well-wishers. Thank you for being such an important part of our journey," Virat had shared in an Instagram post dated December 11, 2017.

The couple is expecting their first child in January. IANS

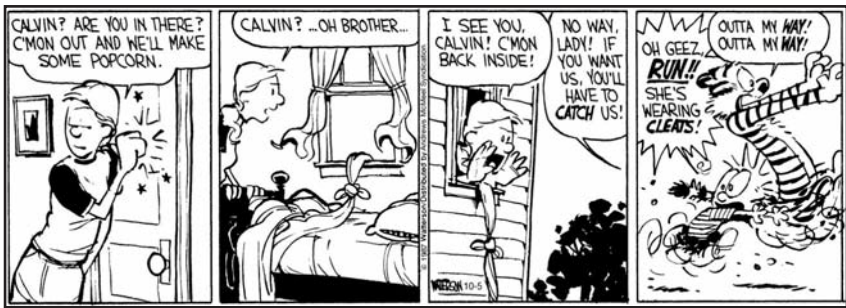


FUN post

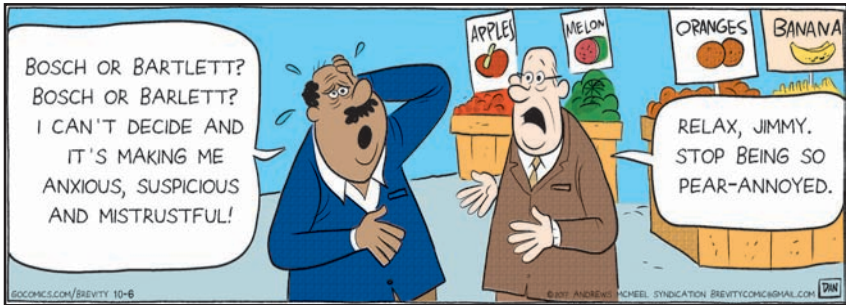
PEANUTS



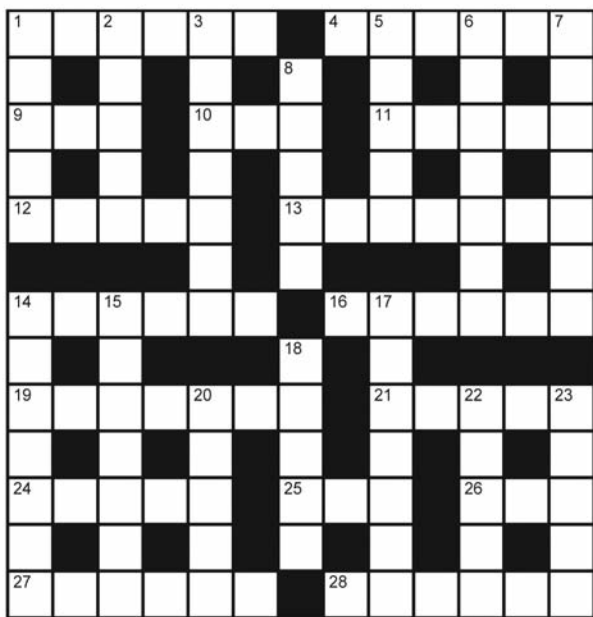
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



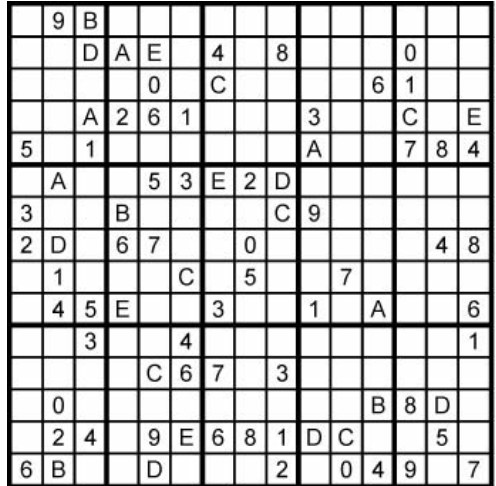
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 World's largest desert
 - 4 Injury
 - 9 Ornamental vase
 - 10 Suds source
 - 11 Dirigible
 - 12 "The Lord of the Rings" figure
 - 13 Ill will
 - 14 Least
 - 16 Go to bed (4,2)
 - 19 West Indies music
 - 21 Bridal path
- Down**
- 25 Kind of card
 - 26 Chinese tea
 - 27 Gold unit
 - 28 Longest river in Great Britain
 - 1 Ten-armed cephalopod
 - 2 Redhead's dye
 - 3 Scams (3-4)
 - 5 Songbird
 - 6 Symbol of purity
 - 7 Headache helper
 - 8 Cut short
 - 14 Book store section
 - 15 Dingo, e.g. (4,3)
 - 17 Out of touch
 - 18 Marsupial feature
 - 20 Sprite
 - 22 Cavalry sword
 - 23 City near Düsseldorf

SUDOKU

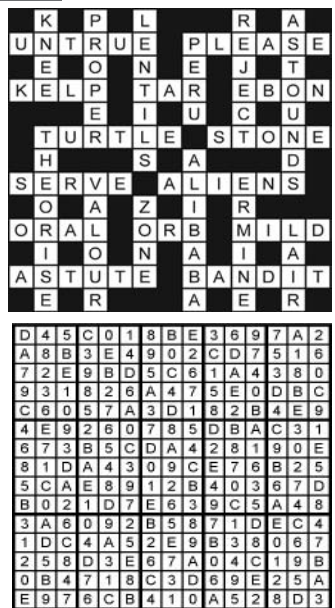
To solve the Sudoku puzzle, each row, column and box must contain the numbers 0 to 9 and the letters A to E.



SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

Ensure farmers sell produce at MSP: BJP to state govt

BJD says the party is always with the farmers and the government has passed a resolution to increase the MSP for farmers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 11: Two days after the state Cabinet passed a resolution to move the Centre demanding implementation of recommendations of MS Swaminathan Committee, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Friday wanted to know from the state government as to what the latter has done for the farmers during the past 21 years.

Addressing a presser here, state BJP Krushak Morcha president Pradip Purohit said, "The BJD government is ruling the state for the past 21 years. What has it done for the farmers other than passing resolutions in Assembly and Cabinet?"

Though the Centre has fixed minimum support price (MSP) at Rs 1,868 per quintal of paddy and is providing the money to the state government, the farmers are not getting the benefits, he alleged.

Before writing letter to the Centre to enhance the MSP, the state government should ensure that farmers sell their produce at MSP fixed by the Centre, he said.

The millers are forcing them to sell their produce after deductions ranging 2 to 10 kg per quintal, the BJP leader alleged.

If the state government really cares for our farmers, it should give at least Rs 500 bonus on paddy, Purohit added.

"Some millers have told me

Before writing a letter to the Centre to enhance the MSP, the state government should ensure that farmers sell their produce at MSP fixed by the Centre. If the state govt really cares for our farmers, it should give at least Rs 500 bonus on paddy

PRADIP PUROHIT | BJP LEADER

I would like to request them (BJP) to support our move to increase the MSP. Our CM is the only CM who has asked the Centre on the issue. Our policies for the farmers are one of the best and have also been lauded by the NITI Aayog

LENIN MOHANTY | BJD SPOKESPERSON

that cuts taken by them from farmers are also being sent to BJD workers. In 2007, the state Cabinet talked about irrigation in each block where it failed badly. After 15 years since their announcement, the irrigation facilities announced by the government are nowhere close to it," the BJP leader said.

Opposing the token system, Purohit said, "Farmers are facing a very tough time due to the new system. Those who have already harvested the paddy are unable to get tokens while those who are yet to harvest paddy get tokens." The system has affected the small and medium farmers leaving them at the mercy of middlemen and dalals (brokers), he alleged.

If the Odisha government is really concerned about the farmers and MSP, then what steps has

it taken to stop such exploitation, he said.

Worth mentioning that the State Cabinet has recently decided to move the Centre for implementation of MS Swaminathan Committee report on MSP and doubling farmers' income.

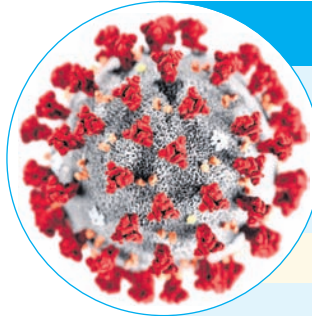
Rubbishing the allegations, BJD spokesperson Lenin Mohanty said, "Our CM and BJD are always with the farmers. We have passed a resolution to increase the MSP for farmers. In Odisha Assembly, we had also passed a resolution on the issue."

He also said, "I would like to request them to support our move to increase the MSP. Our CM is the only CM who has asked the Centre on the issue. Our policies for the farmers are one of the best and have also been lauded by the NITI Aayog."



DECORATIVE ITEMS

Women buying artificial flowers and plants from a roadside vendor near the Exhibition Ground in Bhubaneswar, Friday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	7,10,12,781	4,93,73,610	15,94,242
India	97,96,769	92,90,834	1,42,186
Odisha	3,23,029	3,18,278	1,798

HOMEBOUND



Birds return to their nests as sun sets in Puri sky, Friday

OP PHOTO

Now, online renewal of ultrasound clinics

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 11: As part of the 5T initiative of the state government, registration and renewal of ultrasound facilities has been made online.

Additional Chief Secretary (Health and Family Welfare) PK Mohapatra inaugurated the online application meant for registration and renewal under the Pre-conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (PC & PNDT) Act.

Launching the software in virtual mode, he instructed all the District Collectors, who are designated authorities under PC & PNDT Act, to roll out the online application in their districts.

The software developed by NIC will help the authorities monitor reg-



istration and renewal process, cross verification of procedural delay, review the average period taken for registration and renewal, which ought to be 70 days, he said, adding it would also maintain transparency in the process of registration of ultrasound facilities.

The portal allows the applicant

to track the status of the application. The applicant will be able to download the final certificate from the portal. Timeline for disposal of the registration and renewal of application is 70 days. District authorities were directed to accept downloaded certificate as valid and should not require physically signed or stamped certificates.

In October this year, the state government had included provision of registration and renewal of Ultrasound facilities under the Odisha Right to Public Services Act.

Sarangi seeks funds for AIIMS satellite centre

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Dec 11: Union Minister of State for Micro Small and Medium Enterprises Pratap Chandra Sarangi has urged Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan to sanction special funds for Balasore Satellite Centre of AIIMS-Bhubaneswar.

Sarangi also urged the health minister to ensure timely and actionable implementation framework based on a detailed project report to realise the vision of the governing body of AIIMS-Bhubaneswar to set up a 300-bed hospital at the satellite centre in public interest.



In the letter to the health minister, Sarangi said the construction work of satellite centre is moving at snail's pace.

"The OPD block and the staff accommodation blocks are yet to be completed. There has been considerable delay in implementation of this prestigious project and the primary reason is the absence of earmarked funding," said the Sarangi.

XMAS AHEAD



A stall at the Mission Road in Cuttack displays Santa Claus figurines for sale ahead of the Christmas, Friday

OP PHOTO

BJP's thrust on local panels for 2024 polls

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 11: Newly-appointed state BJP in-charge D Purandeswari Friday asked her party workers to strengthen the organisation at booth level. She directed the party workers to constitute a 25-member committee for each booth.

According to Purandeswari, the committees will work to ensure that all the welfare schemes of the Modi government reach the people. It will also work to bring BJP to power in the state in the next Assembly elections, she said. Purandeswari, for the first time, held meetings with BJP MLAs, MPs, and defeated MLA & MP candidates along with president and in-charges of organisational districts.

The BJP in-charge also directed the party workers to intensify their fight against the BJD government over various issues like Pari 'murder' case in Nayagarh, farmers' issues and corruption cases.

"She has advised us on the roadmap of the party for next three months. The state BJP will continue its fight to give justice to

The saffron party will hold 'Padayatra' from Bhubaneswar to Nayagarh between December 20 and 24 over Pari 'murder' case

BJP's state in-charge D Purandeswari directed the party workers to constitute a 25-member committee for each booth

'Pari' and protect farmers from state government's exploitation," said BJP leader Prithviraj Harichandan.

The party will hold Padayatra from Bhubaneswar to Nayagarh between December 20 and 24 over 'Pari' issue, he said.

Similarly, it was decided in the meeting to continue party's fight to ensure farmers get minimum support price (MSP) for their produce. "Though the Centre is providing MSP to the state government, the farmers are not getting it due to corrupt practices," he said.

State BJP vice-president Pravati Parida said her party would continue to work for Mission 120+ called by Amit Shah. The party will intensify its fight for women and farmer issues, she added.

Minister for timely completion of semesters

Sahoo directed new VCs to implement 5T action plan of Chief Minister in the universities

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 11: Higher Education Minister Arun Kumar Sahoo Friday directed the newly-appointed Vice-Chancellors (VCs) of six universities to complete the syllabus and conduct the semester exams in time if the colleges and universities reopen next year.

The VCs - Sabita Acharya of Utkal University, Aparajita Chowdhury of Ramadevi Women's University, N Nagaraju of Gangadhar Meher University, Dinabandhu Sahoo of Fakir Mohan University, Prafulla Kumar Mohanty of Khallikote University and Kishore Kumar Basa of North Odisha University - were present in the meeting.

The minister directed the VCs to complete the admission process, the syllabus and conduct semester exams in time once the colleges are reopened



Higher Education Minister Arun Sahoo presides over the Vice-Chancellors' meet

in January 2021.

The minister also directed the new VCs to implement the 5T action plan of Chief Minister in the universities for achieving progress through Transparency, Teamwork, Technology, Time and Transformation. Earlier,

the Higher Education department had said that it was mulling to reopen all educational institutions across the state from January 1, 2021 as a second wave of the pandemic is unlikely to happen. A final decision in this regard, however, would be

taken by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik after reviewing all the related aspects, including the prevailing Covid-19 pandemic in the state, said Higher Education department's commissioner-cum secretary Saswat Mishra, Thursday.

The Higher Education department December 7 issued a notification stating that UG and PG examinations will be held after resumption of classroom teaching and completion of syllabus. In a letter to vice-chancellors of the state-run universities and principles of all government and non-government colleges, Mishra had said that the academic session has been badly affected due to prevailing Covid-19 pandemic-related dislocations.

Despite the online classes, most of the students were unable to get the benefits due to various reasons, the notification read.

EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender Notice No. eT-M-Veh-ADME-125-2020
NAME OF THE WORK: HIRING OF TWO LIGHT ROAD VEHICLES WITH DRIVER FOR ASSISTANT DIVISIONAL MECHANICAL ENGINEER/TALCHER AND ASSISTANT DIVISIONAL MECHANICAL ENGINEER/ PARADEEP AT TALCHER AND PARADEEP STATION FOR MONITORING DAY TO DAY CARRIAGE & WAGON ACTIVITIES AT RESPECTIVE LOCATION, CONDUCT SURPRISE CHECKING TO VARIOUS LOADING POINT, IMWB AND ATTEND DERAILMENTS FOR A PERIOD OF TWO YEARS.
Advised Value: ₹ 21,72,500.50, EMD/Bid Security: ₹ 43,500/-, Tender Document Cost: ₹ 3,540/-, Period of completion: 24 months.
Bidding start date: 14.12.2020, **Tender closing date & time:** at 1530 hrs. of 28.12.2020.
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.irps.gov.in
Sr. Divisional Mechanical Engineer/ Khurda Road
PR-401/L/20-21

REVISED TIMINGS OF SPECIAL TRAINS			
PURI - NEW DELHI - PURI EXPRESS SPECIAL 02801 from Puri at 2145 hrs on every day 02802 from New Delhi at 2240 on every day		BHUBANESWAR - KSR BENGALURU - BHUBANESWAR EXPRESS SPECIAL 08463 from Bhubaneswar at 0540 hrs on every day 08464 from Krantivira Sangolli Rayanna Bengaluru at 1340 hrs on every day	
BHUBANESWAR - HOWRAH - BHUBANESWAR EXPRESS SPECIAL 02074 from Bhubaneswar at 0600 hrs on every day 02073 from Howrah at 1325 hrs on every day		BHUBANESWAR - ANAND VIHAR - BHUBANESWAR EXPRESS SPECIAL (VIA ANGUL) 02813 from Bhubaneswar at 1230 hrs on every Saturday 02814 from Anand Vihar Terminus at 0600 hrs on every Monday	
BHUBANESWAR - BALANGIR - BHUBANESWAR EXPRESS SPECIAL 08493 from Bhubaneswar at 0635 hrs on every day 08494 from Balangir at 1445 hrs on every day		BHUBANESWAR - ANAND VIHAR - BHUBANESWAR EXPRESS SPECIAL 02209 from Bhubaneswar at 0735 hrs on every Wednesday 02210 from New Delhi at 1240 hrs on every Thursday	
BHUBANESWAR - NEW DELHI - BHUBANESWAR EXPRESS SPECIAL (VIA-TATA) 02823 from Bhubaneswar at 0930 hrs on every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 02824 from New Delhi at 1700 hrs on every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday & Saturday		SAMBALPUR - RAYAGADA - SAMBALPUR EXPRESS SPECIAL 08301 from Sambalpur at 0605 hrs on every day 08302 from Rayagada at 1325 hrs on every day	
BHUBANESWAR - NEW DELHI - BHUBANESWAR EXPRESS SPECIAL (VIA-ADRA) 02825 from Bhubaneswar at 1135 hrs on every Wednesday & Sunday 02826 from New Delhi at 1700 hrs on every Monday & Friday		VALSAD - PURI - VALSAD SPECIAL 09209 from Valsad at 2015 hrs on Thursday 09210 from Puri at 0630 hrs on Sunday	
BHUBANESWAR - NEW DELHI - BHUBANESWAR EXPRESS SPECIAL (VIA-Sambalpur City, Jharsuguda & Rourkela) 02855 from Bhubaneswar at 0715 hrs on every Saturday 02856 from New Delhi at 1700 hrs on every Sunday		ROURKELA - BHUBANESWAR - ROURKELA SPECIAL 02861 from Rourkela at 0520 hrs on every day 02862 from Bhubaneswar at 1340 hrs on every day	
PURI - DURG - PURI EXPRESS SPECIAL 08425 from Puri at 1910 hrs on every day 08426 from Durg at 1610 hrs on every day		HOWRAH - PURI - HOWRAH SPECIAL 02837 from Howrah at 2235 hrs on Every day 02838 from Puri at 2015 hrs on Every day	
PURI - AHMEDABAD-PURI EXPRESS SPECIAL (VIA SAMBALPUR) 08405 from Puri at 1920 hrs on every Wednesday 08406 from Ahmedabad Junction at 1900 hrs on every Friday		CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI TERMINUS-BHUBANESWAR-CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI TERMINUS SPECIAL 01019 from Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus at 1400 hrs on Every day 01020 from Bhubaneswar at 1520 hrs on Every day	
VISAKHAPATNAM - KORBA - VISAKHAPATNAM EXPRESS SPECIAL 08518 from Visakhapatnam at 2105 hrs on every day 08517 from Korba at 1610 hrs on every day		GANDHIDHAM - PURI - GANDHIDHAM SPECIAL EXPRESS 02973 from Gandhidham at 0935 hrs on Wednesday 02974 from Puri at 1110 hrs on Saturday	
PURI - AHMEDABAD - PURI EXPRESS SPECIAL (VIA VIZIANAGARAM & TITLAGARH) 02843 from Puri at 1730 hrs on every Tuesday, Thursday, Friday & Saturday 02844 from Ahmedabad Junction at 1900 hrs on every Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday & Sunday		SECUNDARABAD - BHUBANESWAR - SECUNDARABAD SPECIAL EXPRESS 07016 from Secundarabad at 1650 hrs on every day 07015 from Bhubaneswar at 0845 hrs on Every day	
PURI - OKHA - PURI EXPRESS SPECIAL 08401 from Puri at 0950 hrs on every Sunday 08402 from Okha at 1840 hrs on every Wednesday & Friday		SEALDAH - PURI - SEALDAH SPECIAL EXPRESS 02201 from Sealdah at 2000 hrs on Every Monday & Saturday 02202 from Puri at 1920 hrs on Every Tuesday & Saturday	
PURI - ANAND VIHAR - PURI EXPRESS SPECIAL (VIA ADRA) 02815 from Puri at 1100 hrs on every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Saturday 02816 from Anand Vihar Terminus at 0730 hrs on every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Saturday		TIMINGS OF THE ABOVE SPECIAL TRAINS AT SCHEDULED STOPPAGES / STATIONS HAVE ALSO BEEN REVISED.	
PURI - ANAND VIHAR - PURI EXPRESS SPECIAL (VIA TATA) 02875 from Puri at 1100 hrs on every Tuesday, Friday & Sunday 02876 from Anand Vihar Terminus at 0730 hrs on every Tuesday, Friday & Sunday		All trains are running with reserved accommodations. Passenger without reserved ticket will not be allowed to enter the station and train.	
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5 notorious chain snatchers held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Dec 11: The Sadar police here Friday busted a notorious chain-snatching gang with the arrest of five of its members.

According to the twin city Commissionerate Police, the police crackdown came while investigating a chain-snatching case (638/2020) registered with the Sadar police here December 5.

“Satya Ranjan Nayak and his mother, a resident of Kusia Lane at Bidadasi in the Millennium City here, were on way home on a scooter when two bike-borne miscreants snatched away the woman’s gold chain. Satya’s mother fell off the vehicle, receiving grievous injuries. A hapless Satya chased the desperadoes to a few metres, but it didn’t yield any result as the miscreants opened fire on him before fleeing the scene,” a senior Sadar police official said.

The mother-son duo approached the Sadar police which registered a case (638/2020) under Sections 394 and 307 of the IPC apart from 25 and 27 of the Arms Act and began a probe.

During investigation, a special squad of Sadar police stumbled upon the accused, all of

them history-sheeters, leading to their arrest.

Five snatchers—Sangram Rout, 31, of Balipada under Nandankanan police limits in Bhubaneswar; Dhaneswar Pradhan, 28, of Tentulisahi under Sadar police limits here; Manas Lenka, 28, of Majhisahi under Laxmisagar police limits in Bhubaneswar; Jagannath Bhoi, 26, of Gotalagoan under Balipatna police limits

in Khurda and Pradip Behera, 35, of Ragadipada under Laxmisagar police limits in Bhubaneswar were arrested. Also, three others—Baidyanath Sahoo, 37, Dahapatna under Barang police limits in Cuttack, Kaminikanta Rana, 34, of Beli under Simla police limits in Balasore and Dillip Kumar Moharana, 59, of

Bania Sahi under Mangalabag police limits in Cuttack—involved in purchasing the booty from the snatchers, have been arrested, said an official identifying the accused.

At least 13 gold chains worth over ₹6 lakh, a country-made gun and three motorcycles have been recovered from their possession, the official pointed out.



At least 13 gold chains worth over ₹6L, a country-made gun and three motorcycles were recovered from their possession

Delay in resolving pension plea irks HC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Dec 11: The Orissa High Court Friday expressed displeasure over non-settlement of the pension account of an employee of Hirakud dam for last several years.

A division bench of Justice Sanju Panda and Justice SK Panigrahi directed the state government to withhold the salary of Finance and Law department secretaries if the pension account of Mithuram Bhoi is not settled before the next hearing of the case December 21.

As per the case proceedings, Bhoi had worked as a work-charge employee at Hirakud dam for 37 years before his retirement June 30, 1998. He had approached the Odisha Administrative Tribunal (OAT) in 2015 seeking pensions and other dues.



Accepting Bhoi’s plea, the OAT had directed the Water Resources department to consider Bhoi as a regular employee and provide him minimum salary, pensions and arrears.

Challenging the OAT order, the Water Resources department had filed a writ petition in the HC which, in its December 12, 2019 order, had directed Hirakud dam superintending engineer and chief engineer of the department to settle Bhoi’s pension account.

Bhoi had filed a contempt petition in the HC September 28 this year after steps were not taken to provide him the dues.

Taking up the case, the HC had directed the government counsel to submit the causes behind delay in the settlement Bhoi’s account.

The government counsel had informed the court that the process is being delayed as it requires the consent of Law and Finance departments.

SKYROCKETING FUEL PRICES DECRIED



CPI workers stage a demonstration near Rajmahal Square in Bhubaneswar, Friday, condemning the rising fuel prices

State’s Covid-19 fatalities near 1,800

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 11: State’s Covid-19 caseload mounted to 3,23,029 Friday as 387 more people tested positive for the infection, while four fresh fatalities pushed the death toll in Odisha to 1,798, a senior Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department official said.

Of the 387 new cases, 220 were reported from different quarantine centres and the rest detected during contact tracing.

Sundargarh recorded the maxi-



■ Sundargarh recorded the maximum number of new cases at 58, followed by Khurda at 51 and Angul at 27

■ The fresh fatalities were reported from Bargarh, Khurda, Malkangiri and Mayurbhanj

mum number of new cases at 58, followed by Khurda at 51 and Angul at 27.

Taking to Twitter, the H&FW department said, “Regret to inform the

demise of four Covid positive patients while undergoing treatment in hospitals (sic).”

The fresh fatalities were reported from Bargarh, Khurda, Malkangiri

Dense fog warning for two days; cold wave to continue

Minimum temperature drops below 15 degrees Celsius at 14 places

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 11: Interior Odisha continued to remain under the grip of cold wave as the minimum temperature fell below 15 degrees Celsius at 14 places, Friday.

As per a weather bulletin of Bhubaneswar Meteorological Centre, Phulbani town recorded 8 degrees Celsius—the lowest in the state. Daringbadi and Angul recorded a minimum temperature of 11 degrees Celsius each while it



was 11.4 degrees at Jharsuguda and 12 degrees at each of Koraput and Bhawanipatna.

The other places that witnessed below 15 degrees Celsius are—Sundargarh (12.5), Bariapada (12.6),

Miscreants open fire at ‘criminal’

Bhubaneswar: Unknown bike-borne miscreants Friday opened fire at a person at Kalinga Vihar under Tamando police limits here. However, the victim Sanjay Khuntia escaped unhurt. Police sources said Khuntia was recently arrested by Khandagiri police in a murder case. Khuntia, a dreaded criminal, is involved various criminal activities like extortion and land encroachment. Upon return from jail, Khuntia engaged in a tussle over cow smuggling and extortion issues with another local gang. The miscreants moving in the motorcycle failed to target Khuntia and the bullet missed him. DCP Umashankar Dash has formed a special team to arrest the three accused who have been identified by the police.

Central varsity tag sought for Utkal

Bhubaneswar: Students of Utkal University, Friday, organised a signature campaign near Vice-Chancellor’s office demanding central university tag for the varsity. Many alumni and students of the university participated in the campaign and demanded that the varsity should be granted central university status. They urged the VC and the state government to talk with Centre and Union Education Minister for the same. Earlier, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan had written to the Union Education Minister demanding grant of Central University status to Utkal University.

BMC helpline to promote mechanised cleaning

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 11: The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), Friday, launched a helpline number—14420—in an attempt to discourage usage of manual labour in cleaning of sewage.

Initiated under Safai Mitra Suraksha, by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, the helpline is one among the few criteria mentioned by the ministry to encourage ULBs to adopt mechanised cleaning of sewer and septic tanks. While BMC is the first in the state, the other cities to have operationalised the helpline number are Kota (South), Port Blair, Moga, Gurugram and Ranchi.

“Under the programme, the toll-free no. is an important component. Other than the toll-free number; there will be IEC about helpline, scheduled de-sludge, penal actions for non-compliance and engaging only licensed service providers. Different media materials like

hoardings, plays, wall paintings, murals etc would be used to educate citizens about the same,” said BMC Commissioner Prem Chandra Chaudhary.

The ministry, which had launched the scheme to ensure that no life of any sewer or septic tank cleaner is ever lost again owing to the issue of ‘hazardous cleaning, has also launched a dedicated helpline number (1800 34500061) to register complaints and provide real-time solutions to the issue.

Under the programme, a review system for the cities will also be done. The cities will be judged on parameters like services, awareness, campaign activity and eco-system parameters like scheduled de-sludge and treatment capacity.

It can be also added here that Bhubaneswar had earlier become the first city in the country and second in the world to receive the ISO-9001:2015 certification for effective Faecal Sludge & Septage Management FSSM services.

Loans disbursed to 165 street vendors in City

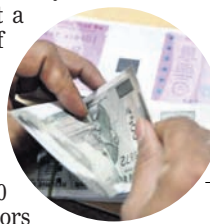
POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 11: A ‘loan mela’ under PM Svanidhi Yojana was organised on the premises of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) office here Friday where about 165 beneficiaries were disbursed loans.

Under this programme, every eligible beneficiary would get a loan of ₹10,000.

According to a survey, there are more than 14,000 street vendors under the BMC. Out of them, more than 8,200 online applications were received and so far more than 3,500 businessmen have availed this loan. Officials of State Bank of India and Urban Livelihood Mission verified documents of the applicants and sanctioned their loans.

“Such camps are held regularly in every zone of the BMC. In a recently held loan mela, 68 persons got the funds in North Zone. While the rate of interest is 7 per cent, one who pays back regularly becomes eligible for more loans under PM Svanidhi programme. There is also a reward for those who promote cashless transactions,” said Additional Commissioner, SC Mallik.



‘SHG members to protect rights of hapless women’

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 11: Members of self-help groups (SHGs) being trained by the State Commission for Women (SCW) in various women related laws will now guard the human rights of hapless women of their localities.

The SCW has started such training programmes at block levels to educate the SHG members about various women-centric laws and rules enacted by the Union and state governments.

Speaking to **Orissa POST**, Chairperson of SCW Minati Behera said, “We have recently started organising legal awareness camps at the block level adhering to Covid-19 guidelines. Previously, such camps were being organised at the district headquarters only.”

“We are trying to train them about the rights of women enshrined in the Constitution of India and various rules and regulations made to safeguard the rights of women in remote areas. We are educating them regarding their rights like the property rights of woman, rights of the women after the death

We have recently started organising legal awareness camps at the block level adhering to Covid-19 guidelines. Previously, such camps were being organised at the district headquarters only

MINATI BEHERA | CHAIRPERSON, SCW



of her husband, their rights in relation to domestic violence and others,” added Behera.

Behera also revealed that the SCW is collating and translating various legal sections related to women rights into Odia. Special leaflets will be distributed among the women to spread awareness among the citizens.

The SCW also again resumed the organisation of camp courts at the district head quarters after the easing of Covid-19 guidelines. The SCW has decided to increase the frequency of organization of such camps to handle rising cases

of violence against the women folk. The SCW is also hearing pleas of women victims on social media sites like Whatsapp.

Behera further informed OP that recently it has succeeded in rescuing several women and girls trapped in outside states like Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand.

However, she expressed happiness over help rendered by the state police in rescuing the girls hailing from districts like Kandhamal, Angul from the clutches of the oppressors. She said police forces have been rendering all the required helps when the help sought by SCW.

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Land hurdles delaying NH-55 expansion

AS WORK MOVES SLOWLY, OLD ROAD FALLS INTO BAD SHAPE AND TURNS DEATHTRAP

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, Dec 11: There has been an inordinate delay in completing the expansion of NH-55, passing through central Odisha to the western Odisha. With its expansion moving at a snail's pace, mishaps have been routinely occurring on this route, claiming lives. Land acquisition has posed a hurdle in completion of the project, a report said.

