



## UNIQUE CELEBRATION

Actor Elli Avram did a left hand stand to celebrate the success of garnering 4mn followers on Instagram

LEISURE P2



## SWATI'S BODY RECOVERED

The body of a girl Swati (3), who had gone missing like Pari since December 11, was recovered from a pond, Tuesday

STATE P5



## 28 KILLED IN ATTACK

An attack by Boko Haram in a village in Niger's southeast killed at least 28 people, Niger's govt has said

INTERNATIONAL P10



It's all Google's fault. You see, two days ago Gmail was not working and today Google maps took me to a bar instead of...

## SHORT TAKE

### UK PM Boris will be R-Day chief guest

New Delhi: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has accepted India's "very generous" invite to be the Republic Day chief guest at next month's celebrations in Delhi, UK's Foreign Secretary said Tuesday, calling it "a great honour". This will be Boris Johnson's "first major bilateral visit" since he took charge last year, his office highlighted. "I am absolutely delighted to be visiting India next year at the start of an exciting year for Global Britain, and look forward to delivering the quantum leap in our bilateral relationship that Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi and I have pledged to achieve," the British PM said in a statement.

### Vegetable vendor gets ₹110cr GST notice in Rourkela

Rourkela, Dec 15: In a bizarre development, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) department Tuesday served a default notice of more than ₹110 crore to Kartik Kamila - a vegetable vendor from Rourkela town in Sundargarh district of Odisha. Kamila has been charged with gross tax liability under Section 74(5). This apart, an amount of ₹10 crore has allegedly been marked as input tax credit through a fake bank account. The department has demanded that Kamila pay the tax along with applicable interest and penalty under Section 74(5), failing which a show-cause notice would be issued. The accused, meanwhile, is clueless about any such transaction or tax fraud. Kamila runs a small vegetable shop in the steel city. However, he has been represented as the owner of a market complex at Koelnagar here by Lingaraj Trading Company, reports said. According to Kamila, someone might have used his documents to commit the offence. Recently, a driver in this town was victimised in a similar way.

# Farmers determined to 'make' Centre repeal new agri laws

OPPOSITION USING FARMERS' SHOULDERS TO FIRE THEIR GUNS: PM



Prime Minister interacts with various groups, including Sikh farmers, in Gujarat, Tuesday

## Odisha farmer shaves his head

NEW DELHI: While the farmers are protesting against the three newly passed agricultural laws, a farmer from Odisha expressed his protest in a unique manner by shaving off his head and beard to mark his dissent over the new policies of the government. Parthasarthy Jena from Odisha tonsured his head at Delhi's Singhu Border as a mark of protest. According to Indian traditions, shaving of the hair and beard is done when the head of the family dies. Speaking to media, Jena said, "The government has turned deaf to our voices. It seems like they are dead and hence, I am shaving my head and beard." He also added that he did so to send a strong message to the Centre and said that the protests would continue until the three laws are taken back.

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 15: Leaders of agitating farmers Tuesday asserted they will "make" the Centre repeal the three new agri laws in a hardening of their stand even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi said a conspiracy is afoot to confuse them and accused the opposition of shooting off farmers' shoulders. The Prime Minister also made a strong pitch for the agri laws enacted in September, describing them as historic and said his government was ready to remove any doubts about the legislations. "I want to reiterate that my government is ready 24 hours to resolve all your doubts." As leaders of multiple farmer unions sought to ratchet up pressure on the Centre declaring their fight has reached a stage where they are "determined" to win it no matter what, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said the Centre is willing to continue its talks with "genuine farm unions" to find a solution with an open mind.

## Protests resulting in ₹3,500cr loss daily: Assocham

NEW DELHI: Industry body Assocham Tuesday urged the Centre and farmers' organisations to resolve the impasse over the new agri laws, saying that the protests are inflicting a heavy blow to the economies of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and J&K. "A daily loss of ₹3,000-3,500 crore is resulting in the economies of the region from the value chain and transport disruption because of the protests," according to a rough estimate by the chamber.

Pradesh. Tomar said the Minimum Support Price (MSP), at which the government commits to procure the produce from farmers, is an administrative decision and it "will continue as it is". Addressing a press conference at Singhu Border in Delhi, farmer leader Jagjeet Dallewal said, "The government is saying 'we won't repeal these laws', we are saying we will make you do it." "The fight has reached a stage where we are determined to win no matter what," he added. "We are not running away from negotiation, but the government has to pay heed to our demands and come forward with concrete proposals." Meanwhile, without taking names, Modi, who was on a day-long visit to Gujarat, said Opposition parties who are supporting the protest, when in power, were in favour of similar reforms in the agriculture sector. He was speaking at a function in Dhordo after performing virtual stone laying ceremonies for three projects in Kutch district. He also accused the Opposition of using "farmers' shoulders to fire their guns".

# No forcible collection of school fees: HC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Dec 15: The Orissa High Court Tuesday barred private schools from collecting fees in a forcible manner in the prevailing situation. A division bench of Chief Justice Mohammad Rafiq and Justice Bishwanath Rath pronounced the order while hearing a case seeking waiver of fees by private schools in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic. The HC order on the school fee will be in force till the next hearing on the case, scheduled for January 7, 2021. Bibhuti Bhusan Choudhury, counsel for the private school

guardians' association, informed the HC that some private schools were forcing parents to pay the schools fees. These schools were also preventing students from availing online classes and writing exams over non-payment of fees. The HC bench once again asked the state government to submit its reply on the issue. It is worth mentioning here that the state government had earlier submitted an affidavit on the case. In the affidavit, the state government made it clear that it has no control over private schools. But, the MoU between the stakeholders has provision for reduction of fees within the range of 5 to 30 per cent, said the affidavit.

# Airlines warned about mishaps as plane services resume

THE UNPRECEDENTED NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT GROUNDED AS COVID-RELATED LOCKDOWNS BLOCKED AIR TRAVEL HAS CREATED A SPIKE IN THE NUMBER OF REPORTED PROBLEMS AS AIRLINES RETURN THEM TO SERVICE

REUTERS

Sydney, Dec 15: Regulators, insurers and experts are warning airlines to take extra care when re-activating planes left in extended storage during the Covid-19 pandemic, citing potential pilot rustiness, maintenance errors and even insect nests blocking key sensors. The unprecedented number of aircraft grounded as coronavirus lockdowns blocked air travel - at one point reaching two-thirds of the global fleet - has created a spike in the number of reported problems as airlines return them to service. The number of "unstable" or poorly handled approaches has



risen sharply this year, according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA). Such mishaps can result in hard landings, runway overshoots or even crashes. Worried by IATA's data, insurers are questioning airlines about whether they are doing extra pilot training to focus on landings, said Gary Moran, head of Asia aviation at insurance broker Aon PLC. "They want to know about the circumstances of the training," he said. Approaches and landings place significant demands on crew for which training and regular exper-

iences are seen as vital. According to aircraft maker Airbus SE, the largest category of fatal accidents can be traced back to the approach to an airport, while the largest number of non-fatal accidents happens during landing. In May, a Pakistan International Airlines jet crashed after an un-stabilised approach, killing 97 people, while 18 died in an Air India Express crash on landing in August, also after an un-stabilised approach. INSECTS IN TUBES Training is not the only concern. The European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) has reported an "alarming trend" in the number of reports of unreliable airspeed and altitude readings during the first flight after a plane leaves storage. In some cases, take-offs had to be abandoned or the aircraft had to return to base. In most cases, the problem was traced back to undetected insect nests inside the aircraft's pitot tubes, pressure-sensitive sensors that feed key data to an avionics computer. In June, a Wizz Air Holdings PLC jet halted take-off after the captain found the airspeed was reading zero. Examination of the plane found insect larvae in one of the pitot tubes, with the aircraft having been parked for 12 weeks before the flight, the UK Air Accidents Investigation Branch said last month. No passengers were on board.

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## Lingaraj, other temples in City to reopen Jan 3

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 15: Amidst increasing demands for re-opening of all religious places in the state capital, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Tuesday declared that people would be able to visit all temples in the city from January 3.

Addressing a press meet here, the BMC Commissioner Prem Chandra Chaudhary stated that though the Lingaraj temple will reopen December 27, only servitors and their family members will be allowed entry from December 27 to 31. The temple will remain closed January 1 and 2 to avoid large congregation of devotees. "Denizens of Bhubaneswar will be allowed to enter the temple from January 3 to 5 and people from outside Bhubaneswar can visit the temple from January 6.



Devotees will be allowed to enter the temple only after submitting a Covid-19 negative report of a test that must be conducted 4-5 days prior to visiting the temple," Chaudhary said. The BMC Commissioner further mentioned that a maximum of 500 devotees will be allowed to remain on the temple premises at any given time. "The Lingaraj Temple management committee will be giving us an undertaking mentioning the capacity of maximum people that will be accommodated on their premises maintaining social distancing norms," he added.

# Self-immolation bid by 2 ANMs

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 15: Two of the agitating Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANM), who were on a dharna here for 18 days demanding regularisation of service, attempted self-immolation Tuesday, police said. The two poured kerosene on their bodies and were about to light a matchstick when co-agitators stopped them. They were later taken to a hospital, police said. "We are on dharna for 18 days demanding regular jobs. As the government has turned a deaf ear to our genuine demand, there is no other alternative than killing ourselves," said Rutupragnya Sahu, one of the women who attempted self-immolation. She said that they used to earn ₹7,000-₹8,000 a month working in private hospitals. They left those jobs to join the Covid Care Centres (CCCs) and Covid Care Homes (CCHs) of the state government. CCCs were set up by the health department to treat less serious coronavirus patients while asymmetric patients were initially kept at



CCHs. During the peak of the Covid-19 crisis, the Odisha government had provided employment to ANMs, nurses and other paramedical staff. As many as 21,000 ANMs were given temporary jobs on a daily wage basis for a period of three months or till CCCs and CCHs are functional, officials said. Sahu said that they were disengaged after a decline in the number of new Covid-19 patients across the state. A section of the around 1,000 agitating ANMs have also started hunger strike at the protest site and a few of them were recently hospitalised as their health condition deteriorated. Health and Family Welfare Minister Naba Kumar Das Monday advised the agitating ANMs to apply for regular jobs when the government would advertise for vacant posts.

## COVID PACKAGE Naveen approves ₹289cr for MSMEs

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 15: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday approved a package of ₹289.42 crore for the benefit of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in order to overcome the Covid-19 pandemic-related losses. The package includes interest subvention, top-up subsidy, reimbursement of state GST and waiver of annual institutional maintenance charges. The package aims to benefit a range of entrepreneurs, mostly women and weaker sections of society, in the MSME sector and help them recover from the unexpected challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the CMO said in a statement. Under the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS), about 1,70,000 MSME units will reap benefit of interest subvention. The government will provide an interest subvention for the MSMEs under the scheme with one year moratorium. The government is releasing a sum of ₹108.29 crore to cover 40 per cent of eligible women-run MSMEs. Similarly, under the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) for the financial year 2020-21, the top-up subsidy to weaker sections is 5 per cent as promoters contribution. The government has made provision of ₹27 crore to meet the requirement. This will help the weaker sections (SC, ST, OBC, minority community, women, physically challenged and ex-servicemen) to deal with the pandemic crisis, the CMO said. Food processing units functioning under the Centrally-sponsored PMEGP scheme will be given 15 per cent extra top-up subsidy to cover around 1,000 units for the current financial year. The government will provide ₹10 crore towards the top up subsidy under the scheme.

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	46263.17 ↑ 9.71
NIFTY	13567.90 ↑ 9.70
DOLLAR	73.87 ↑ ₹0.02
EURO	89.56 ↑ ₹0.07
GOLD	₹49,301 ↑ ₹362
SILVER	₹64,206 ↑ ₹735

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
MAX	30.5°C	29.6°C
MIN	19.2°C	17.2°C
Humidity	96%	86%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast: Mainly clear sky		



## KYLIE EMBRACES HER NATURAL HAIR

Known for her wigs and long hair extensions, reality TV star Kylie Jenner took everyone by surprise when she decides to flaunt her real self. Kylie shared a clip of that features her wearing short red hair. In the video she says: "My real hair is cuuute, I gotta give it more love."

## LIZZO PROUD OF DIET RESULTS

Grammy Award-winning singer Lizzo is proud of her detox diet despite the backlash she experienced on social media for promoting the diet culture. Lizzo faced flak after she shared her 10-day smoothie detox diet details on social media. The singer shared two photographs of her before and after the detox diet.



## FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com  
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**ARIES**  
Career decisions and money matters will keep you busy today. And after all the work, you will want to spend some leisure time and take it easy. A leisure trip may materialise, which will put you in high spirits.

**TAURUS**  
This day, Ganesh sees you brimming with pep and vigour. You'll be feeling playful and frisky and will want to amuse yourself, keep others amused. You are likely to hang out with old friends and cronies and will love very second of it.

**GEMINI**  
An extremely productive and fulfilling day awaits you. Along with your daily routine, you will also concentrate on your household issues. You will feel the need to have someone to call your own. You may find yourself in two minds over things like marriage and partnership.

**CANCER**  
Be ready to get into the shoes of a juggler today, says Ganesh. Multi-tasking is the need of the hour, my friend! But, no worries for you will be energetic and deft. Pending pile of work will be finished with ease. Seemingly impossible tasks will be finished in a blink of an eye.

**LEO**  
You are fond of travelling. You will make plans for a trip or a journey and will include your family and friends in your schemes. For those in artistic fields, you will receive critical acclaim. A progressive day awaits, says Ganesh.

**VIRGO**  
Your driving force will be a single-minded desire to take your destiny in your own hands. Your organisational abilities will be flawless, and a burning desire to succeed will motivate you to keep pegging at your tasks. Ganesh says your managerial abilities will be enhanced by your decision-making and reasoning abilities.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh says that you will be able to spend more time with your friend circle. You will be attracted to someone of the opposite sex. In the evening today you will be able to take out your beloved for a romantic evening combined with a drive and dinner at a restaurant.

**SCORPIO**  
It seems, the book, 'How to win friends and influence people' has left a great impact on your mind, bringing about a lot of change in your practical life too. As you switch to a new business venture, your efforts will be appreciated.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
The pressing needs of your loved ones call for extra attention today. A small party at home may see a group of friends and relatives dine together. This may find you in a chatty mood. Ganesh says an intimate tête-à-tête with your better half would fare you well.

**CAPRICORN**  
A penny saved is a penny earned. Your strong belief in this will make you scrutinise your requirements and rearrange the priority list, so that you know where and how to utilise the resources. Your choice of friends will represent your approach and outlook towards life.

**AQUARIUS**  
It is time to make addition in your possessions. Book your dream house or buy a vehicle, as today is a favourable day to do so. You, however, need to consider your financial resources before deciding anything because it will take a major chunk out of your savings, warns Ganesh.

**PISCES**  
Today will not find you in the best of spirits. You need to guard against being sad for the smallest of reasons. Pessimistic thoughts could creep in, owing to some external influences. You need to keep your will-power strong to remain positive.

# LEGACY OF BLOCKBUSTERS GETS OTT REBIRTH

*The success of the magnum opus 'Baahubali' film franchise encourages makers to explore the story through a spin-off series titled 'Baahubali: Before The Beginning'*

There is a thread that ties Star Wars and Moana with Baahubali. Their universes are ever expanding, through spinoff series on the canvas of streaming platforms.

For many, the success of a film directly translates to a chance to cash on the success by spinning a new series and stories. It is a win-win for the audience as well, as the makers as well as people get to live with their favourite characters, and makers continue to reap on the benefits of the success and create a multiverse franchise.

Here's a look at some big-ticket spinoffs, which are either winning fans all over the globe or are in works.

**Star Wars**  
The list of Star Wars stories for Disney's

streaming platform keeps on growing. It already includes The Mandalorian, and two other previously ordered series - one based on Cassian Andor prior to the events of Rogue One: A Star Wars Story, and another following the adventures of Obi-Wan Kenobi between Revenge Of The Sith and A New Hope.

**Baahubali**  
The success of the magnum opus Baahubali film franchise encourages makers to explore the story through a spin-off series titled Baahubali: Before The Beginning. It will explore life on the streets of the fictional city of Mahishmati. Slated to release on Netflix.

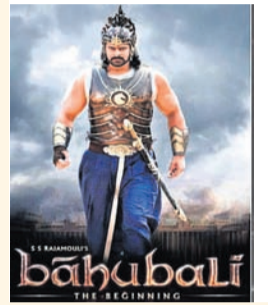
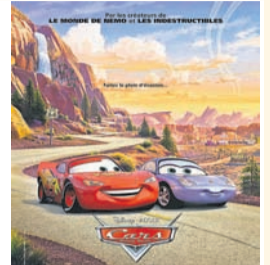
**Loki**  
The OTT series will bring back actor Tom Hiddleston as Loki, the trickster

demi-god and brother to Thor, for new adventures. It will stream on Disney+ Hotstar in 2021.

**Moana**  
Titled Moana: The Series, it takes on from the successful 2016 animated film, which narrates the adventures of a young island princess, who is chosen by the ocean to reunite a mystical relic to a goddess. The spin-off series is being described as a "long-form musical comedy" and slated to release in 2023.

**Boss Baby**  
Based on the film, the spin-off series, "The Boss Baby: Back In Business", follows the Boss Baby as he continues to balance his work as a CEO of Baby Corp and home life schedule. It is available on Netflix.

**Cars**  
The world of "Cars" will expand with a new series. The untitled series will follow Lightning McQueen and Mater on a road trip across the country. It will feature old characters and introduce new characters as well. It is slated to release in 2022.



**Baymax!**  
The Big Hero sidekick and healthcare robot Baymax is getting his own OTT series. Set in San Fransokyo, the show will give Baymax new powers to help people. It will release in 2021.

## Mouni Roy stuns in ethnic chic



**Mumbai:** Actress Mouni Roy looks every inch a stunner in a new photograph she has posted on Instagram. She has chosen to make an ethnic statement, flaunting a perfectly-toned frame in lehenga choli ensemble.

Mouni has paired a multicoloured choli with an ivory embellished lehenga for the photo-op. "Nacho naa Monobina," she wrote as caption, borrowing a line from the song

Monobina, which was pictured on her and superstar Akshay Kumar in the 2018 release, Gold.

Mouni seems to love wearing Indian wear. Not long ago, she shared that she loves wearing saarees and she says that she feels beautiful draped in the outfit.

The actress will next be seen in Ayan Mukerji's action fantasy drama *Brahmastra*, co-starring Amitabh Bachchan, Alia Bhatt, Ranbir Kapoor, and Telugu superstar Nagarjuna.

IANS



## Dhyan Chand biopic in the works

**Mumbai:** The story of hockey legend Dhyan Chand will soon come alive on the big screen, in a biopic directed by Abhishek Chaubey.

The film *Dhyan Chand* will go on floors in 2021. Chaubey, who made *Uda Punjab* and the *Ishqiya* films in the past, has been writing the script for over a year along with Supratik Sen. Casting is underway.

Dhyan Chand, widely acknowledged as the Wizard of Hockey, represented India in the sport from the mid-1920s to 1949. During his career, he helped India win three Olympic Gold medals. He was felicitated with the Padma Bhushan in 1956.

"Dhyan Chand is one of the greatest hockey players in the history of our national Sport, and it is a matter of pride to direct his biopic. We had massive amount of research material in hand and, honestly, every achievement of his life deserves a separate story. I am grateful to have a brilliant creative force like (producer) Ronnie Screwala backing the film, and we cannot wait to get started next year. (We are) Hoping to announce the lead actor soon," said Chaubey. IANS



## Elli clocks 4mn Instagram followers

**Mumbai:** Swedish-Greek actress Elli AvrRam has scored a fan following of four million on Instagram, and she celebrated the feat with a video clip for her fans.

Elli posted the clip on Instagram, where she is seen doing a single hand stand.

"We just became 4 Million... I'll always do my best to be your... LI GHT... To entertain and inspire. Much love to all of you!! And thank you for the constant love and support you guys give me," Elli wrote as caption.

Elli keeps entertaining her fans with her poetry, stunning

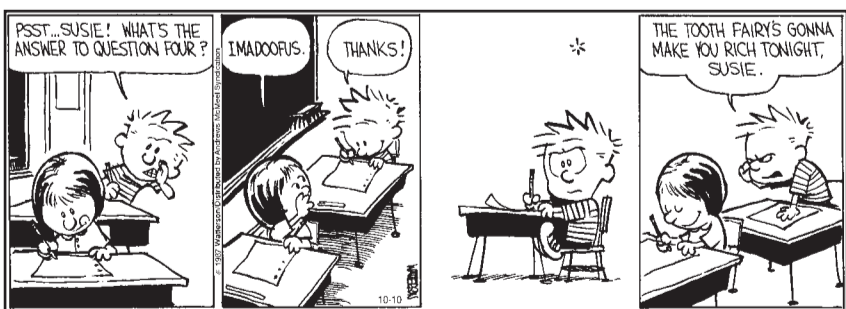
picture and videos.

