



## METHOD ACTOR

Actor Taapsee recently blindfolded herself for 12 hours to get into the skin of her character in *Blurr*

LEISURE P2



## FRESH INCURSION

China has constructed villages in Bhutan territory near Doklam, new satellite images reveal

INTERNATIONAL P10



## STUNNING VICTORY

HS Prannoy defeats Olympic Champion Viktor Axelsen in the Indonesian Open badminton tournament

SPORTS P12

## HYDERPORA ENCOUNTER: 2 BODIES EXHUMED



**Srinagar:** Authorities Thursday exhumed bodies of Mohammad Altaf Bhat and Mudasar Gul, two civilians killed in the Hyderpora encounter, for handing them over to their families, officials said. The bodies were exhumed after sundown and are likely to be handed over to their families later in the night, they said. This will be for the first time that the body of a person buried under police watch is returned to his kin since the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic in March last year. The bodies, accompanied by a police team, are being moved to Srinagar from Handwara where they were initially buried, the officials said.

MORE P8

## PAKISTAN PASSES BILL FOR RAPISTS' CHEMICAL CASTRATION



**New Delhi:** One of the Bills passed by the joint session of the Pakistan Parliament provides for punishment of 'chemical castration' of a habitual rapist, Dawn news reported. The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill 2021 seeks to amend the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860, and the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898. According to the Bill passed Wednesday, "chemical castration is a process duly notified by rules framed by the Prime Minister, whereby a person is rendered incapable of performing sexual intercourse for any period of his life, as may be determined by the court through the administration of drugs which shall be conducted through a notified medical board". Jamaat-i-Islami Senator Mushtaq Ahmed protested over the bill and termed it un-Islamic and against Sharia. **MORE P10**

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## Suspended OPHWC officer gets the boot

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Nov 18:** Suspended deputy manager of Odisha Police Housing and Welfare Corporation (OPHWC) Pratap Kumar Samal was sent on compulsory retirement Thursday following his arrest in a disproportionate assets (DA) case. A senior official at the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said the action was taken based on Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's zero-tolerance policy towards immorality, inefficiency, or lack of integrity. The official had been suspended from service following his arrest by the Vigilance last week for allegedly possessing assets which were over 1022 per cent of his known sources of income, the official said. "With this, 131 government officers have been dismissed from service or sent on compulsory retirement for immorality, inefficiency, or lack of integrity in the last two years," the official said. Twenty-five immovable properties, including five buildings and a flat, owned by Samal were found during a search operation carried out by the state Vigilance officials. Samal was arrested by the anti-corruption wing November 10 for allegedly possessing ₹14.87 crore in DA, the official said. The Vigilance had also unearthed suspicious deposits worth ₹1.5 crore in the bank accounts of Samal and his relatives. Samal was also found investing ₹50 lakh in production of Odia movies through his wife and sister. Vigilance sleuths Thursday grilled Samal's sister Namita as well. Samal will be produced in the court Friday, said sources.



**MARITIME GLORY**  
A customer checks a paper boat at a stall near Unit I market in Bhubaneswar, Thursday, on the eve of Kartika Purnima commemorating the maritime glory of Odisha  
PIC: BIKASH NAYAK

## MAMITA MURDER HC seeks probe status

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, Nov 18:** The Orissa High Court Thursday asked the state government to file a status report on the investigation into the kidnap and murder of Mahaling school teacher in Kalahandi Mamita Meher. A single-judge bench court of Justice Biswajit Mohanty, while adjudicating over the petition filed by the victim's father Tuesday, asked the government pleader to submit the status report within a week. The next hearing in the case has been scheduled to be held December 3. The teacher's father had approached the High Court seeking direction to the police to conduct an impartial investigation, and fast-track trial of the case. The petitioner had claimed that delay in completion of the investigation was putting huge mental pressure on the family members



of the victim. State Home Secretary, DGP, Bolangir Collector, Bolangir SP, and Sindhekela police station IIC have been made respondents in the case. Bolangir police have arrested two persons, including the prime accused, Gobinda Sahu, who is president of the school managing committee where the teacher worked. The prime accused had October 17 night escaped from police custody and was apprehended by the law enforcers two days later. The police said that the prime

accused had confessed to the crime before them, saying he had murdered the teacher by strangulating her in his car. The entire state is on the boil for over a month with the opposition parties demanding the dismissal of Minister of State for Home, Dibya Shankar Mishra, for his alleged close links with the prime accused. Meanwhile, Bharatiya Vikash Parishad Thursday filed an interim application and sought the HC intervention to include the MoS, Home, Sambalpur DIG and Bolangir SP in the investigation into the murder case. The outfit also urged the HC to direct the investigating officers to examine the laptop, mobile phone and call records of the deceased teacher. Opposition political parties are demanding Mishra's ouster to pave way for an impartial investigation into the murder case.

## SC tears skin-to-skin contact ruling

■ The purpose of the law cannot be to allow the offender to sneak out of the meshes of law, the apex court ruled

PNN & AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Nov 18:** The Supreme Court Thursday quashed the controversial skin-to-skin judgement of the Bombay High Court in a case under POCSO Act, saying the most important ingredient constituting sexual assault is sexual intent and not skin-to-skin contact with the child. The Bombay HC had held that no offence of sexual assault under Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act is made out if there is no direct skin-to-skin contact between an accused and victim. A bench headed by Justice UU Lalit set aside the High Court order, and said the act of touching the sexual part of the body or any other act involving physical contact if done with sexual intent would amount to sexual assault within the meaning of Section 7 of the POCSO Act. Purpose of the law cannot be to allow the offender to sneak out of the meshes of the law, the apex

court said. "We have held that when the legislature has expressed clear intention, the courts cannot manufacture ambiguity in the provision. It is right that courts cannot be overzealous in searching ambiguity," the bench, also comprising Justices S Ravindra Bhat and Bela M Trivedi, said. Justice Bhat delivered a separate concurring judgement. "The most important ingredient for constituting the offence of sexual assault is sexual intent and not skin-to-skin contact with the child. Construction of a rule should give effect to the rule rather than destroying it. Any narrow interpretation of the provision which would defeat its object cannot be accepted. The intention of the legislature cannot be given effect unless wider interpretation is given," the bench said. The apex court said this is the first time that the Attorney General had filed an appeal on the crim-

**NO TO HYBRID EXAM MODE**  
**New Delhi:** "Don't mess up with the education system," the Supreme Court said Thursday while refusing to direct the CBSE and the CISCE to provide option of hybrid mode, instead of only offline mode, to the students for appearing in Class X and XII board examinations amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Observing that this "last-minute" business should be discouraged, the apex court said it would not be appropriate to intervene and disturb the entire examination process at this stage. **P-7**

inal side. Attorney General KK Venugopal had earlier told the apex court that the controversial verdict would set a "dangerous and outrageous precedent" and needed to be reversed. The top court, which was hearing separate appeals of the Attorney General and the National Commission for



## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



What kind of freedom did we get in 2014 if comedians are not free to say their mann ki baat!

## INDIA'S LARGEST IPO

# Paytm tumbles 27% in market debut

■ Although Paytm's \$2.5 billion offering was priced at the top of the indicative range, demand was much weaker than other recent IPOs

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, Nov 18:** Shares of One97 Communications Ltd, Paytm's parent company, Thursday made a weak market debut and tumbled over 27 per cent from the issue price of ₹2,150. Addressing a gathering on the listing ceremony of One97 Communications, Vijay Shekhar Sharma, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Paytm said, "I believe that Paytm story inspires and hopefully will inspire tens of and hundreds of millions of entrepreneurs that this country will pro-



duce in years to come that yes they can do it. They can do it even when they come from backgrounds that were not meant to be making you reach here, they can reach here." "Paytm, the biggest IPO in India so far debuted the secondary market on a weaker note as compared to our expectations of a flat listing," Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investment Ltd, said. In traded volume terms, 10.06

lakh shares were traded at the BSE and over 2.39 crore shares at the NSE during the day. "India's largest IPO of Paytm tumbled 27 per cent on its maiden day, with investors questioning its business model and lack of profits along with lofty valuations," Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd. Ant Group-backed Paytm's ₹18,300 crore IPO was oversubscribed 1.89 times on the last day of India's biggest share sale last week. This was greater than miner Coal India's ₹15,000 crore offer a decade back. "Paytm, formally called One97 Communications saw a dull response and got subscribed only 1.89 times from the investors which is much lower compared to the other recently listed companies," Parth Nyati, Founder, Tradingo said. He added that they feel that due

to the brand the company sought high valuation and it might see a correction in the near term. The initial public offering of Paytm's parent company One97 Communications Ltd received bids for 9.14 crore equity shares against the offer size of 4.83 crore shares, according to information available with stock exchanges November 10. Paytm had fixed its IPO in a price band of ₹2,080-2,150 per share. Incorporated in 2000, One97 Communications is India's leading digital ecosystem for consumers and merchants. It offers a range of services, including payment services and financial services. Launched by a son of a school teacher from a small town Aligarh nearly a decade ago as a platform for cellular recharging, Paytm grew rapidly after ride-hailing agency Uber listed it as a fast-cost possibility.

| MARKET WATCH |          |           |
|--------------|----------|-----------|
| INDEX        |          | VARIATION |
| SENSEX       | 59575.28 | ↓ 433.05  |
| NIFTY        | 17764.80 | ↓ 133.90  |
| DOLLAR       | 74.31    | ↑ ₹0.07   |
| EURO         | 84.27    | ↑ ₹0.24   |
| GOLD         | ₹49,175  | ↓ ₹117    |
| SILVER       | ₹66,068  | ↓ ₹57     |

| WEATHER  |                  |        |
|----------|------------------|--------|
|          | BHUB             | CTK    |
| MAX      | 29.4°C           | 30.6°C |
| MIN      | 19.5°C           | 19.2°C |
| Humidity | 64%              | 69%    |
| Rainfall | Nil              | Nil    |
| Forecast | Partially cloudy | sky    |

# leisure



## 'MY WIFE WOULD'VE CHOSEN KEANU AS SEXIEST MAN ALIVE'

Actor Paul Rudd, who has been crowned as the *Sexiest Man Alive* earlier this week, thinks his wife Julie Yaeger would have chosen *The Matrix* star Keanu Reeves for the title. Asked if she would have voted for him if she'd had the change, Rudd quipped: "No, she would have voted for Keanu."

## RUST'S SCRIPT SUPERVISOR SUES ALEC BALDWIN, FILM PRODUCERS

The script supervisor on *Rust* has filed a lawsuit against Hollywood veteran Alec Baldwin and the film's producers Wednesday, claiming she suffered both 'physical and emotional' injuries when the actor shot the film's cinematographer while preparing for a scene. Cinematographer Halyna Hutchins was killed by the gunshot.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
The boredom of your monotonous life will now begin to tell on you. A change of trappings is what you probably have on mind. Money matters are not a big deal, and a little quick change may result in an evening get-together. Ganesh says you will like to flaunt your pretty and peaceful ambience.

**TAURUS**  
You are likely to be disinterested and undecided during the morning. Though the will start off on a low note your resourcefulness and creativity will rise as the day progresses. The way you acquit yourself today will make you stand out and give you immense pleasure and satisfaction, assures Ganesh.

**GEMINI**  
It's celebration time in your family. However, you will be busy handling a business deal while your family makes merry. You may even have to go on a business trip later in the day. You will devote time to achieving professional success rather than celebrating a personal achievement, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
Today, you may have to pay a lot of attention to educational and intellectual activities, predicts Ganesh. There may be novel business proposals and job offers in the afternoon. The opposite sex will be attracted to you like iron pins are attracted to a magnet. However, you are likely to be loyal to the one you love.

**LEO**  
Dashing off in a mad rush never got anyone anywhere. Hence, Ganesh advises you to slow down a bit on this cheerful day. On the business front, you may be slightly concerned about the state of your finances; after all, a smooth functioning of one's enterprise largely depends on the flow of money. Apart from this, Ganesh finds you cultivating a new interest in jewellery and arts.

**VIRGO**  
In the sea of relationships, you may just chance upon the one port you were looking to dock. But weigh your options carefully before forging a bond of love, warns Ganesh. Later in the day, you may think twice about continuing your current job. Romance will brew quite steadily, hopes Ganesh.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh says that today you will feel close to your loved ones and will be able to spend the evening with them. Today you will be successful in whatever work you will take up. Your attractive personality will ensure that people will turn to you and seek your company today.

**SCORPIO**  
It's time to make your dreams come true. The house or the vehicle, which you were dreaming of since a long time may be your today. A favourable day for such transactions, foresees Ganesh. Sincerity will help you to survive the cut-throat competition.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Today, you may feel enchanted by home and family as you seek love and joys of life from them. You may plan a getaway with like-minded people. And this time, it's going to be thrill and adventure.

**CAPRICORN**  
You will be ambitious and reach out the stars in the sky. You will aim for perfection and leave no stone unturned to ensure expected results at work, says Ganesh. You will not only ideate but also plan successful execution by effective delegation of responsibilities among the team members.

**AQUARIUS**  
It's absolutely alright to attend a social do where you don't know anyone. Just be your charming self and everything will fall in place. Minor problems may nag. Know how to play a musical instrument? It's perfect for relaxation, says Ganesh.

**PISCES**  
Today you will find yourself caught in two minds. As a result of which, you will find yourself unable to take a firm decision. Put off important decisions until you find yourself in a better frame of mind, says Ganesh. Post afternoon should see you bonding with old friends and you will begin to see old relationships in a new light.

## Aamir postpones *Laal Singh Chaddha* release

Aamir Khan and his team have decided to postpone their much awaited social drama, *Laal Singh Chaddha* yet again. The Advait Chandan directed biggie, according to industry sources is targeting an April 14, 2022 release now.

"*Laal Singh Chaddha* is a high on VFX film, as the team is using ageing and de-ageing technology for Aamir Khan's character. The process is taking longer than expected as they are looking for nothing but perfection. There are multiple films which have used this trick, but Aamir is clear on providing a world class big screen experience. And hence, he has decided to



move the film to April 14, 2022," a source close to the actor revealed. Interestingly, this release would mean a clash with the much awaited KGF 2 at the

box office. "They are figuring on multiple dates in April - May window

and April 14 is just one of the many in consideration. Another date in consideration is the Eid weekend - 28th April, 2022. Aamir is speaking to his friends, Sajid Nadiadwala (*Heropanti 2*) and Ajay Devgn (*MayDay*), to see if something can be worked upon. A final decision will be taken in a day or two. But yes, *Laal Singh Chaddha* is no longer releasing on February 11," the source added.

The movie is official remake of *Forest Gump* and stars Kareena Kapoor Khan as the female lead. It also marks Hindi debut of Nag Chaitanya.

## Taapsee stays blindfolded for 12 hours

Mumbai: Versatile actress Taapsee Pannu has wrapped her portion in upcoming movie *Blurr*.

The *Rashmi Rocket* actress blindfolded herself for 12 hours to get in the skin of her character, leaving everyone on set in admiration of her. A source revealed, "Taapsee was determined to feel the sentiments of her character. She decided to stay blindfolded for 12 hours. From morning 7 am she kept cotton strap folded on her eyes and went ahead to do all her daily routine in the same condition. Answering phone calls, eating, talking to the crew, cast, and team of the film without removing the blindfold."

Taapsee is one of the youngest stars to successfully establish herself as a true actress of today's generation. The audiences are in awe of her to be back with yet another exemplary on-screen performance.

*Blurr* is an upcoming Indian Hindi-language thriller film directed by Ajay Bahl and jointly produced by Zee Studios, Outsiders Films, and Echelon Productions. The film features Taapsee Pannu and Gulshan Devaiah in the leading roles.



## Why November is luckiest for Manushi

NEW DELHI: Former beauty queen and debutante Manushi Chhillar, who is all set to play princess Sanyogita in the Akshay Kumar-starrer *Prithviraj*, is ecstatic that the teaser of the upcoming film dropped in November, which she considers her luckiest month.

Manushi said: "November has always been my lucky month. So, it is an amazing coincidence that the teaser of my debut film *Prithviraj* has also happened in the same month, in fact just a few days before I was crowned Miss World on November 18 in 2017."

She added: "While I'm nostalgic about my achievement in 2017, I'm also very excited for my launch and the journey that lies ahead of me. November will forever be special in my life. I'm feeling emotional, elated, thrilled, nervous, curious - all at the same time because I have waited for this moment for over a year."

Manushi has been paired opposite superstar Akshay in *Prithviraj* and she hopes that she will make her parents proud with her performance.

*Prithviraj* will release January 21, 2022.



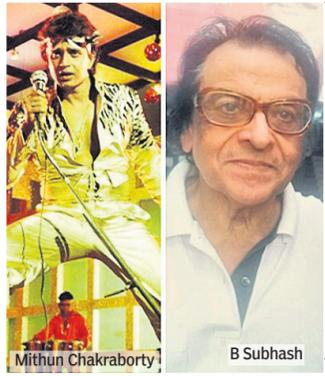
## Disco Dancer director seeks financial aid for his ill wife

Filmmaker and writer B Subash, who sky-rocketed Mithun Chakraborty's career in films including *Disco Dancer*, needs financial help for the treatment of his wife who is battling lung and kidney ailments.

The man behind the success of *Disco Dancer* said that they were doing just fine with the two daughters and son taking care of a company that he established in 1982 but things took a turn for the worse with the COVID-19 pandemic. Their financial situation was complicated further by the severe health issues of his wife Tilottimma.

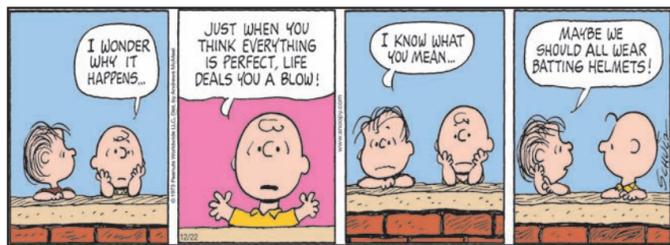
"Five years ago, both her kidneys failed and she was supposed to undergo a kidney transplant. I had decided to give my kidney to her. But it came to light that she has lung issues too. She has ILD (Interstitial Lung Disease) and we couldn't do kidney transplant as it would have had serious repercussions on her health," Subash said in a statement.

The 77-year-old filmmaker informed that many people came out to help, even the people he had previously collaborated with. He said that since

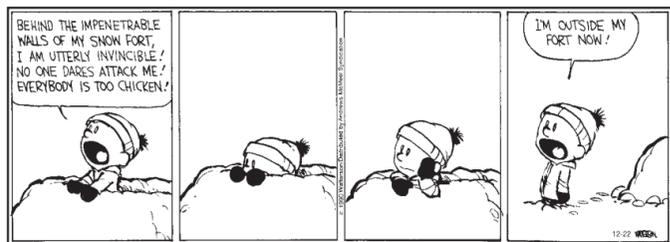


they were unable to pay this huge bill amount of Rs. 30 lakh for her last hospitalisation, his daughter Shweta had approached Juhi Chawla, Anil Kapoor, Dimple Kapadia, Bhushan Kumar, Ratan Jain, and they all came forward. His *Disco Dancer*'s lead actor Mithun Chakraborty too chipped in, shared Subhash.

### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

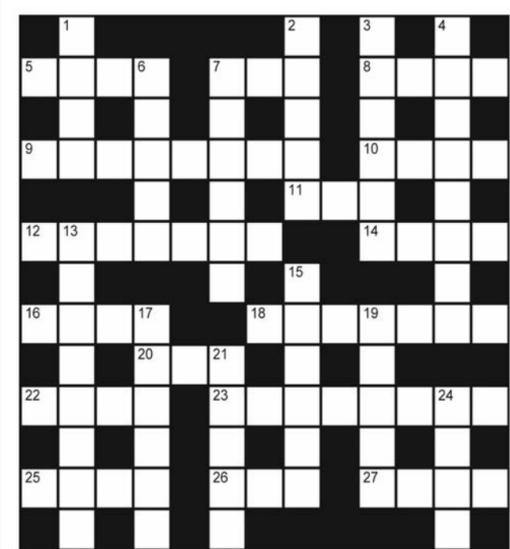


### BREVITY



### FUN post

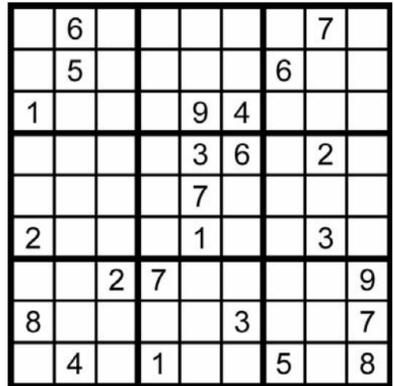
### CROSSWORD



- Across
- 5 Stag
  - 7 Cookie holder
  - 8 "What a shame!"
  - 9 Informed
  - 10 Fired
  - 11 Objective
  - 12 Slender tower with balconies
  - 14 Egg part
  - 16 Medal recipient
  - 18 Spirits
  - 20 Tie the knot
  - 22 Wee warbler
  - 23 Words to a pest (3,5)
  - 25 Hawaiian island
  - 26 Young fox
  - 27 Musical chairs goal
  - 4 Napoleon's undoing
  - 6 Divided land
  - 7 Quartz variety
  - 13 Frozen dessert (3,5)
  - 15 Mercury, for one
  - 17 Confesses (4,2)
  - 19 Cantina pots
  - 21 Male duck
  - 24 Hereabout
- Down
- 1 Coal unit
  - 2 Chip away at
  - 3 Illness

### SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.

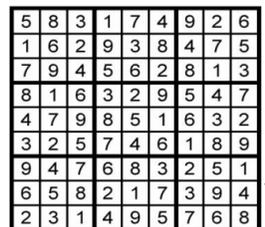


### SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU



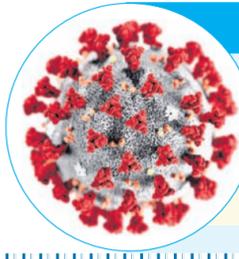
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



## KARTIKA RITUAL

Women buy paper boats on the eve of Kartika Purnima in Cuttack, Thursday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

|        | INFECTED     | RECOVERED    | DEAD      |
|--------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| World  | 25,59,94,083 | 23,13,17,064 | 51,43,223 |
| India  | 3,44,78,517  | 3,38,85,132  | 4,64,623  |
| Odisha | 10,46,317    | 10,35,613    | 8,386     |

## MAN ARRESTED FOR LOAN FRAUD

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Nov 18: Badambadi police Thursday claimed to have arrested a man on charges of furnishing forged documents for availing loan from the Bajrakabati Road branch of a public sector bank, an official said.

Badambadi inspector in-charge (IC) Rashmi Ranjan Mohapatra said they have arrested Sridhar Rout alias Siddarth Swayam Rout aka Siddarth Sarthak, a resident of Paika Sahi in Cuttack Sadar area here, on the basis of a complaint lodged by Union Bank of India Bajrakabati Road branch manager Dolamani Behera.

Mohapatra said the accused usually approaches banks for loan by introducing himself as a doctor with AIIMS Patna in Bihar. He is a history-sheeter, the police official said.

In 2019, the accused had availed a loan from a Bank of Baroda branch in Bhubaneswar by identifying himself as Siddarth Swayam Rout. Later he was arrested, Mohapatra said.

ACCORDING TO BADAMBADI IIC RASHMI RANJAN MOHAPATRA, THE ACCUSED USUALLY APPROACHES BANKS FOR LOAN BY INTRODUCING HIMSELF AS A DOCTOR WITH ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES PATNA IN BIHAR

A FEW DAYS AGO, HE AVAILED A FOUR-WHEELER LOAN OF RS 6.5 LAKH FROM UNION BANK OF INDIA BAJRAKABATI ROAD BRANCH IN CUTTACK BY FURNISHING FAKE DOCUMENTS

A few days ago, he availed a four-wheeler loan of Rs 6.5 lakh from Union Bank of India Bajrakabati Road branch by furnishing fake documents. Later, he managed to get another four-wheeler loan of Rs 10 lakh from Bank of India's Ranihat branch. Recently, the accused had approached a few banks for personal loan with forged documents. However, many of the banks declined his request. On November 16, Union Bank of India Bajrakabati Road branch manager Dolamani Behera grew suspicious and approached the Badambadi police.

The Badambadi IIC said they have recovered many incriminating documents from the accused.

# Three new eco-tourism sites coming up in state



The nature camp at Daringbadi

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 18: Buoyed by the rise in tourist footfall at various eco-tourism sites of Odisha, the state government has decided to set up such facilities at Deomali in Koraput, Karlapat in Kalahandi and Nawana near Similipal.

A proposal for developing new eco-tourism sites was approved at a meeting under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra, who directed the Forest and Environment department to release funds for the purpose immediately.

Mahapatra also directed the officials to maintain the pristine character of the sites with adequate sanitation measures.

The eco-tourism projects, through Community Based Management (CBM) model, rolled out by the state government in 2016, have done well in boosting the tourism sector in Odisha. The eco-tourism sites in Odisha have attracted both domestic and international tourists, recording a manifold increase in footfall and revenue generation. This has improved the livelihood sources of the local community, said an official.

During the meeting, Mahapatra directed the officials to strengthen the CBM model through capacity building of the community mem-

bers dealing with the tourists and visitors.

"The CBM has provided alternative and sustainable livelihoods to many people who otherwise were solely dependent on forests. It has also empowered the people and has infused a sense of belongingness towards the forests and wildlife among them," said the official.

The Chief Secretary asked Idco to acquire non-forest land near popular eco-tourism centers and develop those for setting up of hospitality units.

Additional Chief Secretary, Forest and Environment, Mona Sharma said the eco-retreat activities launched by the state government have encouraged private investment in the tourism sector. Hospitality centres and hotels have come up near Daringbadi and Konark. Some investors have also expressed their interest in starting private ventures in other spots like Deomali, she said.

Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (wildlife) Sashi Paul said as many as 47 eco-tourism destinations have been developed and operationalised in 18 revenue districts of Odisha.

The initiative has played a key role in raising the income of many tribal families in Mayurbhanj, Sundargarh, Sambalpur,

### SUCCESS STORY

As many as 47 eco-tourism destinations have been developed and operationalised in 18 revenue districts of Odisha

The eco-tourism sites had witnessed the footfall of 11,500 visitors from across the country and abroad in 2016-17 fiscal while the number shot up to 57,000 in 2020-21

Tourists from 18 countries including France, Germany, Iran, Australia, the Netherlands, Belgium and South Africa have made night halts at the eco-tourism sites

Malkangiri, Kandhamal, Bargarh, Nayagarh and Koraput districts, he said.

This year, eco-tourism sites have been developed and operationalised at Nrusinghanath, Koraput pine forest, Patora dam and Tensa, he added.

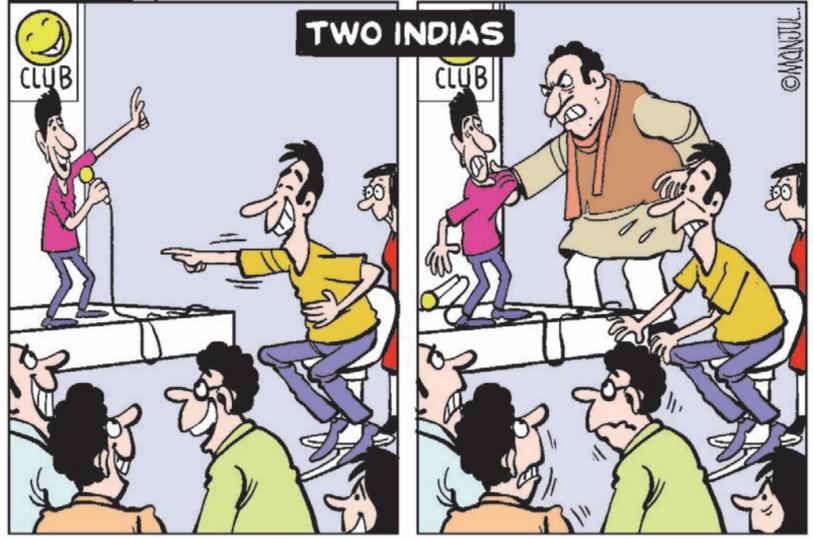
Under the CBM model, around 90 per cent of the revenue generated from the eco-tourism sites was shared with members of the respective communities managing the sites.

According to sources, the eco-tourism sites in Odisha had witnessed the footfall of 11,500 visitors from across the country and abroad in 2016-17 fiscal while the number shot up sharply to 29,024 in 2018-19 and 57,000 in 2020-21 financial year.

The eco-tourism website witnessed around 22.80 lakh hits from 30 countries across the world. Tourists from 18 countries including France, Germany, Iran, Australia, the Netherlands, Belgium and South Africa have made night halts at the eco-tourism sites, sources said.

Similarly, the state has generated revenue to the tune of Rs1.57 crore from eco-tourism sites in 2016-17 financial year, Rs3.40 crore in 2017-18 fiscal and Rs5.61 crore in 2018-19. The figure grew to Rs 8.32 crore in 20-21 fiscal.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



# Piped water to every Keonjhar household by Dec 2022: CM

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 18: Every household in Keonjhar district will have piped drinking water supply by December 2022, said Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik while launching the distribution of Biju Swasthya Kalyana Yojana (BSKY) smart health cards to beneficiaries in the tribal-dominated district through virtual mode Thursday.

On the occasion, Naveen inaugurated 142 projects worth Rs458 crore and laid the foundation stones for 257 projects worth Rs1,201 crore. These are mostly healthcare, education, roads and bridges, sports infrastructure and livelihood projects. The Chief Minister also announced 13 new projects worth Rs378 crore for the district including a mega poultry farm worth Rs36 crore. The poultry farm project will benefit as many as 30,000 people from tribal communities in the region.

Patnaik said his government was been focusing on ensuring piped drinking water supply to all. "All households in the district would be provided with piped drinking



CM Naveen Patnaik launches distribution of BSKY smart health cards in Keonjhar through virtual mode Thursday as 5T Secretary VK Pandian looks on

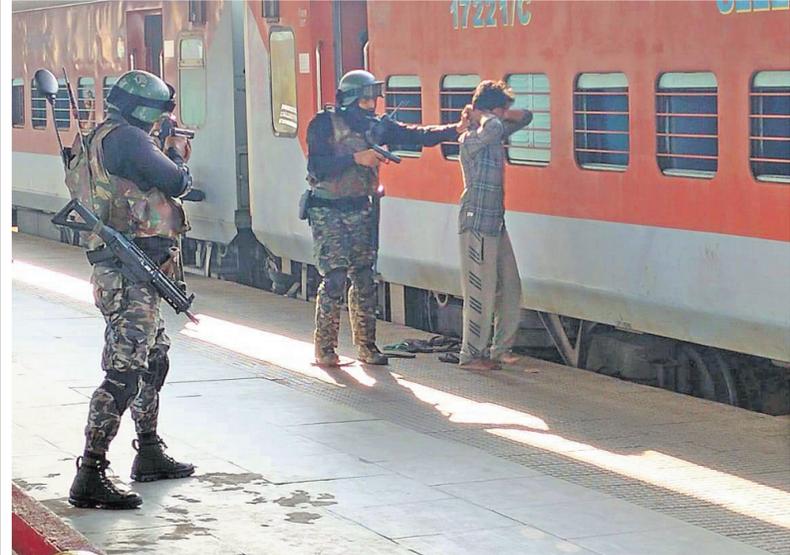
water supply by December 2022," the CM added. Now, around 4.20 lakh people of Keonjhar district can avail the benefits of the BSKY smart health card. With this, the BSKY smart health cards have been distributed in 13 districts of Odisha. Patnaik said people sell land, gold and go for borrowings to meet expenses of treatment.

"When I come across such news, it pains me. Now, the beneficiaries can avail health services by using this card in more than 200 empanelled hospitals across the coun-

try," the Chief Minister said. "For me, every life is precious. Whether it's a farmer or a labourer, a small shopkeeper or a rickshaw puller, everyone should live with dignity. This is the main goal of all welfare schemes of the state," he pointed out.

The smart health cards will be provided to 3.5 crore people of 96 lakh families in Odisha. Each family can avail treatment up to Rs5 lakh per annum. Women members can avail the benefit up to Rs10 lakh every year, sources said.

## ANTI-TERROR MOCK DRILL AT RLY STATION



The Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Government Railway Police (GRP) jointly conducted a counter-terrorism multiagency mock drill at Bhubaneswar railway station here, Thursday. The standard operating procedure (SOP) for station security has mandated regular conduct of such mock drills to check the preparedness and coordination among security and other agencies in case of any eventuality. Special Operations Group (SOG) personnel, Fire Services, Capital Hospital and Railway medical staffers also participated in the counter-terrorism mock drill

## ₹6.48cr sanctioned for Khurda town

Khurda: The state government has sanctioned Rs 6.48 crore under the Mukhyamantri Karma Tatpara Abhiyan (MUKTA) scheme for Khurda town for the development of basic infrastructure like road, drainage system and recreational facilities. This was revealed by Khurda MLA Jyotindra Nath Mitra at a press conference here Thursday. The fund would be spent on various projects at all 22 wards of Khurda town. Earlier, Khurda Collector Sangram Keshari Mahapatra and other officials had discussed various issues of Khurda town with 5T Secretary VK Pandian through videoconference, sources said.

## Brow-antlered deer dies at Nandankanan

Barang: A female brow-antlered deer at Nandankanan Zoological Park (NZP) here died Thursday, an official said. According to zoo sources, the herbivore was undergoing treatment for trypanosomiasis, a disease in vertebrates caused by parasitic protozoan trypanosomes, for the past five days at Enclosure 36B of the nature's paradise. However, she did not respond to medications. With this, the zoo is left with only 20 such herbivores—11 males, five females and four others whose gender is yet to be ascertained, added the official. Notably, the brow-antlered deer is found in Keibul Lamjao National Park in Manipur.

## Srimandir deities' Suna Besha today

Puri: Lord Jagannath and his siblings Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra would be adorned with the Suna Besha (golden attire) at the sanctum sanctorum of Srimandir on the occasion of Kartika Purnima, Friday. However, devotees would not be allowed to witness the ritual due to the Covid restrictions, temple sources said. Lord Jagannath was adorned with the Laxminrusingha Besha on the 4th day of Panchaka ritual, Thursday. Hundreds of devotees visited the 12th century shrine to witness the ritual.

# Esplanade One celebrates Boita Bandana



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 18: During this Boita Bandana, Esplanade One is the place to be at. Since its inception, Esplanade One has been the most sought after community centre for the whole of Odisha.

This year, Esplanade One has got up to 50 per cent off on the best of national and international brands on the occasion of Boita Bandana. There is also installation of a larger than life

boat, which has significance to the festivities set up. Over the years, Esplanade One has ensured that it hosts activations which are culturally rooted and would attract people from across the twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, along with the Holy City of Puri.

Boita Bandana is also called Danga Bhasa, an annual cultural festival in Odisha which is reminiscent of the voyage of Odia ancestors on decorated boats called as 'boita'.

## PARADIP PORT TRUST

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## Port Day

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- PRESENTLY PPT HANDLES CAPE SIZE VESSELS INSIDE HARBOUR AND 3,50,000 DWT VESSEL AT SINGLE POINT MOORINGS (SPM).
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- AVAILABILITY OF DRY DOCK FACILITIES.
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- EQUIPPED WITH VESSEL TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (VTMS).
- 114.55 MILLION TONNES OF CARGO HANDLED DURING THE YEAR 2020-21.
- THE CARGO HANDLING CAPACITY OF THE PORT WILL REACH 367 MILLION METRIC TONNES BY 2025.
- PARADIP PORT RETAINS ITS 2<sup>nd</sup> POSITION IN CARGO THROUGHPUT AMONG ALL MAJOR PORTS.
- THE PORT HAS STARTED HANDLING REGULAR EXIM CONTAINERISED CARGO MOVEMENT TO PORT KLANG AT ITS CLEAN CARGO TERMINAL (PICT)

| FY       | Capacity (MMT) |
|----------|----------------|
| FY 17-18 | 102.01         |
| FY 18-19 | 108.27         |
| FY 19-20 | 112.69         |
| FY 20-21 | 114.55         |

[paradiport.gov.in](http://paradiport.gov.in)
[www.paradiport.gov.in](http://www.paradiport.gov.in)

## Youth gets 10-year RI for raping minor



**Bhubaneswar, Nov 18:** The Fast Track Special Court (FTSC) Thursday sentenced a 24-year-old youth to rigorous imprisonment (RI) of 10 years under the POCSO Act after finding him guilty of sexually abusing a nine-year-old minor girl on the outskirts of the Capital city in 2016. The convict was identified as Ahiraja Nayak who is a resident of Jatni area.

The court also ordered the convict to pay Rs 1,000 as fine. He would incur six months additional jail term in case he fails to deposit the said amount.

According to sources, Nayak had forcefully abducted the victim who was sleeping in her house alone as her parents had gone to a neighbour's residence. He had raped her repeatedly at different places on the fateful night.

The next day, he had left the seriously wounded girl near her house and had fled the spot.

The victim later revealed the whole incident before her parents who lodged a case at the Jatni police station.

Police arrested Nayak and produced him before the court. Special prosecutor Subrat Priyadarshi presented 36 documentary evidences before the court.

The court, after examining 18 witnesses and the evidences, declared Nayak guilty of the crime.

## STF recovers live pangolin, detains 2

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Nov 18:** The Special Task Force (STF) of Odisha Police have rescued a pangolin and nabbed two persons on charge of dealing in wildlife illegally in Kandhamal district, an officer said Thursday.

On the basis of reliable information regarding illegal possession of the pangolin by wildlife criminals, an STF team conducted a raid with the help of Forest officials near Jakikia village under Baliguda Police Station Wednesday. The raiding party nabbed two accused persons for possessing the pangolin, police said.

The accused persons could not produce any valid authority in support of possession of the pangolin, for which they have been detained and handed over to Baliguda Forest officials for necessary legal action at their end. The pangolin was also handed over to Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Baliguda for safe custody.