According to the report, the NHAI has awarded the expansion work to Gayatri Constructions. The deadline for the project has expired. It was alleged that the NHAI has failed to emphasize the completion of the expansion project. This has caused a lot of resentment in the areas where the NH-53 passes through.

The expansion of the Cuttack-Sambalpur NH-55 has been planned in two phases. Gayatri Construction has got its expansion in two phases at a cost of Rs 583 crore. The stretch of the MH-53 from Angul to Sambalpur was started in 2016. As per the agreement with the construction agency, the work should have been completed within 1,000 days from its starting. This portion of the project entailed construction of four



Explaining the reason for the delay in expansion, DGM of Gayatri Constructions, G Padmanabhan said: The administration has failed to hand over land at different times. This has hampered work. From Angul to Bamur, land problem has been at 48 places. The district administration is not finding ways to resolve the issues. However, 90 per cent of the work in Dhenkanal is over

bridges, three under passes, 10 service roads, two truck parking lots and 38 big intersections and 65 small intersections.

Later, other ancillary works were annexed with the expansion work. Timeline has ended, but the work is nowhere near completion, locals alleged. "The expansion work is not ending due to apathy of the district administration. It was appraised of the issue several times, but it has confined its duty to only warning the NHAI and the constriction agency,"

lamented Rashmiranjan Sahu, a resident of Angul.

The delay in expansion of the roads is likely to lead to cost overruns. "Crores of rupees are being spent for its expansion. If the project does not end in time, additional expenditure has to be made. This is unnecessary cost escalation," said Srikanth Mishra, another resident.

It was alleged that as expansion work moves at a tardy pace, the condition of the old road is in bad shape, leading to accidents most of the time.

With its expansion moving at a snail's pace, mishaps have been routinely occurring on this route, claiming lives. Land acquisition has posed a hurdle in completion of the project, a report said

Bibhab Samantsinghar, the transport officer of Angul, said: As the work has been split into two phases, it has created problems. The NHAI has assured to complete the stretch from Sambalpur to Rantlei by March 2021. The PD of the NHAI has assured that bypass construction will be completed by December, 2021

The district has recorded 469 accidents and 215 casualties in 2018. In 2019 and 2020 till date, over 400 accidents have been recorded while over 90 people have died in the district. However, most of the accidents and casualties have occurred on the NH-53.

People have staged agitations in the past over slow pace of expansion. The district administration has filed cases against NHAI. Angul sub-collector had filed a case against the NHAI in 2018. Another case was filed against it September 12, 2019.

Brown sugar worth ₹4.70L seized, 2 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jagatsinghpur, Dec 11: Amid the on-going drive against drug peddling, a flying squad of the excise department and police seized 47 grams of brown sugar worth Rs 4.70 lakh during a raid at Alipingala area under Sadar police limits in Jagatsinghpur district Friday.

They were identified as Dibyaranjan Sethi and Deepak Kumar Rout. Acting on a tip-off the joint team conducted a raid and intercepted both the peddlers from different places. Police recovered 27 gm of brown sugar from Rout and 20 gm from Sethi.



A van being launched for spreading awareness on adoption of orphaned kids in Balasore, Friday

PDS rice worth ₹60K seized; 2 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Dec 11: Police seized foodgrains worth Rs 60,000 in a private godown at Gayaganda village under Tarasingi police limits in Ganjam district Friday. The rice was meant for public distribution system (PDS) through fair price shops.

Two people were arrested during a raid on the godown. The arrested were identified as A Santosh Kumar Patra and Bauri Patra. They are brothers.

The two were allegedly buying the PDS food grains at low cost from people and selling the materials at high price in the market by repacking it. Acting on a tip-off, the Tarasingi police raided the private godown at Gayaganda village and seized 20 quintals of PDS rice and 2 quintals of PDS wheat. They nabbed the duo from the spot.

The materials seized during the raid are valued at around Rs 60,000. According to police, the accused had been running illegal business linked to diversion of PDS food grains.

30 'bonded labourers' rescued; 4 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nuapada, Dec 11: In a major crack-down, Sinapali police rescued 30 bonded labourers Thursday evening while they were allegedly being trafficked in a private bus from Nuapada district to Andhra Pradesh. Four middlemen associated with this trafficking have been arrested.

The police swung into action after getting information from a reliable source that a large number

of 'bonded' labourers were being trafficked.

A team of personnel from Sinapali police station stopped and checked the bus (OD-08 M-0675) near Hatibandha village. They rescued the labourers. Most of the labourers were from Nuapada, Bolangir and Sonepur districts, a police official said.

Police seized the bus which was on its way to Hyderabad and arrested its driver, helper and conductor.

Cotton buying in Ganjam from Dec 15

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Dec 11: The district administration is going to start cotton procurement from December 15. The administration has asked the regulated market committee (RMC), Digapahandi to make all arrangements for opening of the mandi, the lone cotton procurement centre in the district.

The administration has also asked officials to create awareness among farmers to sell their produce at the government-run mandi instead of selling cotton to private traders from Andhra Pradesh, District Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange said.

The Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) will purchase all cotton of farmers from the mandi and supply it to different spinning mills across the country after processing.

According to Arun Mishra, the secretary of Digapahandi, RMC, last year the RMC Digapahandi had procured 4,883 quintals of the cotton through its mandi. This year, over 5,000 quintals of cotton is expected.

He said after procurement, the



CCI would process the cotton in the ginning mill that is being set up by the RMC Digapahandi. A 50-quintal processing per day ginning mill is under construction and expected to start functioning from January 26, he said.

The Collector has also instructed officials to expedite the work to start the operation of the ginning mill from January 26 in a recent review meeting held on cotton procurement. The ginning mill is being set up with an investment of around Rs 2.20 crore. It was learnt that last year over 6,900 quintals of cotton was produced in the state while the cotton cultivation was undertaken in around 858 hectares.

This time, the farmers are expected to produce over 8,400 quintals of cotton even though the cotton areas reduced to 557 hectares. Rain during the harvest season had damaged cotton crops last year, he said, adding that this time a high yield is being expected due to the favourable climate.

Cotton is generally grown in five blocks of the district such as Patrapur, Sanakhemundi, Sorada, Digapahandi and Sheragad. District Collector asked the agriculture officials to expand the cotton-growing areas in the district as it is a cash crop. He also said they have planned to set up another ginning mill at RMC, Hinjili.

Wild boar menace threatens paddy harvest

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, Dec 11: Even as a recent animal census indicated a decline in wild boar population in the Bhitarkanika National Park here, attacks by these wild animals have posed a serious threat to ripen paddy crops and farmers in the harvesting season, a report said.

The wild boar menace is widespread. The animals are attacking the farmers and destroying crops when they are preparing to harvest paddy crops in this kharif season.

This has come as a double whammy for the migrants who had returned home due to Covid-19 induced lockdown and taken up cultivation as a means of livelihood.

The wild boar attack has spread panic among farmers and farm hands. The animals eat ripen paddy crops and attack farmers and destroy their crops. This has pushed the farmers and farm hands into distress as a bleak future stares at them due to the animal attack. Farmers



were already reeling from a crisis due to loss of crops under the impact of cyclonic storm Amphan in May this year.

As they were thinking of making good of the loss in this kharif season, the animal menace has destroyed all their hopes in the absence of any alternative. Farmers alleged that the animal menace is increasing day by day due to the absence of action

by the forest officials. Prafulla Swain of Jagatijor village under Mahakalapara block said the animal menace has increased to such an extent that the area alone recorded 10 attacks in last one month.

A fortnight back, seven persons sustained critical injuries after wild boars animal attacked them at Bahakuada village under Ramnagar panchayat. Similar attacks by the

Farmer Prafulla Swain of Jagatijor village under Mahakalapara block alleged the wild boar menace has increased to such an extent that the area alone recorded 10 attacks in last one month

animal have come to the fore in Ishwarpur, Khyamasahi and Talachua villages under Mahakalapara block. The danger of wild boar is lurking in the area. Farmers are wondering as to how to harvest the paddy crops as the animal might attack them anytime.

Ramani Ranjan Das of Batighar village claimed wild boar population has increased in Bhitarkanika while the forest officials are taking no concrete steps to contain the menace.

He alleged that despite several

measures like erecting barbed wires on the village borders, regular patrolling, financial assistance to the deceased and injured persons, the benefit is hardly available to them due to apathetic attitude of the forest officials.

As a result, farmers in Brahmanasahi, Dera, Dangamal, Hatina, Gupti, Satabhaya, Ishwarpur, Keruapal, Tantiapal and Batighar areas under Rajnagar and Mahakalapara blocks are facing severe crop and financial loss.

When contacted, DFO Bikash Ranjan Das sounded a word of caution for the farmers. He said the period from November to February is the breeding season of these animals when they need huge quantities of food.

They stray into nearby farmland to eat ripen paddy crops and at times attack locals scaring them. He said awareness programmes are being carried out in the area along with night patrolling. Moreover, barbed fencing of the village border is underway.

No action against illegal stone crushing units



POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, Dec 11: Over 400 stone crushing units are operating in Dharmashala area of Jajpur. About 50 of them are mega stone crushing units. It was alleged that the mega units are in operation taking advantage of the loopholes in the official guidelines. They are producing stone chips excessive of the permitted limits. They are accused of violating environmental norms.

On the other hand, the administration has been dillydallying on taking action against the illegal stone crushing units.

Reports said, most of the mega stone crushing units operate at Dankari, Rahadpur, Kusumpur and Bichhakhandi by greasing the palms of the officials.

These units have been producing huge quantities of stone chips. They are flouting SPCB norms

meant for environment protection. But no action is being taken against such units, it was alleged.

It may be noted that the Orissa High Court has recently directed the district administration to shut down all illegal crusher units within January 9, 2021 after hearing a PIL. Thereafter, a task force was formed comprising all tehsildars, BDOs, labour officials, officials of Odisha State Pollution Control Board and police to close all the illegal units.

Following it, the district administration identified 243 illegal crusher units in the district and decided to shut down all these units. In the first phase, the district administration has sealed 55 illegal stone crusher units December 3.

Pramod Kumar Behera, the regional officer of OSPCB, was contacted over phone, but he did not respond.

2 die after inhaling generator fumes

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Dec 11: In a tragic incident, two persons died of asphyxiation after inhaling fumes emitted from a generator at Kathabadi village under Sadar police limits in Keonjhar district late Thursday night.

Two others who also inhaled the fumes were admitted to the Keonjhar district headquarters hospital (DHH). As the condition of one turned critical, the person was shifted to the SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack.

The deceased have been identified as Baidhar Nayak and Babaji Nayak.



According to sources, Baidhar and the three others were present at a marriage ceremony in a relative's house. After having dinner, they had gone off to sleep in a room that also had a generator.

When the power connection

was disrupted at night, Baidhar switched on the generator and went off to sleep again. Little did he realise that he would not wake up again.

Later in the night after power connection was restored, some relatives knocked at the door to ask Baidhar to switch off the generator. When their knocks went unanswered they realised something was amiss. They broke open the door and found the room full of smoke and the four unconscious. The relatives immediately rushed the four to the DHH where doctors declared Baidhar and Babaji dead on arrival.

Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice
e-mail ID-rw_sambalpur@yahoo.co.in; Phone No. 0663-2401850
No. 3784 dated 9.12.2020

Bid Identification No. TENDER ONLINE SBPR-06 OF 20-21

- Name of the work : Roads Works as per DTCN available in the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in
- Total No. of Work : 01 (One) No.
- Estimated Cost : Rs. 10.62 lakhs
- Period of Completion : 02 (Two) Calendar months
- Period and time of availability of bid : 14.12.20 at 11.00 AM to 23.12.20 upto document in the portal for bidding 5.00 PM
- Date and time of opening of Tender : 24.12.20 at 11.00 AM
- Name and address of the officer : E.E.R.W. Divn., Sambalpur inviting bid

(1) Other details can be seen from detailed notice inviting tenders, available in website www.tendersodisha.gov.in
(2) Corrigendum if any shall only be published in the website: www.tenderodisha.gov.in

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
Rural Works Division, Sambalpur
OIPR-25076/11/0006/2021

No. O-705

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
PARALAKHEMUNDI IRRIGATION DIVISION
PARALAKHEMUNDI (GAJAPATI)**
Phone/Fax: 06815-223249, e-mail: eepkhemundieicwr.od@gov.in

Tender Call Notice No. EE-PKID-05/2020-21

- Type of work : Civil Construction Work
- Form of Contract : Percentage Rate
- Period of Completion : 03 (Three) Calendar Months

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Bid Amount Rs. in lakhs	Availability & submission of Bids online
Executive Engineer Paralakhemundi Irrigation Division	PKID- 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06/2020-21 (Total 6 Nos. of work)	Rs.5.35 lakhs to 39.20 lakhs.	15.12.2020 at 10.00 A.M. to 24.12.2020, 5.00 P.M.

Date of opening of the Technical & Financial Bid: **28.12.2020 at 11.00 A.M.**

Further details can be seen from the Govt. website www.tendersorissa.gov.in

Sd/- EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
No. A-353 PARALAKHEMUNDI IRRIGATION DIVISION, PARALAKHEMUNDI
OIPR-32358/11/0005/2021

**OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER
KALAHANDI SOUTH DIVISION**
At/Po- Parmanandapur, Bhawanipatna, Ward No.4, Rly. Station Road, Dist.- Kalahandi, Odisha, Pincode-766002
Phone & Tele Fax No. - 06670-230268 (O); Email ID:- dfokalahandisouth.od@gov.in & dfokids6@gmail.com

NOTIFICATION

No. 99-MM:- This is information for all concerned that the following Forest Roads of Kalahandi South Division will remain closed to traffic on the 31st December, 2020 from zero Hours to 24 hours in accordance with rule 284 of Forest Department Code 1979. The movement of traffic on the date and time specified above will be violation of Section 26 of Odisha Forest Act, 1972 and hence will be liable for prosecution.

Name of the Range	Name of the Forest Road	Length in Km
Karlapat Sanctuary Range	01. Jugsaipatna-Ghatikutru	9.5 Km
	02. Ghatikutru - Bijepur	3.0 Km
	03. Ghatikutru - Madanguda	3.0 Km
	04. Madanguda - Titihula	2.5 Km
	05. Sagada - Deodhar	9.5 Km
	06. Karlapat - Ghatikutru	1.5 Km
	07. Jakam - Karlapat	9.5 Km
Junagarh Range	08. Banamalipur - Kiapadar	15.0 Km
	09. Ampani - Badkutru	21.0 Km
Dharmagarh Range	10. Dhanuli - Benakhamar	5.5 Km
	11. Kalampur - Singari	8.5 Km
Jaipatna Range	12. Biswanathpur - Bijepur	42.0 Km
	13. Khiksabhatta - Bhurty	14.5 Km
Th. Rampur South Range	14. Kadamguda - Amthapada	9.5 Km
	15. Bandhapari - Bhatguda	9.5 Km
Biswanathpur Range	16. Nachniguda - Bankuli	3.7 Km
	17. Silet - Bijepur	7.4 Km
	Total	175.10 Km

OIPR-08122/11/0006/2021

Sd/- Divisional Forest Officer
Kalahandi South Division

“Do not belong to the past dawns, but to the noons of future.”
SRI AUROBINDO

Upright babu riles U'khand minister

These days your average *babu* can rarely say 'no' to a minister. Blind obedience is what is expected from them, leaving little room for independent decision-making. But like always, there are exceptions to the rule. An instance from Uttarakhand has recently come to light. There is even a touch of the bizarre about it!

The state's Minister of Women and Child Welfare Rekha Arya reportedly wrote to the DIG of Dehradun Arun Mohan Joshi inquiring about her Additional Secretary V Shanmugam, who she said was "missing". And since the officer was "incommunicado", she feared he might have been kidnapped!