The actress will soon be seen in a Swedish short film titled *With You*. On the Hindi film front, she featured in Mohit Suri's *Malang* earlier this year. IANS

## PEANUTS



## CALVIN AND HOBBS

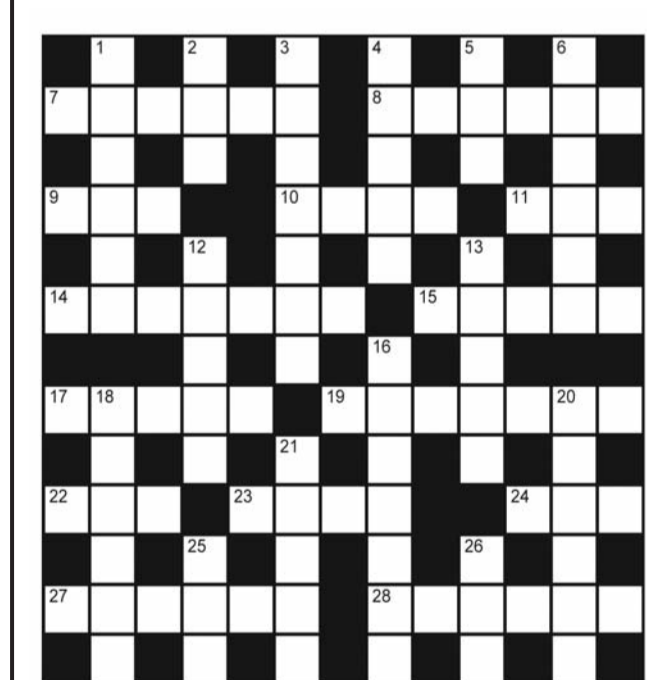


## BREVITY



## FUN post

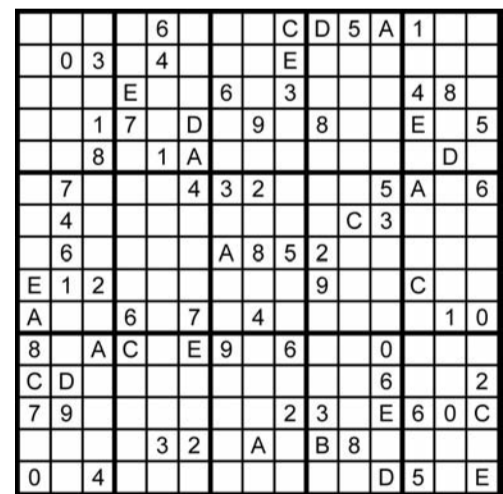
## CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Vow
  - 8 Groove
  - 9 Wetland
  - 10 Arduous journey
  - 11 Camp sack
  - 14 Aquatic bird (3,4)
  - 15 Ladder parts
  - 17 Use a broom
  - 19 Percussion instrument
  - 22 Caribou kin
  - 23 Highlands
  - 24 Doctor's charge
  - 27 French Riviera principality
  - 28 Collared
  - 3 Turtle
  - 4 Frequently
  - 5 Jimmy
  - 6 Chinese tea
  - 12 Fiends
  - 13 Type of jet
  - 16 Bars
  - 18 Deciduous tree
  - 20 Mismatched
  - 21 Sag
  - 25 Cave dweller
  - 26 Flow's partner
- Down**
- 1 Breakfast nook
  - 2 Offbeat

## SUDOKU

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

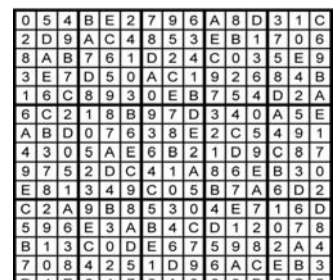


## SOLUTIONS

### CROSSWORD



### SUDOKU

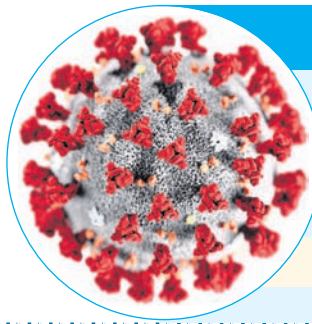


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown

## UPHOLDING TRADITION

Servitors offering *diyās* at the Lions' Gate of Srimandir on the concluding day of *Debadeevapali*, Tuesday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	7,33,60,925	5,14,97,500	16,31,505
India	99,06,657	94,21,940	1,43,747
Odisha	3,24,389	3,19,458	1,815

## Pradhan wants panel for mgmt of 4 temples

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, Dec 15:** Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has urged Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to set up a committee on the line of Shri Jagannath Temple Act-1955 to manage affairs at Maa Biraja Temple in Jajpur, Maa Samaleswari Temple in Sambalpur, Maa Taratarini Temple in Ganjam and Shri Nilamadhaba Temple in Nayagarh.

In a letter to the Chief Minister, the Union minister said these four temples have immense religious and socio-cultural significance to the people of the state. He also said that these temples form an intangible resource of spiritual and devotional tourism, bringing not only millions of footfall and associated revenue but also defining and manifesting in the essential day-to-day life of its citizens.

# Beware! Jamtara gang targeting Capital city

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 15:** Jamtara gang, an interstate cybercrime gang operating from Jharkhand, is now spreading its tentacles in the Capital city here with new targets.

In order to spread awareness among the people, the Commissionerate Police has released a message and cautioned the people to remain alert as the cyber fraudsters of phishing village Jamtara in Jharkhand are engaging unemployed engineers to commit various online frauds.

Warning the people about possible cyber fraud, the cops advised them to stay away from callers who identify themselves as bank officials and requested them to refrain from furnishing any personal information including ATM/Credit Card

and bank account details.

It is pertinent to mention here that cybercrimes in Odisha saw a big jump of 76 per cent in 2019 as compared to the previous year.

Sources said the cyber criminals are resorting to new techniques to swindle money from the accounts of gullible customers.

The gang is luring unemployed IT engineers of various cities in five states including Odisha with job offers. Reports said that the cities like Bhubaneswar in Odisha; Kolkata and Asansol in West Bengal; Alwar, Bharatpur and Mewar in Rajasthan; Gurgaon in Haryana; Mathura, Varanasi and Jalalpur in Uttar Pradesh are on the radar of the interstate cyber fraud gang.

After duping many of crores of rupees in Jamtara, the gang is reportedly trying to lay traps in the



A member of the gang

cities where the internet usage is across all age groups.

Earlier, the email accounts of IPS officer Pranabindu Acharya, Police Commissioner Sudhanshu Sarangi, Inspector General of Police

## CYBERCRIME

The gang is luring unemployed IT engineers of various cities in five states including Odisha with job offers

Commissionerate Police is in touch with police forces of other states to catch members of the gang

Police Commissioner Sudhanshu Sarangi urges denizens, especially the elderly persons, not to respond messages and calls from unknown numbers

(Intelligence) Anup Kumar Sahoo, IAS officer Vineel Krishna and many officers in the Odisha Government had been hacked.

Commissioner of Police, Sudhanshu Sarangi, while ad-

ressing a presser here Tuesday said that more than 100 cybercrime cases have been registered with Commissionerate this year. He also said around 80 per cent of cybercrime incidents in India are committed by the gangs based at Jamtara only.

He said that Commissionerate Police is in touch with police forces of other states to catch members of the gang. He urged denizens, especially the elderly persons, not to respond messages and calls from unknown numbers. They should consult nearby police or the authorised representatives of their banks before sharing any details with the unknown and suspicious random callers, added Sarangi.

He urged the citizens not to share their account details, QR codes, and ATM details with unknown

callers. He said that most of the transactions occurred during the night. The victim wakes up to the shock regarding the withdrawal of a large sum of money from his account. He also advised to use the authorised apps of the respective banks only.

The users need to be extra cautious while responding to unknown messages, emails, and phone calls. He requested the denizens to seek police advice before doing any transaction in haste. Banks have been regularly creating awareness in this regard through emails and messages too.

People should not share OTP of debit or credit cards, said a cyber expert Prashant Sahoo suggesting people to refrain from card swiping at different places.

The Commissionerate Police has released a video of the fraudsters.

# No Zero Night bash in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 15:** Denizens of Capital city who had planned mega celebrations for New Year's Eve may have to look for other ideas as the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), Tuesday, clarified that Zero Night celebrations will not be allowed here this year.

Owing to a possible second wave of the virus, the BMC said that the celebrations will have to wait this year as the city is still not out of the danger yet. He mentioned that those found violating the norms will be fined. Addressing the media, BMC Commissioner Prem Chandra Chaudhary said, "The current Covid-19 guidelines don't allow any celebration on New Year's eve. While Covid cases may have



BMC DIKTAT

Pic for representation

Owing to prevalence of Covid-19 and a possible second wave, the BMC Commissioner stated that the celebrations will have to wait this year as the city is still not out of the danger yet

However, people can celebrate Christmas this year by strictly adhering to Covid-19 norms

## Christmas celebrations allowed

However, in a respite to the Christian community here, the BMC, Tuesday, stated that people will be allowed to celebrate Christmas with a special provision amid the pandemic.

Chaudhary said that people can celebrate Christmas this year by strictly adhering to Covid-19 norms.

He also added that the permission for celebrations will only be given after the Churches furnish the details required as needed under the special provision.

"Members of the Christian community had earlier approached us over Christmas celebrations this year. Keeping in view their request, a special provision has been made for them. They can celebrate Christmas following social distancing norms and with a limited number of guests," Chaudhary said.

"Each and every church has to give a special request and provide details of the space and the number of persons who can be accommodated at a particular point of time. Based on the details, we will issue order for celebration," he added.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



# 29,276 centres for Covid jabs in state

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 15:** The state government has geared up to ensure smooth conduct of the massive vaccination programme.

As per a plan, the government will vaccinate 3.2 lakh health workers and Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) workers in the first phase for which 29,276 centres have been identified, director, Family Planning and vaccination in-charge, Bijaya Panigrahi, told reporters here Tuesday.

Each vaccination centre will have waiting room, vaccination room and observation room. In each centre, 100 to 200 health workers and ICDS workers will be vaccinated. As many as 8,276 vaccinators will be engaged for this purpose, he said.

Every vaccination centre will have one vaccinator, one vaccine officer, one verifier and two supervisors. After vaccination, each health and ICDS worker will be provided



with a certificate after they are kept under observation for at least 30 minutes, Panigrahi said.

For safe storage of vaccines, the state has one state-level vaccine store, nine regional stores and 32 district-level stores. For uninterrupted series of refrigerated production, storage and distribution of vaccines, state has identified 1,222 cold chains, the director further said, adding, state has 1,796 Ice Lined Refrigerators (ILRs) and 1,771 deep freezers for the transportation of the vaccines.

For vaccination, registration of each health worker will be mandatory. There will not be any spot registration, said Director of Medical Education and Training (DMET) CBK Mohanty.

# 12 gunrunners with D-bros links held

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, Dec 15:** The twin city Commissionerate Police Tuesday arrested 12 arms smugglers having links with notorious Dhalasamanta brothers after recovering a huge cache of arms and ammunition from their possession in the Millennium City here.

Acting on a tip-off, the special squad of Commissionerate Police along with officials of Chauhanagar, Malgoda, Jagatpur and Markatnagar police carried out raids at possible hideouts of the smugglers in the respective police limits and made the arrests. Around seven country-made pistols, 35 live ammunition and a sport utility vehicle were recovered from their possession.

"The accused have been supplying arms and ammunition to the antisocials after being instructed by gangster siblings—Sushant and Sushil Dhalasamanta. Investigation is on. More skeletons would tumble out of the closet," a senior police official said.

While Asit Kumar Das, 29, of Badadethilo, Rakesh Mallick, 24, of



The seized guns and bullets

## The accused have been supplying arms and ammunition to antisocials after being instructed by notorious Dhalasamanta brothers

Salajanga and Suryakanta Swain, 27, of Salagaon in Jagatsinghpur district were arrested from Chauhanagar police limits, Braja Kishore Swain, 47, of Khairanga, Ratnakar Das, 40, of Aagar and Dhananjaya Sahoo, 32, of Nuagaon in Jagatsinghpur district were taken into custody from Malgoda police limits here, according to a press note issued by the twin city police.

The team, on the other hand, arrested Rakesh Das, 24, of Alaver; Smruti Ranjan Das, 37, of Galupada and Asish Kumar Jena, 24, of Singipur in Jagatsinghpur district from Jagatpur police limits. Moreover, Subrat Samal, 24, of Ghasia Sahi, Biswajit Pattanaik, 19, of Jhinkiria and Biswajit Samal, 23, of Nima Sahi in Cuttack were nabbed from Markatnagar police limits, it added.

Cases under several Sections of the IPC and 25 of the Arms Act have been registered in this regard at respective police stations, said the official.

# MBA institutions told to start admissions

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 15:** The state government Tuesday directed the chairman of Odisha Joint Entrance Examination (OJEE) to start admissions at all the MBA institutions in the state for the academic year 2020-21.

Skill Development and Technical Education department Joint Secretary AK Nayak, in a letter in this regard to OJEE chairman, said, "The government has decided to allow MBA institutions of Odisha to enrol students in their respective institutions in spot round of counselling process on the basis of marks secured in the qualifying UG exams."

According to the department, candidates who have appeared in any of the entrance tests for admission in MBA institutions and have qualified will be given first preference for admission. Their marks obtained in degree course examinations will not be considered as long as they have secured the minimum number mentioned in the OJEE brochure.



Those who have appeared in any of the entrance tests and qualified will be given first preference for admission

imum number mentioned in the OJEE brochure.

The letter also said, "All other clauses for admissions shall remain the same. This relaxation to the MBA institutions shall be applicable for the academic year 2020-21 only and this cannot be taken as a precedent for the future academic years."

## PET'S DAY OUT



A man carrying his pet dog on his bike in Satyanagar area of Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

# SIDAC gets Centre of Excellence status

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 15:** The State Institute for Development of Arts and Crafts (SIDAC) in the Capital City here has been conferred with the Centre of Excellence (CoE) status by the Union government.

SIDAC is the first state-run institute in the country to impart non-technical training, sources said.

SIDAC is a state government sponsored organisation and it was established in 2004. It has been functioning as an autonomous agency for the development of handicrafts sector in Odisha.

The organisation is managed through a governing body headed by Commissioner-cum-Secretary to Handlooms, Textiles and Handicrafts (HTH) department.

The institute is imparting skill training in handicrafts. It has developed syllabi for the craft courses and standardised the same by implementing the training programmes for more than 10 years, sources added.



With the integration of state-of-art handicrafts and handloom museum 'Kalabhoomi', SIDAC has turned out to be a favoured place for the students from across the country for research activities in the traditional skills as well as related subjects. The organisation has successfully demonstrated its capacity for implementing skill development programmes in different clusters and pockets in state.

Commissioner-cum-Secretary to HTH department and SIDAC chairperson, Subha Sharma, made the final presentation for the status of Centre of Excellence before the standing committee headed by Secretary to the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) November 24 this year. While granting the CoE status,

The organisation has successfully demonstrated its capacity for implementing skill development programmes in different clusters and pockets in state

The MSDE observed that an organisation of the nature and standing of SIDAC has an important role to play in training activity in the informal and non-traditional skilling sector

the MSDE observed that an organisation of the nature and standing of SIDAC has an important role to play in training activity in the informal and non-traditional skilling sector. Besides, the institute has a major role for the training, practice and preservation of rare and dying arts and crafts of the state as well as for wider proliferation of its activities and benefit to the skilling ecosystem.

"This will have positive spinoffs in the form of sharing of best practices with similar institutions in the country as well as mobilisation of global best practices for preservation of rare art and crafts forms," observed the MSDE.

# New tech removes brake vans, guards from trains

# 20 felicitated with Odisha Sahitya Akademi awards

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 15:** The Indian Railways is adopting a cutting-edge technology called End of Train Telemetry (EOTT) which would ensure operation of trains without brake vans and guards.

Operation of trains with EOTT is an ambitious project of Railways for implementation on fast-track mode.

The East Coast Railway (ECoR) has played a pioneering role in leading the way for successful field trial for the first time in Indian Railways in a freight train with EOTT between Talcher and Paradip. Electric Loco Shed, Angul has commissioned and tested the product to make this trial successful.

The EOTT system mainly consists of HOT (head of train) fitted in locomotive and EOT (end of train) fitted on last vehicle of the train. EOTT has Global Positioning System (GPS) module to indicate location of the train, Global System for Mobile communication (GSM) mod-



## HOW IT WORKS

THE EQUIPMENT— END OF TRAIN TELEMETRY (EOTT)— IS DESIGNED TO DO THE GUARD'S JOB BY GIVING INDICATION TO THE LOCO DRIVER

EOTT IS USED TO ESTABLISH COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE LOCOMOTIVE DRIVER AND THE LAST WAGON OF THE TRAIN

ELECTRIC LOCO SHED, ANGUL HAS COMMISSIONED AND TESTED THE PRODUCT TO MAKE THIS TRIAL SUCCESSFUL

THE TECHNOLOGY IS COST EFFECTIVE AS IT REPLACES THE REQUIREMENT OF A GUARD VAN AND GENERATES REVENUES

ule to transfer data to server and radio device for communication & control between HOT (front unit) & EOT (rear unit). High visibility marker light flasher device in EOT

is provided with automatic switching on & off based on the ambient light condition. Brake power pressure of the last vehicle of the train is displayed to train driver in the HOT

display in cab of the locomotive. The train driver can confirm brake power pressure drop in the train up to last vehicle during application of air brake by observing brake power

pressure of last vehicle remotely in the HOT display. It has provision to apply emergency brake from last vehicle of the train by opening a valve in EOT remotely from the cab of locomotive.

It has the provision for automatic application of train emergency air brakes also from the rear when emergency train air brake is applied by loco pilot in the cab and the simultaneous application of brake from front and rear will reduce the braking distance and time for controlling the train. In case of train parting confirmed by loco pilot, emergency brake from EOT, if required by train driver can be applied in order to bring the rear portion to an early halt. These available provisions will boost the confidence of loco pilots during running of trains with EOTT. This technology will eliminate the requirement of brake van and practice of employing guard in the train. One additional wagon can be connected in place of brake van thereby enhancing the scope of earning revenue.



The awardees at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 15:** Odisha Sahitya Akademi felicitated the winners of Akademi awards for 2015 and 2016 at Rabindra Mandap here, Tuesday.

Odisha Sahitya Akademi had July 10 declared the list of Akademi award winners for 2015 and 2016 across nine categories.

The winners were felicitated by Odia Language, Literature and Culture Minister Jyotiprakash Panigrahi in presence of Akademi Chairman Harihar Mishra.

On the occasion, the minister said the government had increased the cash reward for the development of Odia literature. He also informed that by March 2021 all the remaining awards will be given. Also, from next year the awards will be given annually.

For year 2015, the winners are: Nityananda Panda for novel *Gotie Jodi Gaanra Kahani*, Pabitra Panigrahi for short story *Gapara Munha*, Binapani Panda for poetry *Godhuli Geeta*, Sanjay Hati and Naveen Kumar Parida for drama *Manchamaya Natua* and *Natua O Anyanya* respectively, Panchanan Mishra for the essay and critical analysis *Sahitya Samalochana Tattwika O Prayogika Prasanga*, Dharanidhar Panigrahi

for biography *Louhmanava Sardar Patel*, Bijay Kumar Mohanty for translation *Tathapi Kichi Rahijiba*, Rabindra Biswal for children literature *Gachhatiyee O Geetatiye* and Manoj Mohanty for Lyrical writing *Prati Palakare Tume*.

For year 2016, the winners are: Laxmipriya Acharya for novel *Amba*, Devdas Chhotray for short story *Ramaku Maribara Panchati Upaya*, Bhagban Jaysingh for poetry *Pheranti Ghara*, Fakir Singh for drama *Atmalipi O Anyanya*, Prasanna Kumar Swain for essay and critical analysis *Alochana Prasanga*, Surendra Kumar Maharana for Biography and travelogue *Professor Navin Kumar Sahu & Pradosh Patnaik for Biography and Travelogue Chaichi...Chilibi Napatibi Thaki*, Sarada Ratha for translation work *Meghabahana*, Debendra Choudhury for Children Literature *Chuin Chadhei*, Satyanarayana Mishra for lyrical writing *Mishra Raaga*.

This apart, 15 other writers were felicitated for the year 2019 by the Akademi Tuesday. They received cash prize of Rs 1 lakh along with award and citation while Akdemi winners for 2015 and 2016 got Rs 2 lakh along with awards and citations.

# Rainwater harvesting at Biju Patnaik Park



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 15:** The Biju Patnaik Park here became the first park in the city to adopt land-based Rainwater Harvesting (RWH) system on its premises.

Observing the constant water-logging and flooding in state capital, the Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) had proposed to install RWH system in the park in January this year. Constructed at a cost of Rs 11 lakh, the RWH structure has about nine recharge pits spreading over 22 acres.