During last one year, in its special drive against wildlife criminals and poachers, the STF has seized 20 leopard skins, 11 elephant tusks, 2 deer skins, 7 pangolins and 15 kg pangolin scales and has arrested 45 wildlife criminals, the police said.

## WASSUP TODAY

### BHUBANESWAR

- Death anniversary of freedom fighter Manmohan Mishra, Rotary Bhawan, Unit-IX, 5:30pm
- Event to mark birth anniversary of historian Prafulla Chandra Tripathy, 111/D, Jaydev Complex, Saheed Nagar, 6pm

### BALIANTA

- Annual yagna before Maa Bhusandei, Ramachandrapur Yagna Mandap, 5pm
- Yagna before Banabihari Deb, Paribasudeipur, 5pm

Programmes/announcements for wassup today may be sent to [opwassup@gmail.com](mailto:opwassup@gmail.com) for record, it must also carry the sender's mobile number for our verification, but not for publication.

# Odisha logs 229 fresh nCoV cases, 3 deaths

As many as 1,39,58,009 people have taken both doses of Covid-19 vaccine in the state

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Nov 18:** Odisha Thursday logged 229 new Covid-19 cases, including 29 children and adolescents, taking the state's tally to 10,46,317 while three fresh fatalities pushed the coronavirus death toll to 8,386, a Health department official said.

The new infections were detected in 19 districts while the remaining 11 districts did not report any new cases. The state had reported 226 new infections Wednesday while it was 206 Tuesday and 185 Monday, the official added.

Of the new cases, Khurda district of which the state Capital Bhubaneswar is a part, reported the highest of 113 fresh infections, followed by Cuttack (18). The rate of infection among children and adolescents in the age group of 0 to 18 years was 12.66 per cent against the previous day's 14.60 per cent.

As 229 people tested positive for infection out of 57,649 samples tested Wednesday, the daily test positivity rate (TPR) stood at 0.39 per cent against the previous day's 0.37 per cent. The TPR was 0.41 per cent Tuesday and 0.32 per cent Monday. Meanwhile, the coastal state's Covid-19 death toll touched 8,386 with three more deaths due to the deadly disease in the last 24 hours. The fresh fatalities were reported from Khurda, Puri and Sundargarh districts.

The state currently has 2,616 active Covid-19 cases while 10,35,262 patients have so far recovered from the highly infectious disease.

Odisha has thus far conducted over 2.30 crore sample tests including 57,649 Wednesday. The state's cumulative positivity rate is now 4.53 per cent. As many as 1,39,58,009 people have taken both doses of Covid-19 vaccine, the Health and Family Welfare department said.



Governor Ganeshi Lal receives the guard of honour at the passing out parade of newly-recruited DSPs and sub-inspectors of police at Biju Patnaik State Police Academy in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

# BMC to make 67 community toilets

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Nov 18:** Observing the World Toilet Day, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Thursday stated that it will be constructing 67 community toilets across all its wards in the state capital and will also be launching mobile toilets after the pandemic.

With the theme 'Valuing Toilets', BMC along with the Centre for Advocacy and Research (CFAR) observed the day by organising an event at Mayfair Hotel here, which discussed safety, security and rights of sanitation staff and how the specially-challenged, elderly and transgenders could use the toilets effectively and efficiently.

"Under the BMC area we have 75 community toilets with 1,992 seats, 99 common toilets, 42 e-toilets and 10 bio toilets. Around 22,000 people can use these toilets in a day. While some are in renovation and main-



tenance phase, most are working and in use by citizens. In the coming days, we will be introducing 67 new toilets along with five mobile toilets. The mobile toilets will be deployed in areas where there is no access to toilets," informed Suwendu Kumar Sahoo, Deputy Commissioner, Sanitation.

The event which was also attended by leading transgender

leader and Member of National Transgender Council Meera Parida acknowledged BMC's effort for installing the first toilet for transgenders near Vani Vihar Square. Meanwhile, she also suggested setting up of more such toilets across City with proper signage.

"Toilet use, its maintenance quality and social management shows the socio-political and eco-

**Under the BMC area, we have 75 community toilets with 1,992 seats, 99 common toilets, 42 e-toilets and 10 bio toilets. Around 22,000 people can use these toilets in a day. While some are in renovation and maintenance phase, most are working and in use by citizens**

SUVENDU KUMAR SAHOO | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, SANITATION

economic status of that particular locality/community, so we should use toilets and keep our city clean. Our signage campaign for trans-inclusive toilets should be scaled up and the signage of trans-women with women and trans-men with men be displayed across public/community toilets so that we secure the recognition and dignity that we are entitled to,"

Parida said. Meanwhile, in the spirit of inclusive sanitation, 12 SATO-manufactured toilet pans were conferred to persons with disabilities. The event also discussed in details how all in our society could contribute towards a clean and green city and use toilets properly. Five sanitation walls in five wards were unveiled.

Speaking on the challenges faced by the differently-abled individuals, District Social Security Officer (DSSO) of Social Security and Empowerment of Disability (SSEPD) Sanyasi Behera said, "Many urban poor disabled persons do not have space. So it is difficult to make toilets for them. Community toilets do not have options of wheelchair and ramps. It costs 25 per cent more for making disabled-friendly toilets. The disabled individuals face a great difficulty while accessing toilets and thus we demand that extra 25 per cent in budget to cater to their needs."

## Guv advises new cops to be impartial

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Nov 18:** Governor of Odisha Ganeshi Lal Thursday took the salute and handed over prizes to meritorious Deputy Superintendents of Police (Probationers) and Cadet Sub-Inspectors during the passing out parade at the Biju Patnaik State Police Academy (BPSPA) here.

Addressing the gathering, Lal urged the officials to defend the rights of underprivileged citizens impartially.

Wishing the officials' progress, he exhorted them to perform their duty with utmost dedication. Seven DSP probationers and 291 SI cadets received various trainings at the academy and SOG Chandaka, and field training in different districts between 2019 and 2021.



Hundreds of devotees throng Lingaraj temple in Bhubaneswar on the 4th day of Panchaka ritual in the holy month of Kartika, Thursday

OP PHOTO

# 'Exercise spikes body's own cannabis to fight chronic inflammation'

Exercise increases the body's own cannabis-like substances, which in turn helps reduce inflammation and could potentially help treat certain conditions such as arthritis, cancer and heart diseases, a new study has reported.

The study, led by experts from the University of Nottingham, showed that exercise by people with arthritis did not just reduce their pain, but it also lowered the levels of inflammatory substances called cytokines.

It also increased levels of cannabis-like substances produced by their own bodies, called endo-

cannabinoids. Interestingly, the way exercise resulted in these changes was by altering the gut microbes.

For this study, published in the journal Gut Microbes, a group of scientists led by Professor Ana Valdes from the School of Medicine at the university tested 78 people with arthritis. Thirty eight of them did 15 minutes of muscle strengthening exercises every day for six weeks, and 40 did nothing.

At the end of the study, participants who did the exercise intervention had not only reduced their pain, but they also had more mi-

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Thirty eight of them did 15 minutes of muscle strengthening exercises every day for six weeks, and 40 did nothing

Participants who did the exercise intervention had not only reduced their pain, but they also had more microbes in their guts of the kind that produce anti-inflammatory substances, lower levels of cytokines and higher levels of endocannabinoids

crobes in their guts of the kind that produce anti-inflammatory substances, lower levels of cytokines and higher levels of en-

docannabinoids. The increase in endocannabinoids was strongly linked to changes in the gut microbes and



anti-inflammatory substances produced by gut microbes called SCFAS.

In fact, at least one third of the

anti-inflammatory effects of the gut microbiome were due to the increase in endocannabinoids.

"Our study clearly shows that exercise increases the body's own cannabis-type substances which can have a positive impact on many conditions," said Amrita Vijay, a research student at the varsity's School of Medicine.

"As interest in cannabidiol oil and other supplements increases, it is important to know that simple lifestyle interventions like exercise can modulate endocannabinoids," Vijay added.

IANS

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SHORT TAKES

Jumbo found dead in Sundargarh



**Sundargarh:** A tusker was electrocuted after it reportedly came in contact with a live wire laid by poachers to catch wild boars near Patharpunji jungle under Bonai forest division and range in Sundargarh district, Thursday. Locals noticed the animal aged about 50 lying dead and informed the forest officials. Locals claimed the animal might have died of electrocution as burn injuries caused by electric shock was spotted on the carcass. The carcass was buried at the spot. Forest officials said they can comment on the death of the animal after their probe is completed.

Man awarded lifer for sexual assault on minor

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhadrak, Nov 18:** A local court handed down life imprisonment to a 38-year-old man after convicting him for sexually assaulting a minor girl in November, 2017. Additional District and Sessions Judge Pranati Saha also slapped a fine of ₹20,000 on convict Manas Jena. In default, he has to undergo an additional one month of rigorous imprisonment. On the other hand, the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) has directed the district administration to provide ₹3 lakh compensation to the victim.



**The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) has directed the district administration to provide ₹3 lakh as compensation to the victim**

According to the case diary, Jena, a resident of Ghusrigadia village under Khaira police limits in Balasore district, was staying in a rented house at Dagarasahi in Charampa. Jena picked up the girl when she was playing outside her house, November 3, 2017. He took her to an isolated place and sexually assaulted her. The matter came

to the fore after the girl narrated her ordeal before her mother. Later, her father lodged a complaint Bhadrak Town police in this regard. Police registered a case under Section 376 of IPC and Section 6 of POCSO Act, and arrested Jena. He was produced in court which re-manded him to judicial custody.

ANTI-LIQUOR BRIGADE



Women affiliated to Bhuyan Samaj, a local outfit, destroy liquor bottles after vandalising a shop at Bansapal in Keonjhar district, Thursday

Lovebirds end life in Malkangiri

**Malkangiri:** A couple, allegedly in a romantic relationship, committed suicide by consuming poison at Singarajkonda village under Sadar block in Malkangiri district. The matter came to the fore after villagers spotted the bodies in a farmland. On being informed, officials of the Model Police Station launched a probe after sending the bodies for post-mortem, IIC (in-charge) Ram Prasad Nag said. However, no complaint has been lodged in the police station yet, he added. Preliminary inquiries suggested they may have ended their lives over love affair to which their families disapproved of as the youth was married while the girl was unmarried.

CM dedicates 158 more transformed schools

689 HIGH SCHOOLS HAVE SO FAR BEEN TRANSFORMED IN THE STATE UNDER 5T

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Nov 18:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Thursday continued to dedicate schools transformed under the 5T initiative of the state government by dedicating 158 high schools in Malkangiri, Jharsuguda, Kalahandi, Mayurbhanj and Khurda districts.



As per plan, in the first phase of the 5T School Transformation programme, a total of 1,075 transformed schools will be inaugurated in 30 districts by November 24. Of the 158 schools inaugurated Thursday, six are from Malkangiri, 25 from Jharsuguda, 29 from Kalahandi, 60 from Mayurbhanj and 38 from Khurda. Earlier, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik October 16 dedicated 130 high schools in Nuapada, Ganjam, Sambalpur, Rayagada and

**The transformation of schools will minimize the difference of education level in rural and urban areas. Children are the country's future, said CM**

On the occasion, ministers Dibya Shankar Mishra, Sudam Marndi, Ashok Chandra Panda, MP Ramesh Chandra Majhi and MLA Kishore Mohanty also joined the event and applauded the school transformation programme. They praised the Chief Minister's foresight, saying it would bring about a revolution in the education sector in Odisha. The event also featured a video clip on the 5T School Transformation programme.

Incomplete schools inaugurated under 5T



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sambalpur, Nov 18:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday had inaugurated 25 high schools under School Transformation programme as part of the 5T Initiative in Sambalpur district in virtual mode. However, the work of 15 inaugurated schools has allegedly remained incomplete, a report said.

A district level inauguration ceremony for these schools was organised at KGMN High school in Jujumara block. During the inauguration, officials and locals were seen happy over the school transformation. However, locals have alleged that the reality of some inaugurated schools is different. Work in 15 schools has not been completed. At some places, locals are mum on the incomplete work while members of the VSS High School management committee and local guardians have expressed displeasure on the incomplete work. President of the school management committee, Subash Panigrahy, said, "We welcome the School Transformation pro-

Half of diabetics not diagnosed: Upadhyay

**Bhubaneswar:** The United World Against Diabetes, a non-profit making body working in the area of diabetes management and control, backed by Bhubaneswar Bar Association (BBA) organised a walkathon here November 14. More than 300 lawyers went through diabetes screening tests. Nirmal Kishore Rath (president), Raj Kishore Das (Secretary), Devi Dutta Barik (vice-president) and all other office-bearers of the BBA were present. District and Sessions Judge Rama Shankar Hota delivered a key note address on the diabetes awareness programme while Chief Judicial Magistrate Naresh Kumar Mohanty and Sub-Divisional Judicial Magistrate Janmenjaya Palei attended the meeting as guests. United World Against Diabetes President Dr Lalit Kumar Upadhyay said, "India is the diabetes capital of the world and more importantly, 50 per cent of the population is still undiagnosed. There is a need for urgent action on diabetes awareness." UWAD Odisha state chief-coordinator Biswajit Panda, coordinator Bapuji Biswal and Pratap Rath, among others, organised the programme.

Assam panel visits Odisha to learn disaster management skills

AGENCIES

**Kendrapara, Nov 18:** A three-member panel of the Assam government has visited a cyclone-prone area in Kendrapara district to get first-hand information about ways to deal with natural disasters.



Odisha which was affected by several natural calamities, especially cyclones, is a role model in the country for its excellent disaster management techniques, team leader Nava Deka said. The panel, led by Deka, engineering consultant (flood mitigation) of the Assam Disaster Management Authority (ADMA), Wednesday visited cyclone shelter centres at Khamarasahi, Dangamal, Prasanpur and geo tube seawall at Pentha under Rajnagar block, officials said. "The efficient disaster control mechanism in Odisha prompted us to visit the coastal districts of Kendrapara and Puri," Deka said. The panel interacted with the panchayat body members and locals in vulnerable coastal pockets

Silk City to host Kishan Mahapanchayat Dec 6

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, Nov 18:** A Kishan Mahapanchayat, an assembly of farmers and farmer leaders, will be held in Silk City December 6 demanding withdrawal of newly legislated farm Acts.

Farmer leaders including Rakesh Tikayat and senior leaders of the Samyukt Kishan Morcha will attend the Mahapanchayat and put forth their demand for withdrawal of the farm Acts. This was stated here by senior leader Bhala Chandra Sarangi. The mahapanchayat will be attended by hundreds of farmers from south Odisha and noted persons from various walks of life.

Sarangi said the BJP-led Modi government has enacted three black farm laws for which the agitation by farmers on Delhi borders is going to complete a year November 26. Over 700 farmers participating in the agitation have lost their lives during this period. However, the NDA government instead of resolving the issue is conspiring to protect the interest of the corporate sector.



SHGs to collect electricity bills



**Champua:** To make women self-reliant and economically empowered, the government has decided to hand over collection of power bills to self-help groups (SHGs) in Champua of Keonjhar district. SHGs interested in such work will be imparted training before handing over the bill collection duty to them. Scores of women members of 77 SHGs from Joda, Champua and Jhumpura blocks took part in a programme in this connection. Executive engineer Manoranjan Jena, CDPO Sita Murmu, assistant engineer Udaynarayan Patra and Tata Power officer Dillip Kumar Sahu said women will be engaged in bill distribution and collection works.

Renovation of Huma, Paramanpur canals soon

WATER RESOURCES DEPT HAS FLOATED TENDER WORTH ₹55 CRORE FOR THE PROJECTS

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sambalpur, Nov 18:** Plans are afoot for renovation of Huma tail distributary and Paramanpur distributary canals which are branch canals of Sasan canal, the lifeline of agriculture in Sambalpur district, a report said.



The matter came to the fore after the water resources department (Hirakud dam upper basin) floated a tender worth Rs55 crore for renovation of these two canals November 13. The work on the two canals will start soon once the tender is finalised, executive engineer Pramod Panda of water resources department said. Panda said along with the renovation of these two branch canals, the renovation of Sasan canal will also begin for which ₹64 crore has been sanctioned earlier. The Odisha Construction Corporation Ltd (OCCL) will undertake the renovation of Sasan canal while the water resources department will execute the renovation works of Huma and Paramanpur canals, he said. The renovation was necessitated as Sasan canal, built 50 years ago, is in a dilapidated condition and is in urgent need of repair. The main canal is 80 kilometre in length while the branch canal and channel are 300 kilometre in length. The tender process is expected to be completed within a period of two months and the work on renovation of these two canals is likely to start after harvest of Rabi crops. Panda, however, admitted that farmers are left with only one month after the harvest of Rabi crops before they start the next cultivation. This one month period will not be sufficient for the completion of ren-

ovation works for which farmers will be urged to stop cultivation work for a season. This will help in preventing water wastage in the canals. The canals are in a dilapidated condition and irrigation facilities will be available downstream once they are renovated.

A 15-kilometre stretch of Huma canal and 10-kilometre stretch of Paramanpur canal will be renovated in the first phase. Walls will be built on both sides of these two canals. ₹22.20 crore has been sanctioned for Paramanpur canal and ₹33 crore for renovation of Huma canal in a single financial year.

Notably, over 40,000 farmers are dependent on these two canals which help in irrigating crops on 25,000 hectares of farmlands in both Kharif and Rabi seasons as well as non-paddy crops. However, insufficient water flow downstream often results in unpleasant situations between various groups of farmers.

NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, KANTABANJI  
nackantabanji@gmail.com  
Letter No.1510/Dt.15.11.2021  
No.C-1316:-  
1 Name of the work : Const. of Smart Park as in the DTCN availability in the tender.  
2 Estimated cost : Rs.66.91,719  
3 Period of completion : 180 days  
4 Date & time of bidding : 17.11.2021, 10 A.M. to 30.11.2021 upto 5 P.M.  
5 Opening of technical bid Online : 01.12.2021, 11 A.M.  
6 Opening of financial bid Online : 07.12.2021 at 11 A.M.  
7 Name & address of the officer inviting bid : Executive Officer, N.A.C., Kantabanji  
Sd./- Executive Officer, NAC, Kantabanji  
OIPR-13111/11/0010/2122

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA  
FOREST, ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE DEPARTMENT  
OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER,  
SUBARNAPUR FOREST DIVISION - 767017  
Tel:- 06654-295076, E-mail: dfosubarnapur@gmail.com  
Bid Identification No. DFO-SNP 01/2021-22 dated. 13.11.2021  
Letter No. 5476/1F, Dated Subarnapur the 13th November-2021  
No.MM-249 NOTICE INVITING TENDER  
Sl. No. Name of the Work Building Works as per DTCN available in the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in  
1 Estimated Cost Rs.10,75,013/- to 14,41,035/- lakhs  
2 No. of Works One Forest Guard quarter and One Forester quarter at different places of Subarnapur Forest Division  
3 Period & time of completion 3 (three) Calendar Months  
4 Date & time of availability of the bid document in the portal 21.11.2021 to 30.11.2021  
5 Last Date/Time for receipt of bids in the portal Upto 5.00 PM of 30.11.2021  
6 Date & Time of bid opening 11.30 hours on Dated 01.12.2021  
7 Name & Address of the inviting bid Divisional Forest Officer, Subarnapur Forest Division, Pin-767017  
Others can be seen from Detailed Notice Inviting Tenders available in website:- www.tendersodisha.gov.in. Corrigendum if any shall only be published in the above website.  
Sd./- Divisional Forest Officer, Subarnapur Forest Division  
OIPR-08014/11/0001/2122

FOCUS KABUL & KASHMIR

# DECOUPLE STRATEGIES



New Delhi should decouple the strategies on Afghanistan and Pakistan vis-a-vis Kashmir. Pakistan will like to link the two. It is in India's interest to separate these

to take should be to decouple the strategies on Afghanistan and Pakistan vis-a-vis Kashmir. Pakistan will like to link the two. It is in India's interest to separate these. In practical terms, New Delhi should engage with Afghanistan irrespective of Pakistan's position and vested interest in Kabul.