As it turns out, according to sources, trouble had been brewing between the minister and the IAS officer for some time. Matters came to a head sometime in September when Shanmugam awarded a contract in a tender possibly against the wishes of the minister. Subsequently, he went into two-day 'self-isolation' and did not take any calls from his office or the minister.

The irate mantri forced Chief Minister Trivendra Rawat to order an inquiry into the award of the contract, but additional Chief Secretary Manisha Panwar has reported that the probe did not find any misconduct by Shanmugam. Further Panwar has stated that the officer had followed due process while awarding the contract and while going on leave. This is where matters rest, for now. It remains to be seen whether the minister will pursue the issue further or let it fly. It would also be interesting to see if the babu manages to hold on to his post or gets transferred elsewhere.

Contrast this with a powerful babu in Delhi who did not vanish after his gaffe. Instead immense sweeping powers and other capabilities were exercised in Delhi and his statement, vanished instead. What was reported in the media (of course, the story was promptly withdrawn, though the video exists!) On questioning the credentials of democracy itself, led to much speculation whether this was just a gaffe or something more!

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect

WISDOM CORNER

- “Don't be afraid to give up the good to go for the great.”
JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER
- “People who wonder if the glass is half empty or full miss the point. The glass is refillable.”
UNKNOWN
- “All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them.”
WALT DISNEY

WORDSWORTH

Binge-watching

Binge-watching, consuming several or all the episodes of a television programme in quick succession, was announced by the British dictionary publishers Collins on 5 November as its 2015 Word of the Year. Once upon a time, we had to wait for the next episode of our favourite television show and had to be sure to catch it when it was broadcast or it was probably gone forever. Technology has changed all that, of course, not only providing box sets for easy access to programmes we want to watch again but more recently giving online access to the whole of a new series at once. The term derives from binge-eating and binge-drinking, terms first found in the US in the 1950s (though binge drinker is a couple of decades older and the noun phrase eating binge is of 1930s vintage). An immediate precursor was binge-reading from the 1990s. Though binge-watching is recorded in the US as far back as 2003, it widened its popularity in that country greatly from 2012 on. Binge is itself an intriguing word, though its ultimate origin is obscure. It derives from the dialects of the midlands counties of England, such as Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire. The English Dialect Dictionary of the end of the nineteenth century notes that to soak a wooden vessel such as a cask or a tub to swell the wood and render it watertight was said to binge it. By extension a man who "soaked" himself in alcoholic drink was said to binge or be on a binge, a usage recorded from Northamptonshire in 1854. Two slang dictionaries, in 1889 and 1890, note it in the sense of a drinking bout but it seems to have become socially acceptable in Britain only during the First World War – early examples are in letters from airmen. Noun and verb were carried to the USA a little later.

Bint

Bint is British slang for a woman or girl, but it is always disparaging and offensive and signals the user as lower class and unrefined. It's also now rather dated. The word is Arabic for a daughter, specifically one who has yet to bear a child. It was in common use as a slang term during the first and second World Wars among British and Allied servicemen stationed in Egypt and neighbouring countries. Sir Richard Burton was the first person to use the word in English, in his Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to El-Medina and Meccah in 1855: "Allah! upon Allah! O daughter!" cry the by-standers, when the obstinate bint of sixty years seizes their hands".

Bioart

This is a rather broad term that can refer to any kind of art that has been inspired by biological mechanisms or which makes use of biological concepts. These include pictorial art based on aspects of nature or medical illustrations, software that turns the genetic code into luminous, scientifically accurate pictures, and robotic sculptures operated by fish. The creation by Eduardo Kac and others of transgenic bioartistic plants and animals – using a jellyfish gene that makes them glow in the dark – has provoked controversy because it raises ethical issues of a type that artists are unused to facing. The field has been in the news recently through the prosecution of Steven Kurtz, who used a biological laboratory at his home to make artistic works based on bacteria and DNA; however, he denies his work has any connection with the species-modification end of the bioart spectrum, which one writer has called "Frankensteinian aberrations".

LOL

Principal is dumb

Boy: The principal is so dumb!
Girl: Do you know who I am?
Boy: No...
Girl: I am the principal's daughter!

Boy: Do you know who I am?
Girl: No...
Boy: Good! *Walks away*

FOCUS KNOWLEDGE

DELIVERING SKILLED WORKERS

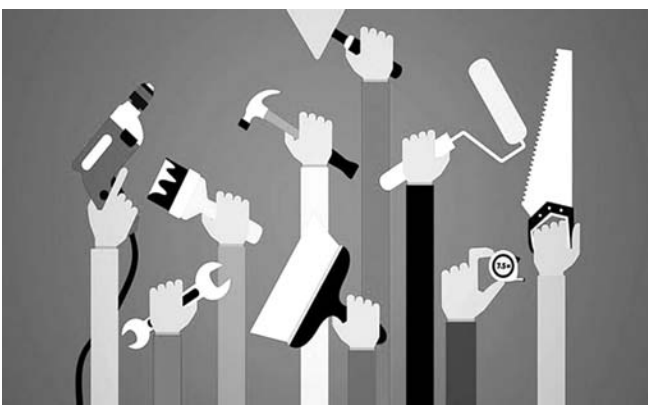


Bharat Jhunjhunwala

WE CAN BECOME SUPPLIERS OF SKILLED WORKERS TO THE WORLD IF WE CAN IMPART THE REQUIRED SKILLS TO THE LARGE NUMBERS OF UNSKILLED WORKERS HAVING PRIMARY EDUCATION IN OUR COUNTRY

A report by McKinsey Global Institute says that there is a shortage of 8.5 crore skilled workers having higher secondary education and above in the developed countries; while there is an excess of 9.5 crore unskilled workers having primary education in the developed and developing countries. Therefore, we can become suppliers of skilled workers to the world if we can impart the required skills to the large numbers of unskilled workers having primary education in our country. The ground reality, however, is hopeless. S Srinivasan, president of Indian Institute of Welding, tells us that at least 10,000 welders have been brought to India from China, Russia and East European countries to meet the shortage of welders in India. On the one hand we are thinking of becoming skill suppliers to the world; on the other hand, we are unable to even meet our own needs of simple skills such as that of welders.

A 2008 report of the World Bank throws light on the disconnect between "education" and "skill" in India. A survey of primary schools in Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh found that the teachers were often not present. And, there was little improvement in the educational attainments even if their presence improved. The report notes that there is lack of motivation among the teachers. The teachers can be made to be present but cannot be made to teach. The World Bank found that making the teachers accountable to the local Panchayats did not make much difference either. A block president from Uttarakhand told me that even the secretary to the block Panchayat did not act as per the directions of the elected president. The secretary followed the orders of the IAS officers neglecting the orders of the elected president. Hence, making the teachers "accountable" to the Panchayat without giving the Panchayats the power to appoint and remove the teachers will be ineffective. The Ministry of Education (MOE) has promulgated a New Education Policy to repair the sit-



A survey of primary schools in Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh found that the teachers were often not present. And, there was little improvement in the educational attainments even if their presence improved. The report notes that there is lack of motivation among the teachers

uation. A programme named "Equip" or "Education Quality Upgradation and Inclusion Programme" has been launched with the objective to equip the students to capture the emerging opportunities by skilling them. However, six of the ten points in this programme are mere slogans: (1) Towards global best teaching process; (2) Promoting excellence; (3) Assessment; (4) Accreditation and ranking systems; (5) Promotion of research and innovation; and (6) Employability and entrepreneurship. Two points would provide more money to the existing inefficient teachers: (7) Strategies for expanding access; and (8) Financing higher education. The ninth point is "Using technology for better reach and internationalization." The World Bank has already informed us that improving attendance of teachers by installing biometric attendance does not improve the standard of education. The same applies to newer technologies like smart classes and online learning. The tenth and the most important point is "Governance reforms." A close reading of the description says, "Introduce governance reforms

in higher education for well-administered campuses." The governance reforms, therefore, are aimed to provide autonomy to well-run government educational institutions which is a step in the right direction. However, that does nothing to help improve the skills of our primary-secondary educated students like the welders who are required by the global economy. The Prime Minister has created a separate Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), perhaps, to bypass the existing education establishment and find another route to skill India. However, the budget of MSDE was a meager ₹3k crore against the budget for Ministry of Education being ₹99k crore in 2020-21. The MSDE is also not interested in skilling welders. It is focused on high-end skilling. It has entered into agreements with Amazon, Google, Adani, Uber, Maruti and Microsoft, which is a good thing. But what about meeting the global shortage of the 8.5 crore jobs of nurses, teachers, physiotherapists, translators and the like? Perhaps the sons and daughters of the officers of the MSDE do not aspire to become

welders; hence MSDE is focused on high-end skilling with Amazon and Microsoft. As the result, skill development is on the backburner. Many countries across the world and many states in our country have recognized that it is impossible to reform the government education system. They have made programmes to provide vouchers to the students with which the students can pay fees of the school of their choice. A study by Center of Civil Society says that a specified amount out of the fee paid by students to schools of the choice is reimbursed by the government in Hong Kong. A fee of ₹550 to ₹1100 per month is paid directly by the government to the schools of choice of the students in certain provinces of Pakistan. It was found that the dropout rate reduced and the learning of mathematics improved. Similar arrangement has been made in the Philippines. Andhra Pradesh and Delhi Shahdara implemented similar programmes and found an improvement in teaching of English and mathematics. These experiences indicate that the students are willing to learn if the teachers are willing to teach; and the teachers are willing to teach only if their salaries are somehow linked to their teaching performance. Skilling our students requires a surgery of MOE. The government must reduce the budget of government schools by half and pay the other half to the school of the student's choice. The teachers will then take interest in teaching because they will not get the one-half payout that will come through the student if they do not teach. The government teachers will also be saved from teaching only the poor students. Our Constitutional mandate of "Welfare State" will then be truly oriented to the welfare of the students and not the welfare of the teachers. Then we will be able to supply not only welders but also software programmers to the world.

The writer is a former Professor of Economics at IIM Bangalore.

SPECTRUM EMPLOYMENT

How Biden can create good jobs



Dani Rodrik

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC WILL LEAVE THE US ECONOMY WITH A DEEPLY SCARRED LABOUR MARKET. MORE THAN 20 MILLION JOBS HAVE BEEN LOST DURING THE CRISIS

The Covid-19 pandemic will leave the US economy with a deeply scarred labour market. More than 20 million jobs have been lost during the crisis, and only half have been regained. Not surprisingly, job losses have hit disadvantaged and less educated workers especially hard. This aggravates a pre-existing trend. Long before the pandemic, the US labour market was becoming increasingly polarized. Good, middle-class jobs had been disappearing for decades, owing to automation, deindustrialization, global competition, and the advent of the "gig economy." To restore the health of America's economy, society, and polity, President-elect Joe Biden's administration must answer a straightforward question: "Where will the good jobs come from?" Good jobs require specific skills and can be created only by productive firms. Creating enough good jobs, therefore, requires addressing both the supply and the demand sides of the problem. On the supply side, workers must be equipped with the hard and soft skills that productive firms require. On the demand side, there must be a large enough segment of smaller and medium-size firms

that are both productive and able to expand employment. The last few decades are proof that markets alone will not solve the problem. Governments at all levels must be actively involved. The good news is that we have accumulated considerable evidence about the type of programs that actually work. On the skill-building front, so-called "sectoral training programmes" have been especially successful. The best known of these programmes is Project QUEST in San Antonio, Texas, which has been in operation since the 1990s. There are many others that operate on the same model, such as Per Scholas in the Bronx, New York, and JVS in Boston. Such sectoral training programs have been shown to increase disadvantaged workers' earnings by more than 20% on average at a relatively low cost. Likewise, we have considerable experience on the demand side to guide us. Tax incentives and open-ended investment subsidies can attract firms to lagging regions, but they are not particularly effective. They are expensive and often waste public resources on projects that would have been realized anyway. So much for the good news. The bad news is that these successful

worker and firm-centered initiatives currently operate at very small scale. Sectoral training programs are typically operated by community groups or non-governmental agencies, and limited funding, as well as a lack of interest from state and federal agencies, prevents them from being scaled up. As a result, the workers they serve number in the thousands instead of the millions that need to be reached. Similarly, customized business service programmes are severely underfunded. It is estimated that firms receive \$47 billion annually in state and federal tax incentives for investment. By contrast, total annual spending on customized training and manufacturing extension services, which is far more effective in terms of job creation, amounts to only around \$1 billion. A second problem is that programmes that are centered on workers and firms are often not well coordinated. Effective programmes to create good jobs are tailored to specific communities' needs and must be driven by local leadership. But the federal government can also play a major role. It can underwrite a massive boost in funding for such programs and encourage states and localities to engage in more experimentation along the lines of

successful programs elsewhere. There is thus a huge opportunity here for the Biden administration. Biden has promised to raise the federal minimum wage and to encourage greater unionization. Beyond these important measures, his plans rely heavily on tax incentives. Under his proposals, companies that increase employment in the United States would get tax credits, while those that invest abroad and boost imports would face tax penalties. He also intends to increase federal spending on goods made domestically and boost spending on government research and development. These tax incentive, procurement, and innovation plans are expected to cost several hundred billion dollars. A significant increase in locally developed and managed programs to create good jobs would be a pittance in comparison. The Biden administration should go further, by building on such programmes' demonstrated successes and making them the cornerstone of his strategy to rebuild America.

The writer is a Professor of International Political Economy at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Strange illness

Sir, The importance of clean and potable water cannot be stressed more. Plenty of water-borne diseases and infections are known to mankind. Fortunately, all of them have known management protocols. Sometimes, a sudden enigmatic illness, through man's lifeline, water, can catch health professionals off guard. Health care workers were puzzled, and the common man petrified, after a strange illness hit Eluru, the district headquarters of West Godavari in Andhra Pradesh. Though the jury is still out on the issue, and only an extensive investigation will reveal what exactly went wrong Saturday, the symptoms and signs point to pesticides or metallic poisoning. While the source of the illness may vary – water, milk, vegetables are all being doubted – there is little doubt over the direct attributable factors. Giddiness, fatigue, anxiety, confusion, vomiting, headache, seizures, unconsciousness were the common symptoms in the affected. Muscle weakness and perspiration were also noted. The presence of lead in blood samples of the patients has fairly, but not conclusively, confirmed the culprit. Organic chlorines are not very common in day-to-day use in many nations, but that it can cause 'chronic' toxic effects need no reiteration. Poisoning by organochlorine compounds may mimic that caused by metals. But in metallic poisoning, the buildup of manifestations is generally over a time, and in organochlorine toxicity the onset of features may be sudden. All age groups have been affected; there are no reports of contagious spread, and the symptoms were acute. Therefore the metal poisoning or organochlorine angle becomes conspicuous. It's time to put preventive measures in place to save lives from poisoning of food, water and air.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

NATO & Europe

Sir, This has reference to Melvyn Krauss article 'Getting NATO back on track'. It's good for Europe that NATO is rejuvenating. Earlier, it was a deterrent for the East Block backed by communist Soviet Union. It is being realised that a strong Europe is a necessity with NATO its ally. Russia's involvement in the US elections is a warning sign. When we talk of US troops it means UN backing too. Like in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, the US needs to be present to control China. NATO membership gives smaller countries a sense of security. Sharing of information among the members prevents terrorism. The new wave of migrants is posing a new challenge for maintaining peace in Europe. A strong NATO means a stronger Europe. Sunil Pradhan, NUAPADA

of the day quote

The BJP government is ignoring farmers by adopting a heartless attitude towards the justified demands of the agitators shivering on the streets. The global response that is coming to this has deeply hurt the democratic image of India worldwide. The BJP government should stop exploiting those who feed us

AKHILESH YADAV | SP PRESIDENT

I urge school leaders to make rigorous efforts for the effective implementation of New Education Policy, 2020 which has been prepared taking into consideration the views of largest number of stakeholders for the first time ever

RAMESH POKHRIYAL | UNION EDUCATION MINISTER

I have decided to convene a two-day legislature session from Tuesday next week in order to deliberate pending issues in the Legislative Council

BS YEDIYURAPPA | KARNATAKA CM

SHORT TAKES

Couple killed

Lohardaga: A couple was killed by villagers in Jharkhand's Lohardaga district for allegedly practising witchcraft, police said Friday. Ramsevak Bhagat and his wife were beaten to death by some people at Putar village under Pehsarar block of the district on Thursday night, they said. The villagers called the couple from their house and started beating them with lathis for allegedly practising witchcraft.

