

'DEAD' MAN FOUND ALIVE AFTER 7 HRS IN MORTUARY

MORADABAD (UP): In a bizarre incident, a 40-year-old man was kept in a mortuary freezer for almost seven hours before he was taken out alive. According to reports, Sriyesh Kumar, an electrician, was hit by a speeding motorbike following which he was taken to the district hospital Thursday night. The doctors had declared him dead. The following day, the hospital staff put the body in the freezer. Nearly seven hours later, when a 'panchnama' or document, signed by family members after identifying the body and agreeing to an autopsy - was to be filed by the police, Kumar's sister-in-law Madhu Bala noticed that he was showing signs of movement. In a video that went viral, Bala can be heard saying: "He's not at all dead. How did this happen? Look, he wants to say something, he is breathing." Kumar is now undergoing treatment at a health centre in Meerut where his condition has improved.



RAJASTHAN CABINET EXPANDED

JAIPUR: Fifteen ministers - 11 Cabinet and four Ministers of State - were sworn in Sunday in Rajasthan, in a much-awaited expansion of the Ashok Gehlot ministry. Governor Kalraj Mishra administered the oath of office to the new ministers. The 11 Cabinet ministers include three - Mamta Bhupesh, Bhajan Lal Jatav and Tikaram July - who have been elevated from Minister of State (MoS) to Cabinet rank, while two - Vishvendra Singh and Ramesh Meena - are those who were sacked last year for rebelling and have been re-inducted as Cabinet ministers. The Council of Ministers in Rajasthan now has 19 Cabinet ministers and 10 MoS, apart from the Chief Minister. P9

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Balasore declared 'Best performing marine district'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 21: Balasore district received the "Best Performing Marine District" award in the country at a function organised by the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Government of India on the occasion of the "World Fisheries Day 2021" here. The fisheries sector is high on the priority list of the Government of Odisha, which has placed the fisheries & aquaculture sector as one of the growth propellers for over 15.89 lakh fishermen, farmers, women SHGs, youths and entrepreneurs.

Odisha is immensely contributing to the fisheries development in the country with its huge fisheries resources which includes 480 km of marine coastline, 4.18 lakh hectares of brackish water bodies and 6.86 lakh hectares of inland water bodies including rivers, ponds, tanks and reservoirs. Odisha is the 4th largest fish producing states in India with 8.73 lakh metric tons of fish produced during 2020-21 contributing to 2.33% of the state economy. Over last 5 years, fisheries sector has grown at an average annual growth rate of about 13% in Odisha.

WEATHER		BHUB	CTK
MAX	30.8°C	31°C	
MIN	23.0°C	26°C	
Humidity	85%	92%	Forecast
Rainfall	NIL	NIL	Light rain likely

State fails to utilise Nirbhaya Fund

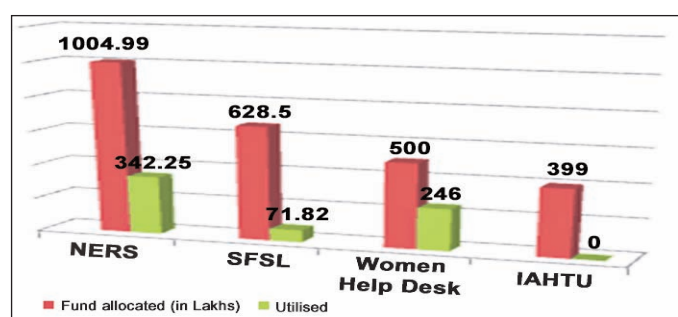
■ Odisha Police received ₹2,532.49 lakh from 2016 to January 2021 end, but could spend only ₹660.07 lakh for women-centric activities

GYAN RANJAN MOHAPATRA, OP

Bhubaneswar, Nov 21: The alarming rise in incidents of crime against women in the state notwithstanding, available data reveals that the major chunk of the amount approved by the Centre under the Nirbhaya Fund for various women-centric initiatives remains unutilised by the Odisha Police.

For instance, the state government received ₹2,532.49 lakh from the Nirbhaya Fund from 2016 till January 2021 end, but ₹1,872.42 lakh could not be spent for the safety and well-being of women during the period.

According to the response to an RTI application filed by this correspondent, the state government received ₹948.71 lakh to implement the National Emergency Support System (NERS), or the 112 Emergency Helpline number, in



the 2016-17 fiscal. The Home department received another ₹56.28 lakh for the same purpose three years later - in 2019.

It was only recently that the state government launched the single emergency helpline number 112 replacing multiple numbers like 100 (police), 101 (Fire Services), 102 (ambulance), 104 (Covid-19), 108 (disaster), 181 (women helpline) and 1089 (child helpline) for emergency help. While over ₹10 crore was allocated by the MHA to implement the project, the state police could only utilise ₹342.25 lakh. The remaining ₹662.74 lakh is lying idle in the state coffers.

Similarly the Union Ministry of Home Affairs allocated ₹628.50

lakh to strengthen the State Forensic Science Laboratory (SFSL) by procuring advanced technologies and equipment for accuracy in DNA analysis, cyber forensic facilities and other related scientific analysis.

Of the entire amount allocated for the strengthening of the forensic laboratory, only 11.42 per cent (₹71.82 lakh) has been spent till March 2021. The above amount has been spent on facilitating an advanced DNA analysis system at the SFSL.

Another ₹5 crore was received by the state for strengthening of the almost defunct women help desks at various police stations across the state. The state police was suc-

cessful in spending only 49 per cent of the money allocated for strengthening the poorly functioning or non-existent help desks for women at the police stations. Against the amount received, the police spent ₹2.46 crore for the purpose, while ₹2.54 crore still remains unspent.

The Union government also allocated ₹3.99 crore to establish new or reinforce the already established 32 Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs) in all the districts of the state. The state police also did not spend single paisa out of the allocated ₹3.99 crore for the strengthening of AHTUs despite the alarming rise in crime against women and child trafficking incidents.

It is pertinent to mention here that Odisha holds the second spot in the country in human trafficking for the two consecutive years of 2019 (876) and 2020 (741).

Besides, the Empowered Committee constituted under the Nirbhaya project has approved the proposal of ₹110.35 crore submitted by the Odisha government for the implementation of a safe city project in the Commissionerate Police area (Bhubaneswar-Cuttack), July 21, 2017.

Farmer unions dig in heels over MSP issue

■ The Union Cabinet is likely to take up for approval Wednesday the Bills for rescinding the three farm laws

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Lucknow, Nov 21: Showing no signs of relenting, farmer unions announced they were sticking to their planned protests with a 'mahapanchayat' in Lucknow Monday to press for a law guaranteeing MSP even as the Centre prepared to bring bills in Parliament to fulfil their demand of repealing its three agri laws.

The Union Cabinet is likely to take up for approval Wednesday the Bills for rescinding the three farm laws so that they are introduced in the forthcoming Winter Session, government sources said Sunday.

Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), the umbrella body of farmers' unions, said they would continue their planned protests, including the march to Parliament November

29 to observe one year of anti-farm law protests.

The SKM took the decision at its first meeting after Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his address to the nation Friday announced that the three farm laws will be repealed.

"We discussed the repeal of farm laws. SKM's pre-decided programmes will continue. Kisan panchayat will be held in Lucknow November 22, gatherings at all borders November 26 and march to Parliament will be organised November 29," farmer leader Balbir Singh Rajewal said at a press conference at the Singhu border of Delhi, one of the anti-farm law protest sites.

The SKM will again hold a meeting November 27 to decide the future course of action, the amalgam said, adding it will also write an open letter to Prime Minister Modi on its demands.

Seeking withdrawal of the three laws, agitating farmers from Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh are sitting at three sites on Delhi's borders since November last year and have said they will stay put until all their demands are met. (More P8)

Demand to repeal CAA gains ground in UP

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Nov 21: Several Muslim organisations and members of the civil society have now urged the government to repeal the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the withdrawal of the farm laws.

BSP MP from Amroha, Kunwar Danish Ali, has called for the repeal of the CAA "without further delay".

"Repealing 3 Farm Laws is a welcome move. I congratulate farmers for their will power to fight, sacrifice and defeat the mighty state power and their crony capitalist friends. Prime Minister Modi must also reconsider and repeal CAA "without further delay", he tweeted.

Welcoming the decision to repeal the farm laws, Jamiat president Maulana Arshad Madani claimed that the agitation against the CAA encouraged farmers to protest the farm laws. He demanded that just like the agri laws, the CAA should be withdrawn.

He said that the decision to withdraw the farm laws has shown that democracy and the power of the people is paramount.

"Every effort was made to subdue the farmers' movement just as it was done with all other agitations in the country," Madani alleged. Darul Uloom Deoband spokesman, Maulana Sufiyan Nijami, said that just like the farm laws, the government should take back the CAA for harmony and peace in society.

Speaking on the condition of anonymity, a social activist who participated in the anti-CAA protests said that "like-minded people" were mulling restarting their agitation that had been called off during the pandemic.

"The farmers have shown the way and if sustained protests by them can force repealing of farm laws, why can't we do the same?" she queried.

The CAA was notified December 12, 2019, and came into force with effect from January 10, 2020. After the CAA was passed by Parliament, widespread protests were witnessed in different parts of the country.

Chemicals of bombs used in Pulwama attack sourced via Amazon: CAIT

■ Open manufacture, sale and purchase of ammonium nitrate was banned in India in 2011 under the Explosives Act, 1884

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Nov 21: The sale of marijuana on the Amazon e-commerce portal is not a new and first offence of e-commerce giant, the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) said in a statement.

Earlier in 2019, the chemicals for making the improvised explosive devices (IEDs) which were used in the Pulwama terror attack resulting in the death of 40 CRPF soldiers were also purchased via Amazon, it added.

The NIA during the investigation of Pulwama case revealed this fact in its report in March 2020. Besides other material, ammonium nitrate, which is a contraband item in India, was also purchased through the portal.

CAIT national president BC Bhartiya and secretary general Praveen Khandelwal said that as per reports available in public domain during initial interrogation by the NIA, the person arrested disclosed that



he used his Amazon online shopping account to procure chemicals for making IEDs, batteries and other accessories. The explosives used in the attack were determined through forensic probe to be ammonium nitrate, nitro-glycerin etc.

CAIT said since facilitation of sale of contraband item ammonium nitrate was used against our soldiers, a case of treason should be registered against Amazon and its officials. It is the result of the lukewarm attitude of the policy makers and officials that is allowing e-commerce portals to do whatever they like, CAIT statement said.

It is also most surprising how this

sensational matter was made dead and no further actions were taken for sale of contraband items.

Bhartiya and Khandelwal said that ammonium nitrate was declared a banned item in 2011 for which a notification was issued listing the dangerous grades of ammonium nitrate under the Explosives Act, 1884, and banning its open sale, purchase and manufacture in India. Ammonium nitrate was found to be the main explosive in the bombs used to trigger the explosions at busy and crowded areas. Before Mumbai, ammonium nitrate was used in the blasts at Varanasi and Malegaon in 2006 and in the serial blasts in Delhi in 2008.

The CAIT from 2016 is demanding a codified law and rules for e-commerce but unfortunately no step has been taken so far which speaks to the sorry state of affairs. "What worse can be than the procurement of chemicals used for making bombs and targeting our great soldiers? This case must be re-opened and responsible persons who were managing Amazon portal should be prosecuted as per the law," CAIT said.

Bhartiya and Khandelwal urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah for their immediate direct intervention in the matter.

leisure



BHUMIKA CHAWLA ON HER FAVOURITE TV SHOWS

Tere Naam actress Bhumika Chawla, on World Television Day, remembered her favourite TV shows. "I watched *Chitrahaar*, *Ramayan*, *Mahabharat* and *DD news* with dad while Sundays used to be movie time. There were also serials like *Udaan* and cartoons such as *Spider-Man*," she said about her childhood.

'ASGHARI STOLE THE SHOW AT HOUSE OF GUCCI PREMIERE'

Britney Spears has said her fiancé Sam Asghari was the highlight at the premiere of *House of Gucci*. She took to Instagram and said 27-year-old Asghari stole the show with his appearance on the red carpet of Lady Gaga's latest movie.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

Today, you will appreciate beautiful things and exotic artefacts. You may even seriously think of pursuing a business related to such commodities. However, you may not be able to make up your mind, says Ganesh. However, you will decide to keep an open mind about it.

TAURUS

You may find it hard to stop the impending outflow of cash while shopping today, says Ganesh. You aren't the one to be dominated and God help anyone who tries to dictate terms to you today. You may end up spending a small fortune, more than lavish to be precise, on the opposite sex today.

GEMINI

Today, you are likely to get encouragement and support for your endeavours from all quarters. You have a gift of gab and your ability to dispel tension with even the simplest of your remarks will be put to test. Still, you will rise to the occasion and prove your mettle.

CANCER

Today is a good day for you. However, don't expect a windfall. It is just one of those days when you will be in a good mood, irrespective of your problems, if any. You will treat your subordinates well, and they will show their appreciation. But if you think the atmosphere at your workplace is good, wait till you reach home.

LEO

Everyone wants to be different. But little do they realise that they already are unique, says Ganesh. Today, you may meet a lot of such different people at work, some of whom may even test your patience. Always remember that working in a team means balancing a variety of egos and opinions.

VIRGO

In all likelihood, you will be eager to grab the monetary challenges that come your way, as they only enhance your desire for success. You will bring up new ideas and better methods of tackling the challenges on hand. Ganesh gives you an assurance that your present business views will do you a world of good.

LIBRA

Being in charge was never easy, but it's not for nothing that leaders are made of sterner stuff. As a person in charge, you are expected to give directions in a manner that gets the best efforts out of your juniors. Move away from traditional dictatorial style, and build a consensus that enables you to pull off the spectacular, says Ganesh.

SCORPIO

You shall be completely immersed in your routine today. It's the same old humbug of a day for you, says Ganesh. But this exciting day may transform into an exciting evening - so be prepared to get surprised.

SAGITTARIUS

Your ship may be rocked by stormy controversies today. Ganesh advises you to steer clear of people looking to give you a piece of their mind. The storm looks to ease away if you lend a patient ear to all such elements, and try and accommodate their views.

CAPRICORN

It's a lucky day for your sweetheart! Wonder why it's written in your horoscope? You will pamper him/her to the hilt, take them out on a shopping spree and buy whatever they lay their eyes on, even if it's way beyond reasonable, says Ganesh. You will go overboard to make your love feel that nothing else matters, and although this lavish outing will serve the purpose, you may later regret not keeping a count of your cash.

AQUARIUS

You find solace in travel today. But if you plan to include others, beware, as you may end up doing all their dirty work too. But, you will find fulfillment even in that, which, says Ganesh, is your strong point.

PISCES

Today just might be the day when you invent a better mousetrap. However, your ideas have a propensity to wane and wax at the same speed, says Ganesh. Hence, keep a notebook handy to jot down all your earth-shattering revolutionary ideas.