On the other hand, New Delhi should engage with Islamabad to resolve the Kashmir issue. The terms of engagement have to be creatively worked out so that the dialogue process is resumed or recreated. Some of the tools that will constitute the dialogue process will include a framework based on a set of agreed principles. One may have to go back to the first principle. What is it really about? What are we trying to achieve? The second tool will be to proceed to a resolution in which the issue needs to be focussed on continually and relentlessly, day by day. The biggest problem with the Middle East peace process is that no one ever gripped it long enough or firmly enough.

There are many successful examples in the world of conflict resolution. Nothing is impossible in life and in politics if right inputs are made and a process is created. New Delhi has two options on Kashmir - one is to hold up to Pakistan and its allies by balance of power, or resolve it by bilateral negotiation, a dialogue process. At present, there is no dialogue in sight. That is a big miss in the diplomacy in South Asian region. The conflicts among South Asian countries have been prompted and abetted by external players. The countries concerned should try to stay away from such manipulation and solve their respective problems. That is challenge of the time.

To sum up, India will have to change gear and shift from an inherently antagonistic position in relation to Pakistan, and engage in dialogue. China's pernicious pressure on India's neighbour has to be fought off. The best way to do is to talk to Pakistan, the closest ally of China.

The writer is Professor of International Politics, JIMMC.

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The killing of four persons Tuesday last in Srinagar should raise concerns about the ongoing tension in Kashmir. Although Kashmir is under the direct control of the Union government, the security situation is far from being perfect. The scenario has got worse, at least in perception, after the Taliban's coming to power in Kabul. Going by the past experience, observers and officials are predicting a spillover of terrorism from Afghanistan to Srinagar. How does New Delhi deal with this impending threat?

Clearly, Kashmir, the part with India, and the Pakistan occupied territory have been unfinished business. India is claiming, albeit, not so vociferously yet, the POK, and Pakistan is leaving no stone unturned to grab Indian Kashmir. Unless a concrete solution is worked out, the tension is most likely to continue. Taliban in Afghanistan is an important variable in the equation. It too has to be strategically dealt with.

Before we proffer some diplomatic tools that can be used in solving the Kashmir tangle, let us sample some of the observations made by experts. There are at least three kinds of voices from Taliban, one of engaging in Srinagar, another of being concerned about it, and third of plain neutrality. The first stand was articulated by, Suhail Shaheen of Taliban who told the BBC's Hindi service: "As Muslims, we also have a right to raise our voice for Muslims in Kashmir, India or any other country."

In another interview with a Pakistan-based channel, Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid urged Pakistan and India to sit together to resolve all issues. This is position of concern, but not direct involvement. At the same time, in a recent interview with CNN-News18, Taliban leader Anas Haqqani said: "Kashmir is not part of our jurisdiction and interference is against our policy."

The reactions from the Indian side reflect deep anxiety, ominous anticipation but resolute preparedness. Lt. Gen. Deependra Singh Hooda, former military commander for Northern India be-

tween 2014-2016, said militant groups based across the border in Pakistan would "certainly try and push men" into Kashmir, following the Taliban victory in Afghanistan. He added that it was too early to predict if any influx of fighters into Kashmir would be "in big numbers that destabilise the security situation" and push the region into a military confrontation. Naturally, going by the past experience, when the Soviet Union withdrew from Kabul in 1989, the mujahideen and their comrades in arms, terrorists from various groups backed tacitly by Pakistan army and the ISI turned to Kashmir. Indian officials worry Afghanistan under the Taliban could be used as a base for organising Islamist militants in Kashmir, many of whom are allied with Pakistan in their struggle against New Delhi. This was corroborated in an interview by former Pakistani General and President Musharraf, "After the Soviet withdrawal, hundreds of Islamist fighters, terrorists had to go somewhere. And for many, somewhere was Kashmir." Now, 32 years later, when the last US soldier has left Afghanistan and Taliban has taken over, it again has left thousands of mercenaries jobless, who are triumphant after having driven yet another superpower out of Afghanistan. Boyed by such triumphalism, the ter-

rorists will flex their muscle elsewhere. Their dictum is they "exist to kill and kill to exist." So, to expect them not to do harm is naïve. The European Foundation for South Asian Studies has expressed similar fear that Pakistan-backed and trained jihadi terrorists will be diverted to Kashmir after the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan. A former Kashmir militant who trained in Afghanistan in the 1990s and fought alongside Afghan mujahideen in Kashmir added: "The Taliban victory has already supplied oxygen to our movement." According to intelligence agencies, at least six groups of terrorists have infiltrated the Kashmir Valley. From various intelligence sources it is estimated that as many as 300 terrorists have again occupied the camps across the Line of Control in Pakistani territory. Such incursions will continue to occur unless the contention over Kashmir is not resolved. New Delhi took a bold and sagacious step in convening a meeting of the security heads on Afghanistan. Although it was a bit late in the day, it underlined India's potential to play a role in the war-torn country. To be sure, it is a tall order for India to break into the vaunted security circle of Afghanistan. As such, the big two players, China and Pakistan did not attend the New Delhi meeting. The prudent step for New Delhi

## THE CONFLICTS AMONG SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN PROMPTED AND ABETTED BY EXTERNAL PLAYERS

DK Giri

## Nature Can't Wait

Costa Rica is celebrating 200 years of independence this year. It is an opportunity to honour our ancestors and think about our descendants, and we invite the world to celebrate with us. Those who cannot visit in person should do so by protecting the Earth's land and oceans, the source of all life.

Specifically, governments, businesses, communities, and individuals should commit to conserving at least 30 per cent of the planet's land and oceans by 2030. Scientists have determined that this '30x30' goal is the minimum level of conservation needed to prevent a catastrophic loss of nature and to stem climate change.

But 30x30 will not happen by itself; it will require time, attention, and money. Economists estimate that achieving this goal - by conserving the world's most important intact wild areas and restoring crucial degraded habitats - would represent less than one-third of the amount that governments spend on subsidies to activities that destroy nature. It is encouraging that nine major philanthropic organisations recently pledged \$5 billion to the 30x30 effort, the largest donation to nature in history.

Others must now follow their lead. Sixty percent of the world's terrestrial wildlife populations have been lost since 1970, and almost one-third of global fish stocks are being exploited at an unsustainable level. The destruction of natural areas also releases huge quantities of greenhouse gases, contributing to climate change.

True, the cost to protect nature may seem like a lot, especially as countries grapple with the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic. But it is less than 1% of global GDP (roughly \$87 trillion in 2019), and little more than one-third of the nearly \$2 trillion in total military spending worldwide in 2020. Moreover, this sum is a fraction of what economies would lose should crucial ecosystems fail. The World Bank recently estimated that the collapse of three ecosystem services - pollination, food provision from marine fisheries, and timber from native forests - could reduce annual global GDP by \$2.7 trillion. Because we cannot rely solely on private philanthropists to foot the bill, the necessary global investments must come from a combination of enhanced public and private finance. Every country must commit its share, with the G7 in particular leading the way with solid funding pledges.

Governments could free up additional resources by phasing out subsidies that harm nature instead of protecting it. For example, countries are currently negotiating at the World Trade Organisation to end \$35 billion in annual fishing subsidies that support large-scale industrial fleets and have driven the depletion of global fish stocks.

A substantial portion of the funds we need should go to low-income countries that host the majority of the world's biodiversity. Costa Rica, for example, accounts for only 0.03% of the planet's landmass, but contains an estimated 5% of its biodiversity. Furthermore, significant funds should be dedicated to protecting the land rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, who are nature's best and most cost-effective stewards.

Nature will repay us many times over for the investments we make. The economic benefits of protecting 30% of the world's land and oceans by 2030 - including job creation in sectors such as forestry and tourism - would likely outweigh the costs by a ratio of at least five to one. Costa Rica's economy is based on nature-positive activities such as forest conservation, renewable electricity generation, and biodiversity protection. Since the 1980s, the country has stopped and then reversed forest loss, while the economy has grown by some 250% in real terms. We now have a system of national parks and protected areas that cover more than 26% of our land area.

Winning one of the first-ever Earthshot prizes will help us replicate in the ocean our successes on land. Already, an ambitious process is underway this year to enlarge protected areas from under 3% of our oceanic territory to closer to the 30% promised in our 2020 nationally determined contribution under the Paris climate agreement. My goal is to realise this massive expansion before I leave office.

Momentum toward 30x30 is growing. The High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, led by Costa Rica, France, and the United Kingdom, has engaged over 70 countries in support of this goal. And 30x30 has become a crucial feature of the most recent draft of the Global Biodiversity Framework, which is set to be finalised by 196 countries at the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP15) in Kunming, China, in 2022.

But actions speak louder than words. Governments, firms, and all of society must dedicate the financial resources needed to achieve 30x30.

Nature is the ultimate source of all our fresh water, food, clean air, and genetic resources for medicine and industry. It keeps dangerous pathogens in check and carbon in the ground, and generates green jobs. It is an irreplaceable source of human creativity, and spiritual and mental health.

Humanity is enmeshed in nature. Because we are capable of destroying it, we are responsible for protecting it. Let us decide now to invest the funds needed to fulfill that responsibility before it is too late.

The writer is Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica.

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SRI AUROBINDO

When we have passed beyond enjoyings, then we shall have Bliss. Desire was the helper; Desire is the bar.



Andrea Meza

The World Bank recently estimated that the collapse of three ecosystem services - pollination, food provision from marine fisheries, and timber from native forests - could reduce annual global GDP by \$2.7 trillion

## SPECTRUM WORLD TOILET DAY

# Clean environs usher in positive vibes

Recall the early morning queues at the toilet doors in public places as also in trains, with passengers occasionally knocking the doors in anxiety. The dysfunctional condition of many toilets due to choked outlets and lack of water inside overburdened the limited facilities. Proper toilets in place would have significantly done away with the ugly scenes of people including women, squatting for relieving themselves in row along the railway tracks or highways.

Advanced thinking, as in other sectors, has not penetrated the toilet system and clean living to a desired extent. Conceding that "No innovation in the past 200 years has done more to save lives and improve health than the sanitation revolution triggered by invention of the toilet," the American statesperson Sylvia Mathews Burwell deplored that "it did not go far enough. It only reached one-third of the world." Sanitation is a universally admitted determinant of public health, yet hardly taken in earnest. Proper sanitation and cleanliness can effectively keep several infections and diseases at bay. Well maintained toilets not only promote health but also provide safety and dignity to people. The twin issues of toiletry and

cleanliness are linked to individual and social health, personal habits, mindsets, and also religious convictions. In all Hindu rituals, cleansing is an essential prerequisite. Our country has fewer working toilets at home than cell phones, and some 1.1 billion people are cursed still to defecate in the open despite significant dent made under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan launched October 2, 2014. In vengeance against open defecation by certain populations, former Union Minister Jairam Ramesh had exhorted girls, "Don't get married in a household where there is no toilet."

Reports indicate that half the toilets commissioned by government or non-government agencies were unusable, being poorly constructed or ill-maintained. Other countries with more than half the inhabitants without access to private bathrooms and safe sewage or disposal systems are Haiti, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Papua-New Guinea.

Dearth of toilets in markets and other public places constrains one to immediately attend the call of nature. Male folks somehow manage but women often face tough ordeal when outside. Health experts recommend not to withhold any of the natural urges - peeing, pooping,

sneezing and passing gas when the body so warrants. Curbing these natural impulses not only causes bloating and physical discomfort but also short- and long-term health complications like constipation, impaction, weakening of muscles, and in stray cases bladder bursting that can become lethal, says a known family physician Susan A. Werner. There is evidence of heart attacks and paralysis consequent upon increased pressure in the bowels when stool is retained forcefully. Urine held for long may revert back to the kidney enhancing urea levels besides creating urinary tract infection and related problems. A positive aspect of the dreaded coronavirus has been espousal of the hygienic practices and cleanliness at home and around if only out of fear psychosis. The lingering habit of regular hand washing, sanitisation of edible and other commodities, proper disposal of domestic waste and maintaining cleanliness in living and working places has been a welcome sign.

A word about the bathroom: we tend to forget, it is a room too. It must not be a dark and dingy corner but a clean, well-lit room where one feels comfortable, and at ease. It is to accord a rightful place to bathroom that this year's theme

of World Toilet Day is 'Valuing the Toilets'. The credit of observing toilet day goes to Singapore-based Jack Sim, also known as Mr Toilet, whose initiative to dispel worldwide taboo about toilets and sanitation was later endorsed and support by the United Nations. In India, Sulabh International with a wide network is doing a commendable job.

The day aims to enhance awareness about role of toilets in promoting health, safety and dignity of people. Acknowledging sanitation as a major modality of public health, this day pleads to devise ways and means to ensure that 3.6 billion people living without access to safely managed sanitation are educated and trained to change for the better; and help achieve Sustainable Development Goal 6 - water and sanitation for all by 2030.

Yet maintaining hygiene and cleanliness has not to be a one-time affair but a part of our routine as author Meagan Francis said, "Cleanliness and organising is a practice, not a project." Once cleanliness becomes a mindset, positive vibes proliferate all around and dispel negativity.

The author is a blogger and writes on spiritual, health and social issues.



Harish Barthwal

SANITATION IS A UNIVERSALLY ADMITTED DETERMINANT OF PUBLIC HEALTH, YET HARDLY TAKEN IN EARNEST

## WISDOM CORNER

If I can stop one heart from breaking, I shall not live in vain. EMILY DICKINSON

Start with what is right rather than what is acceptable. FRANZ KAFKA

The tigers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction. WILLIAM BLAKE

## WORDSWORTH

### Portfolio

This word has shifted sense in the nineties. Now it can refer to the varied set of skills one possesses that makes one employable in the new, thrusting world of part-time work, short-term contracts and everyday redundancies. Not only do we no longer have a job for life, it has become more and more common for us not to be employees of a single company at all, but to hawk our skills around from place to place, picking up work like a hungry free-range chicken pecking for grain. The more skills one has, so the argument goes, the more one is likely to find some nourishing titbit even when times are hard. Nineties management-speak has coined a series of words to describe this situation. In addition to portfolio career, coined by Professor Charles Handy, and now a well established term, we have portfolio employment, portfolio worker and even portfolio nomad, which conjures up an image of peripatetic workers traipsing from workplace to workplace, carrying their portable employable skills with them. There's been a word for this situation for several centuries, of course: freelance, originally a mercenary soldier who was not bound by ties to a particular liege lord, but who was free to travel to find work for his lance. The word portfolio came into English from Italian in the early eighteenth century. The original was portafoglio, something in which one carried sheets of paper.

### It's Delhi again

Sir, Delhi again tops the list of most polluted cities in the world. One thing that is baffling is that Delhi having a green cover of 56.2 per cent still battles with pollution. Delhi is much greener than all the metro cities, then why does it struggle for a whiff of fresh air? There are geographical and some economic factors related to this. One is Delhi's landlocked position and the other is that Delhi has the biggest cluster of small scale industries in India and it is seen that most of these industries do not meet the limits on air, water and soil pollution. The Delhi government should be more stringent on these limits. Most people blame it on Diwali celebrations because it is the easier target but I think people have become more sensible now and many have stopped bursting firecrackers for good. And another thing is that a day of firecrackers can in no way have an impact so large.

### Contrasting pictures

Sir, The pleasant and pleasing picture of River Umngot of Meghalaya tweeted by the Ministry of Jal Shakti, looking incredibly beautiful with crystal clear water reflecting the awesome riverbed has a lot of things to tell us. It shows that undoubtedly once upon a time rivers and streams did look like this but the onslaught of humans on nature has resulted in the grim and devastating pictures that we see now. In contrast to the picture of one of the clearest rivers on Earth, were the videos and pictures that went viral last week, depicting the Yamuna frothing with toxic foams created because of heavy chemical pollution. These two images give the whole of mankind lessons to learn - the more we ignore and exploit nature, the more we suffer. Let us not forget that in our craving to make our lives better we selfishly distort nature not realising that our own lives and future are getting distorted. One of the major causes of river pollution in India is the discharge of city and industrial waste into the rivers without having any consideration. The Delhi Jal Board recently had to deploy people to sprinkle water in the Yamuna to keep the filthy toxic froth away from its banks during the Chhath Puja celebrations.

## 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, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Noopur Baruah, TEZPUR (ASSAM)

M Pradyu, KANNUR (KERALA)

## of the day quote

Parliament is meant for discussion and not for dancing and tearing papers  
**ANURAG THAKUR** | UNION MINISTER

India has very old democratic values and they did not come from the British  
**RAJENDRA ARLEKAR** | HIMACHAL PRADESH GOVERNOR

The party will stage agitations across Maharashtra to demand reservations for Muslims in the state  
**ASADUDDIN OWAISSI** | AIMIM PRESIDENT

## SHORT TAKES

### Tiger found dead

**Umaria (MP):** A tiger was found dead in Madhya Pradesh's Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve here on Thursday, forest department officials said. The carcass of the tiger, T-37, was recovered in the Dhamakhori buffer area of the reserve by beat guards during patrolling, they said. Another big cat was spotted running away from the site by the beat guards, an official said.

### Four drown

**Betul (MP):** Four teenagers, including two girls, drowned while bathing in a dam in Madhya Pradesh's Betul district Thursday afternoon, police said. All the bodies were retrieved from the dam at Amagohan village, some 20km from the district headquarters, Shahpur Sub-Divisional Officer of Police (SDOP) Mahendra Singh Meena said.

### Four killed

**Jaipur:** Four persons died and three others injured when their car met with an accident on National Highway 48 on Thursday in Rajasthan's Dungarpur area, police said. The accident took place at a crossing on the highway, when the car in which they were travelling went out of control and flipped over, Tulsiram Meena, a Head Constable at Bichhiwada police station, said.

### Woman arrested

**Kota:** A 35-year-old woman was arrested here Thursday for allegedly killing her neighbour's four-year-old daughter following a heated exchange of words with the mother of the child, police said. The woman, Ashabai, dragged the girl inside her home in the labourers' colony of a stone factory in the Gokulpura industrial area while she was playing, locked the door and smashed her head with a rock, Deputy Superintendent of Police, City police station (Jhalawar), Amit Kumar said.