"The purpose of putting up rainwater harvesting structures in parks is to recharge the groundwater. Usually, a huge quantity of rainwater goes into drains and wasted. With little planning and expenditure, we can easily stop the waste of this precious resource and use it for recharging the groundwater on a massive scale," said BDA Chief Engineer Rajendra Kumar Nayak.

As per individual reports, the state capital receives about 1,200 mm rainfall every year. While 25 per cent gets charged into groundwater, the remaining runs off or goes

**CONSTRUCTED AT A COST OF ₹11 LAKH, THE RWH STRUCTURE HAS ABOUT NINE RECHARGE PITS SPREADING OVER 22 ACRES**

into drains. Observing this, the BDA has planned to introduce this facility in around 32 parks across the city. The facilities are being developed with an aim to create awareness among citizens, especially children, on the need for conserving water.

"If we undertake rainwater harvesting in every park, we can replenish groundwater on a massive scale. For each square metre of area, we can collect about 1,000 litres of water per year. A park of 200 square metres area can conserve 2 lakh litres of water every year," Nayak added. Welcoming the move, urban planners here said that the initiative should be extended to all small and large parks in the city that occupy large areas of land.



**PAT FOR GRAMIN DAK SEVAK:** Orissa Postal Circle Chief Post Master General Colonel Jaleswar Kanhar hands over 'Meghdoot Award' to Kirtan Nayak, a Gramin Dak Sevak under Berhampur circle, at an event organised in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday. Nayak is the first person from Odisha to receive the prestigious national-level award as he extended the postal services and helped 4,112 persons withdraw money during Covid-19 pandemic. Director of Postal Services Aditya Kumar Nayak is also seen

# Delay in wage payments to invite action: CM

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 15:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday directed the district magistrates (DMs) to ensure that not a single poor family suffers from lack of livelihood in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic.

Naveen was reviewing the implementation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) and urban livelihood mission in all the districts through videoconferencing with the Collectors.

"The Covid-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented challenge before us since last March. The world economic growth has slowed down and the poor people have suffered the most. The government's priority is to ensure employment in this difficult time for the poor," he said. Stating the government has taken

steps to provide livelihood support to the poor people through MGNREGS and state's own urban livelihood mission, Naveen said the two programmes are expected to create 20 crore man-days by the end of the current financial year.

The CM has warned the District Collectors that strict action will be taken if there is delay in payment of wages under the two schemes. Emphasizing on timely payment of wages to the beneficiaries, the Chief Minister advised the collectors to monitor it by regularly calling the beneficiaries under Mo Sarkar programme. From January 1, 2021, each district will have a separate Mo Sarkar cell to get feedback from beneficiaries of livelihood programmes, he said.

The CM congratulated the DMs of Jajpur, Koraput and Subarnapur for their excellent work towards the achievement of the MGNREGS

**The CM congratulated the DMs of Jajpur, Koraput and Subarnapur for their excellent work towards the achievement of the MGNREGS targets**

targets. Special focus will be given to the migration prone districts. He mentioned that additional 100 man-days and enhanced wages will be given to each family in such districts. Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy said the administration is giving emphasis to create 20 crore man-days in the state. Steps are being taken to provide livelihood support to the marginal farmers and landless agricultural labourers, he said.

Panchayati Raj secretary DK Singh said that the government has issued 7.26 lakh job cards under MGNREGS this year while only 2.96 lakh job cards were issued last year. Employment has been provided to 51 lakh persons of 31 lakh families by creating 14.50 crore man-days.

Similarly, Housing and Urban Development secretary G Mathivathan said that 8,000 employment generation projects have been taken up in 114 urban local bodies, of which 5,000 have been completed and all the other projects are at various stages of completion. Participating in the discussion, Secretary to Chief Minister (ST) VK Pandian advised Collectors to ensure active involvement of Mission Shakti members for supervision of the programmes and timely payment of their entitlement.

# Jayanta seeks early rehab of evicted Puri shopkeepers



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 15:** Puri MLA Jayanta Sarangi Tuesday said that the shopkeepers near Srimandir have been suffering due to delay in the development and beautification works being carried out by the government near the Srimandir.

The BJP MLA fired salvos against the government on the issue and demanded early rehabilitation of the shopkeepers who have lost their shops during the process.

"I have never been against development works. But I want that the people who are suffering due to that should not suffer much. The government must act and provide assistance expeditiously to the people who have lost their shops, livelihood and others owing to the development works carried out by the government near Srimandir," he said.

He said that a number of people in Badadanda are now helpless due to their shops been taken over in the name of development. "The shopkeepers there have faced the double whammy of demolition in the name of development and Covid-19 outbreak," he said.

He also said, "The government bulldozed the shops of many overnight without notice. On the other side, it has failed to make new shops though several months have passed." The legislator said that the government made tall claims that people who had shops would get new outlets under the new beautification project. "However, it has failed to hand over a single new shop. The construction works are non starter. It will take two to three years to make it," he said.

## Restaurant fined

**Bhubaneswar:** The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation, Tuesday, slapped Rs 20,000 penalty on a city-based hotel-cum-restaurant for violation of Covid-19 guidelines. In a drive conducted by the BMC's South East Enforcement team, Hotel Priya at Kharavel Nagar was found violating social distancing norms.

## CLASSIFIED

### LOST

I, Siddhartha Shankar Panda, S/o. Late Tirthankar Panda, R/o. At/P.O./P.S./Tahasil-Attabira, Dist.-Bargarh declared that a Sale Deed bearing RSD No. 2292/56, Dt.01.08.1998, Volume No. 31 of SRO Bargarh has been lost somewhere. That the above Sale Deed is not traceable in spite of our sincere try and effort.

## CHORUS FOR FEE REDUCTION



Students of Ravenshaw University in Cuttack, Tuesday, demonstrate near the varsity Registrar's office demanding reduction of admission and readmission fees

# 'Rape case against Sanakhemundi MLA at Panigrahi's behest'

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, Dec 15:** Issues for tainted Gopalpur MLA Pradeep Panigrahi are increasing by the day. Now, a woman from Gandhinagar area in Ganjam district has lodged an FIR with Ganjam SP Brijesh Kumar Rai alleging that Panigrahi had forced her to lodge a rape case against Sanakhemundi MLA Ramesh Jena in 2016.

The woman Tuesday said that the Gopalpur MLA promised her to give a job to her daughter in TATA Motors in 2016. In return of the favour, Panigrahi asked the woman to lodge a rape case against Ramesh Jena in the police station. However, Panigrahi didn't keep his promise and duped her, she added.

On the other hand, the SP advised the woman to lodge the same complaint at the Crime Barnch of Odisha as the cops of the crime

## CB takes Gopalpur MLA on 2-day remand

**BHUBANESWAR:** The Crime Branch sleuths Tuesday took Gopalpur MLA Pradeep Panigrahi on a 2-day remand for further interrogation in connection with the alleged job scam. Panigrahi has been lodged in Jharpada jail after the SDJM court sent him on a 14-day judicial custody December 3. Sources claimed CB sleuths will succeed in eliciting incriminating information from the MLA during interrogation in remand period. Earlier, the CB, ADGP Soumendra Priyadarshi had revealed that Panigrahi had allegedly collected money from two persons on behalf of Akash Pathak, son of shunted IFS officer Abhay Kant.

branch department are presently probing the Gopalpur MLA case.

Notably, the three-time MLA was arrested December 3 from his residence and was remanded to judicial custody for 14 days. Panigrahi was arrested for his alleged involvement in a job fraud racket. Currently, he is lodged in Jharpada jail. The report was lodged by Tata Motors at the Cyber Police Station. Tata Motors officials had lodged

a report accusing Akash Pathak — son of suspended IFS officer Abhay Kant Pathak — of duping several job aspirants on the pretext of providing them with jobs in the automobile major. Akash allegedly duped 67 persons from Gopalpur by impersonating the MD of the company. Tata Motors authorities had come up with a clarification saying that Akash had never been a Tata Motors employee.

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# When will be CIRB in place

THREE YEARS ON, FORMATION OF COASTAL INDIA RESERVE BATTALION FOR MANNING THE COASTLINES CAUGHT IN RED-TAPISM

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kendrapara, Dec 15:** Even as three years have passed since the state government wrote to the Centre highlighting the need for formation of a Coastal India Reserve Battalion (CIRB) to man the vast stretches of coastline in the country and the state, the proposal is yet to become a reality, a report said.

As a result, coastal security in the state still remains vulnerable to terrorist threat, drug smuggling, illegal fishing and infiltration in the absence of a separate force to man the coastline.

Reports said that the state government wrote to the Union Home Minister in 2017 urging him to give approval for formation of the separate battalion to man the vast coastlines in the state.

In the letter, the then additional secretary, Asit Kumar Tripathy had advanced the reason behind formation of a separate force for coastal security in the state.

He had stated that the formation of a separate force will greatly help the marine police stations in the state to keep the illegal activities in the sea waters under check. Since then, three years have passed but the Centre is yet to make its intention clear on this proposal.

A resident Matrudutt Mohanty said that the state has 480-km-long coastline out of which 48 km lies



FILE PHOTO

**Establishment of CIRB is essential for coastal security... The marine police station has proved itself useful in checking infiltration to some extent**

BRAHMANANDA GAGARIN MOHANTY I ASP

alone in

Kendrapara district. The marine police stations like Talachua, Tantiapal and Jambu have been established along these coastlines in this district.

However, these police stations are always plagued by staff crunch and lack of proper infrastructure which has severely hit their functioning. As a result, infiltration into the district through sea route has increased in recent days as

these police officials do not have boats to move in the sea.

Notably, 1237 refugees were rehabilitated in the remote areas of the district during the India-Pakistan war for liberation of Bangladesh. Their numbers have grown exponentially since then which now stand at over 76,000. Similarly, people infiltrating into the district through sea-routes have set their eyes on Bhitarkanika National Park. This problem will be resolved to a great extent if the CIRB is formed and deployed in the state.

Another resident Amarbar Biswal said that police busted a fake radio station at Banipal near Bhitarkanika in 2001 which was found broadcasting secret defence details about the Wheeler Island, the missile testing centre of DRDO.

Similarly, people in a fishing trawler, which was seized by the Rajnagar forest department, shot dead a forest guard in 2002. An exchange of fire also took place between the forest officials and fishermen illegally fishing in the sea water near the Olive Ridley nesting site of Gahirmatha.

Similar reports of arms, drugs and fake currency smuggling is nothing new in this area. Therefore, it is high time the CIRB should be formed which will help in keeping a check on all these illegal activities.

Social activist Pratap Chandra Padhi said several Bangladeshi boats have been seized during last three years if we go by the seizure list of forest department. This year alone, over 10 fishing boats have been seized for straying into the sea waters near Gahirmatha.

The infiltrator are earning in lakhs through poaching in Bhitarkanika, encroachment of forest land and by establishing illegal prawn gheries. He said the formation of CIRB is highly essential for coastal security as well as for upkeep of the bio-diversity in Bhitarkanika.

When contacted, ASP Brahmananda Gagarin Mohanty admitted that establishment of CIRB is essential for coastal security while stating that the marine police station have proved useful in checking infiltration to some extent.

# WORK ON JODA FLYOVER PROJECT IS YET TO START

CM NAVEEN PATNAIK LAID THE FOUNDATION STONE OF THE PROJECT NOVEMBER 12, 2020, THROUGH VIDEO CONFERENCING

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Joda, Dec 15:** Clouds of uncertainty are hovering over a flyover project proposed in Joda town of Keonjhar for various reasons, a report said.

According to the report, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik laid the foundation stone of this ambitious project November 12, 2020, through video conferencing. The 4.87-km-long bridge project has been estimated at a cost of ₹206.02 crore. It will start from DAV School to Joda Government Hospital.

However, locals are unsure of when the work of this bridge project will begin.

Odisha Bridge Construction Corporation Limited (OBCCCL) had floated a tender for its construction. A Gujarat-based construction company bagged the contract, but it has not yet signed an agreement with the OBCCCL.

On the other hand, the OBCCCL has opened an office at PWD inspection bungalow. A junior engineer and another employee have been appointed in the office.

Junior engineer Dhaneswar Majhi said that steps will be initiated soon for land acquisition.

The flyover will be of 12 metre



**O**disha Bridge Construction Corporation Limited (OBCCCL) had floated a tender for its construction

**A** Gujarat-based construction company bagged the contract, but it has not yet signed an agreement with the OBCCCL

width while two service roads (each 5.5 metre wide) will pass under the flyover. Drains with 5.5 meter width will be constructed on both sides of the services roads.

Meanwhile, OBCCCL has issued letters to Nesco, OPTCL, BSNL, the Forest department and Joda municipality to remove their re-

spective infrastructures - electricity poles, telephone poles, and roadside trees.

However, an underground slurry pipeline laid by a private mines company will create a hurdle in the construction of the flyover, said Niranjana Bohidar, president of Joda Bikash Parishad.

He added that though a month has passed since the foundation-laying of the project, certain statutory factors are allegedly delaying the project.

The work for the project will be started only after the Gujarat-based company signs the agreement with the OBCCCL. Official sources said that timeline of the project construction will be fixed.

# Nayagarh kids forbidden from outdoor playing

Due to the two recent cases of minor girls being killed by miscreants, parents are wary about their children's security

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nayagarh, Dec 15:** If this hamlet's lanes and by-lanes are devoid of scenes like children playing, do not be surprised. The fact behind this sudden shift in scenes is due to the two recent cases of minor girls being killed by miscreants, forcing parents to keep their children indoors.

According to advocate Amiya Patnaik, the police investigation in cases relating to minors going missing or being killed left a lot to be desired. The police are not giving as much importance to such complaints as they ought to and the recent Pari and Swati cases have proven it. This is the reason why people's dependence on police is constantly declining.

"At the same time, the police department is also short staffed which is compromising its efficiency. The Mahila and Shishu desks are in



name only," he rued.

Nayagarh district Congress president Ranjit Dash said a strange sort of fear has gripped the parents across the district. As a precaution to avoid Pari and Swati-like fate visiting upon their children, they have already stopped allowing their children to play outside.

Echoing the same, BJP district president Lala Manoj Ray said the Pari-death case points to the police's failure. Our party will continue its fight till justice is deliv-

# Swati's body recovered from pond

**RANPUR:** The body of Swati, a three-year-old girl who had gone missing since December 11, was recovered from a pond at Badhipatna village under Sarankul block in Nayagarh district Tuesday. Some local residents spotted the body of the minor girl. They immediately informed the victim's family members and the police.

Police reached the spot, recovered the body and sent it for post-mortem. The minor's body had grievous injury marks around the eyes. Locals alleged that the miscreants who killed her had tried to



gouge out her eyes.

Meanwhile, the victim's father Sanjay alleged that local residents are behind the death of his daughter. He said that his daughter had

never gone out of the village.

The police are also tight-lipped about the incident. They have said that only the post-mortem report will provide them some leads in solving the case.

Swati was last seen at about 2.00pm Friday while playing near her house, reports said. Thereafter, she went missing. Family members lodged a complaint with the police at the Rajsunakhala outpost after failing to locate her. The gruesome deaths of Pari and Swati have shocked people across Nayagarh district.

ered to Pari's family.

CPI (M) leader Bishwanath Mohapatra accused the government

of playing down a sensitive case like the Pari-death case, allowing the culprit in the case to roam freely.

Notably, in both the cases, Pari and Swati went missing while playing with their friends near their houses.

# 'Irregularities' in paddy procurement in Sambalpur, Malkangiri

Farmers seek intervention of the dist admin and state govt alleging 'middlemen's involvement' in preparing forged documents in the name of farmers



FILE PHOTO

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sambalpur/Malkangiri, Dec 15:** Alleging irregularities in paddy procurement at cooperative societies and procurement centres (mandi) in Malkangiri and Sambalpur districts, local farmers Tuesday warned the district administrations of protests.

Farmers in Malkangiri district said that at MV-72 mandi some middlemen registered themselves as farmers of the district for which they had got the identity cards from cooperative societies.

The farmers demanded intervention of the district administration and state government accusing 'middlemen's involvement' in preparing forged documents in the name of farmers.

The farmers also alleged that the staff of cooperative societies have also a good equation with the middlemen for which they got identity cards as farmers. They further alleged that the middlemen are purchasing paddy from farmers at cheaper rates and selling them to cooperative societies through fake identity cards at a higher price.

Similarly, many farmers in Sambalpur alleged that officials of Supply department have registered names of some farmers who do not really exist in the district.

"Ghost farmers are participating in paddy procurement process, this has delayed procurement of paddy from genuine peasants," said a farmer.

Meanwhile, reports from Sambalpur added that BJP has announced to hold a farmers convention in Bargarh December 22 to explain the benefits of Centre's new farm laws to the farmers. Senior BJP leaders will attend the meeting and explain about the new farm laws to the farmers.

This was stated here by BJP state president Samir Mohanty at a press meet held here Tuesday. He alleged that the farmers in the state are at the receiving end due to the reduction in weight (katni-chhatni) of paddy during paddy procurement at mandis. This in order, is pushing the farmers to exploitation. He said the mandis are always plagued by severe mismanagement while the farmers are suffering due to unavailability of tokens ahead of paddy procurement.

# ₹11cr Ramial bridge gets Nabard's nod

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Dhenkanal, Dec 15:** Commuting problem for scores of residents in Kamakshyanagar sub-division of Dhenkanal district will be over as a bridge will be set up across Ramial river between Jamunakote and Marthapur.

Nabard has given green signal to the bridge project estimated at a cost of ₹11 crore. The Roads and Buildings department will execute the project.

The bridge will facilitate commuting link with NH-53 passing through Kamakshyanagar and Bhuban. The bridge will be of 120

metre long and 11 metre wide.

Nabard has approved its cost estimate at ₹11 crore while the project will require the administrative approval.

After completion of the bridge, it will facilitate communication from Pandua Chhak to Jiral, Marthapur, Jamunakote and Bhuban.

**MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, RAIRANGPUR**  
Phone No. 06794-222054  
E-mail ID: rairangpurn.hud@ori.nic.in  
rrpurnac@gmail.com  
"e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE  
TENDER CALL NOTICE No. 159 / Dt.11.12.2020  
BID IDENTIFICATION No. T4RRP2020-21

1. Name of the Work	: Civil Works
2. Total No. Works	: 3 Nos.
3. Estimated Cost	: 33.80 lacks to 84.06 lacks
4. Class of Contractors	: As per DTCN
5. Period of Completion	: As per DTCN
6. Availability of Tender Online for Bidding	: 14.12.2020 at 10.00 A.M. to 28.12.2020 upto 5.00 P.M.
7. Tender Box Offline Dropping	: 29.12.2020 upto 5.00 P.M.
8. Date & time of opening of Tender	: 30.12.2020 at 11.00 A.M.

Other details can be seen from the website [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in).

**Sd./- Executive Officer Rairangpur Municipality**

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, JEYPORE (R&B) DIVISION, JEYPORE**  
E-mail ID: eerbjepore@rocketmail.com, ID: ee\_randbjep@gmail.com, Tel. & Fax: 06854-231114(O)  
**e-Procurement Notice**  
Bid Identification No. E.E. (R&B) - 06/2020-21/JYP(K)  
No. 4855 Date: 07.12.2020  
No. B-519: Bid documents consisting of work, Estimated cost, cost of tender paper, EMD, Time of completion, Class of contractors and the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in Govt. website i.e. [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in).

- Name of the Work : Civil Work as mentioned in DTCN
- No. of Works : 4 Nos.
- Estimated Cost : Rs. 38.66 lakhs to Rs. 49.22 lakhs
- Period of Completion : 4 Months
- Date & time of Bidding : From 11.00 hours of 17.12.2020 upto 16.00 hours of 27.12.2020
- Last date & time for receipt of bids in portal : 16.00 hours of 27.12.2020
- Bids received online shall be opened on : 11.00 hours of 28.12.2020
- Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid : Executive Engineer, Jeypore (R&B) Division, Jeypore

Further details can be seen from the [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in)  
Executive Engineer, Jeypore (R&B) Division  
OIPR-34027/11/0007/2021

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MINOR IRRIGATION DIVISION, JAJPUR**  
Mail ID: eemijapur@gmail.com; Phone No. 06728-222008  
**E-Procurement Notice**  
Bid Identification No. 06/EE MID JAJ 2020-21

Name of work	Civil Construction works as mentioned in the website.
No. of Works:	16 (Sixteen) Nos.
Estimated Cost:	Varies from Approximately Rs. 14.86 lakhs to Rs. 59.88 lakhs.
Period of completion:	90 (Ninety) days.
Availability of Bid documents:	From Dated: 16.12.2020 at 10.00 A.M to Dated: 23.12.2020 upto 5.00 P.M in website ( <a href="http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in">www.tendersorissa.gov.in</a> ).
Time of receipt of bid through online:	From Dated: 16.12.2020 at 10.00 A.M to Dated: 23.12.2020 upto 5.00 P.M.
Date of opening of bid documents:	Dated: 24.12.2020
Date of Lottery:	Dated: 28.12.2020 at 11.30 A.M. (If required)
Last date of Submission of APS:	Dated: 02.01.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.
Mode of Payment of Bid Cost & Bid Security	Govt. of Odisha has introduced e-payment gateway in to the portal for payment of cost of Bid & Bid security/ EMD. The process of using e-payment gate is mentioned in the "Procedure for electronic receipt, accounting & reporting of cost of tender paper & Earnest money deposit on submission of bid. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "https://tendersorissa.gov.in"
Name and address of the OIT:	Executive Engineer, M.I. Division, Jajpur, At: Bhabaniganj, Po: Anukula, Jajpur, PIN-755001, E-mail: eemijapur@gmail.com

**Sd./- Executive Engineer, M.I. Division, Jajpur**  
OIPR-32280/11/0002/2021

**NOTIFICATION**  
No. MM-109: This is for information of all concerned that, the following forest roads of Deogarh Forest Division, Deogarh will remain closed to the traffic on Dated 30th December, 2020 from Zero hours to 24 hours in accordance with Rule 284 of Odisha Forest Department Code, 1979. The movement of traffic on the date as specified above will be violation of section 26 of Odisha Forest Act and hence will be liable for prosecution.