Farmer abducted

Medininagar: Miscreants kidnapped a farmer from Matnag village in Jharkhand's Palamu district, police said Friday. The kidnappers have demanded a ransom of Rs 5 lakh from the family for the release of the abducted farmer, they said. Police said that an FIR has been registered and they have started an investigation into the case.

Drug seized

Mumbai: Mumbai police have arrested four persons, including two African nationals, from suburban Kandivali and recovered from them mephedrone (MD) drug worth Rs 1.40 crore, an official said Friday. The arrest was made on Thursday, the official said. "Unit-11 of the Mumbai crime branch had received specific information that two foreign nationals were coming to supply narcotic drugs at Khajuria Nagar in Kandivali west," he said.

Man booked

Aurangabad: Police have registered a case against a Nashik-based man for allegedly duping two cousin brothers from Aurangabad of over Rs 12 lakh, an official said Friday. The victims-Mohammed Zahed Qureshi and his cousin Shafiq Khan-wanted to buy a car from the accused identified as Syed Rafiq, the police official said.

Boy kidnapped

Gorakhpur (UP): A 6-year-old boy has been kidnapped from a village in Uttar Pradesh's Maharajganj district and a ransom of Rs 50 lakh demanded from his parents, police said Friday. Deepak, son of Piyush Gupta, was playing games on a mobile phone outside his house around 3 pm on Wednesday from where he went missing with the handset, they said.



India is not responsible for the problem of climate change and is presently contributing only 6.8 per cent of global emissions

PRAKASH JAVADEKAR | UNION ENVIRONMENT MINISTER

THEME OF UP'S R-DAY TABLEAU

The glory and grandeur of the Ram temple being built in Ayodhya will be on display during the Republic Day parade in national capital New Delhi on January 26



BORDER STANDOFF: INDIA BLAMES CHINA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 11: India Friday said the military standoff in eastern Ladakh in the last six months has been a result of the actions by China which sought to effect a "unilateral change" in the status along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). The comments by External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava came at a media briefing when asked about the fresh comments by the Chinese foreign ministry blaming India again for the border situation in eastern Ladakh. "Our position has been very clear and has been articulated several times in the past. The situation that we have seen since the last six months has been a result of the actions of the Chinese side which has sought to effect a unilateral change in status along the LAC in eastern Ladakh," he said. "These actions are in violation of the bilateral agreements and protocol on ensuring peace and tranquility along the LAC in the India-China border areas," Srivastava



The comments by External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava came at a media briefing when asked about the fresh comments by the Chinese foreign ministry blaming India again for the border situation in eastern Ladakh

The armies of India and China are locked in a tense border standoff in eastern Ladakh since early May. Both sides have held multiple rounds of military and diplomatic talks. However, no breakthrough has been achieved yet

added. A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson on Thursday blamed India again for the border standoff in eastern Ladakh.

Panel formed to probe deaths

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, Dec 11: Rajasthan Health Minister Dr Raghu Sharma Friday constituted a four-member committee to investigate the death of at least nine infants/newborns at JK Lone Mother and Child Hospital in Kota. Medical Education Secretary Vaibhav Galiya issued the orders in this regard. The committee will submit its report to the state government in three working days. The committee includes Medical Education Commissioner Shivangi Swarnkar; Director, RCH Dr Lakshman Singh Ola; Additional Principal and Senior Professor, Paediatrics Department, Dr Amarjeet Mehta; and Additional Principal and Senior Professor, Paediatrics (Medicine), SMS Medical College, Dr Rambabu Sharma.

Dr Raghu Sharma said that the panel will immediately visit Kota to investigate every case of infant death and also look into overall arrangements at JK Lone Hospital, like requirement and availability of medical staff, availability of medical equipment and medicines etc and prepare its report. The Minister also directed all medical colleges' Principals to take special care of treatment of newborns across Rajasthan. After getting information about the death of nine infants since Wednesday night, Dr Sharma had asked the Kota Medical College Principal for a report immediately. The hospital's Medical Superintendent in his report said that nine infants brought there for treatment died between December 9 and 10. The report claimed that out of nine infants, three were brought dead to hospital, while three died of congenital diseases. Three others were cot death cases. The Minister also issued strict warning to hospital administrations to ensure proper care of newborns and strict action in case of any negligence. Meanwhile, BJP state President Satish Poonia termed the deaths as unfortunate. Nine newborns died in Kota's government hospital. Last year, 107 kids died in 35 days.

LAYING A TRAP



A fisherman casts his net in the sea near Pattinapakkam beach in Chennai, Friday

PTI PHOTO

'LOVE JIHAD' Rajasthan women want tough laws

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, Dec 11: Women in Rajasthan want strict laws against the perpetrators of 'love jihad' and there is a rising consensus among some groups who have urged Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot to bring legislation soon. According to Nimiketam Sanstha, a social organisation, data on love jihad incidents from 20 districts in the states showed 20 cases in Jaipur, 23 in Ajmer, and 13 in small districts like Tonk. Women from various groups staged a protest against increasing cases of 'love jihad' in the state on Thursday which also was World Human Rights Day. Sixty-seven fresh cases have been reported in the year 2020. Overall 153 cases have been reported in different districts of the state in the last four years, they said. The women activists staged

protests at Central Park here. "The human rights of victims of love jihad need to be protected," they said, adding the government should take stringent actions against such acts and accused should be "dealt with an iron hand". There has been a major surge in cases as only 17 cases of love jihad were reported in 2017. The Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) leaders have also written a letter to the Chief Minister demanding to bring in a law against love jihad. In his letter, it said: "Many cases of love jihad are being reported in the state each month where a plot is hatched to lure innocent girls who after being married are forced to change their caste." There is a strong need to bring a strict law against love jihad in Rajasthan. Gehlot should immediately focus his attention on to this serious issue to secure the lives of daughters and daughters-in-law, it added.

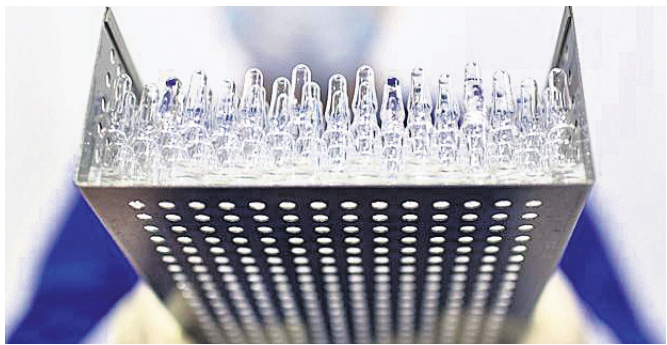
COVID VACCINATION Centre seeks database of forces

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 11: Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla asked the Director Generals of the Home Guards, Civil Defence and Fire Services to prepare a data of their force personnel involved in the Covid-19 management related works. The data will be submitted to the Union Health Ministry and accordingly the Ministry will decide to distribute vaccine among these personnel. The DGs have been reportedly asked to prepare the data and submit that within the next 15 days as Covid-19 vaccine can be introduced any time in the coming weeks, sources said. This was decided in a meeting held in the Home Ministry office on Thursday evening. The meeting was attended by the three Director Generals, Home Guard, Civil Defence and Fire Services, which lasted for over an hour. The Centre is focusing on the immunisation programme when the Covid-19 vaccination process begins.

First mRNA vaccine candidate gets trial nod

The novel mRNA vaccine candidate, HGCO19 has been developed by Gennova, a company based in Pune



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 11: India's first indigenous mRNA vaccine candidate has received approval from the Drug Controller General of India to initiate Phase I/II human clinical trial, the Ministry of Earth Sciences said Friday.

The novel mRNA vaccine candidate, HGCO19 has been developed by Gennova, a company based in Pune and supported with seed grant under the Ind-CEPI mission of Department of Biotechnology of Science and Technology Ministry. The mRNA vaccines do not use the conventional model to produce immune response. Instead, mRNA vaccine carries the molecular instructions to make the protein in the body through a synthetic RNA of the virus. The host body uses this to produce the viral protein that is recognised and thereby making the body mount an immune response against the disease. mRNA-based vaccines are scientifically the ideal choice to address a pandemic because of their rapid developmental timeline. The mRNA vaccine is considered safe as is non-infectious, non-integrating in nature, and degraded by standard cellular mechanisms. They are expected to be highly efficacious because of their inherent capability of being translatable into the protein structure inside the cell cytoplasm. Additionally, mRNA vaccines are fully synthetic and do not require a host for growth, e.g., eggs or bacteria. Therefore, they can be quickly manufactured in an inexpensive manner under GMP conditions to ensure their "availability" and "accessibility" for mass vaccination on a sustainable basis. Gennova, in collaboration with HDT Biotech Corporation, Seattle, USA, has worked together to develop an mRNA vaccine candidate. HGCO19 has already demonstrated safety, immunogenicity, neutral-

ization antibody activity in animals. The neutralising antibody response of the vaccine in mice and non-human primates was comparable with the sera from the convalescent patients of COVID-19. Gennova's vaccine candidate uses the most prominent mutant of spike protein (D614G) and also uses the self-amplifying mRNA platform, which gives the advantage of a low dosing regimen compared with the non-replicating mRNA or traditional vaccines. HGCO19 uses the adsorption chemistry so that the mRNA is attached on the surface of the nano-lipid carrier to enhance the release kinetics of the mRNA within the cells compared to the encapsulation chemistry. HGCO19 is stable at 2-8 degrees Celsius for two months. Gennova has completed all preliminary work and should be initiating the Phase I/II Human clinical trial soon since the approval from the DCGI office has been received. The Department of Biotechnology is implementing the IndCEPImission 'India Centric Epidemic Preparedness through Rapid Vaccine Development: Supporting Indian Vaccine Development' which is aligned with the Global Initiative of CEPI and aims to strengthen the development of vaccines and associated technologies for the diseases of epidemic potential in India. The Ind-CEPI mission of DBT is implemented by its PSU, Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC). "Establishment of such indigenous technology platform will not only empower India to handle the COVID-19 pandemic but also ensure the preparedness for future outbreaks," said Dr Renu Swarup, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology and Chairperson BIRAC.

lar issued on December 8 stated. "It has been observed that several officials/staff (mainly contractual staff and advisers engaged for government work) do not wear attire suitable for government employees. Hence, the image of government staff gets sullied among people," it said. People expect "good behaviour and personality" from all government officials and employees, it reminded. "...If the attire of officials and employees is unsuitable and unclean, it also has an indirect impact on their work," the circular said.

New dress code for govt employees in Maha

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

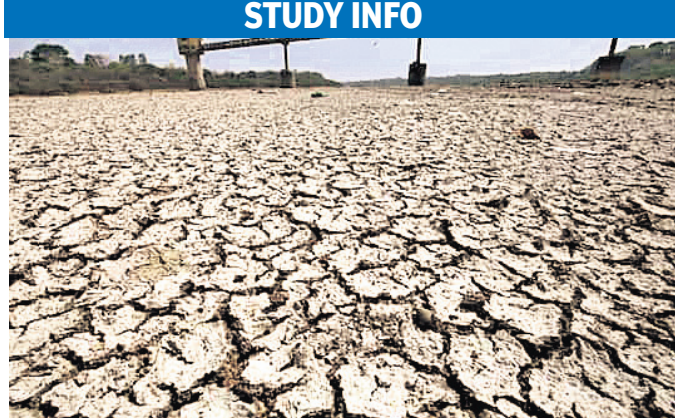
Mumbai, Dec 11: Jeans and t-shirt may mean stress-free wear for some, but they are no longer suitable 'office attire' for government employees in Maharashtra. And the government may do a policy 'flip-flop' once in a while, but the employees are not allowed to wear the humble slippers to the office as per the new dress code. Also, all government employees must wear khadi clothes at least on Fridays to encourage the use of handspun, a circu-

Droughts in India influenced by North Atlantic air currents

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Dec 11: Nearly half of the droughts that occurred during the Indian summer monsoon season in the past century may have been driven by atmospheric disturbances from the North Atlantic region, finds a new study. The study was carried out by researchers at the Centre for Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences (CAOS), Indian Institute of Science (IISc), and it has been published in the research journal, 'Science'. More than a billion people depend on the annual Indian summer monsoon, which brings copious rain to large swathes of the country between June and September.

When it fails, and most of the country plunges into drought, the usual suspect is El Nio, a recurring climate event during which abnormally warm equatorial Pacific waters pull moisture-laden clouds away from the Indian subcontinent, according to the study. But 10 out of 23 droughts that India faced in the past century have occurred during years when El Nio was absent. What, then, could have caused these droughts? The IISc study said that these droughts were a consequence of a sudden and steep drop in rainfall in late August. This drop was linked to an atmospheric disturbance in the midlatitude region over the North Atlantic Ocean, creating a pattern of atmospheric currents that swoop in over the subcontinent and "derail" the monsoon,



Bengaluru-based IISc said. "As early as the 1980s, people have looked at these droughts individ-

ually. But they have not collated and pooled them together, and deduced that these droughts may all have a different type of evolution than El Nio droughts, as well as a common cause, which is this mid-latitude influence," V Venugopal, Associate Professor at CAOS and one of the senior authors of the paper, was quoted as saying in an IISc statement. The research team looked closely at daily rainfall during both El Nio and non-El Nio drought years, and noticed stark differences in their patterns between June and September, the statement said. The droughts that happen during an El Nio year follow a standard pattern. The rainfall deficit - departure from a long-

term average - sets in early around mid-June and becomes progressively worse. By mid-August, the deficit spreads across the country and there is no going back from a drought, it said. Surprisingly, the droughts during the non-El Nio years, when analysed together, also seemed to follow a common pattern, the study noted. First, there was a moderate slump in June. Then, during mid-July to mid-August - the peak of the season - the monsoon showed signs of recovery and the rainfall amount increased. However, around the third week of August, there was a sudden steep decline in rainfall, which resulted in drought conditions, it found.

of the day quote

Mamata Banerjee's government in West Bengal should understand that the BJP will neither get afraid nor will it bow down

JYOTIRADIITYA SCINDIA | BJP LEADER

Indian youth can learn a lot from the works and life of Tamil poet, freedom fighter, journalist Subramania Bharathi, popularly known as Bharathiar

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

The Centre should withdraw these farm laws and it is time for the government to act

BHUPINDER SINGH HOODA | FORMER HARYANA CM

SHORT TAKES

Maha Covid recoveries drop

Mumbai: Maharashtra's Covid-19 fatalities crossed the 48,000-mark on Friday even as recoveries dropped vis-a-vis new infections which remained under the 5,000 levels, health officials said. The state reported 87 deaths, taking Maharashtra's overall Covid death toll to 48,059. The state has reported around 1,000 deaths in the past 12 days.

Woman, three kids found dead

Thane: The bodies of a woman and her three minor children, who were reported missing since late October, were found in a decomposed state in Thane district in Maharashtra, police said Friday. An official said the four deaths may be the result of a family dispute as the woman's husband had reportedly married a second time a few days ago. The decomposed bodies of Ranjana Bagri (30) and her two daughters and son, all aged between six to 12 years, were found in the forests at Pacchapur in Bhiwandi taluka of Thane district Thursday, Inspector D M Katke of Padgha police station said.