DHARITRI YOUTH CONCLAVE: CLIMATE CHANGE | FOCUS ODISHA

Mega discourse on climate change Nov 24

YOUNG SPEAKERS FROM EMINENT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF ODISHA WILL BE SPEAKING AT THE CONCLAVE



The drastic effects of climate change are now being felt globally and the tumultuous adverse reactions due to global warming are quite visible. India is no exception to this rule and the state of Odisha has been bearing the brunt of the devastating effects of climate change.

Multiple cyclones on an annual basis, droughts, floods, coastal erosion, wildfires and lightning deaths have ravaged Odisha. Victims of climate change are far too many in the state and the situation will only worsen over time unless urgent steps and concrete action is put in place.

The ongoing COP26 climate sum-

mit at Glasgow has seen representatives from around 200 countries engaged in negotiations on how to limit global warming to 1.5

degrees Celsius as compared to pre-industrial levels.

So far, the summit has showcased a number of financial pledges, buoying hopes that national commitments to bring down emissions could actually be implemented. But a clear picture is yet to emerge on how far these voluntary initiatives could moderate global warming.

The need of the hour is to take important steps to create consciousness among the youth regarding this most urgent issue of climate change. In this backdrop, Odia daily Dharitri would be hosting a Youth Conclave in capital city Bhubaneswar on 24th November, 2021.

Young speakers from eminent educational institutions of Odisha will be speaking at the Conclave titled - Climate Change: Focus Odisha. Along with them, experts who have experience in the field will also share their concerns and solutions on climate change in the state.

The aim of the Conclave is to create consciousness among the youth and bring together people working for the same cause to inspire each other to work towards a collective future.

Waterman of Odisha



Winner of Green Hero award, water activist Ranjan Panda held the honorary position of Country Manager for India from the Climate Scorecard Project, Boston

Ranjan Panda has many accolades to his name for his continuous endeavor towards water conservation along with environmental protection and climate change advocacy.

Popularly known as the Waterman of Odisha, Panda has also been conferred with the first 'Green Hero' award by the President of India, and has three decades of experience in working closely with grassroots communities and national bodies towards water conservation and climate change. He also carries out campaigns under two active networks - Water Initiatives Odisha (WIO) and Combat Climate Change Network, India.

Panda is simultaneously a senior freelance journalist and an expert on water, sanitation and climate change

issues. He leads the 'Mahanadi Peace Initiative', 'Healthy Rivers', 'Happy Cities' and 'Youth4Water' campaigns. He is also the organiser of the annual Odisha River Conference. He is also one of the founders of Climate Journalism Network based out of Oslomet University, Norway.

Panda held the honorary position of Country Manager for India from the Climate Scorecard Project, Boston. The organisation monitors the progress of Paris Agreement commitments made by the highest GHG emitting nations.

He is a core member of the global network 'Bay of Bengal Climate Change Initiative'. He has also contributed to the 12th Five Year Plan of the Government of India, and has made his presence felt in important processes related to climate action both at national and global levels.

Panda will be attending the Dharitri Youth Conclave 2021 on Climate Change : Focus Odisha November 24 as an expert panelist.

A true changemaker

One doesn't have to have unlimited resources in order to make a difference. Odisha's Soumya Ranjan Biswal, a 24 year-old climate activist has made climate safety and protection of the threatened habitat of Olive Ridley turtles his life's purpose.

A large part of Soumya's time is spent in patrolling the beach and cleaning the beach along the Olive Ridley nesting site at the Devi river estuary in Odisha, something he has been doing since he was 10.

24-year-old Soumya from Astaranga village has been working in this direction for several years, and has been actively involved in wildlife conservation with focus on protection of Olive Ridley sea turtles. He has worked with the forest department, local communities and youth volunteers across the state to encourage long term wildlife management.

Since childhood, Soumya has been keeping a night vigil at the beach near his village in Astaranga where thousands of tiny Olive Ridley turtles gather to lay eggs every year.

Earlier in 2019, Soumya, along with his friend Dilip Kumar Biswal, had pulled off a month-long cycle ride dressed as Olive Ridley turtles to bring attention to protection of the species. The duo had pedalled through the coastal pockets of Rushikulya, Puri, Chilika, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Bhadrak and Balasore to create awareness.

Both Soumya and Dilip had also entered the Limca Book of Records for carrying out the 'Longest Cycle Ride for Turtles' by cycling 800km to reach Gahirmatha, the major nesting site of the turtles in Kendrapada district, while covering the coastal areas of Puri, Chilika, Gopalpur, Rushikulya, Satkosia, Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Siali and Paradip.

Recently, Soumya was chosen by the United Nations (UN) as one of 17 young men and women recognised for their pioneering work in India, as part of UN India's climate campaign called 'We The Change'.

Soumya will be attending the Dharitri Youth Conclave 2021 on Climate Change : Focus Odisha November 24 as an expert panelist.



Soumya Ranjan Biswal entered the Limca Book of Records for carrying out the 'Longest Cycle Ride for Turtles' by pedalling 800km to create awareness on the protection of Olive Ridley turtles

Climate warrior from Sundargarh

26-year-old Archana Soreng from tribal-dominated Sundargarh district has made her village, state and country proud.

A resident of Bihabandh village near Rajgangpur town, Archana was selected as one of the seven members of the Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change



formed by the Secretary General of the United Nations. She was also invited by US President Joe Biden to speak at his two-day virtual climate summit, Leaders' Summit on Climate 2021.

In the summit, Soreng, a member of Kharia tribe, gave a message - Do not take the support of the youth and the marginalized and indigenous communities for granted.

The young environmental activist has been working for documentation, preservation and promotion of traditional knowledge and practices of indigenous communities, and creating awareness on climate change.

Archana was also in Glasgow recently for the United Nations Climate Change Conference 2021, more commonly referred to as COP26 to represent the voice of the indigenous youth.

Soreng's grandfather, who was the first to form forest protection com-

mittees to patrol forests and keep tabs on timber smugglers in their region, taught her that 'living in harmony with forests and nature and taking care of them is the only way to have a sustained way of life'. Inspired by her late grandfather and father, both tribal leaders in their village, Soreng understands the role of tribal communities in preservation of forests.

She has dedicated her life towards documenting indigenous practices on healthcare, environment preservation, forest protection and agriculture.

A Master's degree holder in Regulatory Governance from Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), she is now working as a research officer at Vasundhara Odisha, a research and policy advocacy organisation in Bhubaneswar, working on natural resource governance, tribal rights, and climate justice.

Soreng will be attending the Dharitri Youth Conclave 2021 on Climate Change : Focus Odisha November 24 as an expert panelist.

LIVING IN HARMONY WITH FORESTS AND NATURE AND TAKING CARE OF THEM IS THE ONLY WAY TO HAVE A SUSTAINED WAY OF LIFE, BELIEVES ARCHANA SORENG

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

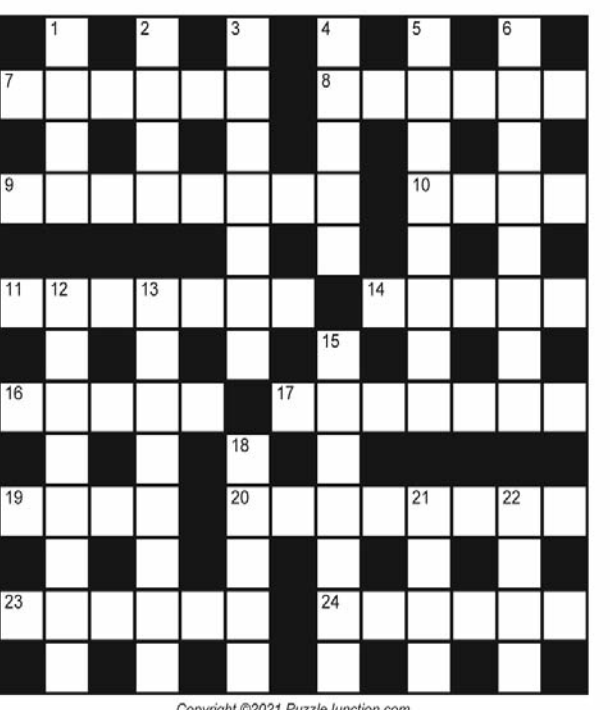


BREVITY



FUN post

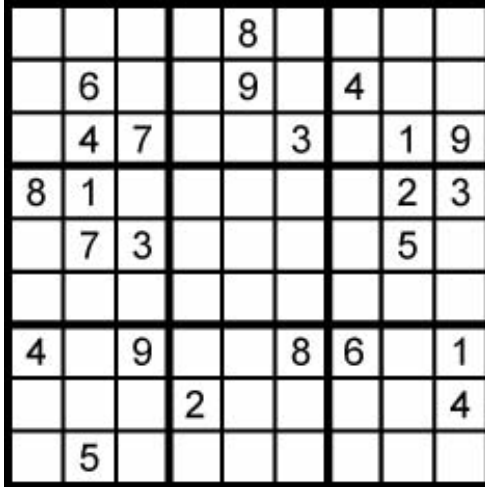
CROSSWORD



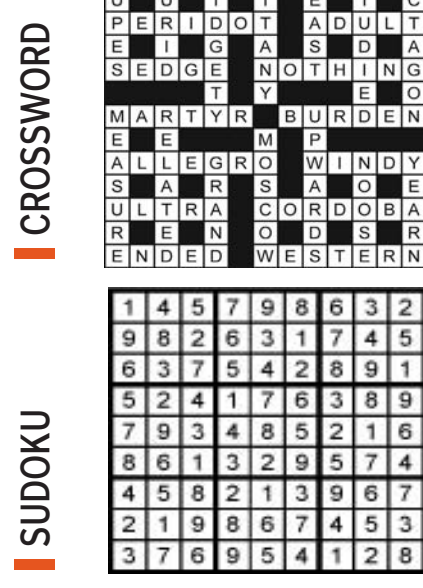
- Across**
- 7 Break in the action
 - 8 Root vegetable
 - 9 French endive
 - 10 Exigency
 - 11 Sweet liqueur (4,3)
 - 14 Tunic
 - 16 Durable wood
 - 17 ___ thermidor
 - 19 Family member
 - 20 Salad ingredient (5,3)
 - 23 Italian port
 - 24 Paradise
- Down**
- 1 Hit alternative
 - 2 Greek promenade
 - 3 Baltic State
 - 4 Exorbitant
 - 5 They come with age
 - 6 Popular terrier
 - 12 Construction worker, e.g.
 - 13 Genius
 - 15 Toxic
 - 18 Sweetie pie
 - 21 Greek god of love
 - 22 Bird venerated by ancient Egyptians

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

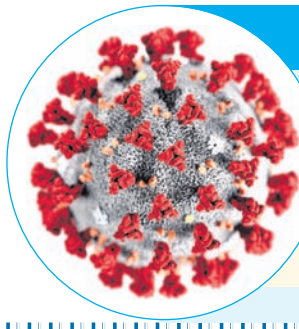


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



PAYING HOMAGE

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik pays floral tributes to former Chief Minister Harekrushna Mahatab on his birth anniversary in Bhubaneswar, Sunday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	25,76,06,280	23,25,55,468	51,66,393
India	3,45,10,413	3,39,22,037	4,65,662
Odisha	10,47,003	10,36,501	8,393

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



CM urges PM to extend free rice distribution

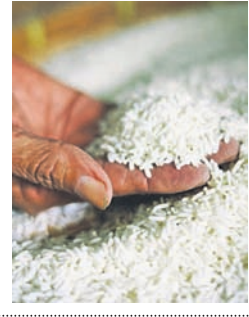
Naveen requested the PM to extend the additional allocation of rice under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana for at least eight months

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Nov 21: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, requesting him to extend additional allocation of rice under the PMGKAY scheme for at least eight months for its free distribution among beneficiaries of National Food Security Act (NFSA). Patnaik also said the provision of free ration among people at this juncture ensured that not a single needy and vulnerable person was deprived of foodgrains during the pandemic. He urged the PM to extend the additional allocation of rice under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana till the improvement in Covid-19 situation. "Since adequate foodgrains are available at present with the government, I would request you to kindly consider extension of additional allocation of rice at least

SUCCESS DURING PANDEMIC

The additional free benefit under the PMGKAY was initially provided for a period of three months (April-June 2020) to ameliorate distress caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, with the crisis continuing, the programme was extended for another five months (July-November 2020)



After the onset of the second wave of the pandemic, the PMGKAY was once again rolled out for a period of two months (May-June 2021) and was further extended from July to November 2021

The Centre had November 5 said there was no proposal at present to extend free foodgrains supply under the PMGKAY to provide relief to ration card holders, in view of recovery in the economy and good disposal of foodgrains in the open market

for the next eight months under PMGKAY for distribution among the beneficiaries under NFSA till the pandemic situation improves and complete normalcy is restored in the state," Patnaik wrote in the letter.

With the PMGKAY scheme, the Centre supplies free ration to 80 crore beneficiaries under the National Food Security Act (NFSA).

The free ration is given over and above the subsidised grains distributed to them.

Notably, the Centre had November 5 said there was no proposal at present to extend free foodgrains supply under the PMGKAY

to provide relief to ration card holders, in view of recovery in the economy and good disposal of foodgrains in the open market.

Initially, the additional free benefit under the PMGKAY was provided for a period of three months (April-June 2020) to ameliorate distress caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, with the crisis continuing, the programme was extended for another five months (July-November 2020).

After the onset of the second wave of the pandemic, the PMGKAY scheme was once again rolled out for a period of two months (May-June 2021) and was further ex-

tended from July to November 2021.

Patnaik thanked the PM for providing seven months' rice free of cost under the scheme for distribution among NFSA beneficiaries in the state from May to November 2021 during the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Odisha has prioritised distribution of seven months' quota of PMGKAY-III foodgrains to the NFSA beneficiaries and completed it by November 5, 2021. Similar facility was also extended to all the beneficiaries of the state covered under its own Food Security Scheme," the CM said.

He also stated that the effect of Covid-19 has not waned away yet completely despite a fast-paced vaccination drive undertaken across the state as new coronavirus cases continue to surface.

The CM pointed out that economic activities are yet to reach the pre-pandemic level as a result of which people still struggle to lead a normal life with sustainable means of livelihood.

"Under the prevailing situations, it is felt highly necessary that the government must provide relief to the vulnerable during these critical hours. A serious cause of concern in this ongoing pandemic scenario is the challenge of food security to the needy and vulnerable," Patnaik said.

ONLINE BOOKING BEGINS FOR KONARK ECO-RETREAT

POST NEWS NETWORK

Konark, Nov 21: The Tourism department has started preparation for the three-month long eco-retreat festival at Konark.

Online booking for the festival, scheduled to be kick-started in the second week of December, began Sunday, sources said. Meanwhile,

Tourism department director Sachin Ramchandra Yadav, Puri Collector Samarth Verma and Additional Collector Binoy Kumar Dash visited the venue of the festival and took stock of the preparation.

"Construction of a road to the festival venue is going on at full pace. Steps are being taken to arrange drinking water and electricity sup-

ply to the site. A private agency has been engaged to erect at least 70 ultramodern tent houses for the eco-retreat festival," said an official.