Sl. No.	Name of the Forest Road	Name of the District	Name of the Range	Length in K.M.
1	2	3	4	5
1	Pathar Garh - Kailash	Deogarh	Deogarh	4.00
2	Kansar Hiran	Deogarh	Deogarh	9.00
3	Suguda Gundiapali	Deogarh	Deogarh	13.00
4	Badbahal - Laimura	Deogarh	Deogarh	4.00
5	Jharpur - Laimura	Deogarh	Deogarh	4.00
6	Kholdihi - Gollo	Deogarh	Deogarh	4.00
7	Kailash - Gollo	Deogarh	Deogarh	3.00
8	Khairpali Palsama	Deogarh	Reamal	3.00
9	Chhuriabahal - Tusula	Deogarh	Barkote	19.00
10	Thianal Autal	Deogarh	Barkote	17.00
11	Bamparada Kadalidhi	Deogarh	Barkote	2.25
12	Kadalidhi - Jalisuan	Deogarh	Barkote	7.00
13	Tusula Parposhi	Deogarh	Barkote	12.00
14	Damita Pachherpani	Deogarh	Barkote	3.50
15	Bamparada - Netrabahal	Deogarh	Barkote	2.50
<b>Sub-Total of Deogarh District</b>				<b>107.25</b>
16	Jamardihi Nagira	Angul	Pallahara	13.50
17	Chargachhia - Kurlma - Turaghati	Angul	Pallahara	5.00
18	Bankdarh - Jamardihi	Angul	Pallahara	9.00
19	Kuchiabada - Raipal	Angul	Khamar	15.00
20	Dimiria - Ranja	Angul	Pallahara	1.50
<b>Sub-Total Angul District</b>				<b>44.00</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>				<b>151.25</b>

**Sd./- Divisional Forest Officer, Deogarh Division**  
OIPR-0804/11/0001/2021



One who loves God finds the object of his love everywhere.

SRI AUROBINDO



# After Thoughts

As 2020 comes to an end, it will be remembered as a year which shattered lives across the globe on an unprecedented scale. While the health concerns overpowered people's mind space, there came along a few books, both at the international and national level that drew attention. The latter half of the year has turned out to be a season of tell-all books, one written by former US President Barack Obama, another by former President of India Pranab Mukherjee and also by outgoing US President Donald Trump's niece Mary Trump.

The books by Obama and Mary Trump deal with US and world politics while the memoirs of Pranab Mukherjee, 'The Presidential Years', set to hit the stands next month, dissects, among other things, the malaise afflicting the Congress party and the dangers being posed to the country by the style of functioning of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Although Pranab's credibility had taken a beating, yet his exposes may cause some minor flutter both within the BJP and Congress. The Congress had pushed hard for Pranab's presidential candidature yet he did not bat an eyelid before sacrificing all that his benefactor party stood for by going to the RSS headquarters at Nagpur to get acceptability as the Prime Ministerial candidate, should the BJP not be able to go it alone in 2019. Pranab died a sad man since elections took a completely different turn than what he had envisaged. While many may praise Pranab for his daring commentary in his book about Congress President Sonia Gandhi and former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, it may be noted that he never uttered a word to correct course in both UPA I and II in both of which he was a very senior minister. Like all others, Pranab's complicit silence when he enjoyed power has been the bane of the party tottering to collapse.

Interestingly, most Indians adorning high positions of power, be it political, military, bureaucratic or even corporate, have always preferred to remain silent and partnered all evil deeds. Those who have spoken up or written books, like Pranab, have done so at the end of their physical existence or when they are totally convinced of their irrelevance after losing power. Here is an excerpt from Pranab's book: "Some members of the Congress have theorized that, had I become the PM in 2004, the party might have averted the 2014 Lok Sabha drubbing. Though I don't subscribe to this view, I do believe that the party's leadership lost political focus after my elevation as president." This shows Pranab as an extremely ungrateful person who was concerned only with his personal aggrandisement but never bothered about keeping the larger interests of the party that gave him all the prominence that he ever attained in his life.

Pranab was never a man of the masses. Most of his career spent as Union Minister was as a Rajya Sabha member. He could wangle a Lok Sabha seat from the Left combine in West Bengal only after decapitating the Congress in that state.

While it is true that the Gandhi family as well as the whole of the Congress has never learnt a lesson and has always preferred to pose a family member as the party head, the other side of the coin also shows that rest of the leaders within the party, starting from Pranab to Sibal have all opted to benefit from the power and pelf but never contributed to the organisation. That is the sole reason for which the Indian National Congress stands decimated and virtually destroyed today.

# AUTHORITARIAN AWAKENING

FOCUS SOCIETY

Although Donald Trump will pack his bags and leave the White House on January 20, he has presided over an authoritarian awakening among a large swath of the American population - one that will persist long after he is gone. As president, Trump not only deployed racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, and Islamophobic rhetoric, but actually baked it into his policies. Nonetheless, more than 74 million Americans voted for him in 2020.



"Make America Great Again" offers the promise of restoring the lost privileges and status for those whose sensibilities are offended by a changing world

But how does this dynamic explain Trump's share of the black and Hispanic vote? As it happens, there is a common thread uniting conservative whites, Asian Trump supporters, and a significant portion of African-Americans and Latinos: a disposition known as right-wing authoritarianism. RWA comprises certain psychological traits that map onto individuals with an "authoritarian personality." This personality type has many dimensions, but a key component concerns the perception and exercise of power.

RWA is the tie that binds Trump's rainbow coalition. As political scientist Matthew C. MacWilliams of the University of Massachusetts Amherst shows, 2016 Republican primary voters who scored high on RWA were more likely to vote for Trump than for other GOP candidates.

In a November 2016 paper, "American Authoritarianism in Black and White," MacWilliams finds that on average, African-Americans outscore whites on RWA. Here, a particularly illuminating data point is the social and organising function of religion in African-American life. MacWilliams finds that those who attend church on a regular basis exhibit more RWA tendencies, on average. And similar research since the 1950s has shown that Mexican-Americans, too, are more authoritarian-leaning than white Americans, probably also owing to their churchgoing.

Instead of trying to sort Trump voters by skin color or gender, a more nuanced view of psychology might help us understand why the 45th president appeals to so many voters whose ethnic, religious, and sexual identities he has mercilessly disparaged. Unless we improve our understanding of these voters' overriding identification with those able and willing to exercise power, and their own latent thirst for power, we risk being blindsided by it again.

The writer is Professor of International Management and Faculty Director of Action Learning at the MIT Sloan School of Management.

PROJECT SYNDICATE



Yasheng Huang

TRUMP ACTUALLY GAINED SUPPORT FROM ALL OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS THAT HE HAD MALIGNED, INSULTED, AND HARMED, GARNERING MORE BLACK, HISPANIC, AND MUSLIM VOTES THAN HE DID IN 2016

Even more strikingly, exit polls suggest that Trump actually gained support from all of the demographic groups that he had maligned, insulted, and harmed, garnering more black, Hispanic, and Muslim votes than he did in 2016. Asian-Americans also pivoted to Trump, voting for him by a larger margin than they did for him in 2016. And Trump won around 55 per cent of white women in 2020. In two consecutive elections, the majority of white women chose a blatant misogynist over a female presidential or vice-presidential candidate.

Writing in the Washington Post just after this year's election, Fareed Zakaria argued that there is no common ground among ethnic and religious minority groups, the implication being that their members found Trump appealing for different reasons. But this is the wrong way to frame the issue. Trump created his rainbow coalition, and his supporters are more blindly loyal than President-elect Joe Biden's. The right question, then, is what united minority Trump supporters, both among themselves and with his white supporters.

To be sure, Biden has his own rainbow coalition, but he earned it through hard work, sincerity, and conscientiousness. He put an African-American woman on his ticket and promised to protect the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) immigration policy. By contrast, Trump was showered with support from the very people he savagely attacked and harmed. He has referred to immigrants from Latin America as "drug dealers, criminals, rapists," and has presided over the separation of migrant families at the US-Mexico border. Nonetheless, he increased his Hispanic support in critical districts this election cycle.

Mexico border. Nonetheless, he increased his Hispanic support in critical districts this election cycle.

Trump's trade war with China, moreover, had a devastating impact on rural America. But that didn't stop him from winning Iowa and other farm states by a healthy margin. Likewise, some first-generation Chinese immigrants (with PhDs and Ivy League credentials) are fervent Trump supporters, despite his malicious labeling of COVID-19 as the "China virus."

The common foundation supporting this vast Trumpian tent of rural whites, Latinos in Texas, Chinese-American entrepreneurs, white suburban women, and a small but growing share of black men is a deep-seated notion of authority - a more primordial disposition than ethnic tribalism, religious affiliation, and sexual identity. These voters worship power and the powerful, and identify with all exercises of power by their chosen leader.

This perspective can explain a wide range of Trump supporters' attitudes. His racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, and Islamophobic utterances are each an assertion of power. Racism is a power play, exercised by whites over other ethnic groups; sexism is also a power play, exercised by men over women. Religious intolerance and xenophobia are power plays in the same fashion.

"Make America Great Again" offers the promise of restoring lost privileges and status for those whose sensibilities are offended by a changing world.

In economics, the "circular flow of money" describes how a cost incurred by one person in the economy amounts to income for somebody else. Buying a loaf of bread is a cost to me, but it is income to the baker. Now apply this idea to politics. A white woman is a victim of misogyny; but in a Trumpian world, she also belongs to a class of victors (whose dominance is demonstrated through racism and xenophobia). In this hierarchical vision of the world, white women may be reduced to handmaids, but at least they can still exercise power over others, such as black people and immigrants. In this scenario, while others hold power over her in one instance, she can simultaneously hold power over others in a separate exchange.

I got my first glimpse of this circular flow of power in 2016. I had just delivered a speech on why so many Chinese supported Trump, and a young MIT alumnus shared an exchange she had had with a classmate who said he was okay with a white-supremacist president as long as he, as a young Chinese immigrant, could discriminate against blacks and Latinos.

## IN JEST THIS

# Celebrity interaction on app? Count me out



Melvin Durai

I'M SURE THERE ARE DEEPIKA FANS OUT THERE WHO HAVE PLASTERED THEIR WALLS WITH PHOTOS OF HER. I WOULD NEVER DO THAT, ESPECIALLY SINCE MY WIFE WOULD TEAR THEM DOWN

Akshay Kumar is not just a Bollywood star - he's an "international megastar," according to a press release sent out recently by a UK-based public relations firm. This reminds me of all the press releases I've seen about professors or scientists who are "world famous" in their fields.

"Dr. Manish Desai is an expert on the eating habits of mice, world famous in the field of rodent nutrition," the release will say, and I can't help picturing Desai being mobbed by autograph seekers while attending the International Conference of Rodent Nutrition.

Desai, as it turns out, may one day thank Kumar for helping him become an international megastar: Kumar, along with fellow actor Rana Daggubati, is launching an app called Socialswag, which is being touted as India's first influencer-led online marketplace. This app may propel Kumar from "international megastar" to "intergalactic luminary."

Socialswag, according to the press release, "will enable users to connect with celebrities, influencers, bloggers and other notable figures through personal interactions and learning forums."



Imagine getting an opportunity to have a "personal interaction" with Akshay Kumar or some other movie star through an app. How much money would you be willing to spend for such an opportunity? I'd be willing to part with at least five rupees. Okay, maybe I'd go as high as 10, but only if the movie star happens to be Deepika Padukone.

But what exactly would I say to Deepika? I have no clue, but I suppose I could tell her that I'm her biggest fan, even if it's not quite the truth. I'm sure there are Deepika fans out there who have plastered their walls with photos of her. I would never do that, especially since my wife would tear them down.

Actually, she wouldn't tear them down - she would instead plaster

pictures of Abhay Deol over them.

But our celebrity worship doesn't ever go that far. And that's why we probably wouldn't be good candidates for Socialswag. Personal interactions with celebrities or other "notable figures" over an app just doesn't appeal to us.

That's not to say that we wouldn't be excited about meeting a celebrity in person. There are several celebrities I'd love to meet - actors, singers and athletes I admire - but not through an app. I'd love to sit across former tennis star Mahesh Bhupathi, for example, and ask him what his biggest accomplishment was: winning 12 Grand Slam doubles titles or Lara Dutta's hand in marriage.

Socialswag, according to the press release, will "enable interactions in a number of ways such as masterclasses, live-chats, shout-outs and virtual selfies."

Masterclasses, as the term implies, are classes taught by masters. For example, you may have seen this recent headline: "Australia Defeats India in the Third T20 Despite a Virat Kohli Masterclass." Kohli has taught a number of masterclasses, but mostly to opponents

who don't really want any lessons.

Just imagine, though, if Kohli could give you a personal batting lesson? How much would you pay for that opportunity? Quite a bit, I imagine, especially if you're a budding cricketer. As for me, I'd be willing to take a masterclass from Kohli on mustache and beard maintenance.

You don't have to be an international megastar to be considered a master. There are so many self-described masters who want to give masterclasses on various platforms, not just Socialswag. Most of them don't even have a master's degree. Akshay Kumar says that "products like my Masterclass or a Virtual Selfie will give not only me, but all my peers an additional opportunity to closely connect with fans in these changing times."

I have no idea what a virtual selfie is, but I assume it gives fans an opportunity to be pictured with celebrities in some sort of virtual way. I'm not sure how much it would cost to get a virtual selfie with Deepika Padukone, but I'm willing to pay quite a bit for it. Perhaps even one thousand virtual rupees.

## WISDOM CORNER

- Your most important work is always ahead of you, never behind you. STEPHEN COVEY
Time is the scarcest resource and unless it is managed nothing else can be managed. PETER DRUCKER
The more you like yourself, the less you are like anyone else, which makes you unique. WALT DISNEY

## WORDSWORTH

### Watershed

The word first turns up in English near the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was then purely a scientific term for an imaginary line that separates two river systems. Think of it as the ridge of a roof: which river system rainwater flows into is determined by the side of the line the rain is deposited on. This is the same idea as the German Wasserscheide from which English borrowed the word (what linguists call a calque or loan translation). In English, the noun shed is the English equivalent of the German scheide, both of which have come down to us from the same Old German root. The English noun derives from the verb to shed. It's an old word for a division, split or separation - a shed could be a hair parting, for example, and could also be used for a ridge of land separating two areas of lower country, a divide. (These days a shed is usually a simple building for shelter or storage; this is an altered form of shade, and so has no link to this other sense of the word.) In North America, the word watershed often means not the dividing line, but the river catchment areas on either side of the ridge, the whole land area that drains into a particular river. How the sense shifted isn't clear. It came into use only around the 1870s, and may have been a misunderstanding. The difference in sense explains why Americans don't use the figurative sense of the word as much as the rest of us do. That refers to an important point of division or transition, as in this sentence from the Daily Telegraph in June 1999: "The Balkans conflict is at a watershed between a diplomatic settlement and the prospect of a ground war." This figurative usage only makes sense if you use watershed in its original meaning of a dividing line.

### Wax poetic

These days, the verb to wax - if we leave aside such associations as polishing cars and removing hair from legs - mostly turns up in connection with the phases of the moon. The moon waxes when its illuminated face grows larger from new moon to full moon, then wanes until the cycle starts again. At one time wax was the usual verb meaning to become bigger, but from the fifteenth century onwards it was progressively replaced by grow, so that it survives now only in discussions of the moon or in set phrases such as your wax poetic and similar formations - wax eloquent, wax lyrical, even wax sententious. This is an idiomatic form that's not easy to understand. In everyday usage, in which such set forms are bordering on cliché, it means merely to communicate in the way described. So wax poetic means only "speak or write poetically". Sometimes there's a hint that the person is doing so increasingly - becoming expansive in his language, figuratively increasing or enlarging the specified quality - but that's present rarely enough that a connection with the "grow" sense of wax can't be assumed. However, a link exists, since the usage perpetuates one old sense of the verb, "become or turn", with a nod to another, in which wax before an adjective meant to gradually increase that quality or become it.

## LOL

### Pay for your past bills

A customer sent an order to a distributor for a large amount of goods totalling a great deal of money. The distributor noticed that the previous bill hadn't been paid. The collections manager left a voice-mail



for them saying, "We can't ship your new order until you pay for the last one." The next day the collections manager received a collect phone call, "Please cancel the order. We can't wait that long."

## 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, Rissalgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

### Optimistic target

Sir, The most optimistic target of the Paris Agreement is limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degree Centigrade by the end of the century. Five years ago, almost all the countries pledged to limit global warming to below 2 degree Centigrade and try to keep temperatures at 1.5 degree Centigrade by the end of the century as part of the Paris Climate Agreement. However, today, global average temperatures are already above 1.2 degree Centigrade. If this state continues, the current policies of world leaders will cause the global average temperatures to rise to 3 degree Centigrade by the end of the century. Some findings show that the global average temperatures might exceed 1.5 degree centigrade between 2026 and 2042 if nothing is done to tackle emissions. However, some moves from world leaders have engendered optimism. This year, many world leaders pledged to reach net-zero emissions. China, considered the world's largest emitter, has declared its intentions to reach carbon neutrality by 2060. US President-elect Joe Biden has vowed to reach net-zero emissions by 2050. An analysis by Climate Action Tracker (CAT) found that if all these pledges are met by 2050, it could limit global average rise in temperatures in 2100 to 2.1 degree Centigrade. However, the 2.1 degree Centigrade result depends on countries turning their net-zero pledges into action. Short-term policies must be formulated to meet the long-term goals. In fact, no countries have started formulating short-term policies. Though the UK and the EU have made new short-term pledges, they don't reflect intentions to achieve the ambitious target. CAT's analysis finding of limiting global average temperatures to 2.1 degree Centigrade engenders optimism. On the other hand, there is uncertainty surrounding this figure. Venu GS, KOLLAM (KERALA)

### Laudable move

Sir, The Municipal Corporation of Gurugram has set up the first 'Cloth Bag Bank' to make the city polythene free. The women's self-help groups are linked with this bag bank to supply cloth bags to eliminate polythene from various markets of the city. People are being made aware of using cloth bags instead of polythene. The bag bank will offer bags ranging from Rs 3 to Rs 20. Anyone can come to bag bank and exchange old clothes and plastic bottles for these cloth bags. Cloth collection boxes will be installed in different locations across the city to make people aware. This is a laudable move towards 'clean India'. People need to use cloth bags to sustain the environment. Amit Singh Kushuaha, SATNA (MP)



## Mamata reaches out to refugees

**Jalpaiguri (WB), Dec 15:** Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Tuesday accused the Centre of interfering in West Bengal's jurisdiction by summoning IPS officers to serve under it and dared the Union government to impose President's Rule in the state.

The TMC supremo also lashed out at BJP for trying to convert West Bengal into riot-torn Gujarat and accused the saffron party of creating a "new religion of riot and hatred to serve its divisive politics."

Reaching out to the politically crucial refugee population in the state, she said they need not be afraid of the implementation of National Register of Citizens, National Population Register or the Citizen Amendment Act as all the refugee colonies have been recognised by the West Bengal government.

"If BJP and the Centre think they can scare us by bringing in central forces and transferring state cadre officers, they are wrong. The Centre

is summoning our officers. Just think of it," she said at a rally here. "I dare the Centre to impose President's Rule in Bengal," she added.

Banerjee, a strident critic of the saffron party, iterated that BJP national president JP Nadda's convoy was not attacked in Diamond Harbour and wondered why convicted criminals were accompanying him.

Continuing her tirade against BJP, Banerjee said, "No one wanted to hurt him (Nadda) or his convoy ... Why were so many cars accompanying his convoy? Why were convicted criminals accompanying him? The goons who vandalised the bust of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (in Kolkata) last year were accompanying Nadda ... People get infuriated when they see such goons roaming free."