### One killed

**Etawah (UP):** Celebrations turned into mourning when a 40-year-old man died due to celebratory firing at a pre-wedding function here on Wednesday night. The incident took place in Nagla Khushali village under the Jaswantnagar police station area where the 'Tilak' ceremony of Satish Jatav was being held.

### 3 held in Bihar

Patna: Three persons, including the Principal of a school, have been arrested for flouting the liquor ban in Bihar's Nawada district. The arrests were made late on Wednesday night and all three were found in a drunken state. The accused, Sanjay Kumar Tarun, Principal of Inter (10+2) school Rajauli along with Sandeep Kumar and Udesya Kumar were roaming in the Jajpur Tola village under the Rajauli police station.



The vacant seats in BJP rallies are indicating that the BJP seats in the next assembly too will remain vacant  
**AKHILESH YADAV** | SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF

## ANTONY TO HEAD CONG DISCIPLINARY PANEL

The Congress Thursday reconstituted the party's disciplinary committee with veteran leader and former defence minister A K Antony being appointed as its chairman



# Don't mess up with education system: SC

The top court was hearing a plea by six students seeking directions to the CBSE and the CISCE to issue a revised circular for conducting the ensuing Class 10 and 12 board exams in the hybrid mode, instead of the offline mode only, amid the pandemic

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Nov 18:** "Don't mess up with the education system", the Supreme Court said Thursday while refusing to direct the CBSE and the CISCE to provide option of hybrid mode, instead of only offline mode, to the students for appearing in Class 10 and 12 board examinations amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Observing that this "last-minute" business should be discouraged, the apex court said it would not be appropriate to intervene and disturb the entire examination process at this stage. The top court noted that term one board exams of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) have already commenced from November 16, while semester one of the board exams of the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) are to commence from November 22.

"This eleventh hour changing and giving hope to the students, we discourage this," a bench of



REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE

Justices A M Khanwilkar and C T Ravikumar said. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who appeared for the CBSE, told the bench that all precautions have been taken for conducting the board exams in offline mode and the number of examination centres have been increased from 6,500 to 15,000.

The top court was hearing a plea by six students seeking directions to the CBSE and the CISCE to issue a revised circular for conducting the ensuing class 10 and 12 board exams in the hybrid mode, instead

of the offline mode only, amid the pandemic.

The bench told senior advocate Sanjay Hegde, who was appearing for the petitioners, that it was too late now and the examinations cannot be rescheduled at this stage. Hegde told the top court that today there is a state of uncertainty and the students should be given the option of hybrid mode to appear in the examinations.

"Don't mess up with the education system. Let the authorities continue to do their job," the bench

# INDIA, CHINA TO HOLD TALKS SOON



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Nov 18:** India and China Thursday agreed to hold the 14th round of military talks at an early date to achieve the objective of complete disengagement in remaining friction points along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh.

At a virtual meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) on border affairs, the two sides had "candid and in-depth" discussions on the situation and reviewed the developments since the last military talks on October 10, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

Apart from agreeing to hold the next round of military talks, there were no signs of any major outcome from the meeting.

The MEA said the two sides agreed on the need to find an early resolution to the remaining issues while fully abiding by bilateral agreements and protocols so as to restore peace and tranquility.

In a statement, the MEA said it was also agreed that both sides should continue to ensure a stable ground situation and avoid any untoward incident. "It was agreed that both sides should hold the next (14th) round of the Senior Commanders meeting at an early date to achieve the objective of complete disengagement from all the friction points along the LAC in the Western Sector in accordance with the existing bilateral agreements and protocols," it said.

The eastern Ladakh is officially referred to as Western Sector. The last round of military talks on October 10 ended in a stalemate following which both sides blamed each other for the impasse.

Apart from agreeing to hold the next round of military talks, there were no signs of any major outcome from the meeting

The last round of military talks on October 10 ended in a stalemate following which both sides blamed each other for the impasse

In a strong statement after the 13th round of talks, the Indian Army said the "constructive suggestions" made by it at the negotiations were neither agreeable to the Chinese side nor could Beijing provide any "forward-looking" proposals.

In its statement, the MEA also referred to the "agreement" between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi during their meeting in September in Dushanbe that the military and diplomatic officials of the two sides should continue discussions to resolve the remaining issues in eastern Ladakh.

"Accordingly, the two sides had candid and in-depth discussions on the situation along the LAC in Western Sector of India-China border areas and also reviewed the developments since the last meeting of the Senior Commanders of both sides which was held on October 10," it said.

The Chinese foreign ministry said the two sides will continue to work hard to further ease the border situation and strive to "shift from emergency response to normalised control as soon as possible."

In a statement, it said the two sides had a candid and in-depth exchange of views on the recent situation in the China-India border areas at the meeting.

## RAIN ALERT



PTI PHOTO

Boats stand parked at a dock as fishing has been banned over forecast of heavy rainfall, in Cuddalore district, Thursday

## 8-YR-OLD GIRL SEEKS ₹5 MN COMPENSATION

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Thiruvananthapuram, Nov 18:** An eight-year-old girl Thursday approached the Kerala High Court seeking Rs 5 million as compensation after she and her father were falsely accused of mobile phone theft by a woman police officer and shamed publicly.

In her petition, the girl stated that despite several pleas, no action was taken against the woman police officer, hence they want justice from the court.

Following public shaming, she went into a state of shock and had to undergo counselling sessions and that episode continues to haunt her, her petition read.

The incident occurred on August 27, when 38-year-old Jayachandran and his daughter

were out on the main road in the outskirts here near Attingal to watch the movement of a huge trailer carrying equipment to the ISRO unit.

Suddenly Rejitha, the woman officer finding her mobile missing, accused Jayachandran who was standing near the police patrol vehicle, of stealing it.

She even said that he must have passed the mobile to his eight-year-old daughter; his accomplice.

She publicly humiliated the father and the daughter and threatened to take both of them to the nearby police station. This was witnessed by a large crowd. Later, Rejitha found out the mobile phone in the vehicle. The entire episode was filmed by an onlooker.

He shared it on social media and it went viral.

## Channi-led group offers prayers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lahore/Der Baba Nanak (Gurdaspur), Nov 18:** Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi along with some of his Cabinet ministers Thursday offered prayers at the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan after travelling through the visa-free Kartarpur corridor that reopened for pilgrims after a gap of 20 months.

The over four-km long Kartarpur corridor links Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan's Kartarpur; the final resting place of Sikhism founder Guru Nanak Dev, to Dera Baba Nanak shrine in Gurdaspur district. Pilgrimage to the gurdwara was suspended in March 2020 due to the Covid pandemic.

Evacuee Trust Property Board spokesperson Amir Hashmi said in Lahore that besides the group led by Channi, a delegation of BJP



PTI PHOTO

leaders also visited the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib. "Indian Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi along with about 30 persons, including his Cabinet ministers, today visited Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, Kartarpur, by using Kartarpur Corridor," Hashmi said. Punjab Congress chief Navjot

Singh Sidhu was not part of the Channi-led 'jatha' (group) which went to pay obeisance at the gurdwara. Sidhu's media advisor Surinder Dalla on Wednesday night had said that the Congress leader had been officially intimated that he could go on November 20 instead of November 18.

# TN'S HOPE RESTS ON UP, BIHAR FOR BRAHMIN BRIDES

THE THAMIZNADU BRAHMIN ASSOCIATION HAS LAUNCHED A MOVEMENT TO SEEK BRIDES FOR 40,000 MEN FROM THE COMMUNITY

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chennai, Nov 18:** Tamil Nadu Brahmin youths are in search of north Indian Brahmin brides after acute shortage in the home state.

The Thamiznadu Brahmin Association (TBA) has launched a movement to seek brides for 40,000 men from the community. An article in the November issue of the Tamil mouthpiece of the TBA stated that the community is searching for Brahmin brides in the Hindi heartland of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

Association president N. Narayanan while speaking to IANS said, "Around 40,000 Tamil Brahmin men in the age group between 30 and 40 are having difficulty in finding brides in Tamil Nadu from the community."

He cited the skewed sex ratio as

the main reason and said that for every ten boys only 6 girls are there and this is creating major problems in finding brides.

The Brahmin community of Tamil Nadu is a stickler for tradition and even marriages between Tenkalai and Adikalai sects in the Iyengar community are not possible. Marriages between Telugu and Tamil Brahmins are common and so are marriages between Kannada speaking Madhwas and Tamil speaking Smarthas. Now the Brahmins of the state are stretching their wings to North India in search of Brahmin brides.

However, intellectuals and academicians differ on the reason for the shortage of brides even though they agree that there is a shortage. R. Padmanabhan, Director, Socio-Economic Development



REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE

Foundation, a think tank based out of Madurai and himself a Brahmin, told IANS, "More than the sex disparity ratio, several Brahmin parents are finding it difficult to marry off their girls. The reason is the standard set by rich and af-

fluent Brahmins in marriages even though the customs and traditions and teachings of the community are against pomp and show. Thus, several parents are finding it difficult to marry their daughters and this is a major reason for the shortage

of brides."

The Tamizhnadu Brahmin Association is planning to appoint coordinators in Delhi, Lucknow and Patna to scout for brides for Brahmin youths from the state. A person proficient in Hindi will be appointed at the association headquarters in Chennai to coordinate for the Tamil Nadu part.

The TBA is of the opinion that taking up family planning as proposed by the government is one reason for the shortage of brides and for the imbalance in the sex ratio between brides and grooms.

Gourikrishna, a homemaker in Adayar, Chennai who belongs to the traditional Iyengar sect, told IANS, "Brahmin boys can search for brides from other communities as well. This is not happening because everyone wants to maintain

their legacy and is sticking to their traditions. This has led to the youths searching for brides in North Indian states. I don't know how the girls of those places will adjust to South India, especially Tamil Nadu, as the Brahmins here are entirely different from the North Indians. If they are marrying North Indian girls, they can easily marry outside the community."

The subject has become a topic of hot debate and a social issue with as many as 40,000 youths of the community not getting brides within the state. Social commentator and retired Professor M.K. Krishnan told IANS, "Brahmins must think outside their community and then they can marry within Tamil Nadu. It will be better than marrying from outside the state especially, North Indian states."

HYDERPORA ENCOUNTER

# Magisterial probe begins; parties rally behind families



Former CM Omar Abdullah with party leaders during a sit-in protest demanding a probe into the killings of civilians Altaf Ahmad Bhat and Mudasar Gul and the return of their bodies, in Srinagar, Thursday. PTI PHOTO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, Nov 19:** On a day of fast-paced developments, the Jammu and Kashmir government Thursday began a probe into the Hyderpora encounter in which the kin of three of the four persons killed have claimed they were innocent as political parties rallied behind the families and staged peaceful protests led by former chief minister Omar Abdullah.

Hours after Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha ordered a magisterial probe into the killings, Deputy Commissioner of Srinagar Muhammad Aijaz Asad appointed additional district magistrate Khurshid Ahmad Shah as inquiry officer.

Shah immediately issued a public notice, urging people who wish to record their statement in connection with Monday's encounter and approach his office within 10 days on all working days.

The magisterial probe was ordered amid protests by families of three of the four persons killed in the encounter claiming their relatives were innocent.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The kin of Mohammad Altaf Bhat (building owner), Mudasar Gul (tenant) and Amir Magray (Gul's office boy) have been protesting against the killings which they described as cold blooded murder.

The relatives of Bhat and Gul were camping at Press Colony since Wednesday morning, to press for return of the bodies which were buried in the dead of night of Monday at Handwara in North Kashmir. Authorities later in the day exhumed bodies of Bhat and Gul, for handing them over to their families, officials said. This was for the first time that the body of a person buried under police watch was returned to his kin since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March last year.

The day began with viral videos doing rounds which showed police removing families of two civilians from the protest site at Residency Road around midnight.

Omar, who is the vice president of the National Conference, moved near the residence of Chief Justice

of Jammu and Kashmir High Court and staged a non-violent sit-in along with party leaders to demand for the return of bodies of the civilians killed in the encounter.

"We are sitting here peacefully. If we wanted we would have blocked roads, bridges, but no. There has been no sloganeering, no law and order disturbance and no road has been blocked. We are not raising voice against the government, we just demand that bodies be returned," Omar told reporters at the Municipal Park here.

He said despite the fact that the police admitted that the civilian was killed in crossfire, his body was not given to the family, but buried in Handwara.

In a related development, People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) met at the residence of its president Farooq Abdullah to discuss the situation arising out of the encounter.

After the meeting, Mohammad Tarigami, who is the spokesman of the PAGD, said they will be exploring all avenues to end the culture of impunity and the bloodshed.

"We will be writing to the President of India this evening, seeking a credible probe into the Hyderpora incident. In our view, only a judicial probe can be credible and fair." "The PAGD leaders also appeal to the people and leadership of the country to rise in defence of democratic rights of citizens of India from Jammu and Kashmir as well. There is a need to share this pain of Kashmir before it is too late," he said.

The Peoples Conference and High Court Bar Association also held a protest against the killings.

Meanwhile, the Hurriyat Conference has called for a general strike Friday to press for the demand for returning the bodies of the slain men to their families.

# House panel asks FB to submit records on complaints

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Nov 18:** A Delhi Assembly committee asked Facebook India Thursday to furnish records of users' reports (complaints) and action taken on the content posted on the platform one month prior and two months after the northeast Delhi riots in February 2020.

Hearing a representation by Shivnath Thukral, the public policy director of Facebook India (Meta Platforms), in the Assembly, chairman of the Peace and Harmony Committee Raghav Chadha asked for the records.

He also quizzed the Facebook official regarding the organisational structure, the complaints redressal mechanism, community standards and hate speech definitions with respect to the social media giant. Summonses were issued by the committee to Facebook India to put forward its views on the critical role of social media platforms in curbing the spread of false, provocative and malicious messages that can incite violence



When things happen in the real world, they reflect on our platform as well. We do not want hate on our platform. There are some bad actors that need to be worked on

SHIVNATH THUKRAL | PUBLIC POLICY DIRECTOR, META PLATFORMS

(To prevent a) chaotic situation and societal disharmony, a social media platform as big as Facebook can be extremely pivotal in diffusing the violent situations in a diverse and multicultural society as India

RAGHAV CHADHA, CHAIRMAN | PEACE AND HARMONY COMMITTEE

and disharmony.

In his opening statement, Thukral said: "I want to address the recent global debate that is going on around our company. We believe that we should be scrutinised in good faith, criticism helps us get better. But we cannot be subjected to unfair trials based on selectively leaked documents which paint a false picture of our company." Facebook is not a law en-

forcement agency but it has a mechanism to co-operate with such agencies whenever required, he said during the hearing, adding, "When things happen in the real world, they reflect on our platform as well. We do not want hate on our platform. There are some bad actors that need to be worked on."

Thukral said Facebook has 40,000 people working on content management, including 15,000 dealing with

DELHI RIOTS

content moderation. Any content found against the community standards followed by the platform is taken down immediately, he added. As the Facebook official refused to comment on particular questions, citing limits of Supreme Court directions, Chadha quoted the same to say that he cannot 'stonewall and frustrate' the members of the committee.

A statement of the committee later stated, "During the hearing, the official on behalf of Facebook India acknowledged that their tools are not always perfect and there are scope of improvements." Chadha tried to probe Thukral regarding a host of issues while focusing on India-specific definition of 'hate speech' and ways that Facebook used to deal with fake news and organised disinformation campaign.

The committee specifically enquired about the hierarchy and organisational structure of Facebook India and sought details about it as well as various teams and their recruitment processes.



Traffic jam on a road near Anand Vihar metro station in New Delhi, Thursday. PTI PHOTO

# Delhi allows EVs on 250 roads during no-entry hours

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Nov 18:** With air pollution reaching alarming levels in the city, Delhi Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot Thursday announced that electric light commercial vehicles will be allowed entry on about 250 roads during no-entry hours.

He also said that the transport department will empanel manufacturers of electric kits for retrofitting of conventional internal combustion engines to electric ones.

Gahlot said the Electric Vehicle (EV) policy of the Delhi government launched last year also provides non-financial incentives besides the subsidies.

He noted that when the EV policy was launched, there were just 46 light commercial vehicles (LCVs) which have now increased to 1,054.

Stating that the percentage of electric vehicles among total vehicle registration has now gone up to around 7 per cent, the minister hoped it will be further raised to 25 per cent by 2024 as targeted in the EV policy.

He said retrofitting of diesel vehicles will enable their use beyond the prescribed 10 years as electric vehicles.

"Delhi is now open to ICE to electric retrofitting! Vehicles if found fit can convert their diesel to electric engine, dep'll empanel manufacturers of pure electric kit by approved testing agencies. Once empanelled this'll enable vehicles to continue plying here beyond 10 yrs," Gahlot tweeted.

Delhi recorded its air quality in the "very poor" category Friday and strong surface winds are likely to bring some relief from high pollution levels Sunday onwards, authorities said.

The city recorded its 24-hour average air quality index at 347, down from at 375 Wednesday.

"The air quality is likely improve significantly from November 21 owing to relatively strong winds and reach poor category. PM2.5 to be the predominant pollutant," the central government's Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi said.

# DELHI GOVT WORKING TO CLEAN YAMUNA BY 2025, SAYS KEJRIWAL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Nov 18:** Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal Thursday said his government is working on a war footing on a six-point action plan to clean the Yamuna by February 2025.

The chief minister said he will deliver on the promise he made before the 2019 Assembly polls to clean the Delhi stretch of the river.

The six-point action plan by the Delhi government includes enhancing capacity of sewage treatment plants (STPs), in-situ treatment of large drains, crack-down on industrial waste, desilting of drains and sewage lines, connecting drains of JJ clusters with sewer line and connecting 100 per cent households in Delhi with sewage network.

"It took the Yamuna 70 years to become so polluted. The damage done in 70 years cannot be undone in just two days. I had made a promise that I will clean the Yamuna (in Delhi) by the next assembly polls and will take a dip in it along with all of you," he said at a press conference.

"We are working on a war footing to clean the Yamuna. There are six specific action points to achieve this and I am personally monitoring the progress," the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader said.

He said the government is constructing new sewage treatment plants (STPs) as well as increasing the capacity of the existing ones and upgrading those.

"This will increase our sewage treatment capacity from around 600 million gallons of waste water a day to 750-800 MGD," Kejriwal said.

He said the waste water from four major drains falling in the Yamuna - Najafgarh, Badshahpur, Supplementary and Ghazipur - is being treated in situ. The government is building new sewer treatment plants like Coronation Plant, Okhla Treatment Plant, Kondli Treatment Plant, Rithala Treatment Plant.

The city government will shut down the industries discharging industrial waste into the Yamuna,



**FACT FILE**

**DELHI GENERATES AROUND 720 MILLION GALLONS OF WASTE WATER A DAY. THE 35 STPS AT 20 LOCATIONS ACROSS THE CITY CAN TREAT UP TO 597 MGD OF SEWAGE AND HAVE BEEN UTILISING AROUND 90 PER CENT OF THEIR CAPACITY**

Pictures and videos showing devotees offering prayers in the Yamuna on the occasion of Chhath Puja with foam floating on the surface of the river had triggered a political slugfest between the ruling AAP and the BJP in Delhi

The 22-kilometre stretch of the Yamuna between Wazirabad and Okhla, which is less than two per cent of the river's length of 1,370 kilometres from Yamunotri to Allahabad, accounts for around 80 per cent of the pollution load in it

According to experts, the primary reason behind the formation of foam in the Yamuna is a high phosphate content in detergents used in dyeing industries, dhobi ghats and households in Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. The poor quality of effluent discharged from common effluent treatment plants and STPs is another reason

the chief minister said.