The visitors can make night halts at the festival. They can also enjoy surfing, parasailing and yoga at the event. A few battery-operated vehicles would be deployed to ferry visitors to the festival, he added.

Naveen to lay foundation stone for Srimandir heritage corridor Nov 24



A pandal ready for the mega event

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, Nov 21: The Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) and the Puri district administration have made all arrangements for the foundation laying ceremony of Srimandir heritage corridor project, scheduled to be held November 24.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik is scheduled to lay foundation stone for the mega project, said an official of the temple administration.

The shrine authorities are all set to organise a massive Yagya (sacred offering to the fire god) ahead of the foundation laying ceremony. "Rituals for the Yagya will begin November 22 and conclude November

24. All the rituals would be performed in the presence of Gajapati king Dibyasingha Deb. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and many other dignitaries will participate in the concluding ceremony of the sacred rituals," said the official.

The Yagya would be performed on a pandal near the North Gate of Srimandir. Security has been stepped up at the venue to avoid any untoward incident, he added.

At least 32 Brahmin priests would perform the Yagya rituals. The royal priest of the Gajapati king will supervise the entire process, sources said.

Notably, the district administration has recently completed the land acquisition process for the mega project.

Sports Minister reviews Hockey Men's Junior WC preparedness

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Nov 21: With just two days left for the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's Junior World Cup, Sports Minister Tusharkanti Behera Sunday visited the Kalinga Stadium here and reviewed the progress of work.

He discussed with the officials about Covid management, security, infrastructure, broadcasting and hospitality while visiting various points and corners in the Kalinga Stadium.

Expressing his satisfaction on the preparedness of the event, Behera said, "All mandatory arrangements and protocols are in place. I am satisfied with the timely execution of work. Our efforts are towards a safe and successful conduct of the event and I am confident, once again, along with Hockey India, Odisha will prove to be a great host."

Kalinga Hockey Stadium is an iconic and coveted stadium and all the teams have expressed their excitement to play here, he said. "I am glad to know that the players have settled in well, turf and all allied facilities of the stadium are match ready and the visiting teams have commenced their training and practice matches. It is good to see this atmosphere here," the Minister added.

The FIH Odisha Hockey Men's Junior World Cup will start on November 24 and continue till December 5.

Scientists find link between vitamin D, inflammation in coronavirus patients



Representational image (PTI)

The researchers found that in the lung cells of people with Covid, part of the immune response was going into overdrive, exacerbating lung inflammation

Scientists have found that vitamin D functions to reduce inflammation caused by immune cells that might be relevant to the responses during severe Covid-19.

The study demonstrated a mechanism by which vitamin D reduces inflammation caused by T cells. These are important cells of the immune system and implicated as part of the immune response to the infection causing Covid-19.

The team, led by Purdue University, studied and analysed individual lung cells from eight people with Covid. They found that in the lung cells of people with Covid, part of the immune response was going into overdrive, exacerbating

lung inflammation.

The team then examined how viruses affect lung cells in a previous study. Finding that viruses can trigger a biochemical pathway, known as the immune complement system, the researchers started looking for ways to disrupt that pathway and ameliorate the subsequent inflammation.

"In normal infections, Th1 cells, a subset of T cells, go through a pro-inflammatory phase," said Majid Kazemian, assistant professor in the departments of Computer Science and Biochemistry at Purdue University.

"The pro-inflammatory phase clears the infection, and then the system shuts

down and goes to the anti-inflammatory phase. Vitamin D helps speed up this transition from pro-inflammatory to the anti-inflammatory phase of the T cells. We do not know definitively, but theorise that the vitamin could potentially help patients with severe inflammation caused by Th1 cells," Kazemian added.

In patients with Covid-19, the pro-inflammatory phase of the Th1 cells seems not switched off, possibly because the patients didn't have enough vitamin D in their system or because something about the cell's response to vitamin D was abnormal.

In that case, the researchers posit, adding vitamin D to existing treatments in the form of a prescribed highly concentrated intravenous metabolite may further help people recover from Covid infections, though they have not tested this theory.

"We found that vitamin D - a specialised form of it, not the form you can get at the drugstore - has the potential to reduce inflammation in the test tube, and we figured out how and why it does that," Kazemian said.

"We do not recommend the use of normal vitamin D off the shelf at the pharmacy. No one should be taking more than the recommended doses of vitamin D in an attempt to prevent or combat Covid infections."

Further research, especially clinical trials, and testing in patients are necessary before this can be adopted as a treatment option, Kazemian said.

75 Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

Announcement of National Painting Competition on Energy Conservation 2021

Participate and Paint your vision of an Energy-Efficient World

Last Date For Registration 30th November, 2021

GROUP A
(5th, 6th & 7th Standard)

GROUP B
(8th, 9th & 10th Standard)

Topics for State Level*

Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav
• Energy Efficient India • Cleaner Planet

2 Level Painting Competition- State & National

State/Union Territory Level Awards		
Awards	Group 'A'	Group 'B'
First Prize (01 No.)	₹ 50,000/-	₹ 50,000/-
Second Prize (01 No.)	₹ 30,000/-	₹ 30,000/-
Third Prize (01 No.)	₹ 20,000/-	₹ 20,000/-
Consolation (10 No.s)	₹ 7,500/-	₹ 7,500/-

National Level Awards		
Awards	Group A	Group B
First Prize (01 No.)	01 no. of ₹ 1,00,000/-	01 no. of ₹ 1,00,000/-
Second Prize (01 No.)	01 no. of ₹ 50,000/-	01 no. of ₹ 50,000/-
Third Prize (01 No.)	01 no. of ₹ 30,000/-	01 no. of ₹ 30,000/-
Consolation (10 No.s)	01 no. of ₹ 15,000/- each	01 no. of ₹ 15,000/- each

* For Registration & Complete details please visit www.bee-studentsaward.in.

State Nodal Officer's address

Mr. P. A. JOHN, Sr. Manager (Corp. Communication)
Mob: +91 94814 06145, E-Mail : pajohn.ntpc.er2@gmail.com

Please Note:-

- The concerned Schools / individual students would Register themselves on web-portal www.bee-studentsaward.in. ONLINE registration portal will be active upto **30.11.2021**.
- Schools are required to conduct the competition at their school level among the registered students of their school and **upload selected one best entry only on the NTPC web portal <https://paint-2dc5c.web.app>** in each category (in Group - A & B) by **04.12.2021**.
- School is required to submit and upload the painting & other details of the selected one best entry only in Group - A & B mandatorily such as student's name, BEE Regd. No, Complete address, Class, E-Mail Id, Mobile No. of participants etc. on <https://paint-2dc5c.web.app>.
- Winners of the State level painting competition will be notified on <https://paint-2dc5c.web.app> on **08.12.2021**
- State Level Prize Distribution Ceremony shall be held on 10.12.2021 at Bhubaneswar.**

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Central Fisheries dept Secretary visits ICAR-CIFA

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 21: Jatindra Nath Swain, Secretary to the Department of Fisheries in the Union Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Sunday visited ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (CIFA) in the City here.

ICAR Deputy Director General (Fisheries Science) JK Jena and ICAR-CIFA Director Saroj Kumar Swain welcomed Swain and took him to the hatcheries, aquariums and other facilities at the institute.

The ICAR-CIFA Director gave an overview of the research activities and farmer-friendly technologies of the institute.



The Secretary to the Fisheries department visited tilapia, genetically-improved rohu, prawn, and ornamental fish units at the institute. He got details regarding the status of freshwater aquaculture in Odisha. The Secretary appreciated the research work and stressed on developing innovative and efficient technologies for the farming community.

The Secretary also interacted with the scientists of ICAR-CIFA. He urged the researchers to focus on farm input cost reduction, market creation for fish and fishery products and proper mechanism to disseminate advanced technologies to the farmers and other end users.

The Centra has set a target of producing 22 million tonnes of fish by 2025 and earning Rs 1 lakh crore from exports, said the Secretary. He also assured the researchers of extending all kind of support to strengthen research in the fisheries sector.

TPWODL, IndusInd Bank ink pact for ease of consumers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 21: After TPWODL took over the electricity distribution in Western Odisha in January this year, it has always been trying to improve its consumer services in order to make it more convenient for its consumers.

Taking a step further towards consumers' convenience, TPWODL signed a contract with IndusInd Bank. Consumers now will be able to pay their electricity bills through Bharat Money Store, a subsidiary of IndusInd Bank. It has around 4,500 stores, both in urban and rural areas of Western Odisha.

TPWODL has made excellent IT services and within a few more days, the electricity bill payment can be done at any of the Bharat Money Stores.

Consumers can pay their electricity bill at any of the 4,500 stores in 1,700 panchayats. Consumers will not have to travel to TPWODL offices for bill payment as the same can be done in their nearest Bharat Money Store.

WASSUP TODAY

BHUBANESWAR

- Birth anniversary of Saheed Laxman Naik, statue near Kalinga Hospital, Nalco Square, 9am
- Birth anniversary of Dr. Shantanu Mohapatra, Rabindra Mandap, 6pm

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

BJD agitation over LPG price hike begins today



AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Nov 21: The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) will hit the streets for three days beginning Monday protesting the rising cooking gas prices, an official said.

The BJD, along with activists of its wings such as Biju Mahila Janata Dal (BMJD), Biju Chhatra Janata Dal (BCJD) and Biju Yuva Janata Dal (BYJD) will agitate for three days beginning November 22, both in urban and rural localities under three

Revenue Divisional Commissioner (RDC) zones, demanding reduction of cooking gas prices, said BJD spokesperson and BYJD president Byomakesh Ray in a press conference. Ray said the LPG prices in the country rose by 70 per cent in last three and half years.

As per the schedule, the massive protest will be carried out in all blocks under Cuttack RDC zone November 22, Sambalpur RDC zone November 23 and Berhampur RDC zone November 24.



Union Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Minister Parshottam Rupala felicitates Balasore for being 'the best performing marine district in fisheries sector' at an event organised at Rail Auditorium in Bhubaneswar on the occasion of World Fisheries Day, Sunday

State logs 205 fresh nCoV cases, 2 deaths

Khurda district, which comprises state Capital Bhubaneswar, reported the highest number of fresh cases at 107, followed by Sundargarh (22) and Cuttack (10). Khurda also recorded both the fresh fatalities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Nov 21: Odisha Sunday registered 205 new Covid-19 cases, 34 less than the previous day, with the tally rising to 10,47,003, a Health department official said. Two fresh fatalities pushed the coronavirus death toll to 8,393, he said.

The daily count of Covid-19 cases in the coastal state remained above 200 for six consecutive days. Forty-five children and adolescents are among the new patients, the official said.

The single-day positivity rate among people below 18 years of age was at 21.95 per cent, up from the previous day's 15.48 per cent.

Odisha currently has 2,327 active cases, while 263 more people were cured of the disease Saturday, taking the total number of recoveries to 10,36,230



The state has thus far conducted over 2.32 crore sample tests, including 50,233 Saturday, and the state's cumulative positivity rate stands at 4.5 per cent

Over 1.43 crore people have received both doses of Covid vaccines while as many as 2,72,43,449 beneficiaries have taken the first dose

The new cases were reported from 19 districts, while 11 others did not register any fresh infection in the last 24 hours, the official said.

Of the new cases, 119 were recorded in quarantine centres

and the remaining 86 were detected during contact tracing, he added.

Khurda district, which comprises state Capital Bhubaneswar, reported the highest number of fresh cases at 107, followed by

Sundargarh (22) and Cuttack (10).

The two new Covid fatalities were registered in Khurda, the official said. Fifty-three other Covid-19 patients have so far died due to comorbidities, the Health official said.

Odisha currently has 2,327 active cases, while 263 more people were cured of the disease Saturday, taking the total number of recoveries to 10,36,230. The state has thus far conducted over 2.32 crore sample tests, including 50,233 Saturday, and the state's cumulative positivity rate stands at 4.5 per cent.

Over 1.43 crore people have received both doses of Covid vaccines while as many as 2,72,43,449 beneficiaries have taken the first dose, the Health official added.



AHEAD OF DEMOLITION

Authorities of Hind Cinema at Ranihat, one of the oldest cinema halls in Cuttack, Sunday remove items from the premises ahead of its demolition by the district administration

OP PHOTO

BREAKING SOUND'S BARRIER

'Monkeys, humans produce same brain responses to speech sounds'

A better understanding of the way auditory deficits manifest in the brain can fill a critical gap in the development of fast, accurate and non-invasive diagnostics, the researchers said

Speech sounds elicit comparable neural responses and stimulate the same region in the brain of humans, macaques and guinea pigs, according to a study that may help pave way for better understanding and diagnosis of auditory processing deficits. A multidisciplinary group of University of Pittsburgh researchers reported in the journal

eNeuro that the brain's responses to sound - called frequency-following responses (FFRs) - can be recorded from small electrodes placed onto a person's scalp.

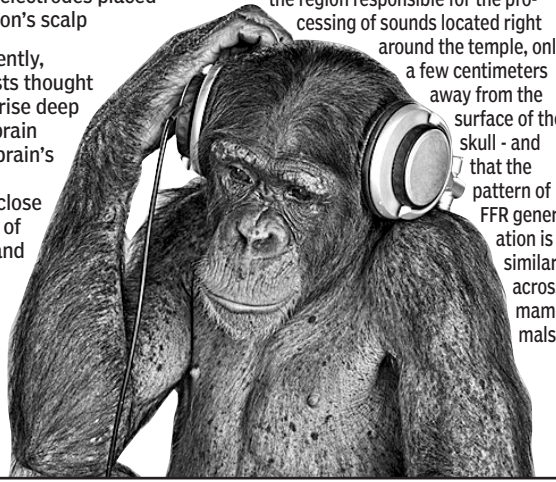
They are used by clinicians to quickly assess a child's hearing capacity and flag a slew of potential speech and language disorders, such as dyslexia and autism. But the method has a major drawback - it lacks specificity. "These tests can only tell us that something is off. But we do not know what that 'off' is," said Bharath Chandrasekaran, Professor at Pitt's School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences.

"Understanding the source and mechanism of FFR generation would allow us for the development of specific markers of speech impairments, which would be instrumental in improving clinical

The brain's responses to sound are called frequency-following responses (FFRs) and can be recorded from small electrodes placed onto a person's scalp

Until recently, scientists thought that FFRs arise deep inside the brain stem - the brain's innermost structures close to the base of the skull - and ripple outward, eventually reaching the surface of the brain and the scalp

Pitt researchers proved the long-standing theory wrong as they found that FFRs are generated not only at the brain stem, but also in the auditory cortex of the brain - the region responsible for the processing of sounds located right around the temple, only a few centimeters away from the surface of the skull - and that the pattern of FFR generation is similar across mammals



diagnostics for auditory processing deficits," he added.

The FFRs are also used to identify issues in auditory processing, or the way in which the brain interprets sounds coming from the environment, especially speech. The closer the FFR profile resembles the profile of the sound source, the stronger the brain's auditory processing capacity is. In contrast, the more different the two profiles are, the higher the chances of diagnosing an auditory deficit get.