RRB exams from Dec 15

New Delhi: All candidates appearing in the Indian Railways' examinations from December 15 onwards to fill up 1.4 lakh vacancies would have to undergo body temperature checks before they were allowed into examination centres, a railway official said Friday. Addressing a virtual press conference here, Railway Board Director General (HR) Anand S Khatri said: "Candidates with high temperature will not be allowed inside."



The trial run of the electric bus is being conducted by the Dehradun Smart City Ltd, which proposes to run 30 such buses in the city during the current financial year

TRIVENDRA SINGH RAWAT | UTTARAKHAND CHIEF MINISTER

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR UP FOLK ARTISTS

In order to promote art and culture in Uttar Pradesh, the state Lalit Kala Akademi has decided to provide a monthly scholarship of ₹5,000 to folk artists who are associated with the institution



CHILLING OUT



Children ride a bicycle on Delhi-Meerut Expressway during farmers Delhi Chalo protest against new farm laws, in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

ANTI-CAA PROTESTS BEGIN IN ASSAM



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Dec 11: Fresh agitation against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) was launched by 18 organisations in Assam Friday demanding repeal of the legislation and release of jailed KMSS leader Akhil Gogoi who was taken into custody during the protests last year.

Protest rallies were taken out across the state by the organisations, including Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti, All Assam Students Union (AASU), Asom Jatiyatibadi Yuba Chatra Parishad, Lachit Sena, besides students, and youth organisations of ethnic communities.

The agitation began from Sivasagar, where it was launched last year before it was halted due to COVID-19 pandemic. Mentioning that the CAA was against the identity, language and cultural heritage of the indigenous people of the state, the protestors were demanding that the act be rolled back. Addressing the rallies, leaders of the organisations said, the people will give a "fitting reply" to the BJP-led dispensation in Assam in the Assembly elections for allegedly "betraying the people by imposing the CAA upon them despite protests, since its introduction in Parliament till its enactment".

The AASU hoisted black flag at its headquarters here and displayed such flags in seven north-east states under aegis of the North East Students Organisation demanding roll back of the CAA, AASU chief advisor Samujjal Bhattacharya told reporters. Five persons had lost their lives during the anti-CAA protests in Guwahati last year.

BKUB moves SC against agri laws

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 11: Amid continuing protests at Delhi borders against the Centre's three new agri laws, farmers' body 'Bhartiya Kisan Union Bhanu' (BKUB) has moved the Supreme Court seeking to intervene as a party in a pending plea challenging the constitutional validity of the legislations.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Justice S A Bobde, October 12, had issued a notice to the Centre by agreeing to test the validity of the laws on the pleas filed by RJD lawmaker from Rajya Sabha, Manoj Jha and DMK Rajya Sabha MP from Tamil Nadu, Tiruchi Siva, and one by Rakesh Vaishnav of Chhattisgarh Kisan Congress.

The three laws -- Farmers' (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020; Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020 and The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act 2020 -- took effect from September 27 after President Ram Nath Kovind's assent.



BKUB, through its Mathura-based President Bhanu Pratap Singh, has sought impleadment as a party in the lead petition filed by DMK lawmaker Tiruchi Siva. "These Acts are illegal and arbitrary, because, these Acts would pave way for cartelisation and commercialization of the agriculture products and if allow to stand, we are going to completely ruin our country as the corporates can, with one stroke, export our agriculture products without any regulation, and may even result in famines," the farmers' body said in its plea filed through lawyer A P Singh.

The laws are "unconstitutional, anti-farmer" because, as per them, the farmers' position would become "vulnerable" before corporate giants and the greed of multinational companies, it said.

"These laws would dismantle the Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC) system intended to insure fair prices for farm products," it said.

These laws were passed "hastily without having an adequate discussion" and a bare reading of the provisions would indicate that their implementation in current form will be disastrous and pave the way for exploitation of farmers, it said.

ISRO to launch India's 42nd communication satellite Dec 17

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Dec 11: The launch of communication Satellite CMS-01 on-board the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C50), is scheduled

on December 17 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota, the Indian Space Research Organisation said Friday.

"PSLV-C50, which is the 52nd mission of PSLV, will launch CMS-01 from the Second Launch Pad (SLP) of Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR, Sriharikota. The launch is tentatively scheduled at 15:41 Hrs IST December 17, 2020

subject to weather conditions," the space agency said. CMS-01 is a communication satellite envisaged for providing services in Extended-C Band of the frequency spectrum, it said. The

Extended-C Band coverage will include Indian mainland, Andaman-Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands.

CMS-01 is the 42nd

Communication Satellite of India. PSLV-C50 is the 22nd flight of PSLV in 'XL' configuration (with 6 strap-on motors), ISRO said, adding that this will be the 77th launch vehicle mission from SDSC SHAR, Sriharikota.



Rare genus of malaria detected in Kerala

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, Dec 11: Kerala Health Minister K.K. Shailaja has informed that a rare genus of malaria, Plasmodium Ovale, has been detected in the state.

The new genus was detected in a soldier who had come from Sudan, the minister said in a tweet late Thursday. The patient is being treated at the district hospital in Kannur.

"Plasmodium Ovale, a new genus of malaria, has been detected in the state. It was found in a soldier who was being treated at the district hospital in Kannur. The soldier had come from Sudan," the minister said.

"The spread of the disease can be avoided with timely treatment and preventive measures."



Malaria is caused by Plasmodium parasites that are transmitted to people through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there are five parasite species that cause malaria in humans, and two of

these species -- Plasmodium falciparum and Plasmodium vivax -- pose the greatest threat. Malaria cases in India dropped from about 20 million cases in 2000 to about 5.6 million in 2019, the WHO said in its World Malaria Report, released November 30.

Globally, there were 229 million cases of malaria in 2019 compared to 228 million cases in 2018.

The estimated number of malaria deaths in the world stood at 409,000 in 2019, compared with 411,000 deaths in 2018. The WHO African Region continues to carry a disproportionately high share of the global malaria burden.

In 2019, the region was home to 94 per cent of all malaria cases and deaths.

MATTER OF CONCERN

Eluru colony in grip of fear due to mysterious disease

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Eluru (Andhra Pradesh), Dec 11: PJ Colony in Andhra Pradesh's West Godavari district headquarters Eluru bore the brunt of the mysterious illness which shook the state, leaving the colony's residents in a scared state.

As many as 40 people in this working class neighbourhood collapsed due to the mysterious illness. In all, nearly 600 people suffered sudden convulsions from Saturday to Thursday morning, the majority of whom were treated at the government district hospital in Eluru and some at the government hospital in Vijayawada.

"There is a water tank in our colony. Water is supplied from it.



Patients and their bystanders are seen at the district government hospital in Eluru, Andhra Pradesh

AP FILE PHOTO

The water comes here from Pampula Cheruvu and that gets supplied. We are wondering if that was the reason we faced this problem," Manikyam, 40, a resident said in a statement. He complained that the municipal water used to

look green in colour until four days ago but after this illness now it looks okay.

Manikyam believes that it was water which caused this illness. He cited the cases of a few neighbours who just collapsed. Sattibabu,

45, Manikyam's neighbour, said leaders and officials should come to check the quality of the water in canals and pipelines at regular intervals but it is never done.

Meanwhile, Suribabu, 40, who along with two other family members fell sick, said that he too collapsed. Suribabu was not alone, two daughters, Lakshmi Pravalika (15) and Deepika (17), were also affected by the illness. However, he expressed satisfaction at the treatment and medicines offered to them by the government. He said blood samples and also the samples of what they had cooked at home were taken for tests. According to Manikyam, JP Colony is a working class neighbourhood where people eke out a living as masons, jute

mill workers, auto-rickshaw drivers and by doing other small jobs. However, all of them are now afraid. Satyanandam, 45, another resident from the same colony, complained that a medical camp was held for only one day, which was not there on Wednesday as well as Thursday. Residents also pointed out that even bleaching powder was not sprinkled in the colony though it was done at most places in the town. Moved by the plight of the colony residents, Manikyam said Telugu Desam Party (TDP) leader Badeti Chanti was supplying filtered water at 20 points in the town. He said the colony has now been visited by Health Minister Alla Kali Krishna Srinivas, district collector, WHO officials and others.

India, Uzbekistan ink 9 pacts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 11: India and Uzbekistan Thursday signed nine agreements to broaden cooperation in an array of areas and agreed to step up efforts for an early conclusion of a bilateral investment treaty, at a virtual summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev.

In the wide-ranging talks, Modi and Mirziyoyev strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and reaffirmed the determination of their countries to combat the menace by "destroying" terrorist safe-havens, networks, infrastructure and funding channels, according to a joint statement.

Ways to speed up connectivity projects linking central Asia was a major focus of the summit and the Indian side welcomed a Uzbek pro-

posal to hold a trilateral dialogue among India, Iran and Uzbekistan to promote connectivity through the Chabahar port. The statement said the two leaders discussed the situation in Afghanistan and noted that establishment of peace and stability in that country is of great importance to the security and stability of the entire region. In his opening remarks, Modi said the peace process in Afghanistan must preserve the achievements of the past two decades. The joint statement said India and Uzbekistan expressed their unanimity in their support for a united, sovereign and democratic Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The agreements signed are aimed at expanding cooperation in a range of areas including new and renewable energy, digital technologies, cyber security, community development projects, and in sharing of information on movement of goods.



The Opposition thinks it can put pressure on me by holding rallies. That is not the case; but the rallies will endanger people's lives

IMRAN KHAN | PAKISTAN PRIME MINISTER

UN ADOPTS RESOLUTION ON AFGHANISTAN

The UN General Assembly's (UNGA) resolution on the situation in Afghanistan was adopted Friday by a majority of 131 votes, supporting an inclusive Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process



of the day quote

Yemen is perhaps the most dangerous place on earth to be a child. One child dies every 10 minutes from a preventable disease



HENRIETTA FORE | UNICEF CHIEF

Negotiations (on Brexit) are still ongoing. However, given that the end of the transition is very near, there is no guarantee that, if and when an agreement is found, it can enter into force on time



URSULA VON DER LEYEN | EUROPEAN COMMISSION PRESIDENT

Some 39,000 Australians stranded abroad, mostly in India, due to the COVID-19 pandemic have registered to return home



SCOTT MORRISON | AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Mississippi cops fatally shoot man

Oxford (US): Mississippi police have fatally shot a man while responding to a domestic-violence call at an apartment complex, authorities said. The Mississippi Bureau of Investigation is examining the Wednesday shooting in Oxford, as it does for all shootings of or by law enforcement offices in the state. Oxford Police Chief Jeff McCutchen said in a video Thursday that a person called 911 and reported hearing screaming and seeing a man dragging a woman into an apartment.

HK media tycoon Lai booked

Hong Kong: Hong Kong pro-democracy activist and media tycoon Jimmy Lai has been charged under the city's national security law, amid a widening crackdown on dissent, according to local media reports. Lai, who founded the Apple Daily tabloid, was charged on suspicion of colluding with foreign forces and endangering national security, local broadcaster TVB reported Friday. He is the most high-profile person to be charged under the law since it was implemented in June.

Imran reshuffles Cabinet

Islamabad: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan Friday reshuffled his Cabinet on the directions of a court that barred un-elected advisers and special assistants from heading the Cabinet committees. This is the fourth Cabinet shakeup since Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) came to power in 2018. The change followed the recent verdict of the Islamabad High Court barring un-elected advisers and special assistants from heading the Cabinet committees.

Mexico prohibits spanking kids

Mexico City: The lower house of Mexico's congress has unanimously approved a law that would prohibit all forms of physical punishment of children by parents, caretakers, teachers or guardians. Spanking is out, as is a long list of corporal punishments that speak to how deep-rooted the practice is in Mexico. Congress said an estimated 63% of children between 1 and 14 had suffered physical punishment. However, pulling ears, pinching, slapping and similar punishments have been allowed.

Watchdog raises possible Kushner link to \$700mn rescue loan to YRC

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, Dec 11: A congressional monitor of federal pandemic aid is raising the possibility of a link between President Donald Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, and a \$700 million relief loan to a struggling trucking company.

Bharat Ramamurti, a Democratic member of the four-person Congressional Oversight Commission, raised the possible Kushner connection at a hearing Thursday, as panel members from both parties challenged the Treasury Department's decision to award the loan to YRC Worldwide.

The taxpayer-funded loan was made on the grounds that the company's operations are critical for maintaining national security.

The panel members questioned the decision to deem YRC's business vital to national security. It was the first and by far the largest loan made under the national security portion of the Treasury Department's corporate aid programme, which has loaned billions to major airlines and smaller air carriers.

YRC received a separate \$600 million loan last year from Apollo Global Management and several other lenders that was arranged by Apollo, a big private equity firm that is YRC's biggest creditor, according to the oversight panel.

Apollo co-founder Joshua Harris advised the Trump administration on infrastructure policy in early 2017 and met with Kushner, who is an adviser to the president. Later that year Apollo lent \$184 million



WHIFF OF A SCAM

Bharat Ramamurti, a Democratic member of the four-person Congressional Oversight Commission, raised the possible Kushner connection at a hearing Thursday

The panel members questioned the decision to deem YRC's business vital to national security

It was the first and by far the largest loan made under the national security portion of the Treasury Department's corporate aid programme

to Kushner's family real estate company to help refinance its mortgage on a Chicago building, according to a New York Times report cited by Ramamurti.

Ramamurti asked Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin whether he had had contacts with Kushner or his staff regarding the YRC loan. Mnuchin said he had not. Ramamurti then broadened the question to a request for correspondence with anyone in the White House.

"This warrants further investigation," Ramamurti said. He called the loan to YRC "a fast-tracked, extremely generous loan that just so happened to help" Apollo as YRC's creditor.

There was no immediate comment on the matter from Kushner or his staff.

"Apollo was not involved at all in (YRC's) decision to seek the Treasury funds, Apollo spokesperson Joanna Rose said on Thursday. "We are a capital provider for thou-

sands of companies. We are one of many lenders to YRC. This is not a company that our funds own or control.

The congressional monitors found that taxpayers could be at risk of losing money on the \$700 million investment. YRC has had financial problems for years, well before the onset of the pandemic, and has been at risk of bankruptcy.

Mnuchin defended the loan, saying that YRC meets the criteria for companies deemed essential for national security as the Treasury Department had worked out with the Defence Department and the Office of Director of National Intelligence.

He acknowledged that taxpayers could end up losing the money if YRC fails and doesn't pay it back. "This was a risky loan," Mnuchin said, but he added, "We've been fortunate that the economy recovered...Ultimately Treasury and the taxpayers will be very well compensated."

IN RHYTHM



The Royal Ballet performs "The Nutcracker" in a full dress rehearsal, ahead of performances to live audiences under Covid-19 safe guidelines throughout December as well as a livestream broadcast, at the Royal Opera House, London

REUTERS PHOTO

Zakiur Lakhvi granted ₹1.5L 'basic expenses'

AGENCIES

New York, Dec 11: In what could be a cause of worry for New Delhi, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) sanctions committee has allowed payment of ₹1.5 lakh (Pakistani rupee) per month to Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi, one of the masterminds of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack.

After being listed as a terrorist, Lakhvi's assets and bank accounts were frozen. Sources say the Pakistani government put in a request to consider a monthly payment from his account to cover his expenses relating to food (₹50,000),

medicines (₹45,000), public utility charges (₹20,000), lawyer's fee (₹20,000) and transportation (₹15,000). The request has been approved by UNSC 1267 Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee. The UNSC has given approval for "basic expense" for Lakshar-e-Taiba's leader Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi and Mahmood Sultan Bashiruddin, a Pakistani nuclear engineer who founded and served as director of UN-listed entity Ummah Tameer-e-Nau. He was conferred the Sitara-e-Imtiaz (third highest civilian honour in Pakistan) by the previous Nawaz Sharif government.