The waste water in the "jhuggi jhopri" clusters flows through the storm water and drains into the Yamuna. These clusters will be connected to the sewer network, Kejriwal said.

The AAP government will provide household connections in areas that have a sewer network. Earlier, consumers had to get the connections themselves.

"There are a lot of areas in Delhi which have the facility of a full-fledged functional sewer network. But there are also such peo-

ple who haven't taken the sewer connection and are instead disposing waste in the drains. This was primarily because the task was tedious. The person had to first file an application, get it approved, then take the onus of connecting their household to the sewer network. A lot of people thus did not do so. Now, the Delhi Government will step forward and connect each and every household to the sewer network itself. There will be no need of filing an application or getting the connection done yourself. We have also reduced the

charges significantly and whatever nominal charges would be there for the connection, will be adjusted with your monthly bills," Kejriwal said.

The city government has also started desilting and rehabilitation of the sewer network. "Our engineers and officers are hopeful that we will be able to clean the Yamuna by February 2025 with the implementation of the six-point action plan. Specific targets have been set for each action point and I will personally monitor the progress," Kejriwal said.

# Placed under house arrest: Mehbooba

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, Nov 18:** PDP president Mehbooba Mufti Thursday claimed she was put under house arrest, while two of her party colleagues were arrested by the police.

The former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister said her party chief spokesperson Suhail Bukhari and spokesperson Najmu Saqib were arrested.

"Again under house arrest & PDPs @SAAQQIIB & @Suhail Bukhari too have been arrested," she wrote on Twitter and posted pictures of the locked gate of her residence.

Referring to the Hyderpora encounter, the PDP chief charged that the "pattern of using innocent civilians as human shields" and

then denying their families the right to a decent burial shows that the Centre has "plumbed new depths of inhumanity".

"Their narrative right from the start was based on lies to escape accountability. They don't want to be held accountable for their actions & that's why they are muzzling voices that speak up against such injustice & atrocities," she alleged.

A controversy has erupted over Monday's encounter in Hyderpora following conflicting claims about the two deceased as their family members contested the police's charge that they were "terror associates."

The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Thursday ordered a magisterial probe into the Hyderpora encounter here.



# Brother appears before ED in money laundering case

**New Delhi/Srinagar:** Tassaduq Hussain Mufti, the brother of former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mehbooba Mufti, Thursday appeared before the Enforcement Directorate here for questioning in a money laundering case, officials said. Tassaduq, who was the tourism minister in his sister's cabinet, had his statement recorded under provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The criminal investigation pertains to funds allegedly received by him from some Kashmir-based businesses when Mehbooba Mufti was the chief minister of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, they said. Mehbooba has been questioned by the ED in the past in connection with the case.

# national

## of the day quote

Interesting to read that PM stressed the need for 'quality debates' in Parliament. He also suggested setting a separate time for quality debates. The question is -- Will PM ever participate in a debate in Parliament?

P. CHIDAMBARAM | CONGRESS LEADER

In the next two years, investments to the tune of Rs 10,480 crores will come in Howrah district. Around 882 new projects and industrial parks would come up in the district, generating more than 1,16,000 jobs

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

The state government has been revamping the entire education scenario and closing down schools with zero enrolments

PEMA KHANDU | ARUNACHAL CM

## SHORT TAKES

### Lightning kills man

**Chennai:** A 48-year-old man lost his life after being struck by lightning in Radhapuram area of Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu. Muthu was grazing his cattle when the incident took place on Wednesday evening. After he failed to return home by evening, his relatives went in search of him and found his body with burn injuries. Seven others were admitted to Tirunelveli district hospital after they were injured in lightning strikes.

### Rajasthan BJP MLA accused of rape

**Jaipur:** A BJP MLA from Gogunda has been accused of rape for the second time in ten months. A case was lodged against Pratap Lal Gameti in Udaipur's Ambamata police station on Wednesday based on a woman's complaint. Police, after recording the statement, got the victim's medical test done. In her complaint, the woman alleged that she had gone to the MLA for a job after which he started abusing her sexually for almost two years on the pretext of marriage.

### Former SP MLA heckled

**Ghazipur (Uttar Pradesh):** Former Samajwadi Party MLA, Subhash Pasi, who recently quit his party to join the BJP, was heckled by the local people when he reached his constituency on Wednesday night. According to reports, as soon as Pasi reached his constituency, people started shouting slogans against him and banged on his car. The protesters alleged that as a legislator, Pasi had not done any developmental work in the constituency and had moved over to greener pastures for personal gains.

### Five Nigerian nationals booked

**New Delhi:** As many as five Nigerian nationals were booked by the Delhi Police for illegally staying in India, an official said here Thursday. According to the official, all the accused Nigerian nationals were residing at Om Vihar, Uttam Nagar in the city. The accused were identified as -- Dalington, Theophilus, Sundry Patrick, Nmadi and Nonso. The police got information that some African nationals were illegally residing in the Uttam Nagar area. Acting on the tip-off, a team of six policemen was formed to nab the accused.



The government is evaluating the process for normalising international operations

JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA | CIVIL AVIATION MINISTER

### LALITHA MAHAL PALACE TURNS 100

Lalitha Mahal Palace, a celebrated architectural icon built by the Mysore royals originally for stay of viceroys and other state guests and equipped with a hand-operated heritage lift imported from England in 1921, has turned 100



# No relief for ex-Mumbai top cop

A magistrate court in Bombay Wednesday declared Singh a "proclaimed offender" in an extortion case registered against him and some other police officers in the city

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Nov 18:** The Supreme Court Thursday asked former Mumbai police commissioner Param Bir Singh, who has sought protective orders, to disclose his location, saying "no protection, no hearing until we know where you are". The apex court asked his lawyer to inform about Singh's whereabouts and posted the matter for hearing on November 22. A bench headed by Justice S K Kaul took exception that his plea seeking protection has been filed through power of attorney. "You are seeking protective orders; nobody knows where you are. Suppose you are sitting abroad and taking legal recourse through power of attorney then what happens. If that is so then you will come to India if the court rules in your favour, we don't know what you have in mind. No protection, no



hearing until we know where you are," said the bench also comprising Justice M M Sundresh. It further said: "The petition has been filed through power of attorney. Where are you. Are you in this country or outside? In some state, where are you. We will come to the remaining, first we know where you are?" A magistrate court in Bombay on Wednesday declared Singh a "proclaimed offender" in an extortion case registered against him and some other police officers in the city. Singh had last attended his office in May this year after

which he went on leave. The state police had told the Bombay High Court last month that his whereabouts were not known. The crime branch of Mumbai Police, which is probing the extortion case, had sought the proclamation against him, saying that the IPS officer could not be traced even after the issuance of a non-bailable warrant. Under Section 82 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, a court can publish a proclamation requiring an accused to appear if a warrant issued against him or her cannot be executed. As per Section 83,

after issuing such a proclamation the court can also order attachment of the offender's properties. Former assistant police inspector Sachin Waze is also an accused in the case, registered at the Goregaon police station. Besides Singh, co-accused Vinay Singh and Riyaz Bhatti were also declared proclaimed offenders by Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate S B Bhajipale on Wednesday. Bimal Agrawal, a real estate developer and hotelier, had alleged that the accused extorted Rs 9 lakh from him for not conducting raids on two bars and restaurants which he ran in partnership, and also forced him to buy two smartphones worth around Rs 2.92 lakh for them. The incidents occurred between January 2020 and March 2021, he had claimed. Following his complaint, a case was filed under Indian Penal Code Sections 384 and 385 (both pertaining to extortion) and 34 (common intention) against six accused. Singh is facing an extortion case in Thane too. The IPS officer was shunted from the post of Mumbai police commissioner in March 2021 after Waze was arrested in the case of the SUV with explosives found near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's south Mumbai residence 'Antilia' and the subsequent death of Thane businessman Mansukh Hiran.

# Surjewala moves SC against ordinances



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Nov 18:** Congress leader Randeep Surjewala Thursday moved the Supreme Court challenging the Union government's ordinances extending the tenures of Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) chiefs from two to up to five years. He has moved the plea against the Central Vigilance Commission (Amendment) Ordinance, 2021, and the Delhi Special Police Establishment (Amendment) Ordinance, 2021, of November 14 along with the Personnel Ministry's November 15 notification amending the fundamental rules which enable the government to extend the tenures of ED, CBI chiefs, as also of the defence, home and foreign secretaries.

extension of tenure in this "ad-hoc and episodic fashion" reaffirms the control of the Executive over investigative agencies and is "directly antithetical" to their independent functioning. The CBI and ED directors had a fixed tenure of two years but can now be given an extension each year as long as the cumulative extension is not beyond five years from the initial date of appointment, the Congress leader said. "It would thus mean that each permissible extension will be at the discretion and the subjective satisfaction of the appointing authority," he said. Surjewala has alleged that the impugned ordinances and notification have the effect of increasing the dependence of agency chiefs based upon the subjective satisfaction of the appointment authority each year. He also alleged that the security for the establishment is being ensured by the government through these ordinances. Alleging that they are designed to defeat a judicial pronouncement, the Congress leader said the ordinances and notification reveal a clear abuse of power by the government and also a flagrant contravention of the observations of this court. Surjewala said in the present case, the government has completely overlooked the directions and principles laid down and reiterated repeatedly by this court regarding the fixity of tenure as well as the extension of tenures, which as per this court are to be limited "only to rare and exceptional cases" and can only be provided for a short period of time. He also said that there is no defensible reason to promulgate the ordinances and notification barely 15 days before Parliament is set to convene.

## PAYING HOMAGE



Defence minister Rajnath Singh pays homage at the revamped memorial in Rezang La, Ladakh

PTI PHOTO

# Vir Das won't be allowed to perform in MP, says minister

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhopal, Nov 18:** Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narottam Mishra Thursday said comedian Vir Das, who is facing police complaints over his monologue 'I come from two Indias', would not be allowed to perform in the state, prompting the opposition parties and artists to slam the BJP leader as they asked why he was silent over actor Kangana Ranaut's recent controversial remarks. Das, who is in the US right now, had on Monday uploaded a six-minute video on YouTube titled 'I come from two Indias', which was a part of his recent performance at the John F Kennedy Centre in Washington DC. The Mumbai-based stand-up comic, who has also dabbled in cinema, had touched

on various topics in the clip, including the farm protests, the battle against COVID-19, the duality in response to women, particularly rape, and the crackdown on comedians. "We won't allow such jesters to perform. If he tenders an apology, we are going to think over it," Mishra said here when asked about the comedian's monologue. Reacting to his remarks, the Congress, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) leaders and some artists asked why Mishra was not giving any statement on Ranaut over her recent remarks in which she said that India attained "real freedom" in 2014, when the Modi-led government came to power, and described the country's Independence in 1947 as "bheek" or alms.

# KCR holds 'maha dharna' for farmers

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad, Nov 18:** Demanding the Centre to enhance rice procurement from Telangana and protesting its policies, Chief Minister K. Chandrababbarao, his cabinet colleagues, MPs and state legislators began 'maha dharna' here Thursday. Alleging that Telangana's farmers were suffering due to the policies of the Centre, Rao described the 'maha dharna' as the beginning of a struggle to protect the farmers' interests. KCR, as the chief minister is popularly known, declared that the movement will continue till the Centre relents and change its policies to procure rice from Telangana on a par with Punjab. "This is just the beginning. If necessary we will go to Delhi. We are ready to take it to any extent," said



Alleging that Telangana's farmers were suffering due to the policies of the Centre, Rao described the 'maha dharna' as the beginning of a struggle to protect the farmers' interests

the Chief Minister while formally launching the mega protest at Indira Park in the heart of the city. He alleged that the Centre's policies were harming the farmers of Telangana at a time when they were moving on the path of prosperity and contributing to the country's progress. He declared that their protest was also in support of farmers of north India who have been demanding the Centre to take back new farm laws. KCR's entire cabinet, MPs, mem-

bers of Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council, other elected representatives and leaders of Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) were participating in the dharna, which began at 11 a.m. and will continue till 2 p.m. A delegation of TRS leaders will later reach Raj Bhavan to submit a representation to Governor T. Tamilsai Soundararajan. Dismissing BJP's criticism for staging protests despite being in power in the state, KCR recalled that

Prime Minister Narendra Modi sat on a 51-hour dharna when he was the chief minister of Gujarat. The TRS chief said it was the responsibility of Narendra Modi to avoid a situation where the chief minister of a state has to sit on dharna. This is the second protest by TRS in less than a week. State ministers, MPs and state legislators and other leaders had participated in the dharnas held in all Assembly constituencies on November 12. The 'maha dharna' was held a day after KCR wrote to Narendra Modi to direct the Food Corporation of India (FCI) to enhance the target of rice procurement from Telangana. KCR demanded that he ask the FCI to enhance the target beyond 40 lakh tonnes for procurement of rice during the ongoing Kharif 2021-22 to 90 per cent of the production as done in Punjab.

# India among nations with lowest quit rates for smoking: Report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Nov 18:** India ranks second in the number of smokers aged between 16 and 64 years and is among the nations with one of the lowest quit rates for smoking, according to a new report. The report prepared by 'The International Commission to Reignite the Fight Against Smoking' using secondary data from sources like the World Bank, said that China and India are home to more than 500 million tobacco users between the ages 16 and 64 years. "India ranks second with 250,002,133 smokers between 16 and 64 years of age. Tobacco preva-

lence in India is three times higher among men than women. India also accounts for some of the highest rates of smokeless tobacco use and oral cancer in the world," it said. According to the report, 37 per cent of Indian respondents showed a desire to change behaviour with a plan to quit smoking. However, India is among countries with the lowest quit rates for smoking. The quit rates for men are less than 20 per cent, it noted. The report said an estimated 1.14 billion people worldwide still use tobacco, which kills nearly eight million people and eliminates nearly 200 million disabil-



ity-adjusted life years annually. "The cost to the world is nearly

According to the report, 37% of Indian respondents showed a desire to change behaviour with a plan to quit smoking

urgent to reignite the fight against smoking," it said. According to the report, nearly all countries ban the marketing and direct sales of tobacco products to children but in low-to-middle income countries, these prohibitions are not rigorously enforced. The report cites data from Consumer Voice 2019, which states that despite prohibitions in India, a study of areas around 243 schools found nearby vendors displaying tobacco products in ways that are appealing to children and the youth. "Around 91 per cent of displays were at 1 meter (at a child's eye level.) An estimated 54 per cent of

the points of sale have no visible health warning; and 90 per cent of displays were beside candy, sweets and toys, items marketed to children," it said. The report recommends adopting best practices to combat misinformation and build a healthier information environment to reduce harm from tobacco by leveraging multi-national, multi-disciplinary and participatory foresight studies. It advocated risk-proportionate regulations as a means of making it easier for smokers to quit while nudging expansion of access to tobacco-harm reduction products in low-to-middle-income countries.

# international

## of the day quote

Glad to meet @Tharman\_s, Singapore Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for Social Policies. Good discussion on the international economic situation



S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

Never has Pakistan seen such a fascist government. How can these thieves be expected to conduct transparent elections?



SHEHBAZ SHARIF | PAKISTAN'S LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Libya will not go back to pre-2011. We will build a new Libya. We will bring an end to suffering, tears and blood



FATHI BASHAGHA | LIBYA EX-INTERIOR MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### Britain's Prince Charles in Cairo

**Cairo:** Britain's Prince Charles and his wife, Camilla, arrived in Cairo Thursday for the first time in 15 years, hoping to promote tolerance and cement bilateral ties. The visit is part of the royal couple's first tour since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. It is also their first visit to Egypt since the country was rocked by a popular uprising in 2011 that was followed by years of political turmoil.

### Rapper Young Dolph fatally shot

**Memphis:** Rapper Young Dolph was shot and killed Wednesday at a cookie shop in his hometown of Memphis, Tennessee, and a search is underway for the shooter, officials said. Police tweeted that no suspect information was available in the shooting, which took place at Makeda's Cookie's near Memphis International Airport.

### US' bridges are in trouble

**Washington:** More than 45,000 bridges across the US have degenerated so badly that the Federal Highway Administration have listed them in poor condition in last year's National Bridge Inventory, a media report said. The bridges in poor condition total 7 per cent of all the bridges in the country, Xinhua news agency quoted the USA Today report published Wednesday as saying.

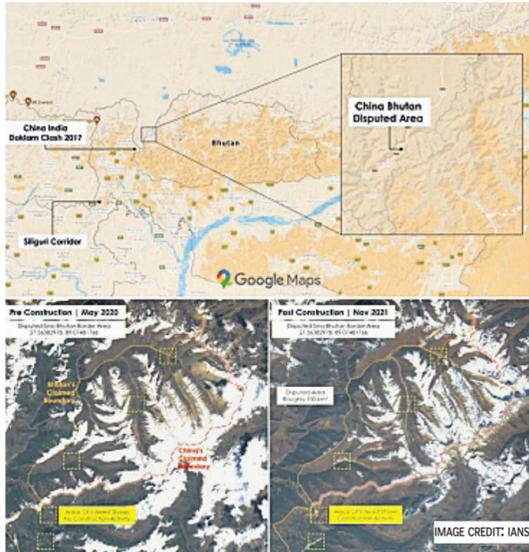
### Suspected extremist kill 25 in Niger

**Niamey (Niger):** At least 25 people were killed by suspected extremist gunmen in southwest Niger, the government said Wednesday. Buildings were burned and ransacked in the attack earlier this week near Bakorat village along the border with Mali, Alkache Alhada, the interior minister said in a statement. The government called the attack cowardly and said security sweeps in the area are underway. This is the latest in a string of extremist violence linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group in the conflict-ridden West African nation, particularly along the border with Mali.

### SK sees record jump in Covid-19 cases

**Seoul:** South Korea reported its biggest daily jump in coronavirus infections since the start of the pandemic as hundreds of thousands of masked students flocked to schools Thursday for the country's highly competitive college entrance exam amid growing concerns about the delta-driven spread.

# China grabs land on Bhutanese territory



AGENCIES

**Beijing/New Delhi, Nov 18:** China has constructed new villages in Bhutan territory near Doklam in the last year, new satellite images have revealed.

The images show that four villages were built by China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) in about 100 sq.km. area between May 2020 and November 2021. It seems that construction started at the same time when the PLA had ingressed into Indian territory at multiple locations in eastern Ladakh and the Sikkim sector.

The Doklam plateau was in the

limelight in 2017 when the Indian Army and the China's PLA were locked in the stand-off for over 70 days. The Chinese had to retreat from the area after the Indian troops contested the plateau.

Doklam is an area of 100 sq.km comprising a plateau and a valley at the tri-junction between India, China and Bhutan. It is circled by the Chumbi Valley of Tibet, Bhutan's Ha Valley and India's Sikkim.