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ated not only at the brain stem, but also in the auditory cortex of the brain - the region responsible for the processing of sounds located right around the temple, only a few centimeters away from the surface of the skull - and that the pattern of FFR generation is similar across mammals.

In response to four different tones of the Mandarin syllable 'yi', the brains of English-speaking individuals, who are not familiar with Mandarin Chinese, generated similar FFRs as macaque monkeys and guinea pigs, both of which have very similar hearing range and sensitivity to humans.

A better understanding of the way auditory deficits manifest in the brain can fill a critical gap in the development of fast, accurate and non-invasive diagnostics, the researchers said. IANS

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SHORT TAKES

Bees sting youth to death

Baripada: A swarm of bees stung a youth to death at Khadambada panchayat under Bisoi police limits in Mayurbhanj district, Sunday. The deceased was identified as Kurshna Munda (25) of Paladihi. According to reports, Kurshna was returning home late Friday night when a swarm of bees attacked him. He was lying unconscious when some locals found him and took him to a local hospital. His condition was critical. He succumbed during treatment. Police have registered a case in this regard.

₹2.21 crore for Joda civic body

Joda: The state government has sanctioned ₹2.21 crore for Joda municipality in Keonjhar under Mukhyamantri Karma Tatpara Abhiyan Yojana (MUKTA Yojana). Champa MLA Minakhi Mohant said that the fund will be utilised for 45 projects to be executed in 14 wards. She added that a lot of developmental works will be carried out in the civic body with the fund. Among the projects are a park, two public gymnasiums, 3 children's sports parks, 4 walking tracks, three other public gyms and two roadside toilets.

Scam in farmers' registration

Padmapur: There have been allegations about irregularities in the online registration of farmers in various cooperative societies in Basudevpur area of Bhadrak district. Meanwhile, two secretaries of cooperative societies have been suspended. Besides, five data entry operators have been sacked, a report said. Farmers have alleged irregularities in online registration at Belimeda cooperative society, Guagadia Maa Kali cooperative society and the cooperative societies at Basudevpur, Bideipur, Chudamani and Lungar. Many farmers had furnished land records to societies, but registration has been done on the records of only two plots while several plots had been left out. At some cooperative societies, paddy traders had been registered as farmers to push their paddy through the government procurement system. Moreover, the authorities concerned have served show cause notices to secretaries of the six cooperative societies.

World Fisheries Day observed

Sundargarh: The World Fisheries Day-2021 was celebrated at Sadbhawana Bhawan here, Sunday. Collector Nikhil Pawan Kalyan inaugurated the function and asked the farmers to be more serious about agriculture as well as other sectors which would help them in boosting their income. District Fisheries Officer Jitendra Kumar Behera elaborated on various schemes of the fisheries department and advised farmers to practise pisciculture intensively which would help them in generating higher income. He also emphasised on integrated farming resulting in better development of the agriculture and allied sector. The Collector also awarded and felicitated some of the fish farmers making achievements in fish farming. An interaction with the farmers was also done by the Collector to which he proposed solutions to various problems of the farmers.

2 minors drown

Kendrapara: Two minor siblings drowned in a nullah at Barimul village under Sadar police limits in Kendrapara district, Sunday. The deceased were identified as Subhasmita Mallick, 3, and her younger sister Madhusmita Mallick, 2, daughters of Bipin Mallick of the village. The siblings drowned while they were collecting paper boats from the water body that people had floated in the nullah on the occasion of Kartik Purnima, Friday. Sadar police registered a case of unnatural death and sent the bodies for post-mortem. An investigation has been launched into the mishap.

Stolen newborn found dumped on roadside

POLICE DETAIN TWO FAMILY MEMBERS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sonepur, Nov 21: The theft of a newborn girl from the district headquarters hospital (DHH) at Sonepur Saturday took a curious turn with the child being found dumped on the roadside near Saradhapali village under Pratappur police station limits, Sunday. Police rescued the baby girl from the roadside and rushed her to the district headquarters hospital for treatment. The mother of the infant, Santoshini Tandia - wife of Gajendra Tandia - identified the baby as her own.

Santoshini had delivered the baby in the hospital Saturday. A woman on the pretext of holding the baby in her arms for some time stole the infant from her grandmother when her mother was in the washroom after delivery of the child, Saturday. Doctors conducted a check-up

of the newborn and found its condition stable. Later, she was handed over to her mother. Sonepur police had swung into action after receiving a report from the father of the baby girl Gajendra Tandia.

As per the report, Santoshini was admitted to the gynaecology and obstetrics department of the hospital Friday after she complained of labour pain. She gave birth to a baby girl later in the day. The incident took place when Santoshini had gone to the toilet after handing over the baby to her mother-in-law. Later, a woman allegedly came and asked to hand over the baby for vaccination. The elderly woman gave the baby to the unknown woman who could not be traced by the family later. Police have, meanwhile, detained the father and grandmother of the newborn for more investigation.

Major irrigation boost on the anvil

TECHNICAL PANEL PROPOSES 9 MEGA LI PROJECTS IN JAJPUR, KENDRAPARA AT ESTIMATED COST OF ₹455.47 CRORE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, Nov 21: A technical advisory committee (TAC) has recently put forth fresh proposals for nine mega lift irrigation (LI) projects including two in Kendrapara, while the previously taken up LI projects are yet to be completed. Farmers from Jajpur district observed that the old projects need to be completed before taking up new projects. According to the proposal, the fresh mega projects, if approved, will be constructed with a total estimated cost of ₹455.47 crore.

The state government had started construction of the previous LI projects during FY 2011-12 to irrigate high-lying farmlands in Jajpur by lifting water from

nearby rivers. These projects still await completion. It is said that after completion, the new projects will irrigate a total of 12,914 hectares of farmland, including Bodua, Malipur, Dharampur, Kantipur, Bangara and Saidapur areas under Binjarpur block and Panaas under Sadar block in Jajpur and Olavar and Kalashpur in Kendrapara. Water from the Kharasuan, Kani and Brahmani rivers will be lifted for the purpose of irrigating the targeted farmlands. As land acquisition and environment clearance will not be required for the proposed projects, the administration will be able to easily take up the construction work. The TAC's proposal awaits approval of chief engineer (planning). However, a number of farm-



Artistes enacting a biographical play on freedom fighter Birsa Munda in Rourkela

OP PHOTO

Eggs hurled again at Union Min's car

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kendrapara, Nov 21: BJD activists allegedly hurled eggs, targeting the vehicle of Union Minister Bishweswar Tudu in Kendrapara Sunday while protesting against the rise in cooking gas prices. Tudu, the Union Minister of State for Jal Shakti and Tribal Affairs, was on the way to attend a meeting at Kendrapara Autonomous College when the incident happened at Tinimuhani. Tudu said that he does not care for such protests.

The ruling BJD has called for a three-day statewide agitation against rising LPG cylinder prices from Monday, party spokesperson Byomkesh Ray said. Claiming that LPG prices have been hiked by up to 70 per cent in

the last three and a half years, Ray questioned the BJP's promise of 'Achhe Din' (better days). He said the BJD will continue to protest till the central government reduces the price of cooking gas.

While the Centre claims that the use of cooking gas cylinder has increased by 98 per cent, the National Family Health Survey shows the increase is only 20 per cent, which is a normal process, he said. The BJP said that the state's ruling party was protesting over LPG prices in a bid to divert the people's attention from the Kalahandi woman teacher's killing case and Mahanga double murder case.

If the BJD government is so concerned about fuel prices, it should have reduced the VAT more, instead of just ₹3.04 on petrol and ₹2.86 on diesel, a BJP leader said.

Villagers play guardians of forest for last five decades

POST NEWS NETWORK

Umerkote, Nov 21: It may sound incredible, but it is true. Residents of a village in Nabarangpur district have been protecting a forest and its resources for the last 50 years without any fail, a report said. The village of Siraguda is inside the Beheda reserve forest under Umerkote forest division in Nabarangpur district. The forest spread over 50 hectares of land is close to the village.

The villagers have been doing it on a rotation basis which has been handed down from generation to generation. The villagers patrol the forest boundaries in shifts to protect the forest from timber smugglers and poachers. The love for the forest and its natural resources is so entrenched in their mind that they have been nurturing and protecting the forest like their own since last 50 years. The practice is not new and has been carried out for at least five decades, long before the Forest Rights Act, 2006 came into force.

Sensing their deep interest in forest protection, Purnachandra Nayak, divisional forest officer, Umerkote forest division roped in the villagers to form the Vana Suraksha Samiti November 10, 2020. The villagers under the aegis of Vana Suraksha Samiti and forest department have been able to create a new jungle by plant-



The village of Siraguda is inside the Beheda reserve forest under Umerkote forest division in Nabarangpur district

The villagers have been guarding the forest on a rotation basis which is being carried out over generations

The practice is not new and has been carried out for at least five decades, long before the Forest Rights Act, 2006 came into force

ing 10,000 trees on 7 hectares of vacant land inside the forest. Under the guidance of forest department, they have also learnt and managed to conserve rainwater and save it for future use. The conservation of rainwater has even provided livelihood to some people in the village.

This heartwarming news has come at a time when destruction of forests and green cover has resulted in the threat of climate change. When contacted, DFO Nayak said that a sum of around ₹3,42,650 has been spent for plantation during 2021-2022 financial year. He said that over 20,000 saplings have been planted to create jungles near Ratanguda and Mudiguda villages while various steps are also being taken by the department to foster the life and livelihood of the villagers.

matter and deferred the next hearing to November 24. As per police sources, the signature test of Gobinda will be done to prove in the court that he was the president of the managing committee of Sunshine Public School at Mahaling in Kalahandi district when Mamita was the principal in that school.

Earlier November 18, the Orissa High Court had sought a status report from the State government on the investigation of the sensational murder case. Mamita's family members had filed a petition in the High Court seeking fast track trial of the case.

Diarrhoea scare grips Dongria village

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bissam Cuttack, Nov 21: Remoteness and inaccessibility of villages and lack of medical services continue to plague the Dongria Kondh tribals as diarrhoea scare has gripped Bada Duargudi village situated atop Niyamgiri hill under this block in Rayagada district, a report said. Over 49 families comprising 400 people live in this village. The matter came to the fore after four persons were afflicted with diarrhoea Thursday night. The incident has sparked panic in the village. The affected persons were identified as a pregnant woman Teladi Sikka, 40, Shyam Sikka, 35, Kachadi Sikka, 26, and a child Aami Sikka, 4. Locals demanded before the administration to rush in a medical team to the village. Family members wanted to take them to the hospital but failed to do so due to bad condition of the road. They waited till morning and finally admitted them to the hospital with the help of Anganwadi workers.

Baripada: Bus stand work yet to kick off

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Nov 21: Despite identification of land for construction of a new bus stand at Baripada town in Mayurbhanj district in view of traffic congestion and lack of amenities in the existing one, work is yet to begin owing to administrative apathy, locals said Sunday. The 44-year-old existing bus stand is in a bad shape and lacks basic amenities for which commuters face several difficulties, they added. Land for setting up the new bus stand was identified at Darogadahi locality on Baripada outskirts several years ago. However, construction is yet to begin even though locals have been running from pillar to post. Some of them warned of protests if the project is delayed further. More than 250 buses ply every day from other districts and neighbouring states to Baripada town. With an increase in population in the town, buses often halt at busy places leading to traffic snarls.

SUSPECTED POACHING OF TUSKER IN SAMBALPUR

Forest dept charged with hushing up case

LOCALS DEMAND CRIME BRANCH PROBE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Nov 21: Following a report published in Orissa Post about suspected killing of a tusker by poachers in Mundeidumberchua reserve forest under Sambalpur forest division, the forest department had intensified its probe to know its veracity and later found burned remains of an elephant buried in the forest October 20. However, it was alleged that the forest department has been trying to hush up the matter. The burnt remains of the animal were sent for forensic testing, but the report has not been made available yet. Locals and several outfits have accused the forest department of delaying in cracking the mystery surrounding the animal poaching. "Poaching of an elephant is a sensitive issue. The elephant was allegedly killed for tusks. The forest department's inefficiency to check poaching has come to the fore. Hence, it is trying to suppress the investigation," locals lamented. They added that all officials from top to the bottom have neglected in protecting elephants in forests. However, till date the forest department has failed to know who had poached the animal and no



action has been taken while delay is cited on post mortem report, they pointed out. Locals have demanded an investigation by the Crime Branch into the alleged tusker poaching in the forest. As for the report, sadar range officer Akhaya Maharana said that the burnt bones and remains of the animal were sent to a laboratory in Dehradun. "After report is received, action will be taken," he added. Foul smell had spread in the area October 18. Locals talked about possibility of an elephant having been killed and buried in the forest. Later, the DFO had ordered an investigation into the matter. ACF Madanlal Sharma visited the spot where the tusker was suspected to have been buried. Forest officials, after days of frantic searches, had recovered burnt bones and ashes in the forest.

Plea filed to examine Gobinda's handwriting

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, Nov 21: The local police have filed a petition in the JMFC court at Bangomunda here seeking permission to examine the handwriting and signature of Gobinda Sahu, the prime accused in lady teacher Mamita Meher murder case, Saturday. Police have sought permission of the court to collect the handwriting and signature of Gobinda Sahu, who is presently lodged in Kantabanji sub-jail and to send it for examination to the Handwriting Bureau. In a bid to collect strong evidence against the prime ac-

MAMITA MURDER



cusced Sahu, police had sought permission of the court to examine his signature. However, the lawyer of the accused strongly advocated against the permission. It is expected that the police will take Gobinda on remand again to examine his signature or else his signature will be examined in presence of the jailor. The court heard the

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,
RURAL WORKS DIVISION-II, CUTTACK
Email ID- cuttackr2nd@yahoo.co.in
Telephone/Fax. No. (0671)-2445119
No.-O-956-

e-procurement Notice for ROAD WORK
Bid Identification No. SECTC-II-03 of 2021-22 dt. 16.11.2021

1. Number of the work	: 1 (One) Number Road
2. Estimated cost (Approx.)	: Rs.11.51 lakh
3. Period of completion	: 1 (One) calendar month for road works
4. Date & time of sale & receipt of bid document online	: From:23.11.2021 at 11.00 A.M. To: 04.12.2021 at 4.00 P.M.
5. Date & time of opening of bids	: 06.12.2021 at 11.30 A.M.
6. Name and address of inviting officer	: Superintending Engineer, R.W. Division-II, Cuttack, Nayabazar, Cuttack- 753004

Further details can be seen from the State Govt. portal <https://tendersorissa.gov.in>
Sd./- Superintending Engineer, R.W. Division-II, Cuttack
OIPR-25095/11/0003/2122



Do not look behind, look always in front, at what you want to do and you are sure of progressing.