While he is a US and UN-san-

ctioned entity, Bashiruddin now lives freely in Pakistan while Lakhvi is out on bail. His time in Pakistani jail was also eyewash since according to reports he had access to all facilities, held his meetings with people from outside and had even fathered a child while at the Adiala jail in Rawalpindi.

According to the rules of UNSC, such requests are allowed unless all the 15 members object to it. According to procedure, a state puts in a request with the 1267 UNSC Committee, and then if all 15 members do not object within three days, approval is granted. Since all states have to object, one or two ob-

jections would not have made a difference, explained an officer.

Further, the officer said that in such cases of "basic expenses", UNSC committee members do not object to unless the amount is "disproportionately" high.

This is not the first time that such a request has been cleared by the UNSC for designated individuals. Hafiz Saeed was also allowed the "basic expenses" under the same provision in August 2016.

One might argue that ₹1.5 lakh in (\$6,500 approx.) is a substantial amount for a country where the average income falls much lower than this.

Joe Biden, Kamala Harris jointly named Time's 'Person of the Year'

JO BIDEN AND HIS RUNNING MATE KAMALA HARRIS, A CALIFORNIA SENATOR WHOSE ELECTION BROKE GENDER AND RACIAL BARRIERS, TOGETHER 'OFFERED RESTORATION AND RENEWAL IN A SINGLE TICKET': TIME SAID

REUTERS

New York, Dec 11: US President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris were jointly named Time magazine's 2020 "Person of the Year" Thursday, chosen from a list of finalists that included the man Biden vanquished at the polls - President Donald Trump.

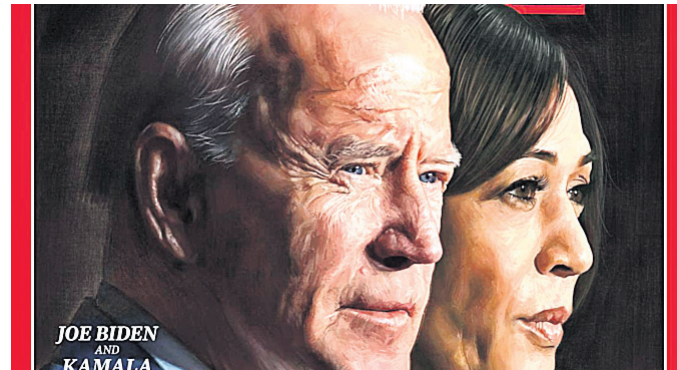
The Democratic former Vice President and his running mate, a California Senator whose election broke gender and racial barriers, together "offered restoration and renewal in a single ticket," Time said in a profile of the pair, pub-

lished online with its announcement.

Following the most tumultuous US presidential campaign in modern times, waged in the throes of a deadly pandemic, economic devastation and a strife-torn national reckoning with racism, Biden and Harris prevailed in an election that drew the highest voter turnout in a century.

Time editor-in-chief and CEO Edward Felsenthal credited the victors with succeeding in "an existential debate over what reality we inhabit."

"For changing the American story, for showing that the forces of



empathy are greater than the furies of division, for sharing a vision of healing in a grieving world, Joe

Biden and Kamala Harris are Time's 2020 Person of the Year," Trump, the 45th US president

After a meeting with his senior ministers, Johnson said the treaty on the table did not work for Britain



The European Union and Britain are at loggerheads over fishing rights, economic fair play and dispute settlement

REUTERS

London/Brussels, Dec 11: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said Thursday there was "a strong possibility" Britain and the EU would fail to strike a new trade deal, but vowed to do whatever he could to avoid a tumultuous split in three weeks.

The European Union and Britain are at loggerheads over fishing rights, economic fair play and dispute settlement, despite months of talks to cover trade from January 1 when the United Kingdom finally exits the bloc's orbit.

The two sides have set a deadline of Sunday to find agreement and prevent a chaotic break.

After a meeting with his senior ministers, Johnson said the treaty on the table did not work for Britain.

"We need to be very, very clear there's now a strong possibility, strong possibility that we will have a solution that's much more like an Australian relationship with the EU, than a Canadian relationship with the EU," Johnson said.

Australia, unlike Canada, has no comprehensive trade deal with the EU, leaving its trade mostly subject to tariffs. Johnson uses the comparison to suggest a deal is not necessary, though Australia has only a fraction of Britain's trade with Europe.

Under such a scenario, Britain would see trade barriers imposed with the EU, its main economic partner, in just three weeks.

Sterling dropped against the US dollar to \$1.3262 on the remarks, down from around \$1.33. It was last almost 0.9 per cent lower on the day at \$1.3274.

Johnson spoke as the 27 national EU leaders met in Brussels and the bloc's chief executive, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, said bridging the persistent differences in UK trade talks was "difficult".

"We are willing to grant access to our single market... but the conditions have to be fair," she said. "This fine balance of fairness has not been achieved so far."

Indian-American selected for NASA's Moon Mission

Raja Jon Vurputoor Chari, 43, a graduate of the US Air Force Academy, MIT, and US Naval Test Pilot School, is the only Indian-American among the 18 astronauts on the manned Moon mission

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Dec 11: An Indian-American is among the 18 astronauts selected by NASA for its manned mission to the Moon and beyond. Nasa on Wednesday named the 18 astronauts - half of them women - who will train for its Artemis moon-landing programme.

Raja Jon Vurputoor Chari, 43, a graduate of the US Air Force Academy, MIT, and US Naval Test Pilot School, is the only Indian-American on the list.

He was selected by Nasa to join the 2017 Astronaut Candidate Class. He reported for duty in August 2017 and having completed the initial astronaut candidate training is now eligible for a mission assignment.

"My fellow Americans, I give you the heroes of the future who will carry us back to the Moon and beyond: the Artemis Generation," Vice President Mike Pence said at Nasa's Kennedy Space Centre in Florida on Wednesday.



"It really is amazing to think that the next man and the first woman on the Moon are among the names that we just read... We started today reflecting on a great hero of the past. The Artemis Generation are the heroes of American space exploration in the future," Pence said after he introduced the members of the Artemis Team during the eighth National Space Council meeting.

The astronauts on the Artemis Team come from a diverse range of backgrounds, expertise and experience. Most of the astronauts in the group are in their 30s or 40s. The oldest is 55, the youngest 32.

The agency's modern lunar exploration programme will land the first woman and next man on the Moon in 2024 and establish a sustainable human lunar presence by the end of the decade, Nasa said.

Nasa will announce flight assignments for astronauts later, pulling from the Artemis Team.

and Time's 2016 Person of the Year - so honoured a month after his upset election victory as the Republican nominee that year - was among three other finalists in the running this year, Time said.

The two others, both group candidates, were the healthcare workers battling the Covid-19 pandemic, and participants in the racial justice movement sparked by the May 25 killing of George Floyd, a Black man who died after a white Minneapolis officer knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes.

The Person of the Year is usually an individual, but multiple people have been named in the past. The

title is one, according to the magazine, signifying "who affected the news or our lives the most, for better, or worse."

Time began its tradition in 1927. Teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg last year became the youngest individual winner of the accolade.

Biden, 78, who served two terms as Vice President to Barack Obama, will become the oldest person to assume the office of US President when he is sworn in January 20. Harris will become the first woman, the first Black and the first person of Asian descent to be inaugurated Vice President.

business

of the day quote

Eros Now along with its parent's theatrical arm, has invested \$1bn in content creation over the last five years. The OTT platform, which had made its services free in the initial part of the lockdown, added 6.9mn subscribers in H1 of the present fiscal

ALI HUSSEIN | CEO, EROS NOW

We need a credible policy for rationalisation of CSS (Centrally Sponsored Schemes) and Central outlays than have been possible so far. We need to constitute an Empowered Group of domain experts to submit to the FM and PM on modalities of further and deeper rationalisation of these CSS

NK SINGH | CHAIRMAN, FINANCE COMMISSION

Our performance is in line with the India growth story. Domestic demand is rising in H2 FY'21 (October-March of financial year 2020-21). With domestic markets recovering, the company is focusing more on value-added products

VR SHARMA | MD, JSPL

SHORT TAKES

Embassy REIT gets approval

New Delhi: Embassy Office Parks REIT's unitholders have approved plans to raise up to ₹8,000 crore through sale of units to institutional investors, mainly to fund its big-ticket acquisition of 'Embassy TechVillage' in Bangalore. Embassy REIT is India's first publicly-listed REIT (Real Estate Investment Trust) sponsored by Blackstone and Embassy group. It got listed on stock exchanges last year.

ICICI Prudential's AUM crosses ₹2L cr

Mumbai: ICICI Prudential Life, which is entering the 20th year of operations, Friday said that its assets under management (AUM) have crossed ₹2 lakh crore. The company, the first in the industry to go public, started operations 20 years ago with the issuance of policies to seven underprivileged children and closed the first year of operations with an AUM of around ₹100 crore (in FY'01). The AUM grew to about ₹50,000 crore in FY'10.

Morgan Stanley's India co-head dies

Mumbai: Top dealmaker and Morgan Stanley's co-head in India, Aisha de Sequeira died after a prolonged illness in New York, her family announced Friday. She was 51. Sequeira, who was head of investment banking for the American institution in India, is survived by three children and husband, who announced her death on social media platforms. After graduating in engineering from Goa, Sequeira went to Yale for further studies and later joined the investment banking major Morgan Stanley.

Govt buys 368.7L ton kharif paddy

New Delhi: Paddy procurement in the ongoing kharif marketing season at MSP has so far increased by 22.5% to ₹69,612 crore. In the ongoing kharif marketing season (KMS) 2020-21, the government continues to procure kharif 2020-21 crops at its MSP (minimum support price) from farmers, an official statement said Friday. The marketing season starts from October.



Covid has essentially reshuffled the medical travel market. India, Turkey and the UAE are gaining market share from Europe and SE Asia, as patients become cost conscious and seek quality medical care and good prices

DANISH AHMED | FOUNDER, HOSPALS

'INDIA PRODUCES 60MN PPE'

Union Textiles Minister Smriti Irani has said that India produced over 60 million personal protection equipment (PPEs) and around 150 million N-95 masks till October, from zero in March. The country has so far exported over 20 million PPE and over 40 million N-95 masks, she said



'Govt will continue to take steps to push growth'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 11: The government is cautiously optimistic on the economic front and will continue to take measures to push growth, Economic Affairs Secretary Tarun Bajaj said Friday.

Addressing Ficci's Annual Convention, he said the second quarter GDP number was much better than market expectations and it will further improve in the second half of the current fiscal.

The economy contracted by 7.5% in the second quarter, as against 23.9% degrowth in the first quarter of this fiscal on account of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"So we are positive. We are cautiously optimistic on the economic front. And we are hoping that our third and fourth quarter will be far better than the second quarter. "And I may also add that not only us, but the international organisations, the rating agencies, all of them have revised their estimates upwards for the country," he said.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB), Thursday, upgraded its forecast for the Indian economy, projecting 8% contraction in 2020-21 as compared to (-) 9% estimated earlier, on the back of faster than expected recovery.

Growth will return in 2021-22, at



7.2% in South Asia and 8% in India, ADB said in its latest Asian Development Outlook Supplement.

Bajaj further said demand momentum continues even beyond the festive season which will push growth in the third and fourth quarters.

"We will continue to take all steps that are required for ensuring that the economy keeps going up from here, and we will see far better quarter three, quarter four and the next year," he emphasised.

On setting up a development financial institution (DFI) for fund-

ing infrastructure projects, Bajaj said such an entity is needed.

In the months to come, there would be some good progress on that front, he said, adding the government has created a debt platform in the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) for which there was a Cabinet announcement.

"The Government of India is committed to give ₹6,000 crores in the next two years...That would be leveraged with debt by NIIF and we will be putting in more than ₹1 lakh crore into infrastructure sec-

We are cautiously optimistic on the economic front. And we are hoping that our third and fourth quarter will be far better than the second quarter

TARUN BAJAJ | ECONOMIC AFFAIRS SECRETARY



tor on the debt side...Other than the equity side.

"While DFI is in the works, we are also taking other steps to ensure that infrastructure spend happens and both debt and equity are taken care of," he said. Bajaj also urged the industry to come forward and invest in the economy so that there is sustainable growth.

ADB launches \$9bn Covid vax initiative for APAC members

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 11: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) Friday said it has launched a \$9 billion initiative that will offer support to its developing member economies to procure and deliver Covid-19 vaccines.

ADB has launched a \$9 billion vaccine initiative, the Asia-Pacific Vaccine Access Facility (APVAX), offering support to its developing members as they procure and deliver vaccines for COVID-19, it said in a release.

ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa said, "As ADB's developing members prepare to vaccinate their people as soon as possible, they need financing to procure vaccines as well as appropriate plans and knowledge to be able to...Manage the vaccination process." He further noted that APVAX will play a critical role to help its developing members meet challenges to overcome the pandemic and focus on economic recovery.

ADB said that over 14.3 million COVID-19 positive cases have been identified in the Asia-Pacific region, causing more than 2 lakh deaths.

As the pandemic persists, the Asian economy is projected to contract by 0.4% in 2020, the first regional gross domestic product contraction since the early 1960s, it added.

Besides, ADB is also making available a USD 500-million vaccine import facility to support the efforts of the developing members to secure safe and effective vaccines, as well as the goods that support distribution and inoculation.

APVAX provides a comprehensive framework and resource envelope for supporting Asia's vaccine programmes, it said.

Under this, the Rapid Response Component will provide timely



support for critical vaccine diagnostics, procurement of vaccines and transporting vaccines from the place of purchase to ADB's developing members.

The Project Investment Component will support investments in systems for successful distribution, delivery and administration of vaccines along with associated investments in building capacity, community outreach and surveillance.

This may include such areas as cold-chain storage and transportation, vehicles, distribution infrastructure, processing facilities, and other physical investments. The component may also be used to develop or expand vaccine manufacturing capacity in developing members, ADB said.

The Manila-headquartered multilateral funding agency said, "Promoting safe, equitable, and effective access to vaccines is a top priority for ADB's COVID-19 response efforts."

It added that vaccination programmes can break the chain of virus transmission, save lives, and mitigate the negative economic impacts of the pandemic.

The ADB's financing for vaccines will be provided in close coordination with other development partners including the World Bank Group, World Health Organization (WHO), COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access Facility (COVAX), GAVI, and bilateral and multilateral partners.

ECoR HANDLES 6.44 MT OF FREIGHT IN TEN DAYS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 11: East Coast Railway (ECOR) carried 6.44 million tonne of freight during the first ten days of this month of the current financial year by increasing 12.5% more than the corresponding period of 2019, according to ECoR's statement.

The statement said, ECoR had loaded 5.73 million tonne of freight during corresponding days of same month in 2019.

Up to December 10, 2020 of the current fiscal, East Coast Railway carried 130.16MT of freight including 72.99MT of coal, 17.36MT of iron ore, 11.08MT of iron & steel, 4.87MT of raw materials for steel plants, 4.63MT of fertiliser, 1.98MT of container, 1.76MT of food grains, 1.74MT of petroleum products and 13.75MT of other commodities.

To achieve this loading figure, ECoR utilised 177 rakes per day



during first ten days of December, 2020 as against 157.9 rakes during the correspondence period of last financial year.

"From April 1 to December 10, 2020, ECoR utilised 40.7 rakes per day in Talcher region, 19.2 rakes in Paradeep region, 13.4 rakes in Dhamara area, 13.9 in Vizag region, 8.4 in Gangavaram area, 6.3 in Keonjhar-Nayagarh area, 9.6 in KK

Industrial production rises 3.6% in October

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 11: India's industrial activity accelerated in October with a rise of over 3.5% in factory output on a year-on-year basis, official data showed Thursday.