TMC had dubbed as 'intimidatory'



**BJP is trying to befool the refugees of the state just like they had done with the people of the country before the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. I want to assure everyone that no one needs to be afraid of the NRC, NPR and CAA**

MAMATA BANERJEE | CM

the union home ministry's order for shifting three IPS officers from the state following the mob attack on Nadda's convoy.

The West Bengal government will have the "last word" on releasing the police officers for central deputation, it had said.

Aiming to take the wind out of the sails of BJP's refugee outreach campaign, she accused the saffron party of trying to befool them.

## HIGH DRAMA



Ruckus between BJP and Congress leaders over the chairman post during the Karnataka Legislative Council in Bangalore, Tuesday. Congress MLCs heckled and pushed Deputy Chairman of the Legislative Council, SL Dharme Gowda, from his seat. PTI PHOTO

## West Bengal BJP rakes up Rohingya issue, questions 'spike' in draft voter list

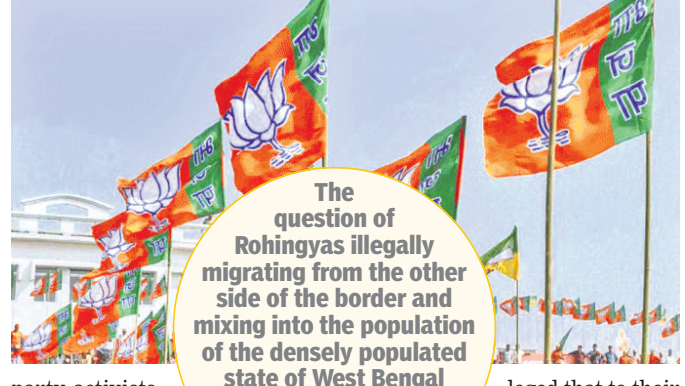
**INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE**

**New Delhi, Dec 15:** In a letter written to the Election Commission Monday, which came to light Tuesday, the Bengal BJP has raised questions over the functioning of the EC personnel posted for the publication of the draft voters' list.

In a more serious charge, it has objected to a 'sudden spike' in new voter registration which is being linked to cross-border illegal infiltration. It has also raked up the issue of Rohingya migration.

"The question of Rohingyas illegally migrating from the other side of the border and mixing into the population of the densely populated state of West Bengal cannot be ruled out," MLA Sabyasachi Dutta wrote in the letter to Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sunil Arora.

"It has been observed lately that the constituencies sharing borders with Bangladesh have witnessed a sudden spike in new voter registration which gives an impression of illegal cross-border infiltration duly supported by the local ruling



**The question of Rohingyas illegally migrating from the other side of the border and mixing into the population of the densely populated state of West Bengal cannot be ruled out**

SABYASACHI DUTTA | MLA

party activists. If allowed, this will not only affect the security of the country, but will also have a profound impact on the entire election process," he complained.

The party reasoned that a spike in areas where new townships come up are understandable and hence 'acceptable' to the party. However, it has objection to surge where neither new townships have come up, nor exodus has taken place.

The BJP lawmaker has even al-

leged that to their "utter dismay", they have found "glaring discrepancies" in the discharge of duty by EC personnel over the handling of the draft voter list. He further alleged that those who prepared the draft list had the "main objective" to "satisfy" the ruling Trinamool Congress. He also alleged that the concerned EC personnel were indulging in such wrongdoings for their "own personal gains".

## Speculation rife over Adhikari joining BJP

**THE DISGRUNTLED TMC HEAVYWEIGHT IS LIKELY TO JOIN THE SAFFRON PARTY DURING UNION HOME MINISTER AMIT SHAH'S PROPOSED VISIT TO BENGAL THIS WEEK**

**INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE**

**Kolkata, Dec 15:** Former West Bengal Transport and Irrigation Minister and Trinamool Congress heavyweight from East Midnapore district Suwendu Adhikari is likely to join the BJP during Union Home Minister Amit Shah's proposed visit to Bengal this week, sources close to him said.

Insiders said Adhikari may also travel to Delhi seeking a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi before December 19. The Nandigram legislator may resign as an MLA before joining the saffron brigade.

"I have also heard that Suwendu Adhikari may join the BJP. He is welcome in the party if he wishes to join us. We will give him opportunities to work for the people in Bengal," BJP state unit president Dilip Ghosh said.

It was also learnt from sources that BJP national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya spoke to Adhikari Tuesday for about four



minutes wishing him on his birthday. While addressing an apolitical meeting at Haldia observing the 121st birth anniversary of freedom fighter Satish Samanta, Adhikari said that he would work towards generating employment for the youth, improve agriculture and restoring democracy in Bengal in the days to come.

"Nandigram was a people's movement. It never belonged to any particular political party or any individual," Adhikari said, adding that he doesn't believe in launching personal attacks. Without taking any name, he said that people would

give a befitting reply to tainted politicians in Bengal.

Adhikari had tendered his resignation as minister from the Mamata Banerjee-led state cabinet November 27. He had also left the chairperson's post of the Hooghly River Bridge Commissioner's (HRBC) two days before that.

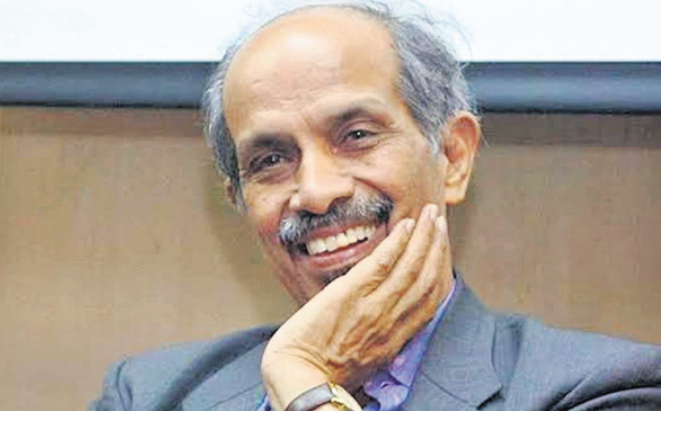
Sources said Adhikari was unhappy with organisational decisions taken by Abhishek Banerjee and political strategist Prashant Kishor. Adhikari and Banerjee were even seen taking potshots indirectly at each other without taking names at recent public meetings in the past. Meanwhile, BJP national vice-president Mukul Roy said that the incumbent Trinamool Congress would not be able to bag 100 assembly seats in the coming elections. "As far as I understand politics, Trinamool will not even secure 100 assembly seats in the elections," he told reporters after a party meeting in Nadia.

The followers of Adhikari in East Midnapore's Contai area have

already painted a building in saffron and converted the office into the Nandigram legislator's assistance centre. According to sources, the building, located at Reyapara in Nandigram, which used to house the office of Trinamool Congress-backed local traders' committee (Byabsayee Samiti) which was turned into Suwendu's assistance centre in the area overnight last week.

Sources said Amit Shah is scheduled to visit Midnapore district, known to be Adhikari's stronghold and a home district, December 19 during his two-day visit. There is a possibility that the disgruntled Trinamool leader may join the BJP during Shah's visit to his home district, sources said. The Union Home Minister has reportedly allotted a bullet-proof car and security to Adhikari, after the rebel Trinamool minister surrendered his security cover given by the state government. The central security would be given to him only after he officially resigns as a lawmaker from the state assembly, sources said.

## The man whose insight paved way for India's rocket programme



**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

**Bangalore, Dec 15:** When India's two successive Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle (ASLV) missions failed in the late 1980s, it was the insights of Prof. Roddam Narasimha that paved the way for subsequent successful flights of the rocket.

Then Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman Prof. Satish Dhawan constituted internal and external committees to review the ASLV programme and Narasimha, an authority on fluid mechanics and aerodynamics, headed the latter panel.

"Today, when we talk of success of PSLV (Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle) and GSLV Mk III (Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle), we owe it to important inputs that the Prof. Narasimha committee gave", former ISRO Chairman K Kasturirangan told PTI Tuesday.

Narasimha, a Padma Vibhushan awardee and a former Director of the National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL) and the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), died at a private hospital here Monday at the age of 87.

Scientists and leaders recalled the

pioneering contributions of the distinguished engineer-scientist, an authority on fluid mechanics and aerodynamics who had also served as a member of the Space Commission.

Another former ISRO chairman G Madhavan Nair said Narasimha had supported India's space programme all through.

"He was very frank in his expression, very bold; he was down-to-earth in his approach to everything. Whenever we had problems (space-related), he used to rush to us (ISRO) to help," Nair told PTI.

Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa said the scientific community has lost a stalwart. "His path-breaking work in aerospace and nurturing scientific institutions of national importance will be remembered", Yediyurappa said.

Kasturirangan said as the NIAS Director, Prof. Narasimha created a very good academic, interdisciplinary atmosphere at the institute. "He was so learned. He was so scholarly that he had an extraordinary breadth and a very deep understanding of many of the subjects like yoga science, Indian philosophy and history of mathematics", he said.

## Gram Panchayat seats 'auctioned' before polls

**Taking serious note of rural voters reportedly auctioning their GP seats in Tumkuru, Ballari, Kolar, Kalaburagi and Mandya districts, the Karnataka State Election Commission (SEC) is mulling to cancel polling if the Deputy Commissioners, who are also Returning Officers, confirm the charge**



**INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE**

**Bangalore, Dec 15:** Reports of rural voters allegedly auctioning Gram Panchayat (GP) seats to candidates in Karnataka so that they could be declared elected 'unopposed' before the two-phase local body elections December 22-27 have made a mockery of the democratic process across the state.

Taking serious note of rural voters reportedly auctioning their GP seats in Tumkuru, Ballari, Kolar, Kalaburagi and Mandya districts, the Karnataka State Election Commission (SEC) is mulling to cancel polling if the Deputy Commissioners, who are also Returning Officers, confirm the charge, an official said Monday.

The SEC meanwhile issued a circular to all DCs, stating that the Returning Officers must carefully scrutinise "unopposed" seats due to GP seats being auctioned are being reported on day-to-day basis.

The circular further adds that the Karnataka Panchayat Raj (Conduct Of Election) Rules, 1993, has a provision to allow candidate to withdraw his candidature through third party or through his agent as well,

hence, the Returning Officers must be careful and use their discretion before accepting any requisitions that come their way where they have declare winner as an Unanimous.

SEC Secretary S. Honnamba told IANS: "If the Deputy Commissioner's report confirms the charge that candidates were auctioning their seats for cash, election in that Gram Panchayat will be cancelled."

While SEC commissioner, B. Basvaraju told IANS that the deputy commissioners who are also district returning officers have taken serious note of such "undemocratic incidents" and also filed cases with relevant sections. "For instance, DCs of Mandya, Ballari, Kalaburagi, Tumkuru have taken action already," he said.

He added that the state election commission at this juncture cannot come out with new law and existing laws aren't enough to punish such activities.

"After hearing these incidents, I feel we need to have stronger mechanisms, which we can think of once the ongoing election process is over. As this kind of exercise needs a lot of deliberations with various stakeholders," he said.

It may be recalled that allegation that a tahsildar offered ₹25 lakh to renovate a village temple in Keragodu GP in Mandya district if

his wife was elected unanimously, came to light a day after elections to the local bodies in the first phase was notified Monday.

"The tahsildar has also assured voters of more funds to develop the village if candidates withdraw their nomination, paying way for his wife election unopposed," a source told IANS.

Similarly, some aspirants are alleged to have offered to pay lakhs of rupees for the post of president and vice-president if they were elected unanimously in a village in Nelamakanahalli GP in the same (Mandya) district.

Similarly, a seat in Madderi Gram Panchayat in Kolar was allegedly auctioned for ₹5 lakh recently. The Madderi Gram Panchayat has 13 villages under it and the auctioning was for one of the seats from Iragasandra Bedli village.

In another case a GP seat at Bettahalli in Paduvagere Gram Panchayat limits under Amruturu hobli of Kunigal taluk in Tumkuru district was sold for ₹1 crore in an open auction held recently.

The SEC November 30 declared 2-day election in 5,762 GP seats across the southern state, with polling in 2,930 seats December 22 and in 2,832 seats December 27. Vote count is on December 30.

Elections to 5762 local bodies are held on non-party symbol as their 5-year term ends this month-end.

## JDS 'completely' opposes anti-cow slaughter bill

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

**Bangalore, Dec 15:** Former Prime Minister and JDS supremo HD Deve Gowda Tuesday reiterated his party's opposition to the anti-cow slaughter bill passed in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly.

"The BJP has gone ahead to pass the Karnataka Prevention of Slaughter and Preservation of Cattle Bill-2020 in the Karnataka Legislature, which will cause unrest in the society and disturb the growth of people," Gowda said in a statement.

The bill - Karnataka Prevention of Slaughter and Preservation of Cattle Bill-2020 -- was listed to be tabled in the Legislative Council, where the ruling BJP does not enjoy majority, Tuesday as per the day's agenda.

But, that was not to be as the Council witnessed high drama Tuesday with members hurling abuses and pushing each other and Deputy Chairman being pulled down from the Chairman's seat, over a row pertaining to no confidence motion, and it was adjourned since die within minutes after it met for the day.

Currently, the ruling BJP is the single largest party in the Council with 31 members, followed by Congress with 29 including the chairman. The JD(S) has 14 members and there is one independent.

"Our party Janata Dal Secular 'completely' opposes this bill", Deve Gowda said. According to him, the Karnataka Prevention of Cow Slaughter and Cattle Preservation Act-1964 is already in place.

However, in 2010 the then BJP government had introduced the Karnataka Prevention of Slaughter and Preservation of Cattle Bill-2010 which proposed to increase the punishment and fine from one to seven times "keeping a community in mind and to target them".

The 87-year-old JD(S) patriarch said the governor at the time had referred it to then President



**The BJP has gone ahead to pass the Karnataka Prevention of Slaughter and Preservation of Cattle Bill-2020 in the Karnataka Legislature, which will cause unrest in the society**

HD DEVE GOWDA | FORMER PM

Pratibha Patil stating that certain provisions in the law need her approval, he added. After the change in government in 2013, the bill was withdrawn by the then Congress government, Gowda explained.

Deve Gowda's statement came on a day when the BJP was planning to move a no-confidence motion against the chairman of the Karnataka Legislative Council K Prathapachandra Shetty and unseat him with the JD(S) help.

The JD(S) had supported the government in the passage of the Karnataka Land Reforms (Amendment) Act-2020 in the Council on December seven.

The JD(S) second-in-command and former Chief Minister H D Kumaraswamy had shown some soft corner towards the BJP when he recently said the goodwill of the people of Karnataka he had earned while heading a coalition government with the BJP in 2006-07 was lost when he tied up with the Congress in 2018-19 and became the Chief Minister of the coalition government.

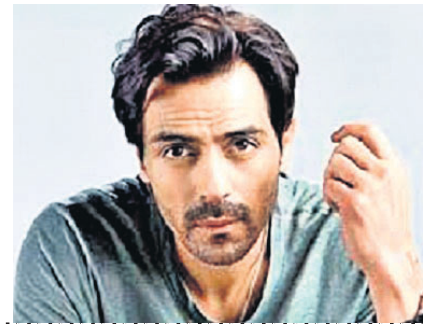


The legal battle for (restoring) the Maratha quota is in the final stage. We have neither changed the legal team nor our stand on Maratha quota. We will win the legal battle

UDDHAV THACKERAY | MAHARASHTRA CHIEF MINISTER

ARJUN'S PARTNER'S BROTHER GETS BAIL

A special NDPS court in Mumbai on Tuesday granted bail to Agisilaos Demetriades, brother of actor Arjun Rampal's partner Gabriella, and two others in a drug-related case



of the day quote

We believe in the rule of law. If anybody is doing anything wrong, action should be taken as per law

DEVENDRA FADNAVIS | SENIOR BJP LEADER

We are saving lives. But remember, this cannot be taken for granted. An overwhelming proportion of our population is still very very susceptible to the virus. And the situation can escalate unexpectedly

DR V K PAUL | MEMBER (HEALTH) AT NITI AAYOG

India-US partnership in the field of Defence sector has matured into a strategic nature over the last decade

RAJNATH SINGH | DEFENCE MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Goa Oppn cries foul

Panaji: Days after the opposition in Goa raked up the issue of a dead person's signature being used on an application form to seek deletion of names of 14 voters from the voters' list in South Goa's Mormugao constituency, opposition parties demanded a probe by the state Chief Electoral Officer (CEO). "How can a man who is dead apply seeking deletion of 14 names from the electoral list? This is an attempt by the ruling party to wipe out opposition votes," Goa Congress general secretary Altinho Gomes said after meeting CEO Kunal.

Sub-Inspector held

Mumbai: A police sub-inspector and one more person were arrested for allegedly demanding and accepting a bribe of Rs 20,000, a Maharashtra Anti Corruption Bureau official said Tuesday. PSI Bharat Dhembare of Charkop police station in the metropolis had demanded a bribe from a civic contractor who had been booked in a case, he said.

Army colonel held

Kanpur (UP): An Army colonel accused of raping his civilian friend's wife of Russian origin after intoxicating her husband at the Officers' Mess in Cantonment area was arrested on Tuesday. "Col Neeraj Gahlot was arrested while trying to flee to an unknown place to evade his arrest," said Superintendent of Police (East) Raj Kumar Agarwal. Police had launched a manhunt for Col Neeraj Gahlot whose mobile location was traced in the vicinity of officers' mess on Monday evening but he had been evading his arrest, said Cantonment Circle Additional Superintendent of Police Nikhil Pathak.

Mann slams Centre

Chandigarh: AAP MP Bhagwant Mann on Tuesday slammed the BJP-led central government for not convening the Parliament's winter session, saying it was trying to "run away" from discussing "anti-farmer" agri laws which have led to the farmers' protest. The Sangur lawmaker alleged that instead of answering core issues concerning the farmers in Parliament, the Modi government has decided not to convene the winter session citing the pandemic.

Woman kills self

Shahjahanpur (UP): An 18-year-old woman allegedly committed suicide by hanging from the ceiling of her home after a man sexually assaulted her, police said Tuesday.

India gets ready for vaccine storage

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 15: The Union health ministry on Tuesday said 29,000 cold chain points, 240 walk-in coolers, 70 walk-in freezers, 45,000 ice-lined refrigerators, 41,000 deep freezers and 300 solar refrigerators will be used for COVID-19 vaccine storage.

Providing the details about cold-chain management at a press conference here, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said guidelines for estimation of electrical and non-electrical cold chain equipment and their strengthening have been issued to states by the Centre.

The guidelines for management of cold chain at last cold chain points and session sites have also been issued, he said.

"A total of 29,000 cold chain points, 240 walk-in coolers, 70 walk-in freezers, 45,000 ice-lined refrigerators, 41,000 deep freezers and 300 solar refrigerators will be used," Bhushan said. "All these equipment have already been delivered to the states. Some other equipment are being supplied," he said. Giving more details about the preparations, the senior official said 36 states and Union territories have concluded meetings of State Steering Committees and



State Task Force, while 633 districts have concluded meetings of the District Task Force in this regard.

Twenty-three ministries and departments in the Centre and states have been identified and assigned roles like planning, implementation, social mobilisation, awareness generation, among others, for the vaccine roll-out, he said.

Training modules for medical officers, vaccinator officers, alternate vaccinators, cold chain handlers, supervisors, data managers and ASHA coordina-

tors are also finalized, and physical training as well as training on virtual/online platforms have started, the health secretary said.

National and state Training of Trainers (ToTs) workshops have also been completed, he added. In reply to a media query, Bhushan said state governments have been allowed to form vaccination session sites even at units where the Army or paramilitary is posted.

Vaccinating 100-200 people in each session per day, monitoring them for 30 minutes after administering the shots for any adverse event and allowing only one ben-

Recovery rate crosses 95%

New Delhi: India's active COVID-19 caseload has fallen below 3.4 lakh, a mere 3.43 per cent of the total infections, supplemented by an impressive recovery rate of over 95 per cent, which is among the highest in the world for countries with high caseloads, the Union Health Ministry said Tuesday. The daily new cases recorded Tuesday -- 22,065 -- were also the lowest in over five months. As many as 22,252 cases were reported on July 7, the ministry said. The number of recoveries have crossed 94 lakhs (94,22,636), pushing the national recovery rate to over 95 per cent, which is "one of the highest in the world for countries with high caseload", the ministry underlined.

eficiary at a time are among the guidelines issued by the Centre for the COVID-19 inoculation drive.

According to the guidelines issued to states recently, the COVID Vaccine Intelligence Network (CoWIN) system—a digitalised platform—will be used to track enlisted beneficiaries for the vaccination and anti-coronavirus vaccines on a real-time basis.

RT-PCR test mandatory at Sabarimala temple

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, Dec 15: All officials on duty at Sabarimala, where the Lord Ayyappa temple is located, besides pilgrims should undergo the RT-PCR test as the Kerala Health Department has revised its guidelines following increasing number of COVID-19 cases in the area in recent days.