THE MOTHER



Ungraceful In Defeat

Union Minister and retired army General VK Singh is known to be a loose cannon. This is the man who had uttered the word 'Presstitute' in Parliament. With a knack of shooting his mouth off on complex issues which need the finesse of a seasoned politician, his rather brusque and rough handling has proven to be an embarrassment for the country many a times. He might be a person trained in military warfare but his types have never fought a real war. He has again proven to be an embarrassment when he asked farmers November 20 "what black" there was in the three controversial farm laws that now stand repealed after the Prime Minister's announcement, except "the ink used to write them." It could not simply be that he thinks he is too smart which is why he made such an obnoxious statement on an issue that shook the country to its core in recent times and brought the powerful Modi and his BJP government to their knees. It appears the BJP is still calculating the political cost that the party will have to pay for the not-so-honourable retreat the Centre has been forced to make with its decision to scrap the "black" laws. It appears to be confused, at its wits' end and scared of the electoral repercussions it may face in the next few months when several states, including the all-important Uttar Pradesh, go to polls. It went to absurd lengths to blacken the farmers' movement against the laws for a whole year by labelling the farmers as anti-nationals, Khalistanis, terrorists and every other abuse in its limited vocabulary. From its tallest leader, Prime Minister Narendra Damodardas Modi, down to its foot soldiers, the ruling party used all the tricks in its bag to denigrate and discredit the farmers' agitation. Its obduracy was such that it seemed to have been devoid of the milk of human kindness when farmers died by the hundreds and the government became more and more vindictive and insensitive.

There is no doubt that the BJP is desperate to control the damage caused by the introduction and later the repeal of the laws to the party's electoral fortunes. For this, it is still insisting that there is nothing bad in the laws even after the Prime Minister in a subdued and conciliatory tone begged pardon and pleaded, while announcing the decision that the government "failed to explain the benefits of the laws to a small group of farmers". Whether it was a 'small' or large group of farmers, we will never be certain, but Modi's volte face did not look small. Such a defeated posturing by the Prime Minister should not have left any room for harping on what the government thinks about the laws. Instead, it should have been gracefully accepted as victory for the farmers' viewpoints without any more debate. But, the tumultuous joy of the agitating farmers for the victory of their agitation over the government and the latter's severe loss of face appear to be sending shockwaves to the BJP that has necessitated a counter-attack in the form of the General's unworthy diversionary comments.

The farmers have shown to the country that when there is a people's uprising, any government can be compelled to bow and accept the verdict of the citizens. It is more so, when Opposition political parties are either anaemic or devoid of credibility for their past acts of omission and commission. For, these parties have for the past few years, got powerful issues to corner the government but have miserably failed to build up courage to face them. Demonetisation, botched up GST, the Rafale deal, unprecedented employment crisis, COVID mishandling are examples of such issues that were enough for a political party with credibility to topple the government. But, the BJP emerged unscathed in each case.

For the first time in the seven plus-year-long tenure, the Modi government has suffered ignominious defeat at the hands of the farmers who scrupulously did not allow any political party to be openly associated with their movement. The Opposition parties, of course, extended their support, raised the issue time and again in the Parliament and outside and ensured that the farmers' agitation did not lose importance by raising other issues, including the Pegasus snooping scam, with the same intensity. It was a wise decision of the farmers to keep political parties with their flags away from their agitation. The political parties have such a low standing in the eyes of the people that had they fought hand in hand with the farmers, the government could have easily succeeded in convincing the people of its narrative that the farmers had no real issue for which they enlisted the support of a discredited Opposition. The government tried all means to brand the agitation as the handiwork of terrorist outfits and anti-national forces while slapping sedition cases on many supporting the farmers' cause.

The government appears to have got enough feedback that convinced Modi about the BJP's imminent electoral reverses in UP, Punjab and Uttarakhand in the next few months as farmers from these states, along with those from Rajasthan have been in the forefront of the agitation against the farm laws. Defeat in these states, especially in UP, will cause incalculable harm to the BJP and the charisma the PM has gained. Its future will be in serious trouble. This seems to be the calculation behind the government decision to throw the farm laws into the dustbin.

An important take away from this climb down is that the ruling BJP has finally been made to understand it cannot do whatever it likes simply because it has the mandate to rule. Democracy means rule of the people and if the people believe the government is wrong, the government must bow down to the wishes of the citizens.

WISDOM CORNER

- If you think in terms of a year, plant a seed; if in terms of ten years, plant trees; if in terms of 100 years, teach the people. **CONFUCIUS**
- He is a wise man who does not grieve for the things which he has not, but rejoices for those which he has. **EPICETUS**
- The ideal man bears the accidents of life with dignity and grace, making the best of circumstances. **ARISTOTLE**

WORDSWORTH

Potboiler

Those among us with an interest in archaeology will know of potboiler in a more literal sense. It was a stone heated in a fire and dropped into a pot of liquid in order to warm it. This was a useful technique in the days when primitive pottery was too fragile to be exposed directly to a fire. However, the figurative sense you mention was recorded about the middle of the nineteenth century, so it's rather older than the archaeological one. An artistic potboiler served the not wholly unrelated function of bringing in some quick money to keep the home fires burning and the cooking pots boiling. So it was a work produced for strictly commercial reasons rather than from any artistic impulse. In the more elevated arenas of artistry such a motive – then, as now – was considered deeply demeaning (though a century earlier Dr Johnson rebuked such ivory-tower attitudes with his magisterial comment that "no man but a blockhead ever wrote, except for money"). It often referred specifically to a work that had been rapidly executed to make a quick buck, therefore one likely to be poorly done. There seems also to have been a strong feeling that to keep one's reputation alive before the public one had to originate new works regularly (the modern academic's mantra of "publish or perish" contains much the same idea). In other words, one had to keep the pot boiling in order to stay in the game. The first examples in the Oxford English Dictionary are all British, so it's tempting to say it's not an American term. However, I've since found an earlier example than the OED knows about, from Putnam's Monthly Magazine of New York, dated 1854: "He has not carelessly dashed off his picture, with the remark that 'it will do for a pot-boiler'". As Douglas G Wilson has pointed out, there was another expression of the period, to boil the pot, to supply one's livelihood. This was recorded in print from the early nineteenth century on, but was probably older in the spoken language. Something that boiled the pot was obviously enough a pot-boiler, so the term is probably much the same age as boil the pot.

FARM ISSUES AS POLL PLANKS

FOCUS NATION



Shivaji Sarkar

SINCE 1967, WHEN APMC ACT WAS ENFORCED, NEVER HAVE FARMERS BEEN AT SUCH A DISTRESS AND CONFUSION

Finally, the three farm laws are to be withdrawn as the nation goes to polls in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and three other states. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement will lead to a sea change in the gamut of a year-long struggle by farmers. Yes, it would now be a direct battle for votes with the farm issues and the Prime Minister taking the centre stage.

It is not an issue of who wins or loses, but calls for a process where none has to go for an adamant attitude that has caused over 700 deaths, innumerable conflicts and a political atmosphere that had led to strong verbosity and millions of hours of media debate. The farmers may be happy and see it as a victory at last, but may wait to withdraw their agitation till the laws are formally withdrawn in the ensuing winter session of Parliament.

The Prime Minister lamented that despite his concern for the farmers "We couldn't convince a section of farmers despite best efforts. The goal of the three farm laws was to empower farmers, especially small farmers." There is a general relief and Modi can do more by also taking this opportunity to scrap the whimsical NGT order of scrapping 10-year-old cars, tractors and other vehicles.

As the farm laws are withdrawn the intense political battle that seemingly would continue is to pitch the campaign plank for the elections. The Opposition may get emboldened as also the farmers. The government would come out with the plank of a responsive government and 'sabka sath, sabka vikas'. It is not that only the Delhi borders were sealed by farmers and police of Haryana, Delhi and UP, it has also created an atmosphere of uncertainty. The controversial Republic Day rally in January 2021 led to many apprehensions and a situation of conflict that was never envisaged.

The reverberating slogans and counter slogans may warm up the poll pitch with curious voters observing each of the movements. It would be yet another move to



Whether the Bharatiya Kisan Union makes an impact in the coming polls with its possible allies the Samajwadi Party and the Rashtriya Lok Dal or just withers away needs to be seen

reestablish the brand Narendra Modi by the BJP-NDA. The Opposition may try to do the contrary. Ultimately, it would turn the elections into an interesting phenomenon. Possibly it would also make any government not to act in haste as it happened with the June 5, 2020 farm ordinances, at the height of lockdown, leading to fears that corporate stranglehold will increase as MSP will be withdrawn. In reality, the government increased MSP on all farm products.

Whether the Bharatiya Kisan Union makes an impact in the coming polls with its possible allies Samajwadi Party, Rashtriya Lok Dal or just withers away also needs to be seen. Since 2018 and during the past one year the BKU has been in the news in the northern states and particularly UP, where all the parties have high stakes.

The farm Bills had generated enough corporate and foreign investor interest. They increased the hope of more investment in warehousing though the farmers apprehended loss of livelihood. Several rounds of talks and their failure had led to a

kind of desperation as the farmers feared that returns would continue to fall.

Farmers refused to accept the government's offer of written guarantee on MSP and offer of levying cess on the new private mandis outside the Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) mandis. Over the years, between 2013-14 and 2017-18, as farmers' return on their produce started reducing, the foreign portfolio investment (FPI) boomed and funding for silo – giant steel structures for storing grains for a longer duration – construction increased.

Since 1967, when APMC Act was enforced, never have farmers been at such a distress and confusion. Normally, despite not being able to sell at MSPs, they were not unhappy at the returns. The MSP decided a floor price and provided the bargaining strength to them against the market forces. In 2013-14, the paddy price was 58 per cent higher than average input and labour costs. This margin shrank to 41 per cent in 2018. The difference on maize reduced from 43 per cent to 25.6 per cent.

Indian farmers have reasons to

be unhappy. Their yields are low. World average for rice per kg per hectare in 2018 is 4679, maize 5924, all pulses 964, arhar 852, soybean 2791, groundnut 1611, wheat 3425, barley 2951 and gram 965. The Indian average is rice 2638, maize 3070, all pulses 757, arhar 757, soybean 1192, groundnut 1422, wheat 3371, barley 2693 and gram 956. The prices they get are less and as the cost is high, approaching international markets is not easy.

In this backdrop, if it is linked to FPI, the trend is surprising. In June, 2020, the FPI was Rs 11,736 crore. It doubled to Rs 22,866 crore in July. The three farm laws were introduced as ordinances June 5, 2020. In August as the farm Bills were introduced for passing by Parliament, the investments jumped to Rs 1,30,576 crore. About half the investments surprisingly came from two tiny countries, Mauritius and Singapore. Another large investor was Netherlands.

The State of Indian Agriculture 2015-16 (SIA15) of the Ministry of Agriculture says in its preface, "in recent years the agriculture and allied sector has been facing numerous challenges. The sector remains constrained by low productivity, excessive dependence on monsoon and weather conditions, continuing fragmentation of land and preponderance of fragmented markets. A combination of these factors has led to episodes of agrarian distress which have been widely reported."

Various other issues such as toll roads, building of silos and the falling farm GDP to 14 per cent may become poll issues. How it would recoil on different political parties would be interesting to watch. It might raise debate in all political parties, including the ruling combine. Farm issues may interestingly become the poll planks though the BJP may like to keep it focused on Ram Mandir. As it appears now, farm growth and structural changes in economy would be at the centre stage but many new political issues may be added to the poll narrative.

INFA

SPECTRUM SUSTAINABILITY

Think small to fight climate change

Kristina Skierka & Richenda Van Leeuwen

WHEN SMALL BUSINESSES HAVE THE FINANCING AND SUPPORT THEY NEED, THEY CAN DRIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH WHILE MITIGATING EMISSIONS AND SUPPORTING ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

When applied to droughts, wildfires, hurricanes, floods, or other extreme weather events, the term 'unprecedented' is getting old. In August, when the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released its latest report about the dire realities we face, a drought exacerbated by global warming already had been raging for years across much of southern Africa.

It seems as though world leaders are finally ready to take meaningful action, but there's a critical group regularly missing from key climate meetings like the recent United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow: local, climate-focused small businesses that already are making a difference in their communities. Small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) working on climate adaptation and mitigation are a crucial but underestimated partner in the fight to reduce emissions.

Even though climate financing options are increasing, SMEs' role in sustainable development continues to be overlooked. Their predicament is one shared by more than 200 million SMEs of all types in developing countries that cannot get the funds they need to grow, facing an estimated \$5.2 trillion annual financing gap. International investors focus on getting dollars

out the door through larger deals, while local capital is kept on the sidelines by high collateral requirements and unmanageable interest rates for early-stage businesses.

SMEs represent 90% of businesses and provide more than 50% of jobs worldwide according to the World Bank, so they have a key role to play in creating opportunities in economies struggling to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Examples like SELCO India, a pioneering off-grid solar company, and Husk Power, an innovative pay-as-you-go renewable energy provider operating in Asia and Africa, show that with the right amount and type of financing and technical support, small businesses can improve lives through energy access – a key international goal. Off-grid renewables also help power sustainable mobility in both rural and urban settings.

Small businesses also have an important role to play in greening agriculture. Land use for crop and livestock production accounts for 24% of global greenhouse-gas emissions, and farms are vulnerable to droughts, floods, and rising temperatures. Financing climate-smart agricultural entrepreneurs is essential for making our food systems more resilient. Here, too, off-grid renewable energy has become indispensable, providing power for

irrigation, processing grains, and operating the cold rooms and coolers needed to store dairy products, fresh seafood, and fruits and vegetables. In India, Technoserve is helping small farms withstand and adapt to the climate crisis and raise their productivity without increasing emissions.

As these examples show, when small businesses have the financing and support they need, they can drive economic growth while mitigating emissions and supporting adaptation to climate change. That is because small businesses are more agile and adaptable – and respond to local needs much faster and more effectively – than large organisations. They also offer governments and policymakers an opportunity to try out new ideas, revealing both pitfalls and best practices before initiatives are scaled regionally or nationally.

Achieving the global goal of net-zero emissions requires policymakers, investors, banks, and others to attend to SMEs' needs much more effectively than they have in the past. For starters, the world needs far more finance vehicles and instruments that are tailored to small businesses working in the green economy. That means a mix of lower-cost, long-term capital and blended finance, as well as easier access. The world also needs more busi-

ness accelerators focused on adaptation to climate change. There are only 25 such green accelerators located in non-OECD countries. Funding research and establishing professional networks will drive support to businesses that have strong growth potential.

Better metrics to assess success will be needed. That does not mean lowering environmental, social, and governance standards. Instead, it means devising indicators specifically for green enterprises in the SME sector to help them demonstrate their effectiveness and attract more investment.

Finally, investors must not overlook women, who produce up to 80% of food in the Global South. Women also are the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Investing in female climate entrepreneurs benefits the climate, food production, and overall prosperity.

Small businesses are integral to climate-change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience. Providing them the financing and support necessary to help them succeed is in everyone's interest.

Kristina Skierka is CEO of Power for All. Richenda Van Leeuwen is Executive Director of the Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST
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Ease restrictions

Sir, The recent decision of the Odisha government to allow open theatres (Jatras) and cultural events at 50% capacity is commendable. Ever since the outbreak of COVID-19, thousands of people working in the Jatra industry were deprived of livelihood and this move will absolutely bring cheer to them. However, the major hurdle is the announcement which has directed the organisers to take permission from local administration prior to performance because Jatras usually run overnight due to popular demand. Several organisers have opined that in districts like Puri and Cuttack the final arrangements and preparations were called off in the last moment because the permission couldn't be obtained from district collectors. The Special Relief Commissioner should direct the local administrations to ease the restrictions otherwise thousand of Jatra artistes will again be forced to existential crisis.