In 2017, China was making infrastructural development work at Doklam to which India objected. China then claimed that there

## 2ND ENCLAVE INSIDE ARUNACHAL

China has constructed a second village near Arunachal Pradesh, which is outside India's perception of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) but 'appears' to be within the McMahon Line. A satellite image expert, whose Twitter handle identifies him as @Detresfa\_, said the new village "appears to be within the survey of India and McMahon line boundary". "It lies 93 km east of a China-constructed village in Arunachal Pradesh," the report said, adding that the second enclave lies approximately 6 kilometres "within India in the region between the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and the International Boundary".

was boundary dispute between Bhutan and China and to which India had no claims.

However, India refuted and stood there matching the deployment of the Chinese troops for 73 days.

Last month, China and Bhutan signed a pact on a three-step roadmap to resolve their boundary disputes. In response, India said that "it has noted the development".

Boundary negotiations between Bhutan and China began in 1984 and the two sides have held 24 rounds of meeting at the expert group level.

Earlier, Bhutan had objected several times to Chinese intrusion into their land.

# Pakistan frees radical Islamist to end violence

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lahore, Nov 18:** Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) chief Saad Hussain Rizvi was Thursday released from the jail, weeks after Prime Minister Imran Khan-led government entered into a 'secret agreement' with the radical Islamist party which was involved in recent deadly clashes with the police.

Rizvi, who was languishing at Kot Lakhpat jail since his arrest on April 12 under terrorism charges, is facing over 100 FIRs under terrorism and murder; attempted murder and other cases.

"The Punjab government withdrew its reference before the federal review board leading to the release of Rizvi," a senior official of the Punjab government told PTI.

In fact, the Punjab province government facilitated his release, he added.

Thousands of TLP workers and supporters welcomed Rizvi at the party headquarters at Yateem Khana Chowk Lahore where he was brought in a procession. Last week, the Punjab government removed the name of Rizvi from the terrorism list, succumbing to pressure from the radical Islamist party.

Under the last month's 'secret agreement', the federal government had lifted the ban on the TLP, citing "in the larger national interest."

Early this month, thousands of TLP members ended their over week-long sit-in in Punjab province after the Imran Khan-led government accepted some "demands" of the radical outfit.

The government had also released over 1,200 TLP workers arrested during the clashes with the police in Lahore last month and on



Last week, the Punjab government removed the name of Rizvi from the terrorists' list, succumbing to pressure from the radical Islamist party

way to Wazirabad, in which 11 Islamists and eight policemen lost their lives.

The TLP had launched protests October 18 from Lahore and announced to march to Islamabad to force the government to accept its demands.

Interestingly, just before reaching the 'secret agreement' with the radical Islamists, Prime Minister Khan had categorically announced that his government would not meet the TLP's demand of closing down the French embassy in Pakistan.

The federal cabinet had also announced treating TLP as a militant organisation. "TLP will be crushed as other such groups have been eliminated. The Pakistani state has defeated major terrorist organisations such as Al Qaeda," Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry had said.

# China's detention of Wuhan scribe 'is a warning to others'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Beijing/New Delhi, Nov 18:** The detention of Zhang Zhan, the Chinese journalist jailed after reporting on the Covid pandemic in Wuhan, is intended as a "warning to others", her former lawyer said, The Guardian reported.

Hundreds of Chinese human rights lawyers and citizens have put their names to an open letter calling for immediate medical care for Zhang, who her family fear is close to death.

Zhang has been on a hunger strike for more than a year in protest at her persecution for reporting on the Wuhan lockdown in early 2020, the report said.

On Thursday, she was awarded the Reporters Without Borders' 2021 Press Freedom award for courage.

Hundreds of Chinese human rights lawyers and citizens have put their names to an open letter calling for immediate medical care for Zhang, who her family fear is close to death

Ren Quanniu, whose legal licence was revoked after he represented Zhang and members of the Hong Kong 12, said it was possible Zhang's severe punishment was "retaliation" against citizen journalists trying to cover the Wuhan outbreak, aimed at sending a message to others given her initial arrest was so widely covered by international media, The Guardian reported.

# Pak Parl approves chemical castration of habitual rapists

The Bill is a response to a public outcry against a recent spike in rape incidents across the country



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Islamabad, Nov 18:** Sex offenders convicted of multiple rapes in Pakistan could face chemical castration after Parliament passed a new legislation that aims to speed up convictions and impose tougher sentences.

The passage of the bill comes almost a year after President Arif Alvi approved the new anti-rape ordinance that was cleared by the Pakistan Cabinet, calling for the chemical castration of rapists with the consent of the convict and setting up of special courts for speedy trials.

The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill 2021 bill was passed along with 33 other bills by the joint session

of parliament on Wednesday. It seeks to amend the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860, and the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898, the Dawn newspaper reported.

"Chemical castration is a process duly notified by rules framed by the prime minister, whereby a person is rendered incapable of performing sexual intercourse for any period of his life, as may be determined by the court through administration of drugs which shall be conducted through a notified medical board," according to the bill.

Jamaat-i-Islami Senator Mushtaq Ahmed protested over the bill and termed it un-Islamic and against Sharia. He said a rapist should be hanged publicly, but there was no mention of castration in Sharia.

Chemical castration is the use of drugs to reduce sexual activity. It is a legal form of punishment in countries including South Korea, Poland, the Czech Republic and in some states in the US, according to media reports. Critics say fewer than 4 per cent of sexual assault or rape cases in Pakistan result in a conviction.



An overcrowded wooden boat, with 99 migrants on board is approached by members of the humanitarian organization off the Libya coast

PTI PHOTO

# Hate speech in Myanmar continues to thrive on FB

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Jakarta, Nov 18:** Years after coming under scrutiny for contributing to ethnic and religious violence in Myanmar, Facebook still has problems detecting and moderating hate speech and misinformation on its platform in the Southeast Asian nation, internal

documents viewed by The Associated Press show.

Three years ago, the company commissioned a report that found Facebook was used to "foment division and incite offline violence" in the country.

It pledged to do better and developed several tools and policies to deal with hate speech.

But the breaches have persisted -- and even been exploited by hostile actors -- since the February 1 military takeover this year that resulted in gruesome human rights abuses across the country.

Scrolling through Facebook today, it's not hard to find posts threatening murder and rape in Myanmar. One

2 1/2 minute video posted on October 24 of a supporter of the military calling for violence against opposition groups has garnered over 56,000 views.

Despite the ongoing issues, Facebook saw its operations in Myanmar as both a model to export around the world and an evolving and caustic case.

# 'Antibiotics misuse helping bacteria develop resistance'

Several countries in the Americas, including Argentina, Uruguay, Ecuador, Guatemala and Paraguay, are reporting surges in detection of drug-resistant infections that have likely contributed to the rise in mortality in hospitalised COVID-19 patients

AGENCIES

**Brasilia, Nov 18:** Overuse of antibiotics and other antimicrobial drugs during the coronavirus pandemic is helping bacteria develop resistance that will render these important medicines ineffective over time, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) warned Wednesday.

Several countries in the Americas, including Argentina, Uruguay, Ecuador, Guatemala and Paraguay, are reporting surges in detection of drug-resistant infections that have likely contributed to the rise in mortality in hospitalised COVID-19 patients, the health agency said. "We've seen the use of antimicrobials rise to unprecedented levels, with poten-



tially serious consequences," PAHO director Carissa Etienne said.

"We risk losing the drugs we rely on to treat common infections," she said in a webcast news brief-

ing. Antimicrobials are being misused outside of hospital settings, and drugs such as ivermectin and chloroquine are being used as unproven treatments, even with strong

The use of ivermectin and chloroquine has been actively encouraged by some authorities in the region, such as far-right President Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil

evidence that they do not benefit COVID-19 patients, she said. Data from hospitals in the region shows that 90% to 100% of hospitalized COVID-19 patients were given an antimicrobial as part of their treatment, while only 7% of them had

a secondary infection that required use of those drugs, Etienne said. Misuse and overuse of antibiotics has long been viewed as a potential threat that could lead to the emergence of so-called superbugs with resistance to existing treatments, a problem that has been exacerbated by the pandemic.

"Throughout the pandemic we have taken the power of antimicrobials for granted," she said, adding that it may take months or years before the full impact of their misuse and overuse becomes evident. There have been few new antibiotics in drug company pipelines as they tend to be much less profitable than other medicines and their use must be limited to remain effective.

# business

## of the day quote

We have raised ₹4,000 crore through QIP (qualified institutional placement) process. The demand was for more than ₹12,000 crore worth shares from domestic and global investors

**ABHISHEK LODHA** | MD AND CEO, MACROTECH DEVELOPERS

Today, Apple supports around one million jobs in India, from our employees, to the fast-growing iOS app economy, to our work with supplier partners

**PRIYA BALASUBRAMANIAM** | VICE-PRESIDENT (PRODUCT OPERATIONS), APPLE INDIA

We are very happy with how the digital payment ecosystem is doing in India and the role we have played directly as well as a catalyst to help users in India

**AMBARISH KENGHE** | VICE PRESIDENT (PRODUCT MANAGEMENT), GOOGLE PAY

## SHORT TAKES

### Icra ups Q2 GDP growth hope to 7.9%

**Mumbai:** A jump in government spending in September has led Icra to upgrade its GDP growth estimate for the second quarter of FY2021-22 to 7.9 per cent, according to a release. The domestic rating agency's earlier estimate for real GDP growth for the July-September period was 7.7 per cent. The GDP had grown by over 20 per cent in Q1FY22 on a low base as the pandemic's first wave raged. The RBI has forecast a 9.5 per cent growth rate in FY22.

### Sidbi, Google tie-up to support MSMEs

**Mumbai:** Small Industries Development Bank of India (Sidbi) Thursday said it has entered into a partnership with Google India Pvt Ltd (GIPL) for piloting a social impact lending programme with financial assistance up to ₹1 crore at subsidised interest rates to MSMEs. This partnership with GIPL brings a corpus of \$15 million (around ₹110 crore) to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) as a crisis response related to Covid-19, Sidbi said in a release.

### Reebok comes up with new upgrades

**Bhubaneswar:** Reebok introduced new upgrades to its running footwear portfolio with the new Floatride Energy and the new Liqifect 180. The all-new Floatride Energy is priced at ₹8,999 and Liqifect 180 will be available at ₹6,599. With these products, Reebok aims to make fitness accessible for everyone, keeping the high-performance standards intact. Floatride Energy offers enhanced flexibility and provides traction and durability and Liqifect 180 offers a modern silhouette with a quilted deco stitch that creates a 360-movement visual from upper to outsole, said a company official.

### Pre-orders to start for Surface Go 3

**Bhubaneswar:** Tech giant Microsoft announced that pre-orders for the new Surface Go 3 will commence on Amazon. Starting at ₹57,999, Surface Go 3 will weigh only 1.2 pounds (544 gms) with 1080p cameras, best-in-class studio microphones, Dolby audio, and a 10.5" touch display. Prices of Surface for Business units start from ₹42,999. The device will be available on Amazon from November 23. Designed to light up the best of Windows 11, Surface Go 3 is 60% faster with a 10th Gen Intel Core i3 processor, said an official.



I would like to invite Google and the rest of the industry to participate in India's \$1 trillion digital economy mission, which will pave the way for the rest of the world

**RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR** | UNION MINISTER OF STATE FOR IT

## DUCATI UNVEILS PANIGALE V4 SP

Italian superbike maker Ducati Thursday launched its flagship motorcycle model Panigale V4 SP in India priced at ₹36.07 lakh (ex-showroom India). Bookings are now open across all Ducati dealerships in Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Pune, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Kochi, Kolkata and Chennai, and deliveries will start with immediate effect, Ducati India said in a statement



# RBI may launch digital currency pilot next year

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, Nov 18:** The Reserve Bank of India's digital currency may see its pilot launch in the first quarter of the next fiscal year, a senior central bank officer said at the State Bank of India's Banking and Economic Conclave as reported by a local newspaper. "I think somewhere it was said that at least by the first quarter of next year a pilot could be launched. So we are bullish on that," the

Business Standard newspaper quoted P Vasudevan, chief general manager at the Department of Payment & Settlement of the RBI as having said.

Central bank digital currencies, or (CBDCs) are digital or virtual currencies that are basically the digital version of fiat currencies, for India that would be its domestic currency rupee.

Previously, the central bank governor had said a soft launch of the CBDC could be expected



by December but there has been no official timeline committed to by the RBI.

"We are on the job and we are looking into the various issues and nuances related to CBDC. It's not a simple thing to just say that CBDC can be a habit from tomorrow on," Vasudevan said, adding that a CBDC could have a useful role depending on how it is implemented and there should be no hurry to launch it.

Vasudevan said the RBI was examining various issues related to which segment the CBDC should target - wholesale or retail, the

validation mechanism and also other issues including distribution channels.

"The central bank is also checking if intermediaries can be bypassed altogether, and most importantly, checking if the technology should be decentralised or should be semi-centralised," the RBI CGM said.

The RBI has repeatedly raised concerns over cryptocurrencies posing macro-economic and financial stability risks.

# PM urges nations to work on crypto

Modi said the digital age has helped in ushering in a new era of opportunities for progress and prosperity but at the same time, it brings new challenges

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Nov 18:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi Thursday called on democratic nations to ensure that cryptocurrency does not end up in the "wrong hands", and cautioned that new-age technologies have the potential to be used as instruments of conflict and domination.

In a virtual address at the Sydney Dialogue, he said India has created a robust framework of data protection, uses data as a source of empowerment of people and has unmatched experience in doing this in a democratic framework with strong guarantees of individual rights. Modi said the democracies must invest together in the research and development of future technology, create trusted manufacturing base and supply chains and work for preventing "manipulation" of public opinions.

He said technology and data are becoming "new weapons" and whether all the "wonderful powers" of technology will be instruments of "cooperation or conflict", "coercion or choice" and "domination or development" will depend on choices the nations make.

The Sydney Dialogue is a forum focused on emerging, critical and cyber technologies.

Modi said the biggest strength of democracy is its openness and a few vested interests should not be allowed to misuse it, noting that the digital age has redefined politics, economies and societies besides raising new questions on sovereignty, governance, ethics, rights and security.



“It (crypto) should recognise national rights and, at the same time, promote trade, investment and larger public good. Take cryptocurrency or bitcoin for example. It is important that all democratic nations work together on this and ensure it does not end up in wrong hands, which can spoil our youth

**NARENDRA MODI** | PM

He said the like-minded countries should develop technical and governance standards and norms consistent with their democratic values and create standards and norms for data governance. There have been concerns in India over mis-

leading claims of huge returns on cryptocurrency investment and its possible use for money laundering and terror financing. Last week, Modi chaired a meeting on the way forward on cryptocurrency or bitcoin.

Giving an overview of India's approach to new technologies, Modi said the country is investing in developing indigenous capabilities in diverse areas including in 5G and 6G for the telecom sector and is one of the leading nations in artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning, especially in "human-centred" and ethical use of AI.

## Support wealth, job creators: PM to banks

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi Thursday exhorted banks to support wealth and job creators, and work proactively to improve the country's balance sheet. Addressing bankers at the symposium to 'Build Synergy for Seamless Credit Flow and Economic Growth', PM Modi said banks have to now adopt a partnership model to help businesses thrive and move away from the idea of being a loan approver to a loan applicant. "Banks have to support wealth creators and job creators ... it is time that banks, along with their own balance sheets, help increase the balance sheet of the country," Modi said. He nudged bankers to offer customised solutions to businesses and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Stating that banks have adequate liquidity and non-performing loans are lowest in five years, he said despite the Covid-19 pandemic, the banking sector has remained strong in the first half (April-September) in current fiscal.

# RBI panel for separate laws on digital lending

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Nov 18:** A working group of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recommended setting up a self-regulatory organisation covering participants in digital lending. The recommendation came as part of its report on digital lending through online platforms and mobiles applications.

The RBI report said separate legislation must be made to prevent illegal digital lending activities and that all data must be stored in servers in India. The committee recommended that data collection should happen only with prior and explicit consent of the borrowers.

The thrust of the report has been on enhancing customer protection and making the digital lending ecosystem safe and sound while

The thrust of the report has been on enhancing customer protection and making the digital lending ecosystem safe

encouraging innovation, it said.

The digital lending app industry had attracted the scrutiny of the RBI and the police after several complaints relating to violation of privacy and harassment by recovery agents.

To address those issues, the RBI set up the six-member working group in January to evaluate digital loans and identify risks posed by unregulated digital lending to financial stability, regulated entities, and consumers.

## SEMICONDUCTOR SHORTAGE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Nov 18:** Automobile retail sales in the country fell 18 per cent year-on-year in the 42-day long festive period this year as semiconductor shortage impacted production across companies affecting their ability to supply adequate numbers to dealer partners, Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) said Thursday. During the period under review, barring three-wheeler and commercial vehicles, all other segments including passenger vehicles, two-wheelers and tractors were down as compared with the same period of last year.

Passenger vehicle registrations stood at 3,24,542 units, down 26 per cent from 4,39,564 units in the fes-

We have witnessed the worst festive season in the last decade.

Semiconductor shortage which was already a full blown crisis showed its true colours when in spite of an above healthy demand, we could not cater to customer's need as SUV, compact-SUV and luxury categories witnessed huge shortage of vehicles,"

**VINKESH GULATI** | FADA PRESIDENT

tive period last year. Similarly, two-wheeler sales declined by 18 per cent at 15,79,642 units this year as against 19,38,066 units in 2020. Tractor sales were down 23 per cent at 56,841 units as compared with 73,925 units in the same period of last year.

## BIZ BUZZ

### Skoda Slavia unveiled in city



**Bhubaneswar:** The Skoda Auto has finally revealed the production guise of all-new premium midsize sedan Skoda Slavia in City, Thursday. Following the successful launch of the midsize SUV Kushaq, the brand-new sedan is the Czech carmaker's second India-specific model, as part of the India 2.0 project. As the sedan is based on the MQB-A0-IN platform - an MQB variant specially adapted by Skoda Auto for India - it offers a comprehensive range of safety features and advanced infotainment systems. The power output of the TSI engines available for the Slavia is 85 kW (115 PS) and 110 kW (150 PS) respectively, and just like other Skodas, this model is characterised by an emotive design. The Skoda Slavia comes with excellent active and passive safety features. Occupants are protected by up to six airbags. To ensure children also have a safe journey, the sedan comes with ISOFIX anchors and Top Tether anchor points on the rear seats, the company officials said.

### Hyundai, Kia launch electric concept SUVs



**San Francisco:** Hyundai Motor and affiliate Kia Corp have unveiled their electric concept SUVs at the Los Angeles Auto Show as they strengthen their all-electric portfolios in line with rival carmakers' electrification push. Hyundai and Kia debuted the large-sized Seven and flagship EV9 concept models built on Hyundai Motor Group's dedicated EV platform, called E-GMP, at the US motor show during a two-day media preview Wednesday and Thursday. The carmakers are planning to gradually phase out combustion-engine cars in global markets as governments are adopting more aggressive policies to fight climate change. The Seven concept has space for seven passengers and aims to travel more than 482 kilometers on a single charge. The EV9 also would get over 482 km on one charge. "The Seven comes with the group's IONIQ battery EV brand's signature design elements, which include Parametric Pixels, the smallest unit of digital imaging. The EV9 was developed under Kia's new design philosophy Opposites United, which embodies its shifting focus toward electrification," the companies said.