The revised norms were issued in connection with the pilgrimage at the temple. The Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) test is mandatory for all pilgrims and officials on duty who reach the shrine after the Mandala Puja December 26.

79 more Covid-19 cases in IIT Madras



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Dec 15: Seventy nine more people have tested positive for coronavirus at the Indian Institute of Technology-Madras campus here, taking the tally in the institution to 183, a senior health official said Tuesday.

Out of the 978 samples lifted from the IIT-M since December 1, a total of 183 people have tested positive till date and results for 25 specimens alone were yet to be received, Tamil Nadu Health Secretary, J Radhakrishnan said.

From 104 Monday, with the addition of 79 more positive cases, the IIT-M's COVID-19 tally stood at 183. For testing, as many as 539 samples were taken Monday alone which includes workers in addition to students and from this batch, 79 tested positive, he said.

The overall positivity rate vis-a-vis the institution has however gone down to 15 per cent from about 20 per cent seen earlier, he

said. A majority of those affected were students and the rest being people like workers in canteens. All of them are being treated at the government-run King's Institute of Preventive Medicine and Research here. Following the outbreak, the institute shut all its departments and classes were being held online.

Allaying fears over further spread of the virus in the area, the official told reporters that IIT-M was only a localised cluster.

Earlier, similar localised outbreaks were witnessed elsewhere like in a large textile store and in a gathering for a feast and hence, people should wear masks always without fail and follow all other norms to help prevent the virus spread, he said.

Testing would be done for those associated with facilities like canteens in educational institutions and mansions for early identification of positive cases and treatment, he said.

STRICT VIGIL



An army soldier during a special training camp at Corps Battle School, at Sarol in Rajouri district, Jammu and Kashmir

Varavara Rao fit to go back to jail: NIA to HC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 15: Poet-activist Varavara Rao, an accused in the Elgar Parishad-Maoists links case, is fit enough to be sent back to Taloja jail in Navi Mumbai from a private hospital in Mumbai where he is currently admitted, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) told the Bombay High Court Tuesday.

Rao, however, will continue to stay in Nanavati Hospital at least till Monday, the next date of hearing on his bail plea on the medical grounds and the plea filed by his wife Hemlatha alleging breach of Rao's fundamental rights due to "continued incarceration without adequate healthcare". The submission was made by Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Anil Singh, who appeared for the NIA, before a bench of Justices SS Shinde and MS Karnik.

During the day's hearing, senior counsels Indira Jaising and Anand Grover urged the high court to grant bail to Rao. Grover said the 81-year-old poet was suffering from inherent medical issues since the time of his arrest in 2018. He said authorities at Taloja prison in Navi Mumbai, where Rao was lodged as an undertrial, did not have the expertise or medical infrastructure to treat him. Grover further said it would be most suitable for Rao's health if he was granted bail and permitted to go back to his home in Hyderabad.

Rao would not flee if granted bail, Grover added. "He (Rao) has been tried for 24 cases in his lifetime which is not a joke for anyone, and he has been acquitted in all of them," Grover told the high court.

Rao has been in an out of state-run JJ Hospital in Mumbai and the Taloja prison hospital since his arrest in June 2018.

No winter session of Parl, govt suggests convening Budget session in Jan 2021

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 15: The government has said the winter session of Parliament will not be held this year in view of the COVID-19 pandemic and that it will be appropriate to convene the budget session in January next year.

In a letter to leader of Congress in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi said, "Winter months are very crucial for managing the pandemic because of recent spurt in cases during this period, particularly in Delhi.

At present, we are in the middle of December and a covid vac-

The Centre said this decision was taken in view of the pandemic

cine is expected very soon." The minister said he had informally contacted floor leaders of various political parties and "they have expressed their concerns about the on-going pandemic and opined of doing away with winter session".

"Government is willing to have the next session of Parliament at the earliest; it would be appropriate to have the Budget Session, 2021 in January, 2021 keeping in mind the unprecedented circumstances created by Covid-19 pandemic," Joshi wrote. Talking about the mon-

soon session which was delayed due to the pandemic, he appreciated cooperation from all political parties for a productive session held under extraordinary circumstances by making special logistical arrangements.

The winter session of Parliament normally starts from last week of November or first week of December.

The Constitution broadly stipulates one major rule that there should not be a gap of more than six months between two sessions of Parliament.

However, it has been a convention to hold three sessions of Parliament -- budget, monsoon and winter -- in a year.

Pranab's son and daughter lock horns on Twitter

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 15: The late Pranab Mukherjee's son and daughter are at loggerheads with each other over his memoir "The Presidential Years", one saying it should not be published without his consent and the other "requesting" her brother to not create "unnecessary hurdles" in the publication of his last book.

The book, which was in the news recently for Pranab Mukherjee's critical comments on the Congress, including his observation that the party lost political focus after his elevation as president, is set to be launched next month by Rupa, which published the two earlier volumes of his memoirs.

The late president's son Abhijit Mukherjee, a former Congress MP, said on Twitter that he has written to the publishers asking them not to publish the book until he gives his nod. His sister Sharmistha

Mukherjee, national spokesperson of the party, shot back saying no one should try and stop it for "cheap publicity" and doing so would be great disservice to the late leader.

"I, the son of the author of the Memoir 'The Presidential Memoirs', request you to kindly stop the publication of the memoir as well as motivated excerpts which is already floating in certain media platforms without my written consent," Abhijit Mukherjee said on Twitter.

"Since my father is no more, I being his son want to go through the contents of the final copy of the book before it's publication as I believe, had my father been alive today, he too would have done the same." Being the son, he said he requested the publishers to immediately stop the publication. "I have already sent you a detailed letter in this regard which will reach you soon. Regards - Abhijit Mukherjee," the tweet read. His sister responded, also on Twitter. "I, daughter of the author of the mem-



oir 'The Presidential Years', request my brother Abhijit Mukherjee not to create any unnecessary hurdles in publication of the last book written by our father. He completed the manuscript before he fell sick."

The final draft, she said, contains her father's handwritten notes and comments that have been strictly adhered to. Stating that views expressed by him are his own and no

95% police stations using CCTNS software, says govt



INDO-ASIANN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 15: More than 95 per cent of the total 16,088 police stations across the country have been using the software facility Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS), a mission mode modernisation project under the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

Connectivity is available at 97 per cent of the police stations and 93 per cent of them are entering 100 per cent FIRs through the project.

Noting that integrated database concepts like the CCTNS and ICJS have become indispensable to realise the dream of New India, Minister of State for Home, G. Kishan Reddy, on Tuesday shared the details while addressing the inaugural session of the second conference on 'Good Practices in Crime and Criminal Tracking Network

and Systems/Interoperable Criminal Justice System (ICJS) through video conferencing. The two-day conference has been organised by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). Reddy also said that integrated database concepts like the CCTNS and ICJS have become indispensable to realise the dream of New India and that the two key modernisation programmes of the MHA have led to effective law enforcement and proved to be force multipliers.

"It is a reality that crime does not follow jurisdictional boundaries. Hence, our response to crime should also not be restricted by boundaries. Immediate recording of crime and the access of the information to all the stakeholders is undoubtedly a key aspect of any effective law enforcement operation. This has led to the genesis of the project of CCTNS," Reddy said.

long-time Congress leader died August 31 at the age of 84, following COVID-19 complications. His comments on the Congress come at a time of intense internal turmoil in the party. The Congress' chief troubleshooter through the decades wrote that the party lost political focus after his elevation as the president and some party members believed the 2014 Lok Sabha poll debacle could have been averted had he become prime minister in 2004.

"Though I don't subscribe to this view, I do believe that the party's leadership lost political focus after my elevation as president. While Sonia Gandhi was unable to handle the affairs of the party, Dr (Manmohan) Singh's prolonged absence from the House put an end to any personal contact with other MPs," Pranab Mukherjee is quoted as saying in his book.

Mukherjee was the 13th president of India after having spent five decades in politics.



## of the day quote

BJP is the real #TukdeTukdeGang in the country. It has smashed the national unity to pieces, shamelessly inciting Hindus against Muslims & now desperately setting peace-loving Punjabi Hindus against their Sikh brethren esp #farmers

SUKHBIR SINGH BADAL | SAD CHIEF

The government is trying to create five crore jobs in the next five years

NITIN GADKARI | UNION ROAD TRANSPORT MINISTER

While no medical treatment was discovered in any medical system, positive results started coming out of the Ayurveda medical system

RAGHU SHARMA | RAJASTHAN HEALTH MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### Delhi records lowest temp

**New Delhi:** The national capital on Tuesday recorded the lowest minimum temperature of the season so far with mercury dipping to 4.1 degrees Celsius, four notches below the normal. Jafarpur in southwest Delhi was the coldest at 3.6. This is a massive dip as the capital city had, on Monday recorded a minimum temperature of 8.4 degrees Celsius after 11.4 Sunday and 14.4 degrees Celsius Saturday, respectively.

### Woman gangraped

**Prayagraj (Uttar Pradesh):** A young woman was gangraped by four men in Katka area in Prayagraj district. The woman works in an orchestra in Prayagraj and was lured by the men who promised her a job in a music group. The police on the complaint of the victim, have registered a case for rape and one of the four accused has been arrested. According to the woman, a man named Jitendra of Kaushambi took her to a hotel in Katka Sunday night. He had also called his three other companions and the four men then took turns to rape the young woman.

### Two dreaded criminals held

**Gurugram:** The Gurugram Police have arrested two dreaded criminals and claimed to have solved around a dozen cases of murder, attempt to murder, fighting, loot, snatching of vehicles on gunpoint and Arms Act which the culprits had allegedly committed across the state. Two cars, four live cartridges, and a pistol have been recovered from their possession, the police said during a press meet Tuesday.

### Four people commit suicide

**Banda (UP):** Four people ended their lives in different regions of the district allegedly due to financial hardship, police said Tuesday. "Moolchand (50), a farmer, was found dead on Monday. His body was found hanging from a tree," Arjun Singh, SHO, Jaspura Police Station said. The farmer belonged to Barehata village, he said. Moolchand's son Budhraj said his father was under financial stress as his sister's marriage was fixed for June in the coming year and the family did not have money.



**Government should climb down from its high horse and reach an agreement with the farmers quickly**

P CHIDAMBARAM | SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER

### VP, PM PAY TRIBUTE TO SARDAR PATEL ON HIS DEATH ANNIVERSARY

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi Tuesday paid tribute to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on his death anniversary



## India, UK to move forward on trade talks



AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Dec 15:** India and Britain will push negotiations on trade ties, their foreign ministers said after talks in New Delhi Tuesday, as both countries seek to restart economies battered by the coronavirus pandemic.

Indian Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar said trade ministers from both countries had held discussions and there was "a serious intent" to deepen trade. Britain's Dominic Raab said the two foreign ministers "would like to nudge our trade negotiators along and see what we can achieve." "What I think we recognise is the possibilities of a deeper trading relationship.

The contours of our economies would allow that and we, certainly, as foreign ministers see a very powerful strategic case," Raab said after four hours of talks with Jaishankar. Trade and investment will be high on the agenda of Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who will travel to New Delhi in January, his first bilateral visit since taking office. Earlier this year, trade minister Piyush Goyal said India was open to engage with Britain on a preferential trade agreement, ultimately leading to a free trade agreement. India pulled out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, an Asia-Pacific free trade agreement, last year due to fears over China's access to

its markets.

Britain is seeking fresh deals, having cited the freedom to strike bilateral agreements as a benefit of leaving the EU. Trade between Britain and India totalled more than 20 billion pounds (\$26.60 billion) in 2018, according to Britain's Department for International Trade.

Meanwhile, India Tuesday said that British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's presence at the Republic Day celebrations next month will be "symbolic of a new era".

Calling it a great honour, UK's Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said that Prime Minister Johnson has accepted India's "very generous" invite to be the chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations next month. "I'm pleased that PM Boris Johnson has invited PM Modi to join the UK-hosted G7 summit next year. The British PM has also accepted the very generous invitation to attend India's Republic Day celebrations in January, which is a great honour," he said this afternoon.

This will be Johnson's first major foreign visit since he took charge last year. In a statement, he said that he is "absolutely delighted to be visiting India next year at the start of an exciting year for Global Britain, and look forward to delivering the quantum leap in our bilateral relationship that Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi and I have pledged to achieve."

## AAP to fight UP polls in 2022: Kejri

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 15:** The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) will contest the Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls in 2022, its national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced on Tuesday as he accused political parties in the state of doing nothing but stabbing people in the back.

In a virtual press briefing, Kejriwal said development and progress in UP have been held back by its "dirty politics" and "corrupt leaders". People in the state want an honest government which only AAP can provide, he added.

Citing Delhi's Mohalla clinics, free water and electricity, healthcare and education facilities, the chief minister said people of Uttar Pradesh were being deprived of these basic amenities by the parties that have formed governments in the state over the years.

"Why do the people of UP travel



to Delhi for every major and minor facility? If a family living in Kanpur has to send their child to a good college, they have to send her to Delhi. If a person living in Gorakhpur has to get good medical treatment for his parents, they have to come to Delhi. Why," he questioned. People of Uttar Pradesh put their trust and faith in every party and gave them a chance, but these parties "stabbed the people in their backs", Kejriwal claimed. "There is only one thing lacking in the politics of Uttar Pradesh,

which is honesty and intent. This is what AAP has. It is with this honesty that AAP has transformed Delhi. We proved that the governments do not lack resources but honest intent," he asserted while announcing that AAP will contest the Assembly elections in the state in 2022. "I appeal to you to give one chance to AAP and you will forget about other political parties, as has happened in Delhi, where the party has formed the government thrice in a row," Kejriwal said.

He said many people from Uttar Pradesh who are living in Delhi have told him that AAP should fight elections in the state.

"They want all the services that are offered in Delhi to be offered in UP as well. They said people of Uttar Pradesh are fed up with these old parties and will come forward to support AAP and defeat these big leaders who consider UP as their property," Kejriwal said in a statement.



A labourer carries rice straws on his head on the outskirts of Agartala

UNI PHOTO

## TABLIGHI JAMAAT Court acquits all 36 foreigners

The court had August 24 framed charges against the foreigners under sections 188, 269 of the Indian Penal Code and Section 3 of Epidemic Act, 1897

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 15:** A Delhi court Tuesday acquitted 36 foreigners, who were charge sheeted for attending Tablighi Jamaat congregation here by allegedly being negligent and disobeying the government guidelines issued in wake of COVID-19 pandemic in the country.

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Arun Kumar Garg acquitted the foreigners from 14 countries of all charges. The court had on August 24 framed charges against the foreigners under sections 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant), 269 (negligent act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life) of the Indian Penal Code and Section 3 (disobeying regulation) of Epidemic Act, 1897.

The charges were also framed under section 51 (obstruction) Disaster Management Act, 2005. However, they were discharged for the offences under section 14(1)(b) (violation of visa norms) of Foreigners Act, sections 270 (Malignant act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life) and 271 (Disobedience to quarantine rule) of IPC. The court had also discharged eight foreign



nationals from six countries of all charges under which they were charge sheeted in the absence of any record or any credible material against them.

The foreigners were charge sheeted for attending Tablighi Jamaat congregation here at Nizamuddin area allegedly in violation of visa norms, indulging in missionary activities illegally and violating government guidelines issued in the wake of COVID-19 outbreak.

## Farmer turns millionaire after finding ₹60L diamond

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Panna, Dec 15:** A farmer from Madhya Pradesh has become a millionaire after finding a 14.98 carat diamond which has fetched Rs 60.60 lakh at an auction, officials said Tuesday.

Overall, 74 diamonds of total 129.83 carats were sold during the three-day auction conducted by the diamond office, which comes under the district administration, here last week, they said. The auction turned out to be a jackpot for farmer Lakhna Yadav (45), who found the 14.98 carat diamond last month in a mine in Panna district's Krishna Kalyanpur area.

The gem was sold for Rs 60.60 lakh at the auction, an official from the diamond office said. Panna, located in the backward region of Bundelkhand, is famous for its diamond mines. For Yadav, who is a small farmer with a two-acre land, this was the first diamond extraction.

"I am happy. This is God's gift. I will use the money from



the proceeds for the education of my children," an elated Yadav told reporters Monday. District Collector Sanjay Kumar Mishra said during the auction last week, 74 diamonds of 129.83 carats were sold collectively for Rs 1.65 crore. Overall, 203 diamonds of 269.16 carats were put up for auction, but 131 of them could not be sold. These diamonds would be auctioned next year, he said.

The affect of COVID-19 pandemic was seen at the auction as less number of traders took part in it compared to previous years, another official said.

## Over 60% women in 12 states, UTs never used internet

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 15:** Over 60 per cent women in 12 states and union territories have never used the internet, the latest National Family Health Survey has revealed.

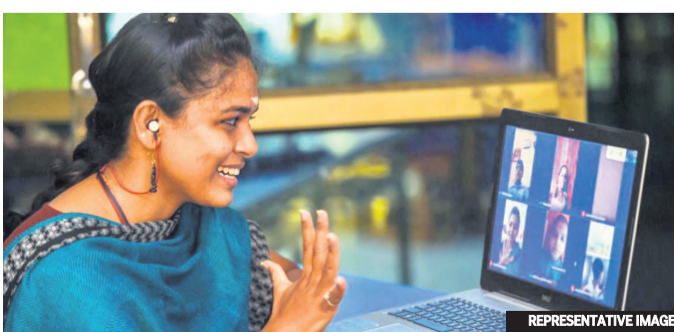
The survey covered 22 states and UTs in the country.

The states and UTs where less than 40 per cent women have used the internet are Andhra Pradesh (21 per cent), Assam (28.2 per cent), Bihar (20.6 per cent), Gujarat (30.8 per cent), Karnataka (35 per cent), Maharashtra (38 per cent), Meghalaya (34.7 per cent), Telangana (26.5 per cent), Tripura (22.9 per cent), West Bengal (25.5 per cent), Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu (36.7 per cent) and Andaman

& Nicobar Islands (34.8 per cent), the survey revealed.

In comparison, more percentage of men have used the internet. About 50 per cent men have used the internet in seven states - Andhra Pradesh (48.8 per cent), Assam (42.3 per cent), Bihar (43.6 per cent), Meghalaya (42.1 per cent), Tripura (45.7 per cent), West Bengal (46.7 per cent), Andaman & Nicobar Islands (46.5 per cent), according to the data.

According to the survey, Andhra Pradesh (68.6 per cent), Bihar (57.8 per cent) and Telangana (66.6 per cent) accounted for the lowest literacy rates among women, while Kerala (98.3 per cent), Lakshadweep (96.5 per cent) and Mizoram (94.4 per cent) recorded the highest literacy



rate among women in surveyed states and UTs.

Andhra Pradesh (79.5 per cent) and Bihar (78.5 per cent) accounted for lowest literacy rates among men while Kerala (98.2 per cent) and Lakshadweep (99.1 per cent) recorded

the highest literacy rate among men in surveyed states and UTs.

Literacy refers to women or men who completed standard 9 or higher and women or men who can read a whole sentence or part of a sentence, the survey said.

Less than 40 per cent women had 10 or more years of schooling in eight states and UTs of Andhra Pradesh (39.6 per cent), Assam (29.6 per cent), Bihar (28.8 per cent), Gujarat (33.8 per cent), Meghalaya (35.1 per cent), Tripura (23.2 per cent), West Bengal (32.9 per cent) and Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu (35.8 per cent).

Less than 50 per cent men had 10 or more years of schooling in nine states and UTs of Andhra Pradesh (47.9 per cent), Assam (35.5 per cent), Bihar (42.8 per cent), Gujarat (45.6 per cent), Meghalaya (34.7 per cent), Mizoram (49.1 per cent), Tripura (29.4 per cent), West Bengal (34.7 per cent) and Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu (49.4 per cent).

The NFHS-5 (2019-20) was con-

## Consider giving break to docs engaged in nCoV duty: SC to Centre

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 15:** The Supreme Court asked the Centre Tuesday to consider granting a break to doctors engaged in COVID-19 duty for the last seven-eight months.

The top court said that continuous work might be affecting mental health of doctors. A bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan, R S Reddy and M R Shah, which is hearing a suo motu case on proper treatment of COVID-19 patients and dignified handling of dead bodies in hospitals, asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta to consider the suggestions of giving the doctors some break.

"For the last seven-eight months doctors have not been given any break and are continuously working. You take instruction and think over giving them some break. It must be very painful and might be affecting their mental health," the bench told Mehta. The solicitor general assured the bench that the government would consider the suggestion of the bench to grant some break to health workers engaged in COVID-19 duty.

The top court also expressed shock that the Gujarat government has levied around Rs 90 crore fine for not wearing face masks, but has not been able to enforce the guidelines on COVID-19-appropriate behaviour.

At the outset, the bench while referring to the affidavit filed by the Centre said that it does not state which hospitals have fire No Objection Certificate(s) (NOCs) and it is citing 2016 information.