Debadurllav Harichandan, BHUBANESWAR

Lessons to learn

Sir, This refers to the article 'Laws gone, votes banked', Orissa POST, November 21. In a serious setback to the ruling dispensation and the choking farm sector, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that the government would pilot the repeal of farm laws. In fact, the government might have erred the way in which the three farm laws were brought in, and also the way the protests were handled, but the country needs liberal reforms, if it wants to ever reach mass prosperity. These farm laws were being demanded by the farmers, experts and economists. There is little doubt that Indian agriculture needs a fundamental transformation, market access and greater interface with the industry. The laws were expected to give income security to the segment of small farmers which accounts for about 85 per cent of the farmers in India. Unfortunately, the government gives in to the maximal demand of the protesters belonging to two small states Punjab, Haryana and a part of the bigger UP. However, this massive climbdown must be seen in the context of the crucial Assembly elections for the five northern states next year. When it comes to contentious political economy questions, it is neither possible to reform by stealth nor through the power of a brute parliamentary majority anymore. Listen to stakeholders, be inclusive, respect established legislative processes, recognise the diversity of India's socioeconomic mosaic, and embrace the democratic spirit. That's the only way to govern India.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

of the day quote

Today, as we rejoice in our victory against Centre's three black laws...our real work has just begun, Centre's sinister plan to end MSP, end food security for the poor, end govt procurement & end PDS will continue without the farm laws, it will be now hidden & more dangerous

NAVJOT SINGH SIDHU | PUNJAB CONGRESS PRESIDENT

What Priyanka ji did in Uttar Pradesh for women, its effect can also be seen in Rajasthan. The women's representation has been increased three times

SACHIN PILOT | FORMER RAJ DEPUTY CM

The government has now realised its mistake and withdrawn the farm laws. There is a demand from different parts of the country that the kin of the farmers who lost their lives should be financially compensated

SANJAY RAUT | SHIV SENA MP

SHORT TAKES

Woman raped for three days

Muzaffarnagar (UP): A 24-year-old woman was allegedly held captive by a man, beaten up and raped for three days here. According to the complaint lodged by the woman with the police Sunday, she was forcibly taken to a hotel by the man where she was made to consume beverages laced with sedatives and raped for three days. The woman also alleged that the accused beat her up whenever she tried to defend herself.

Labourer's hand chopped off, 3 held

Rewa (MP): A 45-year-old labourer's hand was chopped off allegedly by his employer when he asked for his pending wages in Madhya Pradesh's Rewa district, an official said Sunday, adding three persons were arrested. The incident occurred at Dolmau village under the Sirmaur police station, about 40 km away from the Rewa district headquarters, Saturday, police said. The victim, Ashok Saket, who belongs to Scheduled Caste, had earlier worked as a labourer in construction work for one Ganesh Mishra in Dolmau village, Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Shiv Kumar Verma said, adding that Mishra was allegedly dilly-dallying paying the pending wages.

Massive mudslide in Jammu

Jammu: A mudslide triggered by a leaked water pipe of the Public Health Engineering (PHE) department blocked the busy Panjtirthi-Sidhra road connecting the city with the Jammu-Srinagar national highway Sunday, prompting the agency concerned to press its men and machines to restore the vital link, officials said. The road was blocked around 4.30 am following which the Public Works Department (PWD) launched a road clearance operation, the officials said.

Jackal attacks farmers, 38 hurt

Patna: As many as 38 persons sustained injuries after a jackal attacked them in Barsoi block of Bihar's Katihar district Sunday. Following the incident, the angry villagers caught the jackal and beat it to death. Majority of the injured are farmers and labourers of Govindpur and Jamira villages in Barsoi block.

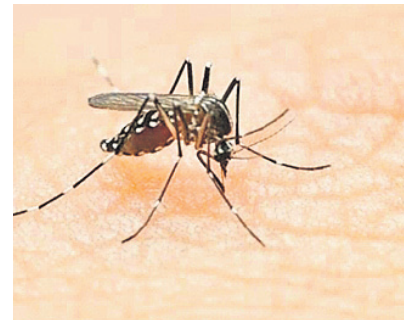


People who have suffered false rhetoric are not ready to believe the words of the Prime Minister! Farmers' Satyagraha continues

RAHUL GANDHI | FORMER CONGRESS PRESIDENT

DENGUE CASES IN CHENNAI SPIKE

After being lashed by incessant rains and subsequent inundation, Chennai is facing another crisis with dengue cases on the rise. The number of cases reported in the city in the last few days has increased to 105 with Kodambakkam and Teynampet areas reporting the majority of them



Unveiling new warship, Rajnath takes dig at China

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai/New Delhi, Nov 21: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Sunday attacked China's expansionist policy in Indo-Pacific region without taking its name, saying some "irresponsible nations" for their partisan interests give inappropriate interpretations to international laws. Speaking during formal induction of Indigenous developed Ship Visakhapatnam into Indian Navy in Mumbai, Singh said, "Some irresponsible nations, for the sake of their narrow partisan interests, keep on giving new and inappropriate interpretations to these international laws from hegemonic tendencies."

"The arbitrary interpretations create obstacles in the path of a rule-based maritime order. We envision a rule-based Indo-Pacific, with freedom of navigation, free trade and universal values, in which the interests of all the participating countries are protected," he said. Singh reiterated that India, as a responsible maritime stakeholder, is a supporter of consensus-based principles and a peaceful, open, rule-based and stable maritime order. "In the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) of 1982, territorial waters of nations, exclusive economic zones and the principle of 'Good order at sea' have been propounded. The defence minister emphasised on the need to keep the Indo-Pacific region open, safe and secure, terming it as the primary objective of the Indian Navy.

He asserted that India's interests are directly linked with the



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh (R) on board INS Visakhapatnam, the stealth guided-missile destroyer ships of Project 15B, during its commissioning ceremony at the naval base in Mumbai

Indian Ocean and the region is crucial for the world economy.

"Challenges such as piracy, terrorism, illegal smuggling of arms and narcotics, human trafficking, illegal fishing and damage to the environment are equally responsible for affecting the maritime domain. Therefore, the role of the Indian Navy becomes very important in the entire Indo-Pacific region," he added. Singh presided over formal induction of the naval ship, first of the four Visakhapatnam class destroyers, indigenously designed by the Indian Navy's in-house organisation Directorate of Naval Design and

constructed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited, Mumbai.

Named after the historic city of Andhra Pradesh on the east coast, Visakhapatnam, the 'City of Destiny', the ship has a total complement of about 315 personnel.

During his address, Singh termed INS Visakhapatnam as a symbol of the growing maritime prowess of the country and a major milestone in achieving Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Make in India, Make for the World'.

He added that the ship is a reminder of ancient and medieval India's maritime power, shipbuilding skills and glorious history.

PARLIAMENT WINTER SESSION Oppn to corner govt on China, inflation, Pegasus

Winter Session of Parliament to begin November 29

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Nov 21: The opposition parties are set to corner the government in the upcoming winter session of parliament on issues of inflation, Chinese incursion, Pegasus spyware and farm laws. Leader of opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge has made it clear that the party will raise the issue of inflation. "It has been 7 months since inflation is in double digits. The Government has failed to bring the prices of essential commodities down making the struggle of common man even worse during the pandemic," Kharge said.

Armed with success on the repeal of farm laws, the opposition will also try to corner the government on the passage of the bills in the house. It has been alleging that the government is bulldozing the procedure.

"Government must realise that enacting important laws in a hurry bypassing parliamentary scrutiny and excluding stakeholders from consultations, re-

sults in confrontation and conflict. It must give up the undemocratic practice and refer all important bills to parliamentary standing or select committees for building consensus," said Anand Sharma after government announced repeal of farm laws. The Congress is also going to raise the issue of Chinese incursion and Pegasus spyware in the house. Former Congress President Rahul Gandhi had said that the party will raise the Pegasus snooping issue in Parliament and will ask who "authorised" pegasus to spy. The Centre had argued that disclosing the details on the use of Pegasus spyware involves national security issues, as it refused to divulge any details.

Rahul Gandhi has also said that the party will also raise the issue of inflation and said that in GDP (Gas, Diesel and Petrol), the government is earning huge amount of money and it's a direct attack on the consumer as it affects directly and indirectly as it also increases inflation.



SCHOOLS SHUT IN DELHI OVER AIR POLLUTION

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Nov 21: All schools in the national capital will remain closed until further orders in the National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas, owing to the rising levels of air pollution in the city.

As per a directive by the Education Department, all the government, government aided, unaided recognised, NDMC, MCDs and Delhi Cantonment Board Schools will remain closed. However, online teaching learning activities and the examinations for board classes would be conducted as per earlier guidelines.

The residents of the national capital continue to breath polluted air as air quality in the city was recorded under "very poor" category Sunday morning.

The System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting And Research (SAFAR) said the Air Quality Index (AQI) in the national capital was 324 for PM10 and 200 for PM2.5. As PM10 went over 300, the department has issued a health advisory asking people with heart or lung diseases, older adults, and children to reduce prolonged or heavy exertion. The PM2.5 level was found to be under the "very poor" category.



TOURISM UPBEAT



Tourists through the Taj Mahal in Agra

PTI PHOTO

Lucky draw to boost vaccination coverage

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 21: Weekly or monthly lucky draw programmes for those fully vaccinated against Covid-19 are among the strategies planned by the government to encourage people yet to take the first dose and those overdue for the second job to get inoculated, sources said Sunday.

The Union Health Ministry has planned other initiatives also such as organising workplace vaccination and providing badges to fully vaccinated employees. States and Union Territories may soon be suggested to undertake these initiatives. The strategies also include involving influential figures in districts or villages, who themselves are vaccinated, to motivate their peer groups in getting the anti-Covid

shots. Such people may be appointed as 'ambassadors' and oriented about the government's 'Har Ghar Dastak' initiative. They can, in turn, provide sound advice to people on the importance of taking both the doses of vaccine and completing the vaccination schedule.

The government has launched the month-long 'Har Ghar Dastak' campaign for house-to-house Covid-19 vaccination of those who are yet to take a dose and those whose second job is overdue. "Workplace vaccination can be organised targeting people who are due for their doses. Employees, both at private and government offices and other workplaces, may be given badges having vaccination messages such as 'I am fully vaccinated, are you fully vaccinated too' to encourage their colleagues to get the doses,"

a source said. "Also, weekly or monthly lucky draw programmes may be organized for the fully vaccinated. Household items like kitchen appliances, ration kit, travel passes, cash prizes can be given to the winners of the lucky draw to motivate the fence-sitters to go for vaccination."

Ideas or initiatives at the local level may further help in motivating people and mobilising the left-out or dropped-out beneficiaries and help in ensuring that all adults are protected against Covid infection, the source said.

According to officials, around 82% of the eligible population in India have received the first dose of the vaccine while around 43 per cent have been fully inoculated.

Ex-women Naxals turn entrepreneurs

According to the Gadchiroli Police, 11 former Maoists, including ten female and one male, were trained in manufacturing phenyl and they have started their own business now

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nagpur, Nov 21: Surrendered women Naxals in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district have turned entrepreneurs by launching a floor cleaner phenyl thanks to the welfare initiatives of the local police. This phenyl is sold under the brand name 'CLEAN 101'.

A Self Help Group (SHG) called 'Navjeevan Utpadak Sangh' was started for surrendered women Naxals on the initiative taken by Gadchiroli superintendent of police Ankit Goyal. The police said the 'CLEAN 101' phenyl is of very good quality and priced much below the market rates for other brands. Gadchiroli police department will help this SHG to market their product. Besides, the SHG has received orders from various government and non-government departments, police said. Dr Panjabrao Deshmukh Krishi Vidyapeeth in Maharashtra's Akola

has ordered 200 litres of 'clean 101' phenyl from the SHG, officials said. "The surrendered Naxal women were organised into a Self Help Group and trained at the MGRI in Wardha. Their first product 'CLEAN 101' floor cleaner was launched recently. We will do their hand-holding for the first few months. The initial sale orders are encouraging," Goyal told PTI. He said 41 farmers from remote, Naxal-affected villages of Ettapalli, Hedri and Dhanora tehsils are sent for a free tour of agricultural universities and innovation centres across Maharashtra from November 19 to 28 under a special initiative aimed at boosting their income. On November 13, 26 ultras, including senior cadre Milind Teltumbde, were killed in the Gadchiroli district in an encounter with C-60 commandos of police. The toll rose to 27 after the body of one more ultra was found at the spot in a forest.



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

Prolonged school closures threat to gender equality: Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 21: Educational disruption due to prolonged closure of schools across the globe will not only have alarming effects on learning loss but also poses threat to gender equality, a new study by UNESCO has pointed out.

"At the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic, 1.6 billion students in 190 countries were affected by school closures. Not only did they lose access to education, but also to the myriad benefits of attending school, at an unparalleled scale," said Stefania Giannini, UNESCO,

Assistant Director-General for Education.

"Educational disruption of this extent has alarming effects on learning loss and school dropout. Beyond this, it poses threats to gender equality, including effects on health, well being and protection that are gender specific," Giannini said. Drawing on evidence from about 90 countries and in-depth data collected in local communities, the report shows that gender norms and expectations can affect the ability to participate in and benefit from remote learning. "In poorer contexts, girls' time to learn

COVID-19 WOES



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

was constrained by increased household chores. Boys' participation

in learning was limited by income-generating activities. Girls faced dif-

iculties in engaging in digital remote learning modalities in many contexts because of limited access to internet-enabled devices, a lack of digital skills and cultural norms restricting their use of technological devices," the report said.

The study pointed out that digital gender-divide was already a concern before the Covid-19 crisis. "The in-depth studies on Bangladesh and Pakistan in the global report revealed its gendered effects on remote learning during school closures. In the study on Pakistan, only 44 per cent of girls in participating districts reported

owning mobile phones for their personal use, whereas 93 per cent of boys did so. Girls who did not own mobile phones reported that they relied on their relatives' devices, typically those belonging to their fathers," it said.

Noting that the pandemic is a timely reminder that schools are sites not only for learning, but also lifelines for girls and boys - an essential space for their health, well-being and protection, the report has several recommendations on how to challenge gender-based barriers for participation in remote learning.

Floods bring AP to its knees

DEATH TOLL CLIMBS TO 31; PEOPLE STRANDED AND HIGHWAYS CLOSED



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Amaravati, Nov 21: In Andhra Pradesh, hundreds of vehicles and passengers were stranded, traffic was either closed or suspended in arterial highways and over 100 trains cancelled snapping rail-road link between southern and other parts of the country as the Penna river in spate caused heavy destruction Sunday.