As per the Quick Estimates of Index of Industrial Production (IIP), the factory output grew by 3.6% in October 2020 from 0.49% in September and (-) 6.6% during the corresponding month of the previous year. "For the month of October 2020, the Quick Estimates of Index of Industrial Production (IIP) with base 2011-12 stands at 128.5," the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation said.

"The Indices of Industrial Production for the Mining, Manufacturing and Electricity sectors for the month of October 2020 stand at 98, 130.7 and 162.2 respectively." The IIP had been in the negative territory from April to August FY'21 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown to curb its spread.

Among major segments, manufacturing production grew by 3.5% from (-) 5.7% reported for the corresponding month of last year.

Similarly, electricity generation grew by 11.2% from (-) 12.2% during



PATH TO RECOVERY

For the month of October 2020, the Quick Estimates of IIP with base 2011-12 stands at 128.5

The IIP for the Mining, Manufacturing and Electricity sectors for the month of October 2020 stand at 98, 130.7 and 162.2 respectively

October 2019. However, mining output de-grew by (-) 1.5% on a Yo-Y basis. Furthermore, the data on a Yo-Y basis showed that manufacturing of primary goods de-grew by (-) 3.3%, whereas capital goods production rose by 3.3%, and intermediate goods inched higher by 0.8%.

On the other hand, the production of infrastructure or construction goods grew by 7.8% and consumer durables by 17.6%. The sub-segment of consumer non-durables showed a growth of 7.5%.

Domestic air travel rises 19% m-o-m in November: ICRA

AGENCIES

Mumbai, Dec 11: The domestic air travel demand is witnessing continued recovery, with passengers increasing 19% month-on-month to around 62 lakh in November, rating agency ICRA said Friday.

However, the domestic air passenger volume declined on a yearly basis by more than half to around 52% in November 2020, ICRA said in a release.

The international passenger traffic declined 83% to around 3.6 lakh passengers in November in the absence of scheduled international operations, according to the rating agency.

Currently, only flights under special arrangements, such as air bubble pacts and the Vande Bharat Mission, are being operated on overseas routes.



The capacity deployed by the airlines during the previous month stood at 59% as against around 52% in October; it said adding that the same was at 46% in September.

ICRA Vice-President Kinjal Shah said the number of flights departing has also increased to 2,065 as December 7, compared with 416 on May 25 when domestic air travel resumed after a hiatus of two months due to the coronavirus-induced lockdown.

"For November, the average daily departures were around 1,806, significantly lower than the average daily departures of 3,080 in November 2019, though better than around 1,574 in October 2020," she said.

'India positioning itself as economic partner'

INDIA'S TRADE WITH THE MENA REGION HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN GOVERNED BY THE FACT THAT THE REGION HAS BEEN A CRITICAL SOURCE OF ENERGY

AGENCIES

Chennai, Dec 11: India is positioning itself as an economic partner by investments in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, said a senior official of Export-Import Bank of India (India Exim Bank) Friday.

In his address at the India-Morocco Business Forum, the bank's Deputy Managing Director Harsha Bangari said that India's trade with the MENA region has traditionally been governed by the fact that the region has been a critical source of energy.

"India is now increasingly positioning itself as an economic partner through increased investments



in the region," she said.

India Exim Bank Friday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Bank of Africa BMCE Group.

Senior representatives from the institutions were joined by Morocco's

Ambassador to India, Mohammed Maliki, and India's Charge d'affaires in Morocco, GK Pant, at the Forum, which was organised on a virtual platform.

India's bilateral trade with Morocco has increased from \$1.2 billion in 2010 to \$2.1 billion in 2019.

While India's imports from Morocco are largely dominated by phosphate and potash, exports are more diversified covering textiles, chemical products, petroleum products, and pharmaceutical products.

According to Mohammed Agoumi, Delegate General Manager, Bank of Africa, the objective of the MoU is to strengthen cooperation in financing, guaranteeing and other financial mechanisms to sup-

port projects of interest of both the institutions.

The banks will also jointly explore funding support for Indian companies setting up operations in Morocco and Moroccan companies setting up operations in India as per their respective mandates.

Till date, India Exim Bank has supported 64 Indian companies for setting up ventures in the MENA region, with a sanctioned amount of ₹6,684 crore, in various sectors such as textiles, automotive, chemicals and dyes, agro processing, irrigation, renewable energy, construction, healthcare, EPC services, shipping and mining, among others, a statement from India Exim Bank said.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 11: Over 950 households from Keonjhar district have received financial support from goat farming initiative, promoted by Tata Steel Foundation in association with Animal Husbandry Department of Joda. This initiative has benefitted the households by providing them a steady source of income.

Parmessiom Thakurani, Mahadevassa, Kuldum, Sialjoda, Jamukundia, Kolhahundula, Panchananpur and Govardhanpur have been generating steady income through goat farming.

"Goat farming has changed my life completely," says Harihar Barik of Thakurani village who earned over ₹91,000 in one year alone through this initiative.

Even though a lucrative option, goat farming came with its own set of challenges like diseases infecting goats leading to high mortality rate. The foundation has also been running several vaccination drives in these villages. Vaccines like PPR (Peste Des Petits Ruminants), FMD (Foot and Mouth Disease) and Goat Pox have been provided to the farmers free of cost to ensure good health of goats. So far, 6055 goats have been vaccinated.

This initiative of goat farming was designed as a 3-year long project and has seen a lot of traction among farmers so far.

With more farmers showing interest in taking up goat farming each year, the number of households benefiting through this sustainable livelihood initiative is only slated to rise.

BUMRAH SHINES ON DAY 1

Indian pacer scores half-century, picks up two wickets on the opening day of India's pink ball warm-up match against Australia A



Mohammed Shami (C) celebrates with his teammates after getting a wicket in Sydney

PICS: ESPNCRICINFO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sydney, Dec 11: Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah (55 n o, 57b, 6x4, 2x6; 2/33) headlined the opening day's play with a maiden first-class fifty and then chipped in with a couple of wickets in an impressive bowling effort putting India in the driver's seat against Australia in the pink ball warm-up game Friday. With his unbeaten half-century, Bumrah was the top-scorer for the visitors, who folded for a disappointing 194 in 48.3 overs at the Sydney Cricket Ground. The Indians however came back strongly with the ball to bundle out Australia for 108 at stumps as 20 wickets fell on a curtailed when almost an hour was lost due to heavy rain. India's four-pronged pace attack did well to intimidate Australian youngsters with short-pitched stuff as Mohammed Shami and Navdeep Saini got three wickets apiece. On a day when the recognised batsmen struggled to put runs on the board, Bumrah, who came into the game with a Test batting average of 2.9, produced a stellar per-

formance with the willow, smashing the ball six times to the fence and twice over it. The 27-year-old, known for his wily bowling, reached his half-century in style, hooking a bouncer by all-rounder Will Sutherland for a huge six over the deep square-leg fence. Bumrah and fellow pacer Mohammed Siraj stitched a valuable 71-run partnership for the 10th wicket before the Indian innings ended with a semblance of respectively. Pleasant surprised with his batting heroics, Bumrah's teammates got up, clapped and gave him a guard of honour as he walked into the dressing room. Earlier, after skipper Ajinkya Rahane opted to bat, Prithvi Shaw (40) and Shubman Gill (43) – both 21-year-old batsmen with bright future – showed enough glimpses of why they are rated so highly by almost everyone in the Indian cricket fraternity. However, the rest of the teammates including the seasoned Rahane, failed to impress on the first day of their final tune-up be-

fore the start of the four-match Test series beginning December 17. The two specialist wicketkeepers Wriddhiman Saha (0) and Rishabh Pant (5) both fell cheaply with the former failing to open his account after the likes of Mayank Agarwal and Hanuma Vihari were also dismissed cheaply. But the most distraught will be the duo of Shaw and Gill, both getting out after promising so much with their dazzling strokes and positive approach. The Australians may have bowled out India for a low score but they wouldn't be too happy with the way their batting panned out during the day's play. While Joe Burns was sent back by a fine Bumrah delivery that moved away just enough to take the beleaguered opener's edge, what will worry them most is the injury to Test hopeful Cameron Green. All-rounder Green, who had scored a hundred in the first warm-up game, suffered a concussion while bowling after a rasping straight drive from Bumrah struck him on the head.



JASPRIT BUMRAH

Bowling his second spell of the day, the 21-year-old was unable to react in time when Bumrah's full-blooded drive slipped through his palms and struck on the right side of the head. The all-rounder immediately went down and non-striker Mohammed Siraj rushed to check on him. After being examined for a couple of minutes by the medical team, the all-rounder was back on his feet as he walked off the field for further assessment. Batsman Patrick Rowe was named his concussion substitute. Bumrah (2/33) and Shami (3/29) bowled a terrific opening spell and beat the outside edge of Marcus Harris and Nic Maddinson a number of times before rain intervened. Shami was rewarded for his perseverance as he picked up the wick-

ets of Harris and Ben McDermott, a hint swing and seam movement aiding him. Siraj (1/26) then had Maddinson to leave the home team reeling at 52 for four. Shami made it 56 for five when he had Sean Abbott caught behind. Jack Wildermuth went for a cut against Bumrah but ended up getting an outside before Navdeep Saini (3/19) sent back Will Sutherland, Alex Carey and Mitchel Swepson, coming in as second change. **BRIEF SCORES** India 194 (Jasprit Bumrah 55 n o, Shubman Gill 43, Prithvi Shaw 40; Jack Wildermuth 3/13, Sean Abbott 3/46); Australia A 108 (Alex Carey 32; Navdeep Saini 3/19, Mohammed Shami 3/29, Jasprit Bumrah 2/33). Match to continue.

HAMILTON FIT TO RACE AT ABU DHABI GP



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Yas Island (Abu Dhabi), Dec 11: Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton has recovered from the coronavirus and will race at the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix this weekend, the Mercedes team said. Hamilton's presence at the Yas Marina circuit means that George Russell returns to drive for Williams in Sunday's race. The seven-time World Champion tested positive for COVID-19 the day after winning the Bahrain GP November 29 and missed last weekend's Sakhir GP in Bahrain as he self-isolated for 10 days. "Lewis tested negative for COVID-19 Wednesday prior to completion of his self-isolation period in Bahrain. This enabled him to travel to Abu Dhabi Thursday afternoon, and he tested negative on arrival," Mercedes said in a statement. "Lewis has therefore completed the protocols required by the FIA for his entry to the paddock and will be able to take part in the race weekend." Governing body FIA confirmed that Hamilton was free to leave

Bahrain according to the health authority regulations in place. There are two practice sessions in Abu Dhabi Friday. Russell was released by Williams to drive for Mercedes as an emergency replacement for Hamilton, and he impressed with his assured driving at the Sakhir GP. He even looked on course to win the race before a botched tire stop by the team and a late puncture when he was in second place combined to push him down to ninth place. But the 22-year-old British driver's speed saw him earn a bonus point for the fastest lap and earn widespread praise. Hamilton has won the Abu Dhabi GP a record five times, including the past two years. He has an insurmountable lead over Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas, who can still be overtaken for second place by Red Bull's Max Verstappen. Sunday will also feature Sebastian Vettel's last race with Ferrari after joining the Italian team in 2015. The four-time F1 champion, who has struggled most of the season, is racing for Aston Martin next year.

Goa test awaits struggling Odisha FC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bambolim, Dec 11: High on confidence after registering their maiden win of the season, FC Goa will look to continue the good form when they take on laggar Odisha FC (OFC) in an Indian Super League match here Saturday. FC Goa, placed sixth, head into the contest on the back of a comprehensive 3-1 victory over Kerala Blaster, while the Bhubaneswar-based outfit occupies the penultimate spot on the table and are winless after four games. The Gaurs will have their sights set on a goal-fest. The likes of Igor Angulo, who is the current joint-top scorer this season, Jorge Ortiz Mendoza, Brandon Fernandes and Edu Bedia will have a big role to play as well. Juan Ferrando's side will also have their eyes set on their first clean sheet of the season. "When we are working in training, it's important to control a few details in transitions and keep improving. We are working a lot," said Ferrando. "I'm so happy about the defensive aspect because the team is good but sometimes, it's necessary to (keep) the intensity in defense. We need to



Coach Stuart Baxter (R) and Vinit Rai have something to talk about the player's gameplay during Odisha FC's training session

be more aggressive," he added. Meanwhile, Stuart Baxter's side has struggled at both ends of the pitch so far. Up front, their attack has appeared blunt, failing to score in three out of their four matches. They are also yet to register a clean sheet this season and have not been able to start games strongly, conceding five goals in the first half – most by a team this season. The problem for Baxter has also been watching his team being dominated by the opponents and Angulo will hope to add to his tally against a leaky Odisha defence. Against FC Goa, the side that has the highest average possession by any team this season (58 per cent), Baxter knows a big challenge lies ahead for his side. "The striker (Angulo) has been scoring goals and that's always a problem," the Englishman said. "The rest of the team... they have a set way of playing and they stick to it. It's important (that) you don't allow them to gain too much momentum. "We have to be a constant threat and ought to be able to deal with them properly. They're one of the better teams and in that way, they deserve our respect," Baxter added. Goa beat Odisha in both their meetings last season.

Amandeep wins 8th leg by three shots; Seher 2nd

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gurugram, Dec 11: Amandeep Drall produced two birdies in the last four holes on the final day to claim a three-shot win over Seher Atwal in the eighth leg of the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour here Friday. With the DLF Golf and Country Club presenting a challenge, Amandeep negotiated it smartly with a one-over 73 to keep a charging Seher Atwal (71) at bay on the final day here. Amandeep, who won the fourth leg and was the top pro in the seventh leg, has now won twice in 2020. She finished at three-under 213 while Seher was even par 216 for 54 holes. Jahanvi Bakshi, who was lying way down in ninth place after the second day rose to third with the day's best card of three-under 69 and four-over 220. Kriti Chowhan (74) was the leading amateur and she was fourth overall at seven-over 223, while Tvesha Malik (75) and Pranavi Urs (79) were tied-fifth at eight-over 224.

ISL: Victor denies ATK Mohun Bagan full points

AGENCIES

Goa, Dec 11: Joao Victor scored the all-important equaliser for Hyderabad FC (HFC) as they played out a closely-contested 1-1 draw with ATK Mohun Bagan in the Indian Super League (ISL) match at the Fatorda Stadium Sunday. Manvir Singh was involved at both ends of the pitch as he scored the opening goal and conceded the penalty that allowed Hyderabad to equalise. Roy Krishna continued to be a threat up front for Bagan as he has been all season and could have scored an early goal. In the seventh minute, he fired the ball from Prabir Das' pass straight at the

keeper before testing Subrata Paul with a powerful header off Pritam Kotal's cross two minutes later. A good move close to the half-hour mark nearly put Bagan in front. Glen Martins sprayed the ball to Krishna who in turn found Manvir on the right flank. Prabir was at the end of Manvir's drilled low cross but couldn't get enough power on his shot towards goal. There was controversy at the stroke of halftime when Prabir caught Nikhil's face with his boot. The referee showed him a yellow card as the Hyderabad players shouted for a red. Manvir made the most of the first-team chance given to him by

his coach and broke the deadlock after the restart. He nicked the ball from the midfield following a Hyderabad goal-kick, dribbled into the box skipping past multiple challenges and slammed the ball home. Hyderabad woke up after conceding the opening goal and pressed for an equaliser: Victor and Souvik Chakraborty were busy in the centre trying to move the ball forward and their efforts were rewarded in the 65th minute. Souvik played Nikhil Poojary into the box who was brought down by Manvir. Victor dispatched the resultant spot-kick to bring the scores level.



Joao Victor (L) celebrates Hyderabad's equaliser with his teammates