## Vice Admiral Srikant succumbs to post nCoV related complications

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 15:** Vice Admiral Srikant died Tuesday morning at the base hospital here due to COVID-19-related complications, officials said.

The vice admiral, the Navy's senior-most submariner, was due to retire December 31. Expressing his condolences, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh tweeted, "Deeply pained at the untimely and sudden demise of Director General Seabird, Vice Admiral Srikant."

The Ministry of Defence and the Indian Navy will always remember his stellar contributions and remarkable service to the nation, Singh said.

"My deepest condolences to his bereaved family and friends. Om Shanti!" the minister stated.

Srikant was admitted at the base hospital in Delhi after he contracted COVID-19, said a junior Navy officer who had worked under him. Subsequently, the vice admiral tested had negative for COVID-19 Sunday morning, but developed breathing difficulties by evening, the officer said.

"He was shifted to ICU and was subsequently put on a ventilator," the officer mentioned. Officials said the vice admiral, who was the Navy's senior-most submariner, died Tuesday morning. Previously, he had held charge as Inspector General of Nuclear Safety and Commandant of the National Defence College, officials said.



China would be in breach of World Trade Organization rules as well as a bilateral free trade agreement if it banned Australian coal  
SCOTT MORRISON | PM, AUSTRALIA

## HINDU-AMERICAN COMMUNITY DONATES OVER 1.3L KG FOOD

The Hindu-American community donated more than 1,33,000 kilograms of food to the poor and needy as part of its 'Sewa Diwali' drive



### of the day quote

A referendum will be added to the French Constitution to fight against climate change and for the need to preserve the environment  
EMMANUEL MACRON | PRESIDENT, FRANCE

My hope is that the EMA, in compliance with all safety procedures, will be able to approve the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine earlier than expected  
ROBERTO SPERANZA | HEALTH MINISTER, ITALY

There's certainly some relief in the short term but I am deeply worried about how these institutions could buckle under further strain  
ALEX KEYSAR | PUBLIC POLICY PROFESSOR, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

### SHORT TAKES

#### Networks secured after massive hack

Washington: U.S. Government agencies and private companies rushed to secure their computer networks following the disclosure of a sophisticated and long-running cyber-espionage intrusion suspected of being carried out by Russian hackers. The full extent of the damage is not yet clear. But the potential threat was significant enough that the Department of Homeland Security directed all federal agencies to remove compromised network management software.

#### America sanctions NATO ally Turkey

Washington: The Trump administration Monday imposed sanctions on its NATO ally Turkey over its purchase of a Russian air defence system, setting the stage for further confrontation between the two nations as President-elect Joe Biden prepares to take office. The move comes at a delicate time in relations between Washington and Ankara, which have been at odds for more than a year over Turkey's acquisition from Russia of the S-400 missile defense system.

#### Vaccination drive begins in Canada

Toronto: Canada administered its first doses of a COVID-19 vaccine Monday, becoming one of the first countries to do so in the effort to beat back the pandemic. Five front-line workers in Ontario were among the first Canadians to receive the vaccine at one of Toronto's hospitals. Anita Quidangan, a personal support worker who worked throughout a COVID-19 outbreak at the Reka Centre nursing home in Toronto, got the first dose in Ontario.

#### PM of Eswatini dies of COVID-19

Johannesburg: Eswatini Prime Minister Ambrose Dlamini, who was undergoing treatment for coronavirus in neighbouring South Africa, has died. He was 52. The prime minister of Africa's last absolute monarchy Eswatini, formerly known as Swaziland, was moved to South Africa on December 1, a fortnight after testing positive for COVID-19, reportedly because of better healthcare facilities here. Dlamini's death was announced by the government of Eswatini. "Their Majesties have commanded that I inform the nation of the sad and untimely passing away of Prime Minister Ambrose Mandvulo Dlamini. His Excellency passed on this afternoon while under medical care," Deputy Prime Minister Themba Masuku said in a statement.

# Victory formalities complete

## ELECTORAL COLLEGE VOTES JOE BIDEN AS THE PRESIDENT AND INDIAN-ORIGIN SENATOR KAMALA HARRIS AS THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

AGENCIES

Washington, Dec 15: The Electoral College has voted Joe Biden as the President and Indian-origin Senator Kamala Harris as the Vice President of the United States, bringing to an end the legal battle unleashed by incumbent Donald Trump who has been alleging widespread voter fraud in the presidential elections. In accordance with the Constitution and federal law, the Electoral College cast its votes Monday for the President, the elections for which were held November 3. The Electors met in their respective states following certification of the results.

The development brings to an end the legal battle unleashed by President Donald Trump against the elections, which he lost both in terms of the popular vote as well as the majority in the 538-member electoral college. Typically, the meeting of the Electoral College is merely a formality. However, it received international attention because of unsubstantiated allegations of massive voter fraud by Trump.

"The presidential election took place over a month ago. The result is not in doubt. In almost any other year, both major parties would have



fully and publicly accepted the will of the American people by now. The peaceful passing of the torch: a hallmark of our grand democracy," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said.

"After no evidence of widespread voter fraud was found in the country; after state election officials corroborated the accuracy of the results in every state in the country; after the Trump campaign's legal team racked up an astonishing win-loss record of 1 and 59; after the Supreme Court summarily dismissed two ludicrous efforts by Republicans to invalidate the results in swing

states; will the Republican Party in Congress—here in the Senate—finally acknowledge the results of an election that was determined over a month ago?" he asked.

Hillary Clinton, former secretary of state and 2016 presidential candidate, voted for Biden as an electoral college member in New York.

"I believe we should abolish the Electoral College and select our president by the winner of the popular vote, same as every other office," she said.

"But while it still exists, I was proud to cast my vote in New York for Joe Biden and Kamala Harris," Clinton added.

### Congratulations, says Putin at last

Moscow: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday congratulated Joe Biden on winning the U.S. presidential election after weeks of holding out. Putin's message to Biden came a day after the Electoral College confirmed Biden as the nation's next president, ratifying his November victory in an authoritative state-by-state repudiation of President Donald Trump's refusal to concede that he had lost. The Kremlin had said earlier that the Russian president would hold off on congratulating Biden until the winner was officially confirmed.

Results of the electoral college votes rolled in from across the country throughout the day.

"This election is over, and President-elect Joe Biden won our state by over 150,000 votes—14 times Donald Trump's 2016 margin. Americans must come together to support our new president and unite to defeat the coronavirus," he said.

# Levinson abduction: Trump blames Iran

AGENCIES

Washington, Dec 15: The Trump administration for the first time has formally blamed Iran for the presumed death of retired FBI agent Robert Levinson, publicly identifying two Iranian intelligence officers believed responsible for his abduction and imposing sanctions against them.

Levinson disappeared in Iran under mysterious circumstances more than a decade ago, and though US diplomats and investigators have long said they thought he was taken by Iranian government agents, Monday's announcement in the final weeks of the Trump administration was the most definitive assignment of blame to date.

The announcement is the latest in a series of tough actions the Trump administration has taken toward Iran as it works to cement an aggressive posture that may complicate any efforts by incoming President Joe Biden and his national security team to radically change course once they take office next month.

US officials pre-emptively made clear Monday that no deal with Iran should be finalised without providing for the release of Americans who remain detained there.

LEVINSON DISAPPEARED IN IRAN UNDER MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES MORE THAN A DECADE AGO

THE ANNOUNCEMENT IS THE LATEST IN A SERIES OF TOUGH ACTIONS THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION HAS TAKEN TOWARD IRAN

Besides calling out two high-ranking intelligence officers by name, US officials also said the Iranian regime sanctioned the plot that led to Levinson's abduction and lied for years about its involvement in his disappearance through disinformation campaigns aimed at deflecting responsibility and covering up the government's role.

"The abduction of Mr. Levinson in Iran is an outrageous example of an aggressive posture that may complicate any efforts to commit unjust acts," Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in a statement.

The Iranian intelligence officers, Mohammad Baseri and Ahmad Khazai, are alleged to have been involved in Levinson's abduction and probable death. Under the sanctions, any property or assets they hold in the United States would be frozen.



## KABUL ATTACK



Afghan security personnel inspect the site of a bomb attack in Kabul, Afghanistan, Tuesday. A bombing and a shooting attack in the Afghan capital killed a few people, including a deputy provincial governor, officials said

# Lawsuit against PM, HM quashed

AGENCIES

Washington, Dec 15: A US court has dismissed a USD 100-million lawsuit filed against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah after the litigants - a separatist Kashmiri outfit and two associates - failed to appear before it at two scheduled hearings.

The suit was filed September 19, 2019, days before Modi's historic 'Howdy, Modi!' event in Houston, Texas. It challenged the Indian Parliament's decision on Jammu and Kashmir that abrogated the special privileges of the state and carved out two union territories and sought a compensation of USD



100 million from Modi, Shah and Lt. Gen. Kanwal Jeet Singh Dhillon.

Dhillon is currently serving as the Director-General Defence Intelligence Agency and Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff under the Chief of Defence Staff.

Other than that attempted service, Kashmiri Khalistan Referendum Front have done nothing to prosecute this case, and have now failed to appear at two duly set Scheduling Conferences, US District Court Southern District of Texas Judge Frances H Stacy said in his order dated October 6 and recommended that the case be dismissed.

The case was terminated by Judge Andrew S Hanen of the US District Court in Texas on October 22. Apart from the Kashmiri Khalistan Referendum Front, the other two complainants have not been identified, other than the acronyms 'TFK' and 'SMS'. The suing party was represented by separatist lawyer Gurpatwant Singh Pannun.

# 'Twitter Killer' in Japan gets death row for murders

AGENCIES

Tokyo, Dec 15: A Japanese court Tuesday sentenced a man to death for killing and dismembering nine people, most of whom had posted suicidal thoughts on social media, in a case that shocked the country.

The Tachikawa branch of the Tokyo District Court found Takahiro Shiraishi, known as the Twitter killer, guilty of killing, dismembering and storing the bodies of the victims in his apartment in Zama, near Tokyo. Shiraishi, 30, pleaded guilty and said he would not appeal his death sentence.

Police arrested Shiraishi in 2017 after finding the bodies of eight females and one male in cold-storage cases in his apartment.



Investigators said Shiraishi approached the victims via Twitter, offering to assist them with their suicidal wishes. He killed the women, including teenagers, after raping them, and also killed a boyfriend of one of the women to silence him, investigators said. On Twitter, Shiraishi used the name Hangman, promising to help his victims die and inviting them to his apartment.

# 252 Indian Jews from north-east Bnei go to Israel



AGENCIES

Tel Aviv, Dec 15: A total of 252 Jews, including infants and elderly, from India's north-eastern Bnei Menashe community Tuesday landed at the Ben-Gurion airport here as immigrants and to start a new life in Israel.

They include 50 families, 24 singles, four infants under the age of two, and 19 people over the age of 62. Their immigration was approved by the Israeli government in October. After landing, they went through the immigration process.

Some 90 per cent of them have completed their aliyah (immigration) permit process and soon all of them will be taken to a Shavei Israel absorption centre in the Nordiya moshav close to Netanya, a Bnei Menashe community member present at the airport said.

# After Arab Spring, a decade of upheaval and lost hopes

AGENCIES

Cairo, Dec 15: Was it real? It's all been erased so completely, so much blood has been shed and destruction wreaked over the past decade. The idea that there was a moment when millions across the Middle East wanted freedom and change so much that they took to the streets seems like romantic nostalgia.

"It was very brief, man. It was so brief," said Badr Elbendary, an Egyptian activist.

Elbendary was blinded on the third day of his country's revolt in 2011, when security forces shot him in the face. It happened during a clash that became iconic among Egypt's "revolutionaries," when protesters and police battled on a bridge over the Nile in Cairo for hours, ending with the police scattering.

Today, he's in the United States. He can't return home. Many of his comrades from the protests languish in prisons in Egypt.

In December 2010, the uprising began in Tunisia and quickly spread from country to country in revolts against longtime authoritarian rulers.

It became known as the Arab Spring, but for those who took to the streets, the call was "revolution." The uprisings were about more than just removing autocrats. At their heart, they were a mass demand by the public for better governance and economics, rule of law, greater rights and, most of all, a voice in how their countries are run.

For a time after 2011, the surge toward those dreams seemed irreversible. Now they are further than ever. Those who keep the faith are convinced that yearning was real



and remains — or is even growing as people across the Arab world struggle with worsening economies and heavier repression. Eventually, they say, it will emerge again. "We have lowered our dreams,"

said Amani Ballour, a Syrian doctor who ran an underground clinic treating casualties in the opposition enclave of Ghouta outside Damascus until it collapsed under a long, brutal siege by Syrian gov-

ernment forces in 2018. She was evacuated with other residents to northwest Syria, and from there she left the country.

"The spirit of the demonstrations may be over for now... But all those who suffered from the war, from the regime's repression, they won't put up with it," she said from Germany.

"Even in the areas controlled by the regime, there is great frustration and anger building up among the people." "Eventually" could be years.

The region is traumatized and exhausted by its most destructive decade of the modern era, perhaps the most destructive in centuries.

Across Syria, Yemen and Iraq, millions have lost their homes in war and struggle to find livelihoods, educate their children or even to feed themselves.

# business



Revenues for both the network and overall TV news genre have not been affected as a result of the BARC decision to temporarily suspend the release of data  
**AVINASH PANDEY | CEO, ABP NETWORK**

## EQUITY INDICES TICK HIGHER

Equity indices ticked higher to new closing highs Tuesday as smart gains in finance and metal stocks offset profit-booking in FMCG and select banking counters amid mixed global cues. A depreciating rupee also weighed on the bourses, though investors took heart from the unabated foreign fund inflows, traders said.



## of the day quote

There is a change in import duty on CPO (crude palm oil) and its import duty reduced to 27.5 per cent from 37.5 per cent, while duty on soft oils remained unchanged



Our current year order inflow is in excess of ₹4,500 crore and we are favourably placed in projects of over ₹3,000 crore. We continue to be on track to achieve order inflows



Steadview is a long-term investor and we see them playing a key role as Delivery heads towards the public markets in the next 12-15 months



## SHORT TAKES

### Chemical sales to 'grow' 9 pc

**New Delhi:** Chemicals and Fertilisers Minister D V Sadananda Gowda Tuesday said the demand for chemicals and petrochemicals is expected to rise 9 per cent annually, and the size of the industry is likely to grow to USD 300 billion by 2025. Addressing a conference organised by industry body ASSOCHAM, the minister said the Indian chemical industry, over the last one-and-a-half decade, has transformed to a mature industry in a liberalised economy.

### BPCL may buy stake in Bina

**New Delhi:** Privatisation-bound Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) has said its board will on Thursday consider buying out Oman Oil Company in the Bina refinery project in Madhya Pradesh. BPCL board will also consider merging Bharat Gas Resources Ltd (BGRL) with itself, the company said in a filing to the stock exchanges Tuesday. BPCL holds 63.68 per cent stake in Bharat Oman Refineries Ltd (BORL), which built and operates a 7.8 million tonne oil refinery at Bina.

### SIP inflows hit 31-month low

**New Delhi:** Investment in mutual funds through systematic investment plans dropped to a 31-month low of ₹7,302 crore in November amid challenging economic environment. However, investment through the Systematic Investment Plans (SIPs) route had risen in October after six months of continuous decline. The 44-player mutual fund industry witnessed an inflow to the tune of ₹7,302 crore through SIPs in November as compared to ₹7,800 crore in the preceding month.

### Deadline of GST probe extended

**New Delhi:** The government has extended the deadline till March 31, 2021 for completing GST anti-profiteering investigations, which were to be completed by November this year. Through a notification, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) extended the deadline for completion of such investigations by authorities, like DGAP, under section 171 of GST Act, till March 31, 2021. In September, CBIC had extended the deadline till November 30, 2020.

## BIZ BUZZ



**NEW DELHI:** SBI Card Tuesday announced launch of 'BPCL SBI Card Octane' in association with Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), offering maximum savings to consumers who spend a significant amount on fuel. The credit card has been designed to offer maximum savings to the well-heeled consumer segment which spends a significant amount on fuel. The BPCL SBI Card Octane brings 25X reward points on spends for BPCL fuel and MAK Lubricants, Bharat Gas (LPG) spends (website and app only) and BPCL's 'In & Out' convenience store spends, SBI Card said in a release. The card offers 7.25 per cent value back (including 1 per cent surcharge waiver) on fuel.

## ADANI PORTS JV TO RAISE USD 300 MILLION

New Delhi: Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd (APSEZ) on Tuesday said its joint venture firm Adani International Container Terminal Pvt Ltd will raise USD 300 million (over ₹2,200 crore) to retire some of its debt. "Adani International Container Terminal Pvt Ltd (AICTPL), a 50:50 joint venture (JV) of Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd and Terminal Investment Limited Holding S.A., priced an offering of USD 300 million 3.00 per cent senior secured notes due 2031. "The notes will be issued to institutional investors permitted to invest in the notes under applicable laws," the company said in a regulatory filing.



## AGRITECH STARTUP ARYA RAISES USD 21 VIA EQUITY

New Delhi: Agritech startup Arya has raised USD 21 million (about ₹155 crore) through equity and debt from a clutch of investors, including Quona Capital, to expand its business. Arya, which is into post-harvest agritech and agri-fintech, on Tuesday, announced the close of its Series B round, raising USD 21 million in a mix of equity and debt. The equity round was led by Quona Capital, alongside existing investors LGT Lightstone Aspada and Omnivore. Multiple lenders participated in providing additional debt financing to the company. Apart from agricultural warehousing services, Arya is also providing digital solutions for storage, processing, financing, and market linkages.

# S&P ups India growth forecast

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Dec 15:** S&P Global Ratings Tuesday raised India's growth projection for the current financial year to (-)7.7 per cent from (-)9.9 per cent estimated earlier on rising demand and falling COVID-19 rates.

For the next financial year 2021-22, S&P projected growth to rebound to 10 per cent. Its revision in growth forecast for the current fiscal reflects a faster-than-expected recovery in the September quarter.

Rising demand and falling infection rates have tempered our expectation of COVID-19's hit on the Indian economy. S&P Global Ratings has revised real GDP growth to negative 7.7 per cent for the year ending March 2021, from negative 9 per cent previously, S&P said in a statement.

A faster recovery keeps more of the economy's supply side intact and can set India up for more prolonged above-average growth during the recovery phase, it added.

India's gross domestic product (GDP) fell 7.5 per cent in the July-September quarter, against a contraction of 23.9 per cent in the April-June quarter.



## DEMAND DRIVEN RECOVERY

- Manufacturing output was about 3.5 per cent higher in October 2020 when compared to the year-ago period, while the output of consumer durables rose
- This recovery underscores one of the more striking aspects of the COVID-19 shock -- the resilience of manufacturing supply chains
- The agency said the demand for goods -- not services -- drives India's recovery, and household savings have risen due to an uncertain outlook

Earlier this month, Fitch Ratings also revised its growth forecast for India to (-)9.4 per cent, from (-)10.5 per cent, on signs of economic revival, while the Asian Development Bank said the economy is likely to contract 8 per cent as against the earlier forecast of 9 per cent contraction, on faster recovery. Last month, Moody's upped India's growth forecast to (-)10.6 per cent for the current financial year, from its earlier estimate of (-)11.5 per cent.

In the statement, S&P on Tuesday said India is learning to live with the virus, even though the coron-

avirus pandemic is far from defeated. However, the reported cases have fallen by more than half from peak levels, to about 40,000 per day.

It is no surprise that India is following the path of most economies across Asia-Pacific in experiencing a faster-than-expected recovery in manufacturing production, S&P Global Ratings Asia-Pacific Chief Economist Shaun Roache said.

Manufacturing output was about 3.5 per cent higher in October 2020 when compared to the year-ago period, while the output of consumer durables rose by almost 18 per cent.

This recovery underscores one of the more striking aspects of the COVID-19 shock -- the resilience of manufacturing supply chains. Again, as with demand, some slowing of output momentum has emerged more recently, S&P said.

The agency said the demand for goods -- not services -- drives India's recovery, and household savings have risen due to an uncertain outlook and constraints of social distancing. But, demand for durables is rising, it added. If consumers cannot or will not spend money on a vacation or eating out, they will divert some of that spending to goods, S&P said.

# SAT stays Sebi's ₹6-cr fine on NSE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 15:** The Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT) has stayed the ₹6 crore penalty that markets regulator Sebi had imposed on NSE for allegedly investing in firms unrelated to the stock exchange business. Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi), in October, levied a fine of ₹6 crore on National Stock Exchange (NSE) for allegedly investing in six companies unrelated or non-incidental to the stock exchange business.

The six entities are -- CAMS and Power Exchange India Ltd (PXIL), NSEIT Ltd, NSDL E-Governance Infrastructure Ltd (NEIL), Market Simplified India Ltd (MSIL) and Receivables Exchange of India Ltd (RXIL). The notice (NSE) had engaged, directly and/or through its wholly-owned subsidiary NSICL, in activities that are unrelated/non-incidental to its activities as a stock exchange by way of acquisition of stakes in PXIL, CAMS, NSEIT Limited, NEIL, MSIL, and RXIL without seeking approval of Sebi, the regulator had said in its order.