Toll in rain-related incidents in different districts of Andhra Pradesh touched 31 as more bodies were retrieved from the flooded streams. The Chennai-Kolkata National Highway-16 remained cut off for traffic between Nellore and Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh as was the Chennai grand trunk rail route severing the all important link between the southern and eastern and northern parts of the

country. The South Central Railway informed that more than a 100 express trains were cancelled because of the damage caused to the rail track at Padugupadu near Nellore and 29 more diverted via other routes. In Kadapa district alone, at least 18 people were dead, crops on hundreds of acres destroyed, heads of cattle washed away and tens of houses in villages were reduced to rubble as flash floods due to a breach of the Annamaya project's earthen bund on Cheyuru river caused havoc.

In Kadapa city, a mother and child, who were trapped on the second floor of a building were rescued in the nick of time by police and fire services personnel, just before the three-storied building folded like a pack of cards in the wee hours. Floodwater gushing out from the Veligallu reservoir

led to collapse of a bridge on river Papagni cutting off road link between Kadapa and Anantapuramu. As floods caused devastation, the Chennai-Kolkata National Highway-16 had to be closed down for traffic in SPS Nellore district following a heavy breach at Padugupadu. The State Disaster Management Authority said more than two lakh cusecs of floodwater flowed out of the Somasila reservoir in SPS Nellore district, leading to the deluge. This caused breach of the National Highway-16 at Kovuru as well. Consequently, traffic on the NH-16 between Nellore and Vijayawada has been suspended, leaving hundreds of vehicles stranded for kilometers on either side. Hundreds of passengers were stuck in the Nellore RTC bus station as bus services were disrupted.

The dam that became the sorrow

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kadapa (AP), Nov 21: The Annamaya project on Cheyuru river has turned out to be the sorrow of many a village in Rajampet Assembly constituency in Kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh.

Togurupeta, Mandapalli, Pulapathur and Gundlur presented a picture of haunted villages in the wake of the devastation. The flash flood caused due to a breach of the project's earthen bund caught at least 18 people in a watery grave and left many others missing in these villages. A sudden gush of about two lakh cusecs of floodwater Friday, with the level reaching up to 10 feet height, caught the villagers unawares and scampering for their lives. Tens of houses in these villages downstream the project were reduced to rubble. The villagers literally lost everything, except the clothes on their person. Crops in hundreds of acres stood destroyed. Tens of cattle heads were washed away. Nothing of the household items was left as the deluge gulped them.

"It all happened in a flash. There was no warning whatsoever about the impending disaster and we were left to face the fury. Now, our lives are in total ruin," the sobbing villagers of Togurupeta and Mandapalli said. In Pulapathur village, 12 people were swept away in the swirling flood in Cheyuru, nine in Mandapalli and five in Gundlur. So far, only 18 bodies have been recovered, with no trace of the rest.

"It was nothing but gross mismanagement on the part of the administration. Didn't they know



about the flood when there was such heavy rain? Why were we not even alerted about the coming danger before it destroyed us?" angry villagers of Mandapalli and Togurupeta questioned.

Except some kind-hearted volunteers, the administration did not come to their help in any way,

they lamented. "Ours is the first village right under Annamaya project. We lost our houses, cattle, belongings... everything. Some of our villagers were killed. There is no place for us to go," the surviving residents of Togurupeta, a hamlet of about 500 people, said.

The temple of the local goddess,

DEADLY DELUGE

Annamaya is a medium irrigation project with a gross capacity of only 2.24 tmc ft on Cheyuru, a tributary of Penna river, in Rajampet constituency

It caters to an ayacut of 22,500 acres, besides fulfilling the drinking water needs of 140 habitations

The Pincha project upstream breached, letting out all floodwater into Annamaya while water from Seshachalam too came gushing in because of very heavy rainfall, resulting in an overall discharge of over two lakh cusecs

That pushed Cheyuru river into spate, inundating at least 10 villages downstream in Rajampet and Nandaluru mandals, and leaving widespread destruction in its wake

which somehow remained intact, has now turned into the only shelter zone for the hapless villagers. Mandapalli presented a heartrending sight. Two families were completely wiped out as seven people in all were killed in the flood fury. Another family lost two persons. Kadapa district Collector Vijaya Rama Raju told PTI that the dam breach was the major factor that caused such a major calamity.

"The river course changed but the dam breach was what caused the real destruction. We still moved some 600 people to safety," he said. "Yes, it was a major calamity, the scale of which could not be imagined," Raju added.

BKU hometown Muzaffarnagar shifts focus to MSP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Muzaffarnagar, Nov 21: With the promise of repeal of contentious farm bills secured, farmers in the UP's Muzaffarnagar have now trained their sights on a law for the Minimum Support Price (MSP).

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement of repealing the three farm laws has sent farmers in celebration in the western Uttar Pradesh town, which is also the headquarters of the Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU).

BKU's president Naresh Tikait and his brother and union spokesperson Rakesh Tikait live in Sisauli village of Muzaffarnagar. Magaram Balyan, a local BKU member, said the government announced the withdrawal of the laws due to pressure from farmers. He claimed the announcement is an attempt to appease voters before the polls.



File photo of BKU spokesperson Rakesh Tikait

said. He also said the farmers' protests have firmly united the Jat community in their opposition to the BJP. The claim was not found wanting of evidence as farmers in the region have been seen to have banned entry of the BJP leaders in their villages.

"Except for their voluntary visits during deaths and condolence prayer meetings, BJP leaders have been banned from entering villages for over a year now," Balyan added. Opposition Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) said the decision to repeal the laws is a big deal as it shows the BJP 'bowing down' to outside the party, which has rarely happened since 2014.

The RLD also said by repealing the laws, the government has not done any favour to farmers as the main problems still remain to be

addressed. "Prime Minister Modi has announced rollback of laws which were not accepted by the farmers from day one. He has just removed the burden off farmers which his government wanted to force on the community," RLD spokesperson Sandeep Chaudhary told PTI.

"The real benefit to farmers would be if the government addresses concerns related to MSP, and delivers on the BJP's promise of doubling farmers' income," Chaudhary said.

Nevertheless, BJP supporters in Muzaffarnagar felt the government should not have given up on the protestors, who may now want to come up with more demands.

"The government should not have done this (repealing farm laws). These 'union-wale' won't

end the protest and will keep on adding demands and blackmail the government," Sunil Kaji, a resident of Satheri in Khatauli area, told PTI.

All the same, he said the announcement will add to the BJP's credibility in the region and may work in its favour in next assembly elections in 2022, and even the general elections in 2024.

Amit Kumar, who lives in Soram and is writing a book on Jat history, said though the decision has been welcomed by people in his region, it has come a bit late.

"Over 700 lives have been lost during the protest. The political atmosphere indicates that BJP's poll prospects will be dented," Kumar, who claimed no affiliation with any farmers union or political party, said.

These laws alone won't help the farmers. The government must now provide legal guarantee for MSP for crops, ensure availability of fertilisers, and resolve other matters critical to farming

MAGARAM BALYAN | BKU MEMBER

"These laws alone won't help the farmers. The government must now provide legal guarantee for MSP for crops, ensure availability of fertilisers, and resolve other matters critical to farming," Balyan

No positive impact in western UP: BJP leaders on repeal of farm laws

THE SAFFRON CAMP IN UTTAR PRADESH BELIEVES THAT IF THE SAME DECISION WOULD HAVE BEEN TAKEN FOUR OR FIVE MONTHS EARLIER, THE POLITICAL SITUATION WOULD HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Nov 21: While the Centre's announcement to repeal the three farm laws is being seen as a political decision with an eye on the forthcoming Assembly elections, many in the BJP believe that it is not going to benefit too much in the poll-bound states especially in Uttar Pradesh as the government reacted late in deciding the fate of the laws.

In his address to the nation Friday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the decision to repeal the three farm laws and the constitutional process to repeal would be completed during the Parliament Session that would start at the end of this month.

BJP leaders in Uttar Pradesh feel that the decision was late and will have no positive impact on the party's electoral prospects in the western part of the state.

The saffron camp in Uttar Pradesh believes that if the same decision would have been taken four or five months earlier, the political situation would have been different.

"This decision can be taken any time since the farmer's protest started a year ago. This delayed decision is not going to help us in Western Uttar Pradesh and it has already caused lots of political damage," a senior Uttar Pradesh BJP leader said.

A section in the state BJP mentioned that if the decision would have been taken before the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) chief Jayant Chaudhary would have not joined hands with the Samajwadi Party (SP).

"RLD-SP alliance will pose a

challenge to us in Western Uttar Pradesh and it could have been avoided if the decision to repeal laws was taken earlier. In that case, RLD may have joined hands with us," a party leader said.

Another leader from the state pointed out that the decision sent two messages among masses: firstly the BJP is "losing ground" and secondly it "dented the strong image" of the Prime Minister.

"People are saying that after realising about losing ground, the Centre has decided to withdraw the laws. It has also dented the 'Kadak' (strong) image of the Prime Minister, which will also go against us in elections as people know that he (Modi) never bowed down to any pressure. But, now the image has changed," he said.

SP fears BJP will bring back farm laws after Assembly polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Nov 21: The Samajwadi Party Sunday expressed apprehension that the three contentious farm laws will be brought again after the 2022 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, citing the statements made by Rajasthan Governor Kalraj Mishra and BJP MP Sakshi Maharaj from Unnao Sakshi Maharaj on them.

The state Congress too slammed the BJP, saying the Centre is on the 'backfoot' and that its 'intention is malafide'.

Both Mishra and Maharaj told reporters Saturday that the laws could be brought again, if needed.

In a tweet in Hindi, the Samajwadi Party charged, "It is absolutely clear that their heart is not



government may bring the bill for farm laws."

"This is the truth of those tendering false apologies to farmers. The farmers will bring a change in 2022," the SP said in the tweet.

Upping the ante against the BJP, general secretary of UP Congress Committee Sharad Misra told PTI, "I am of the view that the Centre is on backfoot, and owing to the strength of the opposition and pressure of the farmers' protest, the government announced the repealing of the three farm laws."

"It was done unwillingly and the intention is malafide. There is every possibility that something will be done by the government to bring back the farm laws, may be in other forms. But, that will also be strongly opposed," he said.

Green nod for India's longest expressway project

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Nov 21: The Ganga Expressway project in Uttar Pradesh has received the environmental clearance, paving the way for the construction of what is being touted as the longest expressway in the country.

According to a government spokesperson, the State Level Environment Impact Authority issued environmental clearance for the 594-km Ganga Expressway project, for which the tendering process has already started.

The estimated cost of the project is ₹36,230 crore. It will be built on PPP mode and tenders have been invited for design, build, finance, operate and transfer.

The expressway will start at Bijauli village in Meerut district from the Meerut-Bulandshahr highway and end at the Prayagraj bypass near the Joodapur Dandu village in



Prayagraj district. It will cover 12 districts, including Meerut, Hapur, Bulandshahr,

Amroha, Sambhal, Badaun, Shahjahanpur, Hardoi, Unnao, Rae Bareilly, Pratapgarh and Prayagraj.

The 594-km-long Ganga Expressway, estimated to cost ₹36,230 crore, will start at Bijauli village in Meerut district and end at the Prayagraj bypass in Prayagraj district

"It will be a six-lane expressway, expandable to eight lanes. Work on land acquisition for the project is on and so far, we have acquired about 94 per cent land. It is estimated that nearly 12,000 people will get temporary employment during the construction of the project while another 1,000 people will get employment during the construction of toll plazas on this stretch," said a government spokesperson.

national

of the day quote

Prime Minister Modi is the biggest 'nautankibaaz' in the country, and by mistake, he has entered politics, else what would have happened to the people of the film industry. All the awards would have been won by Modi

The Congress has neglected Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar. Far from giving him respect and honouring him with the Bharat Ratna, these casteist parties have always neglected and despised him. Then how can these parties be true well-wishers of SCs, STs and OBCs?

We introduced a free pilgrimage scheme for the elderly in Delhi under which they are taken in the comfort of AC trains for free to 12 pilgrimage destinations all over the country, including Haridwar, Rishikesh, Vaishno Devi and Puri

SHORT TAKES

Poachers kill collared tigress

Sidhi (MP): A radio-collared adult tigress from the Sanjay Tiger Reserve was allegedly killed by poachers through electrocution in Madhya Pradesh's Singrauli district, and some persons have been detained in this connection, an official said Sunday. The burnt skin, hairs and collar ID (tracking system) of the tigress, identified as T-30, were found near Banjari village (outside the reserve area) in the Sarai western range of forest in the Singrauli district Saturday, said Y P Singh, Director, Sanjay Tiger Reserve. The tracking signal showed T-30's previous location in the Mohan range (Kusmi) in the Sidhi district and later at Banjari village in the Singrauli district till 6.30 pm November 5 before the contact was lost around 11.30 pm that day, he said.

Health gets top priority in HP

Shimla: Various schemes have been launched by the government to facilitate the people of weaker section with quality health services in Himachal Pradesh, a statement said Sunday. Free medicine scheme is one of them, which proves a boon to the needy. Under this scheme, medicines are being provided free of cost to all patients in various government health institutions, a statement said.

Central team in Chennai

Chennai: A team of Central government officials, led by Rajiv Sharma, Joint Secretary, NATGRID, Ministry of Home Affairs, has arrived here to conduct an assessment of the damages caused in the recent rains in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry, officials said Sunday. The team is to ascertain whether the floods in the state could be considered to be of a severe nature.

Nadda on two-day UP visit from today

New Delhi: BJP president J P Nadda will be on a two-day tour of poll-bound Uttar Pradesh from Monday during which he will attend a number of organizational meetings, including of the party's booth heads from Gorakhpur and Kanpur. Bharatiya Janata Party chief spokesperson Anil Baluni said Nadda will start his programme by offering puja at the Gorakhnath temple and then attend a number of party programmes before reaching Lucknow in the night where he will chair key meetings.



We condemn the PM's silence on Chinese 'intrusion' in Arunachal Pradesh
ABHISHEK SINGHVI | CONGRESS SPOKESPERSON

HEAVY RAINS TO LASH K'TAKA

At a time when people across Karnataka took a sigh of relief waking up to a bright, sunny sky after 15 days, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) Sunday predicted heavy rains across the state for another two days. As rains are not relenting, state authorities are on high alert to face any situation emerging out of copious rainfall



When arms of law extend benefits to law-breakers

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Nov 21: The high-security prison in the national capital - Tihar Jail - known even before independence to keep the criminals at bay, has received much humiliation in the past six months as over three dozen officials associated with the prison have been booked by various law enforcement agencies during the period for extending benefits to the prisoners in one or the other way.

But still there is a catch. The quid pro quo vis-a-vis benefits extended by the accused tainted officials were only meant for the rich prisoners. Inmate or outmate - the poor always stand last in the line.

Firstly it was the Chandra brothers - Ajay Chandra and Sanjay Chandra - former promoters of Unitech, who "utilised the services" of the accused officials.