# Auto sales hit hard this festive season: FADA



As per data collated by FADA, total retail sales across segments stood at 20,90,893 units this festive period, down 18 per cent from 25,56,335 units in 2020

Three-wheeler sales, however, increased 53 per cent to 52,802 units as compared with 34,419 units last year. Similarly, commercial vehicle sales rose by 10 per cent to 77,066 units as against 70,361 units in 2020

In October, total retail sales witnessed a year on year dip of 5 per cent at 13,64,526 units

"We have witnessed the worst festive season in the last decade. Semiconductor shortage which was already a full blown crisis showed its true colours when in spite of an above healthy demand, we could not cater to customer's need as SUV, compact-SUV and luxury categories witnessed huge shortage of vehicles," FADA President Vinkesh Gulati said.

On the other hand, entry-level cars saw subdued demand as customers in this category continued to conserve money to take care of healthcare needs and other expenses, he added.

"The two-wheeler category continues to face the brunt of low sales with the entry level category being the biggest spoilsport. The rural distress in retails coupled with fre-

quent price hikes, triple digit fuel prices and customers conserving funds for healthcare emergencies kept the demand low," Gulati said.

"In the CV space M&HCV segment is now in a recovery mode with infrastructure projects coming up in different states," Gulati said. Buses, however, continue to be in the slow lane as it is yet to see any revival in demand, he added.

It is noteworthy to mention that we are witnessing a tactical shift from ICE (internal combustion engine) to electric. The dealer's body also urged the two wheeler companies to rationalise the inventory. It also requested the companies to roll out attractive schemes for customers so that demand especially in the entry level category can be revived.

## RETRO TAX GOVT ACCEPTS CAIRN'S OFFER

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Nov 18:** Moving quickly towards ending a retrospective tax dispute with a firm that gave India its largest oilfield, the government has accepted Cairn Energy PLC's undertakings which would allow for the refund of taxes, sources said.

Meeting the requirements of the new legislation that scraps levy of retrospective taxation, the company had earlier this month given required undertakings indemnifying the Indian government against future claims as well as agreeing to drop any legal proceedings anywhere in the world.

The government has now accepted this and issued Cairn a so-called Form-II, committing to refund the tax collected to enforce the retrospective tax demand, two sources with direct knowledge of the development said.

Following the issuance of Form-II, Cairn will now start withdrawing all cases in international courts.

Once this is complete, the company will be issued a ₹7,900 crore refund, they said, adding the withdrawal of cases may take up to three-four weeks.

Seeking to repair India's damaged reputation as an investment destination, the government in August enacted new legislation to drop ₹1.1 lakh crore in outstanding claims against multinationals such as telecom group Vodafone, pharmaceuticals company Sanofi and brewer SABMiller, now owned by AB InBev, and Cairn.

About ₹8,100 crore collected from companies under the scrapped tax provision are to be refunded if the firms agreed to drop outstanding litigation, including claims for interest and penalties. Of this, ₹7,900 crore is due only to Cairn.

## ONGC inks feedstock and marketing MoU with Saudi Aramco

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Nov 18:** To explore a strategic alliance on a broad range of energy prospects, public sector oil and gas explorer Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with world's largest oil company Saudi Aramco.

The two energy companies will look into long-term supply contracts for the sale and purchase of crude, refined petroleum and petrochemical products to create secure and competitive energy sources for the Indian market.

Both the entities also hope to utilize their affiliates in this strategic alliance, namely; Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd (MRPL), ONGC Petro-additions Ltd (OPAL) and ONGC Mangalore Petrochemicals Ltd (OMPL) of ONGC and Aramco Trading Company (ATC) of Saudi Aramco.

They also look forward to exploring low carbon energy demand and supply as part of this strategic alliance.

The MoU was signed by ONGC Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) Subhash Kumar and Saudi Aramco Senior Vice President of Downstream Mohammed Yahya Al Qahtani Thursday. The signing ceremony took place at the Saudi Arabia Pavilion at Dubai Expo 2020.



I go into every match with a positive attitude. Rankings don't really matter to me and I always fight for every point. That is the reason why I managed to defeat a great player like Axelsen. It is indeed a satisfying win

HS PRANNOY



# PRANNOY STUNS OLYMPIC CHAMP

SINDHU, SRIKANTH ALSO MAKE IT TO THE LAST 8 STAGE IN INDONESIA MASTERS



**Thursday**  
The highlight of the day was Prannoy's stunning 14-21, 21-19, 21-16 upset victory over Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Viktor Axelsen in a tense 61-minute battle in the men's singles second round and seal his spot in the quarterfinals.  
Down and out in the first game, Prannoy made a sensational recovery to first level the match and then eke out a memorable win against the World No. 2. This was Prannoy's first victory in six attempts against Axelsen. With the win, the World No.

## AT A GLANCE

**HS Prannoy**  
bt Viktor Axelsen  
**14-21, 21-19, 21-16**

**Kidambi Srikanth**  
bt Jonatan Christie  
**13-21, 21-18, 21-15**

**PV Sindhu**  
bt Clara Azurmendi  
**17-21, 21-7, 21-12**

**Lakshya Sen** lost to Kento Momota  
**13-21, 19-21**

next two games to register a brilliant victory. She next meets Turkish shuttler Neslihan Yigit against whom she has a 3-0 record, in the quarterfinals.

Former World No. 1 Srikanth, dispatched Indonesia's sixth seed Jonatan Christie 13-21, 21-18, 21-15 in 62 minutes to also make the last eight stage. He will now meet Prannoy for a place in the semis.

However, it was curtains for young Lakshya Sen and the mixed doubles pair of Dhruv Kapila and N Sikki Reddy.

The 20-year-old Lakshya went down 13-21, 19-21 to the top seed and two-time World Champion Kento Momota of Japan in a 46-minute clash.

Kapila and Sikki, on the other hand, lost a hard-fought 15-21, 23-21, 18-21 battle to Thai duo of Supak Jomkoh and Supissara Paewsampran in the second round mixed doubles match. In women's doubles Ashwini Ponappa and Reddy also crashed out of the event in the second round to third seeds Jongkolphan Kititharakul and Rawinda Prajongjai 18-21, 12-21.

AGENCIES

**Bali, Nov 18:** Indian shuttlers PV Sindhu, Kidambi Srikanth and HS Prannoy registered similar come-from-behind victories in their respective events to advance to the quarterfinals of the Indonesia Masters Super 750 badminton tournament here

32 Indian shuttler became the first player to beat the Dane in full a match since March.

In women's singles, Sindhu, who is seeded third, took 47 minutes to record a 17-21, 21-7, 21-12 win over Spain's Clara Azurmendi. Playing against the World No. 47 Azurmendi for the first time, Sindhu went down in the first game before

putting up a dominant performance in the



**MOMENT TO CHERISH:** Garbine Muguruza poses with the trophy after winning the women's singles title at the WTA Finals

# 'Tequila time' for Muguruza

FIRST SPANIARD TO WIN THE TITLE AT THE WTA FINALS

AGENCIES

**Guadalajara (Mexico), Nov 18:** Garbine Muguruza's trip to Mexico started last week drinking tequila. After winning the WTA Finals, it will end in the same way. The 28-year-old Spaniard beat Anett Kontaveit 6-3, 7-5 to win WTA Finals title for the first time in her career and improve her record playing in Mexico to 14 wins and two losses.

Before the tournament started, Muguruza took a 37-mile (60 kilometre) ride to Tequila, a small town outside this place where the popular spirit is produced. "I went to the town, did a tasting. I knew I need to do this before because when I win..." said Muguruza. "We're (now) going to have some tequila, have fun, lose all the tension we've been having and holding. I think the whole team deserves it," the Spaniard added.

Muguruza became the first Spaniard to win the women's season-ending tournament. Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario was a runner-up

## DJOKOVIC SEALS SEMIFINAL SPOT

**Turin:** Novak Djokovic advanced to the semifinals of the ATP Finals by beating Andrey Rublev 6-3, 6-2 here Wednesday. The top-ranked Djokovic is attempting to match Roger Federer's record of six titles at the season-ending event for the top eight players in the world. Djokovic was again almost perfect on his serve, although Rublev managed to break him in the opening game. Djokovic broke twice in each set and won the match with his 12th ace. "I knew that I had to be on my toes and start well," Djokovic said. "And that is exactly what I did, even though I was a tad nervous," the Serbian added.

two times, the last time in 1993. Muguruza took control early in the match with three breaks against an erratic Kontaveit, who played better in the second and got a break in the ninth, but the Spaniard broke the Estonian's next two serves to win it.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Pramod, Sukant register easy wins

**Kampala:** World No.1 Pramod Bhagat defeated Deada Jean Yves Yao from Ivory Coast in less than 22 minutes in the Uganda International Para Badminton tournament here Thursday. This was his second win in the singles SL3 category. The score read 21-13, 21-9. The ace shuttler also won his mixed doubles match where he partnered Palak Kohli. The pair defeated India's Shanthiya Viswanathan and Uganda's Bashir Mutyaba in straight sets 21-11 21-12. Sukant Kadam, in the SL4 category, trounced Nigeria's Ousmane Habi Adamou in 18 minutes winning 21-4, 21-5.

### Squad announced

**New Delhi:** Indian women's football team head coach Thomas Dennerby announced Thursday a squad of 23 players who will travel to Manaus, Brazil to play in a four-nation tournament, where they will play against the hosts, Chile and Venezuela. The team will depart Saturday. Odisha's Pyari Xaxa is in the side. **The squad:** (Goalkeepers): Aditi Chauhan, M Linthoingambi Devi, Sowmya Narayansamy; (Defenders): Dalima Chhibber, Sweety Devi, Ritu Rani, Ashalata Devi, Manisa Panna, Shilky Devi, Ranjana Chanu, V Linthoingambi Devi, (Midfielders): Indumathi Kathiresan, Sanju, Anju Tamang, Martina Thokchom, Karthika Angamuthu, Kamala Devi; (Forwards): Manisha Kalyan, Pyari Xaxa, Renu, Dangmei Grace, Soumya Guguloth, Mariyammal Balamurugan.

### Honour for Prakash

**New Delhi:** Indian badminton great Prakash Padukone will receive the prestigious 'Lifetime Achievement Award' this year from the Badminton World Federation (BWF). The BWF Council shortlisted the Indian legend based on the Award Commission's recommendation. Earlier Badminton Association of India (BAI) had submitted his name for this award. Prakash the first-ever Indian WC medallist, has contributed immensely to the game.

### Ref suspended

**Sao Paulo:** Uruguayan referee Andres Cunha and video assistant Esteban Ostojich were suspended 'indefinitely' after failing to give a red card to Argentina defender Nicolas Otamendi during a World Cup qualifying match against Brazil. Otamendi hit Brazil forward Raphinha with his elbow in the 35th minute of Tuesday's match in San Juan. "It looks like a foul for a yellow card. I don't see a red," Ostojich told Cunha, according to a video released by South American soccer body CONMEBOL. It said that Cunha and Ostojich made 'a serious mistake' and the two were 'suspended indefinitely'. AGENCIES

# Jyothi dethrones Koreans to win Asian Archery gold

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dhaka, Nov 18:** World Championship triple silver medalist Jyothi Surekha Vennam overcame the mighty Korean challenge twice, including in a gripping but controversial final, to win the women's compound individual gold at the Asian Archery Championships here Thursday. Fresh from winning three silver medals at the Yankton Worlds in September, Jyothi defeated 2015

World Champion Kim Yunhee 148-143 in a lopsided semifinal, before sealing India's first gold against Oh Yoohyun with a one-point victory (146-145).

Leading by two points going into the final set, the World No.6 Jyothi shot one 10 and hit the nine-ring twice, which was enough to land India the first gold medal after the Korean hit the nine-ring in a controversial decision.

The entire Korean contingent including the coaches challenged,

believing it to be a 10, but the judge ruled it a nine, giving the result in India's favour.

"The arrow was completely missing 10. All Korean coaches went to the target which is not allowed as per rules to put pressure on the judge. As per the World Archery rules, it is a one judge call and cannot be protested," said an Indian coach here.

Jyothi started off in a spectacular fashion drilling in three perfect 10s to lead 20-29.

But two 9s in the second end meant that the 25-year-old Indian scored 28, as the experienced Korean shot two 10s en route to 29, which levelled the scores 58-58. Showing great composure, the Andhra archer tilted the match in her favour once again with three 10s from her three arrows in the third set to go ahead 88-86. Then Jyothi held her nerve to maintain the lead even though the Korean came close to leveling the score. However, Jyothi's grit finally helped her emerge victorious.

# DEW MAY INFLUENCE RESULT OF 2ND T20 GAME, SAYS CURATOR

# India look to seal series

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ranchi, Nov 18:** India will look to clinch the series albeit with a more impactful batting performance from the middle-order in the second T20 International here Friday. For coach Rahul Dravid and skipper Rohit Sharma, there couldn't have been a better start with a five-wicket victory against an old nemesis. It helped them hit the right chord at the beginning of their partnership. It ended India's seven-match losing streak against the Kiwis across all formats.

Rohit would certainly like to close out the series here and then go for the jugular when the teams meet in Kolkata for the final game of the series.

Even though India won riding on brilliant knocks from Suryakumar Yadav and Rohit, the scratchy batting of Shreyas Iyer and Rishabh Pant did slightly mess up things for the Indians.

The other big positive from the last match was the performance of senior bowlers Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Ravichandran Ashwin, who were brilliant in hitting the right areas while some of the inexperienced bowlers leaked runs at the other



Indian and New Zealand players arrive in Ranchi, Friday. PTI PHOTO

end. Martin Guptill after the end of the game Wednesday said that the 'wily' Ashwin was

the hardest to get away. India were also brilliant at the death and conceded just 41 runs tak-

ing three wickets which denied the visitors a good 15-20 runs.

What however, is worrying for both the teams is that heavy dew has been predicted for the game at the JSCA International Stadium Complex here Friday.

Seasoned chief curator Shyam Bahadur Singh said Thursday, "Heavy dew is expected from 7.30pm onwards. We will take all possible measures to negate the impact. However, it has been seen in the past that the team bowling second always face problems here because of the dew. A 7.30pm start would mean that both teams will face the effect of the dew.

Meanwhile Jharkhand State Cricket Association secretary Sanjay Sahay said they are expecting a full house after the state government has given a green signal to '100 per cent capacity'. "The state government has okayed for a full capacity and we are all set to witness a full house in India after a long, long time," Sahay said. The 39,000-capacity stadium has tickets priced between Rs 900 and Rs 9,000 and all tickets are 'virtually sold out'. "We have 80-odd tickets left which are all for the emergency quota and we don't keep them for sale," informed Sahay.

# Guptill lauds Ashwin's skills

SURYAKUMAR READY TO BAT AT ANY POSITION FOR TEAM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jaipur, Nov 18:** New Zealand opener Martin Guptill finds India's Ravichandran Ashwin 'very hard to get away' as the off-spinner has an immaculate control over of his line, length and speed. Ashwin has impressed ever since he made a white-ball comeback after four years. He dismissed a well-set Mark Chapman and Tim Seifert in the game played Wednesday.

"He (Ashwin) is a very wily bowler. He has got great control of his line and length. He just doesn't bowl bad balls. I don't remember him bowling any bad balls throughout his career," Guptill said after the game here. "His change of pace is so subtle and well controlled he is just very hard to get away," the New Zealand opener added. The defeat against India was New Zealand's second successive defeat after going down to Australia in the T20 World Cup final played Sunday

**I am very disappointed that I missed the game against New Zealand in the T20 WC. I really wanted to make a mark in the tourney**

SURYAKUMAR YADAV

"We have not played bad cricket in the last two games. It is just we're just coming out on the wrong side. It's the way cricket can go. It's certainly different (scheduling). A World Cup final two days ago and then jump on a plane and here we are in India playing another one," Guptill pointed out.

Meanwhile Suryakumar Yadav who played a brilliant knock of 62 and batted at No.3 in place of the rested Virat Kohli said he is flexible in the batting order. "I have batted from opening to No.7 position. I am very flexible with the batting order. This No.3 role I have been performing for my franchise (MI) for the last three years so I didn't feel much difference," Suryakumar said after the game. "I batted the way I bat in the nets. All my shots are the same. I don't try to do anything different. T20 cricket is to enjoy and that is what I try to do with my batting," the batsman added.

# China mum on missing tennis star Peng

The former World No. 1 in doubles has gone missing after #MeToo allegations against a top politician

AGENCIES

**Taipei, Nov 18:** An email purportedly from a Chinese professional tennis player Peng Shuai that a Chinese state media outlet posted on Twitter has increased concerns about her safety as the sport's biggest stars and others abroad call for information about her well-being and whereabouts. So far, those calls have been met by silence from China.

Chinese officials have said nothing publicly since the accusation about two weeks ago by Grand Slam doubles champion Peng that she was sexually assaulted by a former top government official.

Steve Simon, the chairman and CEO of the Women's Tennis Association (WTA), questioned the authenticity of the email intended

for him, in which Peng says she is safe and that the assault allegation is untrue. It was posted Thursday by 'CGTN', the international arm of Chinese state broadcaster 'CCTV'.

"I have a hard time believing that Peng Shuai actually wrote the email we received or believes what is being attributed to her," Simon wrote. The statement, he added, 'only raises my concerns as to her safety and whereabouts'.

Simon has demanded a full investigation, and the WTA said it is prepared to pull tournaments out of China if it doesn't get an appropriate response. Top players including Naomi Osaka and Novak Djokovic have spoken out, and the #hashtag WhereisPengShuai is trending online. Asked repeatedly about the case,



China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said again Thursday that he is unaware of it. Peng wrote in a lengthy social media post November 2 that Zhang Gaoli, a former vice-premier who was a member of the ruling Communist Party's top leadership

**EVEN IF I'M DESTROYING MYSELF, LIKE THROWING AN EGG AGAINST A ROCK, OR A MOTH FLYING INTO A FLAME, I WILL STILL SPEAK OUT THE TRUTH ABOUT US**

PENG SHUAI

committee, had forced her to have sex despite repeated refusals three years ago.

Peng also wrote that Zhang's wife guarded the door during the alleged assault, which followed a round of tennis. Her post also said they had sex seven years ago and she had feelings for him after that. She also said she knew speaking up would be difficult. "Yes, aside from myself, I kept

no evidence, no recordings, no videos, only the real experience of my twisted self. Even if I'm destroying myself, like throwing an egg against a rock, or a moth flying into a flame, I will still speak out the truth about us," the now-deleted post said.

The post was quickly deleted from her verified account on 'Weibo', a leading Chinese social media platform, but screenshots of the explosive accusation quickly spread across China's internet. She has not appeared in public since then, raising questions about her whereabouts and whether she is being detained.

The 35-year-old Peng is a former No. 1-ranked player in women's doubles. She won doubles titles at Wimbledon in 2013 and the French Open in 2014.