Through such acts, NSE violated the provisions of the Securities Contracts (Regulation) (Stock Exchanges and Clearing Corporations) or SECC norms.

In its order passed on December 11, SAT has stayed the penalty levied by Sebi on NSE. The matter has been listed for final disposal on January 29, 2021. According to the tribunal, one of the questions that arise for consideration is whether the appellant (NSE) as a stock exchange having made investments in six entities are related or incidental to the activities of the bourse.

Further, other questions that require consideration are whether the SECC Regulations, 2012 could be utilised for the purpose of imposing of penalty when the said Regulation has been repealed prior to the issuance of the show-cause notice.

# HIGH INFLATION TO IMPEDE RATE CUT

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Dec 15:** The Reserve Bank would have limited options for policy easing of interest rates as inflation would continue to remain at elevated levels in the current fiscal, analysts tracking the development have said.

According to a research report by Emkay Global Financial Services, while inflation may have peaked, consistent supply shocks have meant the inflation series is estimated to average around 6.3 per cent in FY21.

This is well above the RBI front zone and would shape easing in FY22 for some policy action to come into play by the RBI. According to the Emkay report, retail inflation is expected to trend towards 5.8 per cent by the end of March, 2021.

However, the report said that favourable base effect, the wide output gap and rebalancing of effective demand-supply dynamics will further help inflation ease to 4.8 per cent by FY22. The RBI has

projected CPI inflation at 6.8 per cent for the third quarter, 5.8 per cent for the fourth quarter 2020-21; and 5.2 per cent to 4.6 per cent in H1 of 2021-22.

While growth concerns and sub-optimal fiscal response may keep the MPC's stance accommodative and liquidity adequate, the inflation trajectory still remains above four per cent in FY22 and thus, hints at dimming chances of further rate cuts in the coming year; the brokerage report said. CPI inflation surprised in November 2020 with better-than-expected moderation at 6.93 per cent, driven by sharp easing in sequential food inflation, while core inflation was down marginally.

Food inflation dropped to below 10 per cent, helped by easing in vegetables and cereals. The seasonal easing in perishable vegetable inflation is likely to continue as suggested by high-frequency mandi prices, and should add further to the disinflationary momentum in food.

# Farmers' protest resulting in daily loss of ₹3,500 crore



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 15:** Industry body ASSOCHAM on Tuesday urged the Centre and farmers' organisations to resolve the impasse over the new agri laws, saying that the protests are inflicting a heavy blow to the economies of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and J&K.

A daily loss of ₹3,000-3,500 crore is resulting in the economies of the region from the value chain

and transport disruption because of the protests, according to a rough estimate by the chamber.

ASSOCHAM President Niranjan Hiranandani said, "The size of the combined economies of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and J&K is about ₹18 lakh crore. With the ongoing farmers' agitation and blockade of roads, toll plazas and railways, the economic activities have come to a halt.

Monday, the Confederation of

Indian Industry (CID) had said the farmer agitation has led to supply chain disruptions, which will impact the economy in the coming days and may impinge upon the ongoing recovery from the economic contraction due to COVID-19.

ASSOCHAM's Hiranandani observed that industries such as textiles, auto components, bicycles, sports goods which cater significantly to the export markets would not be able to fulfil their orders, ahead of Christmas, harming the industry's goodwill among the global buyers.

Recovering from the harsh COVID-19 blow, the Indian economy needs to double down on growth which is possible only with a conducive environment for industrial activities, investment including the Foreign Direct Investment, ASSOCHAM stated.

The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) said in the last 20 days, trade and other activities of about ₹5,000 crore have been affected in Delhi and its surrounding states.

# Village industry, Khadi products log rise in sales



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 15:** The MSME Ministry Tuesday said that local products, including those made by khadi and other village industries, have seen a phenomenal increase in sales this year on Diwali, buoyed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's clarion call for 'Vocal for Local'.

Overall, there is almost 300 per cent increase during Diwali this year over Diwali in 2019 in the sale of a basket of products.

The total sales in amount terms by a sample of outlets of Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), spread in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh, increased four times to around ₹21 crore this Diwali from ₹5 crore during Diwali of last year, the ministry said.

This record increase, in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country, has taken place across almost all products including khadi, agarbatti and candle.

Diya, honey, metal art products, glass articles including Charkha in box, agro and food items, cotton and silk fabric, woollen and embroidery products too, it added.

The ministry stated that in pursuance to Prime Minister's clarion call for Aatmanirbhar Bharat and for 'Vocal for Local'.

Its social media campaign, the sale of local products including those made by khadi and other local and village industries has seen phenomenal increase.

The ministry had launched a social media campaign to promote local products made by artisans and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) for the recent festive season across the country.

# 'India will be among top 3 economies in 2 decades'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 15:** Richest Indian Mukesh Ambani Tuesday said India will grow to be among the top three economies in the world in the next two decades and per capita income would more than double.

At a fireside chat with Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg, Ambani said India's middle-class, which is about 50 per cent of the nation's total number of households, will grow three to four per cent per year.

I firmly believe that in the next two decades, India will grow to be among the top three economies in the world, said Ambani, who heads oil-to-retail-to-telecom conglomerate Reliance Industries Ltd.

More importantly, it will become a premier digital society, with young people driving it.

will go from USD 1,800-2,000 per capita to USD 5,000 per capita, he said.

Facebook, Jio and many other companies as well as entrepreneurs in the world have a golden opportunity to be in India, and be part of the economic and social transformation that will accelerate in the coming decades, he added.

Ambani said India has faced the COVID crisis with enormous resilience and

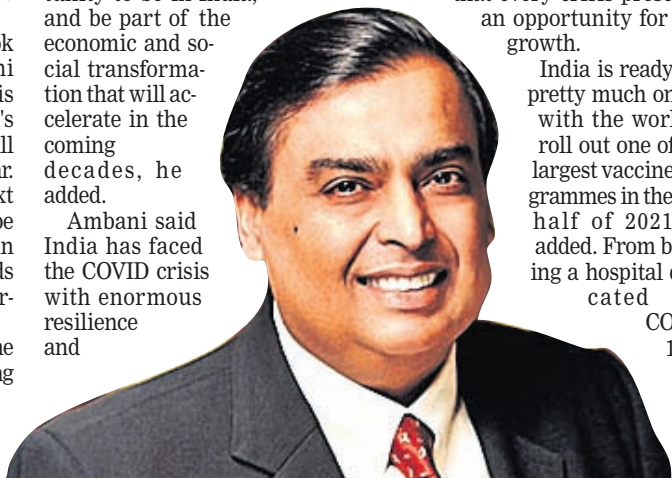
resolve. The sheer magnitude of COVID-19 pandemic, like everybody else in the world, did startle all of us in India. But then I think it is not in India's DNA to be deterred by a crisis, Ambani said, adding that every crisis presented an opportunity for new growth.

India is ready and pretty much on par with the world to roll out one of the largest vaccine programmes in the first half of 2021, he added. From building a hospital dedicated to COVID-19, to pro-

ducing PPEs, and from meal distribution programmes for vulnerable sections, to Jio ensuring connectivity and handling the rise in network traffic as people worked from home, Reliance and Reliance Foundation had taken a series of steps in the face of the pandemic.

Sometimes I wonder that if the pandemic had struck India just four or five years earlier, we would not have been in as good a shape as what we are today, with all the connectivity we have, Ambani said, lauding the Digital India vision.

It is during the pandemic that India has attracted the largest foreign direct investment in its history. We have our own example of how Jio and Facebook concluded our partnership right in the middle of lockdown, Ambani said, referring to Facebook's ₹43,574 crore investment in Jio Platform earlier this year.



# WE'LL MISS ISHANT: RAHANE



WE HAVE STILL NOT DECIDED WHAT'S OUR COMBINATION GOING TO BE. WE WILL SIT TOMORROW, THERE IS ANOTHER DAY TO GO, ONE MORE PRACTICE SESSION TO GO, WE WILL SIT TOMORROW AND DISCUSS WHAT'S OUR COMBINATION

**AJINKYA RAHANE**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Adelaide, Dec 15:** India vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane Tuesday conceded that pacer Ishant Sharma's absence is a 'big miss' but side-stepped queries on his team's possible first XI combination for the opening Day/Night Test against Australia starting here Thursday.

Rahane, who is expected to lead in the last three Tests after regular skipper Virat Kohli goes on paternity leave, also spoke about how pink ball's increased pace off the pitch during the 40-50 minutes of the twilight session, will be the biggest challenge for any batsman.

"I think, we do really have a strong attack but yes we will definitely miss Ishant, being the senior fast bowler," Rahane said during a virtual press conference.

Ishant is recovering from a rib injury sustained during the IPL. Rahane, however, is confident that despite Ishant's absence, the pace attack comprising Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami will step it up for the Australians.

"The guys who are here Umesh (Yadav), (Navdeep) Sani, (Mohammed) Siraj with Jasprit (Bumrah) and (Mohammed) Shami, they are all really good and experienced and they know how to bowl in these conditions," he said.

"This is a new series starting with the Pink ball, so it is all about

getting that momentum, but I do believe that we have the attack to get 20 wickets," he said.

On the possible opening combination among the four available options (Mayank Agarwal, Prithvi Shaw, Shubman Gill and KL Rahul) and two options for wicketkeeping (Wriddhiman Saha and Rishabh Pant), Rahane said a decision will be taken on the eve of the match.

"See, we have still not decided what's our combination going to be. We will sit tomorrow, there is another day to go, one more practice session to go, we will sit tomorrow and discuss what's our combination," Kohli's deputy said.

"But see whoever plays, it is going to be like, everyone is equally there, everyone is equally talented, whoever plays, they can win the match for us, so it is all about trusting our players," Rahane said.

He also didn't give any definitive answer on what would be senior spinner Ravichandran Ashwin's role although he did acknowledge that his all-round skills will be very handy going into the first Test.

"Ashwin's role will be very important. We all know that he is an experienced bowler, he has got variety in his bowling, so his role as a bowler and also as a batsman will be really important," he said.

Twilight period in pink ball Test matches is very important and that has been well documented. What Rahane added to the theory on the day was increase in speed off the pitch during a period of 40 to 50 minutes, which is not the case for normal red balls.

"I feel in the day, the new pink ball slightly moves, but then after that it becomes easy to bat...When the twilight period comes, for 40-50 minutes, that becomes a bit challenging for the batsmen to focus," he said.

"The ball's pace increases, initially there is normal pace, but when lights are on and the twilight period starts, the pace increases off the wicket (surface)," he said.

"In case of red ball, when we play throughout the day, the pace does not change suddenly, but with the pink ball, within 40-50 minutes, pace changes completely.

It is very important to make adjustments there," he said.

A chance to practice for a month and play two first-class games has been the best preparation ahead of

the big ticket series, he said.

"Quarantine was challenging, especially the first 14 days but luckily we got concessions and got the opportunity to practice during the quarantine period, so that was good preparation," he said.

"We got that time this year, to practice, plan ourselves really well, went to do our training and skill sessions and obviously those two practice games really helped before the first Test match."



ISHANT SHARMA

# Smith skips nets due to sore back

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Adelaide, Dec 15:** Australia's premier batsman Steve Smith Tuesday missed a crucial net session due to a sore back as the home team's tumultuous build-up to the four-match Test series against India experienced another major injury scare.

After having warmed up for 10 minutes with his teammates by doing a few stretching exercises and running drills at the Adelaide Oval, Smith skipped the routine football session and headed straight to the dressing room in some discomfort after tweaking his back while bending down to pick up a ball.

On his way to the dressing room, Smith was accompanied by team physiotherapist David Beakley. The day-night first Test starts here from Thursday and Smith is not expected to return to training until at least Wednesday.

According to the Australian media, a team spokesman said the 31-year-old run-machine is likely to bat at the nets Wednesday and there is no doubt about his availability for the much-anticipated series opener.

While the Australian camp played down the issue, Smith did not return for the nets. Smith was in scintillating form during the recent limited-overs series against India, striking successive 62-ball centuries in the one-dayers at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

It is the latest in a series of injury blows to the home team ahead of the Test series. Australia have already been hit by multiple injuries, with David Warner (groin)

## MARK BACKS STEVE FOR CAPTAINCY ROLE

**MELBOURNE:** Former batsman Mark Waugh believes Steve Smith has repented enough for his role in the ball-tampering scandal and needs to be handed Australia's Test captaincy after the retirement of incumbent Tim Paine. Smith was removed from captaincy due to his involvement in the scandal in 2018 which also led to a review of Australia's win-at-all-costs team culture. "I would have made Steve Smith captain. He is one of the best players in the team, so he is always going to be picked in the team," Waugh said on Fox Sports' Heavy Roller Podcast. "Plus he has captained Australia for a number of years. He's got a great cricket brain and I think he is a leader, so why not? I know a lot of people say why should he captain again? But hang on the crime has been paid for as minor as I thought it was," Waugh said. "He's paid his penance there, so he gets back to captain. I think he is a pretty good captain."

and Will Pucovski (concussion) ruled out of the opening Test.

Promising all-rounder Cameron Green will make his Test debut against India here if he clears the concussion protocols, Australian coach Justin Langer said Tuesday.

Green suffered a mild concussion after being hit on the head by a shot from Jasprit Bumrah in the pink ball warm-up match between India and Australia A in Sydney. He was replaced under the sport's concussion rules and has since been monitored by Cricket Australia's medical staff.



STEVE SMITH

# Captains' 'tactics' crucial in D/N Test

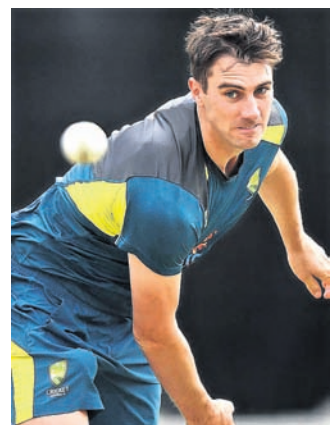
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Adelaide, Dec 15:** Australia pace spearhead Pat Cummins feels the series opener against India will test the tactical acumen of the captains as day-night matches move at a 'slightly different pace' with the pink ball zipping around a bit more under lights.

Australia have won each of their four day-night Test matches so far against New Zealand, South Africa, England and Pakistan respectively.

India, on the other hand, have played just one pink ball Test, winning it convincingly against Bangladesh at Eden Gardens in November last year. Cummins, who played for Kolkata Knight Riders in the IPL, said there is always a sense of excitement when they approach a pink ball Test.

"We are just a little bit, won't say nervous but excited, knowing that the game moves at a slightly different pace to a normal Test match. You can have some sessions under the lights where the balls just zip



around," Cummins told kkr:In.

"After dinner, when the light takes effect, just for whatever reason it seems like the ball zips around a bit more. You can have some periods in a Test match a bit like a one-dayer, where the ball doesn't swing, doesn't seam and all of a sudden out of nowhere, it starts zipping around under the lights.

"It's just another dynamic of the game. It's a tactic that the captains

have to manage - when to bat and when to bowl," Cummins said.

India had registered their first-ever Test series win on Australian soil in 2018-19. But the home side didn't have two of their top batsmen - David Warner and Steve Smith - in that series as they were serving their ball-tampering bans.

Cummins said with the duo back in the squad, it will hold them in good stead in the series. "We like to pride ourselves in winning all our home series. So yeah, definitely been looking forward to this one for a couple of years now. India had a better side than us a couple of years ago ... Even though we shared patches I think overall, we were outplayed by them in that series," he said.

"David and Smith coming back into the side, they are two of the best batters in the world, so of course it helps. We've also got a couple of younger guys who have now become really mature players like Travis Head, Marnus Labuschagne etc. So that's a big help."

# Gavaskar picks Pant, Gill over Saha, Shaw



RISHABH PANT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 15:** The legendary Sunil Gavaskar feels the Indian team management should prefer an aggressive Rishabh Pant over a technically sound Wriddhiman Saha for the wicketkeeper's role in the four-match Test series against Australia, starting Thursday.

Gavaskar said that with a blis-

tering 73-ball 103-run knock in the second warm-up game under his belt, Pant will give India more flexibility in the first Test, the only day-night game, to be played in Adelaide.

"It is going to be a tough one for the tour selection committee because Rishabh played in all the four Test matches four years ago. He also got a hundred and seemed he got under the skin of the Australian players with

his chirping behind the stumps.

"When you just came off a hundred few days earlier, he would be the choice of the management I think," Gavaskar said.

Gavaskar said he preferred Pant over a more-accomplished keeper in Saha, as Australian pitches are not so demanding when it comes to keeping wickets.

Both Gavaskar and Allan Border batted for Shubman Gill over Prithvi Shaw to open alongside Mayank Agarwal in the series.

"India is a little bit shaky at the top of the order. They don't know who they are going to go with. Mayank Agarwal is of course a certainty. But who's the other opener - Shubman Gill or Prithvi Shaw?" said Gavaskar.

"So with uncertainty at the top, they would like to strengthen their batting and so Rishabh Pant will play. I am hoping he (Rishabh) plays at No.6 because then that will allow you to pick five bowlers to try and get 20 Australian wickets," he added.

In the two warm-up games, Gill's

scores - 0, 29, 43, 65 - got better with every knock while Shaw - with scores of 0, 19, 40, 3 - looked out of sorts. And Border was mighty impressed by how Gill has shaped up.

"I've been in Sydney the last couple of days, watching the Indian team against Australia A. I was impressed with Gill," said the former Australia captain.

"I really think he's got something about him, his technique. I know he's young so he can play a few rash shots here and there, but he looks seriously good player; this kid. He would be my pick out of the guys I saw.

"I know you guys (rate) Shaw but it seems to me like he plays a shot-a-ball. Against the new ball, he looks good on flat tracks, but in Australia, you've got to be a little bit more watchful about your shot selection," he added.

Gavaskar agreed with Border and said Shaw needs to get back to the drawing board and work on his weaknesses - inconsistency and poor shot selection.

# KOHLI MOVES TO 2ND IN ICC TEST RANKINGS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dubai, Dec 15:** India captain Virat Kohli Tuesday jumped one place to second in the ICC Test ranking for batsmen, which also features Cheshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane at the seventh and 10th positions respectively.

Kohli is the leading Indian batsman in the chart with 886 rating points behind Australia's Steve Smith (911 points). New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson dropped a rung to the third spot. He is followed by young Australian batting sensation Marnus Labuschagne, Pakistan's Babar Azam and injured David Warner.

Pujara is seventh in the chart

with 766 points, followed by Ben Stokes (760), Joe Root (738) and India Test vice-captain Rahane (726) to complete the top-10 list.

Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah (779) and veteran off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin (756) are the two Indians to find a place in the ICC Test rankings for bowlers at eighth and 10th spots respectively. The list is being headed by Australia's Pat Cummins (904), followed by England's Stuart Broad and New Zealand's Neil Wagner.

Two other Indians - Ravindra Jadeja (3rd) and Ashwin (6th) - also feature in the top 10 list for ICC Test rankings for all-rounders, which is being topped by Stokes.

# Santana douses SCEB's glimmer of first win



Aridane Santana (C) is congratulated by his teammates after scoring one of his goals against SC East Bengal, Tuesday

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Goa, Dec 15:** Thirty-nine seconds was all it took for Aridane Santana to turn the game around as unbeaten Hyderabad FC condemned SC East Bengal to yet another defeat in the Indian Super League (ISL) at the Tilak Maidan, here Tuesday.

Robbie Fowler's men took the lead with their first goal of the season through Jacques Maghoma (26th). But Aridane swept aside any hopes of a first win with a 56th-minute brace that was separated only by 39 seconds. Halicharan Narzary (68th) put the Nizams further ahead. Maghoma scored again (81st) but

Hyderabad held on for a 3-2 win.

East Bengal broke the deadlock and scored their first goal of the season with their first shot on target, totally against the run of play. Anthony Pilkington played Matti Steinmann through on the flank, who squared it for Maghoma. Subrata Pal got a hand to Maghoma's shot but it was too powerful for him to keep it out.

The Nizams must have thought they restored parity minutes before halftime when they were awarded a penalty for Sehraj Singh's foul on Mohammed Yasir. But Majumder guessed right and pulled off a stunning save to keep Santana's penalty out.

In the 56th minute, Aridane scored

the first of his goals. Yasir dipped in a perfect free-kick to Santana, who leapt highest to flick the ball into the back of the net.

Then 39 seconds later, he was at it again, this time Liston turning provider. The substitute drilled in a low cross at the far post to an unmarked Santana, who put the Nizams ahead.

In the 68th minute, it was Colaco once again with a fine assist. The Goa lad danced his way past two SCEB defenders and played a low cross at the far post to an unmarked Narzary, who tapped the ball into empty net.

There was still time for Maghoma to score a second for SCEB, but it was too little too late.