Notably, both Chandra brothers Ajay and Sanjay, who are in jail since August 2017, are accused of siphoning off home buyers' money. On October 12, as many as 32 Tihar Jail officials were found complicit with the former Unitech promoters. It was alleged that the Chandra brothers were conducting business from inside the Tihar Jail in connivance with the prison staff. The Enforcement Directorate (ED)

highlighted certain disturbing facts relating to the manner in which the premises of Central Jail Tihar was misused by both the inmates. The financial investigating agency also made a startling revelation. The ED said they also unearthed a "secret underground office" in south Delhi being operated by the erstwhile Unitech founder Ramesh Chandra and visited by his sons Sanjay and Ajay while on

parole or bail. The Supreme Court, after taking note of the status report filed by the ED, transferred both the brothers from Central Jail Tihar, Delhi to Arthur Road Jail, Mumbai and Taloja Central Jail, Mumbai.

The Apex Court also directed Delhi Police Commissioner Rakesh Asthana to make an immediate inquiry into the matter. After this, the Delhi Police chief submitted a report September 28. The confidential report prepared by Asthana named the jail officials involved.

It also proposed 23 action points that required immediate consideration of the Centre for enhanced prison management at Tihar. The recommendations included installation of jammers and body scanners. However, the top court November 10, expressed its dissatisfaction over the delay by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in taking action on recommenda-

tions submitted by Commissioner Asthana on the prison reforms. It observed that it is a 'sorry state of affairs' in Tihar jail which has become a 'den of criminals'.

The court told Additional Solicitor General KM Nataraj that recommendations made by the Delhi Police Commissioner were very important and the court wants MHA to take steps to implement them. Even before the dust could settle in the Chandra case, Tihar prison, yet again, found itself in troubled waters.

The silk stocking multi-millionaire "conman" - Suresh Chandrashekhar - who is accused of duping the businessmen, politicians and celebrities, too utilised the services of another lot of tainted officials in the Tihar prison. Suresh was incarcerated at the Tihar Jail in 2017 after he duped politician TTV Dhinakaran of Rs 50 crore.

TMC LEADER HELD ON ATTEMPT TO MURDER CHARGE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Agartala, Nov 21: Tripura police Sunday arrested West Bengal Trinamool Congress leader Sayani Ghosh, who allegedly threatened Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb during a meeting here on Saturday night, on the charge of attempting to murder, a police official said.

Ghosh, the youth unit secretary of TMC West Bengal, was arrested after being called in for questioning in a police station in the state capital Agartala.

The development took place a day before a planned visit by the TMC's national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee to the North-eastern state.

Sub-divisional Police Officer (Sadar) Ramesh Yadav said Ghosh was arrested under IPC Sections 307 (attempt to murder) and 153A (promoting disharmony between two groups) for her comments against the chief minister. Yadav said some persons who were with her allegedly threw stones at a street corner meeting which was being addressed by the Chief Minister.

A police official, who did not want to be named, said a BJP worker lodged a complaint alleging that Ghosh had reached the spot where the meeting was being held and shouted "Khela hobey" (game will happen) and claimed that there were not even 50 people in the gathering. "Khela hobey" is a slogan used by the TMC during the assembly election in West Bengal held in March-April this year. Ghosh was earlier detained for questioning in a police station and arrested later.

Govt allows SI to export 50L Covishield doses to four nations

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 21: The Union government has allowed the Serum Institute of India to export 50 lakh doses of Covid-19 vaccine Covishield under the UN-backed COVAX global vaccine programme to Nepal, Tajikistan and Mozambique, official sources said Sunday.



In addition to these three countries, the SII will also export Covishield to Bangladesh under COVAX, they said. The SII will commence Covid vaccine export under the COVAX programme from November 23 and Nepal will receive the first lot of Covishield November 24.

The government, earlier in October, had permitted the SII to export 10 lakh Covishield doses each to Nepal, Myanmar and Bangladesh under the 'Vaccine Maitri' programme. In a recent communication to the Union Health Ministry, Prakash Kumar Singh, Director, Government and Regulatory Affairs at Serum Institute of India (SII) is learnt to have informed that the Pune-based firm has manufactured stock of 24,89,15,000 doses of Covishield and that the stock is increasing day by day.

COVID BOOSTER DOSE

What top health experts have to say

The Indian Medical Association has called for the third booster dose for the healthcare workers across the nation



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Nov 21: The discussion about booster dose has gained momentum among top health experts as they recommend it to people with comorbidities and healthcare workers.

Some also argue that the priority should be to inoculate the entire population with both doses of vaccines first.

The US government Friday opened up Covid booster shots to all adults in an effort to curb rising infections.

However, Union health minister Mansukh Mandaviya said that a decision on booster dose would be taken based on the expert recommendation only, adding that, the priority is to complete the adult vaccination programme with both doses at the earliest.

Talking to IANS, Dr Samiran Panda, Head, Epidemiology and Infectious diseases division at the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), said that Covid booster dose may be introduced based on the scientific evidence, but this time our focus should be oriented on total vaccination with both doses across

the nation.

Padma Shri Dr Ashok Seth, Chairman Pan Fortis Medical Council, told IANS, "We should not follow the US in administering the booster dose. Instead, we need to focus on second dose of vaccination which have been left behind. Once we will start administering booster dose, our mass vaccination program may be hampered which we can't bear".

Citing the reasons for booster dose in the US, he said that the Delta variant is causing infections in European countries and that is also a reason for booster dose there. However, India has passed that phase now. Healthcare workers were the first to be vaccinated. But no case has yet come after around 9 to 10 months which can advocate the need for the booster doses in India", opined Dr Seth.

The IMA said that after the union government's clarification pertaining to the fact that a policy document on booster dose is underway, the IMA has also consolidated its stand on the booster dose for healthcare workers and other high-risk citizens across the country.

88% of board of directors see cybersecurity as biz risk

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Nov 21: Nearly 88 per cent of boards of directors view cybersecurity as a business risk as opposed to a technology risk. However, only 12 per cent of them have a dedicated board-level cybersecurity committee, according to a new report. Even as business leaders are aware of the

need to secure the enterprise against new and evolving threats, responsibility for security mostly lies with IT leadership, says global market research firm Gartner.

Gartner found that in 85 per cent of organisations, the CIO, CISO or their equivalent was the top person held accountable for cybersecurity and just 10 per cent of organisations held non-IT senior

managers accountable. It's time for executives outside of IT to take responsibility for securing the enterprise, said Paul Proctor, distinguished research vice president at Gartner.

The influx of ransomware and supply chain attacks seen throughout 2021, many of which targeted operation- and mission-critical environments, should be a wake-

up call that security is a business issue, and not just another problem for IT to solve, he added. IT and security leaders are often considered the ultimate authorities for protecting the enterprise from threats.

Yet, business leaders make decisions every day, without consulting the CIO or CISO, that impact the organisation's security,

Proctor stressed. CIOs and CISOs must rebalance accountability for cybersecurity so that it is shared with business and enterprise leaders, the report mentioned.

Gartner recommended that IT and security leaders work with executives and board of directors to establish governance that shares responsibility for business decisions that affect enterprise security

'4cr senior citizens forced to travel on full fare since Mar '20'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 21: Almost four crore senior citizens have been forced to pay full fare for their travel since the railways suspended their concessions due to the coronavirus outbreak in March 2020, a RTI has revealed.

In a reply to a query filed by Madhya Pradesh-based Chandra Shekhar Gaur, the railways has stated that between March 22, 2020 and September 2021, 37,850,668 senior citizens have undertaken journeys on trains.

During this period, train services remained suspended for several months due to the coronavirus-induced lockdown. The concessions,

RTI EXPOSES RAILWAYS

which were suspended from March 2020, have remained suspended to this day.

In the case of senior citizens, while women are eligible for 50 per cent concession, men can avail 40 per cent in all classes. The minimum age limit for a woman is 58 and a man is 60. Over the last two decades, railway concessions have been a much-discussed topic with multiple committees recommending their withdrawal. As a result of this in July 2016, the railways made elderly concession optional while



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

booking tickets. In July 2017, the railways enabled the elderly to even give up their partial or full concession through the "give it up" scheme. "The thing is that the concession given to us was significant and is a huge help for those that cannot

afford it. Senior citizens in many homes are treated as an extra, with no income of their own. These concessions helped them to get around." "Those who can have given up their concessions also. With regular train services running, at least

the senior citizen concessions should be restored. Most elderly cannot afford to pay full fares," said Tapas Bhattacharya, a retired private sector employee, who is travelling to Kolkata with his wife, also a senior citizen, next week said. In a letter last month, Madurai MP Su Venkatesan appealed to the Union railway minister to restore passenger concessions for their railway journeys stating that it was necessary for the elderly in a country where 20 per cent live below the poverty line.

"My parents haven't seen their grandchildren for more than two years. This year also they didn't come as they cannot afford the

tickets without concessions. It is also too much for me to pay. They used to come every year to Delhi and spent six months here," said Subhash Singh, a security guard working in a highrise in Noida, whose parents are both senior citizens and stay in Bihar.

In fact, according to a CAG report of 2019, the response to the 'give it up' scheme from the senior citizen passengers was not very encouraging. The report said that out of total 4.41 crore senior citizen passengers, 7.53 lakh (1.7%) passengers opted to give up 50 per cent concession and 10.9 lakh (2.47%) passengers gave up 100 per cent concession.

international



Lukashenko launched a hybrid war against the EU. This is (the) greatest attempt to destabilise Europe in 30 years. Poland will not yield to blackmail and will do everything to defend the EU's borders
MATEUSZ MORAWIECKI | PM, POLAND

UK TO INVESTIGATE RACIAL BIAS
The British government is investigating whether built-in racial bias in some medical devices led to Black and Asian people getting sick and dying disproportionately from Covid-19. Britain's statistics office has found that, up to March 2021, Black and South Asian people in the UK had higher death rates than their white compatriots



of the day quote

This hysteria is being artificially whipped up. We are being accused of some kind of unusual military activity on our territory by those who have brought in their armed forces from across the ocean. That is, the United States of America
DMITRY PESKOV | KREMLIN SPOKESMAN

We will support Chinese businesses in Pakistan on a priority basis and are grateful to them for their keen interest in accelerating their investment in special economic zones
IMRAN KHAN | PM, PAKISTAN

The fifth wave is starting at lightning speed. There is a very strong increase in infections, but we also know that in France we have a very large vaccination cover
GABRIEL ATTAL | GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN, FRANCE

Stir over virus rules in Austria, Italy, Croatia



Thousands of protesters gather in Vienna after the Austrian government announced a nationwide lockdown to contain the quickly rising coronavirus infections in the country
PTI PHOTO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Vienna, Nov 21: Tens of thousands of protesters, many from far-right groups, marched through Vienna Saturday after the Austrian government announced a nationwide lockdown beginning Monday to contain skyrocketing coronavirus infections. Demonstrations against virus restrictions also took place in Switzerland, Croatia, Italy, Northern Ireland and the Netherlands Saturday, a day after Dutch police opened fire on protesters and seven people were injured in rioting that erupted in Rotterdam. Protesters rallied against coronavirus restrictions and mandatory Covid-19 passes needed in many European countries to enter restaurants, Christmas markets or sports events, as well as mandatory vaccinations. The Austrian lockdown will start

Monday and comes as average daily deaths have tripled in recent weeks and hospitals in heavily hit states have warned that intensive care units are reaching capacity. The lockdown will last at least 10 days but could go up to 20, officials said. Saturday's march started off at Vienna's massive Heldenplatz square. Chanting "Resistance!" and blowing whistles, protesters moved down the city's inner ring road. Many waved Austrian flags

Over the past several days, there have been marches in many European nations as one government after another tightened measures

Dutch police arrested more than 30 people during unrest in The Hague and other towns in the Netherlands Saturday, following much worse violence the previous night

The Austrian lockdown will start Monday and comes as average daily deaths have tripled in recent weeks and hospitals in heavily hit states have warned that intensive care units are reaching capacity

and carried signs mocking Chancellor Alexander Schallenberg and Health Minister Wolfgang Mueckstein.

In Italy, 3,000 turned out in the capital's Circus Maximus, a field where in ancient times Romans staged popular entertainment, to protest against "Green Pass" certificates required at workplaces, restaurants, cinemas, theaters, sports venues and gyms, as well as for long-distance train, bus or ferry travel.

In Croatia, thousands gathered in the capital of Zagreb, carrying flags, nationalist and religious symbols, along with banners against vaccination and what they describe as restrictions of people's freedoms.

Thousands march in Belgium

BRUSSELS: Thousands of people gathered in central Brussels Sunday to protest against the reinforced Covid-19 measures that the government has imposed to counter the latest spike in coronavirus cases. Many among them also protested against the strong advice to get vaccinated and any moves to impose mandatory shots. The protest march lined up behind a huge banner saying "Together for Freedom." There were smoke bombs and firecrackers, but there was no violence during the early part of the march, which was due to conclude outside European Union headquarters.

VOYAGE - SWEDISH BAND'S FIRST ALBUM IN 40 YRS

ABBA top UK charts

AGENCIES

London, Nov 21: Swedish pop group ABBA made a triumphant return to the UK music charts Friday, going straight to no 1 with their first album in 40 years, *Voyage*. The record is the fastest-selling album of the year so far, the UK's Official Charts Company said, with 204,000 chart sales in its first week. Only three other music acts have passed the 200,000 sales figure in the last decade: Adele with *25*, Ed Sheeran with *Divide* and One Direction's *Midnight Memories*. "We are so happy that our fans seem to have enjoyed our new album as much as we enjoyed making it. We are absolutely over the moon to have an album at the top of the charts again," ABBA said in a statement. *Voyage*, which received mixed reviews from critics, is the band's first album since 1981's *The Visitors*. It is ABBA's 10th no 1 album in Britain. This also marks ABBA's 58th total week as UK Number 1 on the Official Albums Chart - only two



other acts in history have spent more weeks at the top, The Beatles and Elvis, the Official Charts Company said. In the summer, ABBA's greatest hits compilation album *Gold* surpassed its 1,000th week on the UK albums chart. Formed in 1972, ABBA have won over legions of fans around the world with hits like *Waterloo* and *Dancing Queen* and sold an estimated 385 million records. They split in the early 1980s, with rumours swirling for years they would reunite on stage. In an interview with agencies last week, member Bjorn Ulvaeus said *Voyage* might be the last new venture by one of the biggest-selling bands of all time.

Calif wildfires torched thousands of giant sequoias

SCIENTISTS SAY HUMAN ACTIVITY, INCLUDING THE UNCHECKED BURNING OF FOSSIL FUELS, IS A MAJOR CONTRIBUTOR TO THIS PLANETARY HEATING

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Los Angeles, Nov 21: Wildfires that tore through California's forests this year killed thousands of giant sequoia trees, officials said in the first full-scale assessment of the toll on the rare species. Two huge lightning-sparked blazes burned up to 3,600 of the trees, each of them more than four feet (120 centimeters) in diameter, leaving them dead or expected to die within the next five years. The figure represents five percent of the planet's entire reserve of the trees - the largest species by volume in the world - and comes after up to 14 percent of them were wiped out by fires a year earlier. "The sobering reality is that we have seen another huge loss within a finite population of these iconic trees that are irreplaceable in many lifetimes," said Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks

Superintendent Clay Jordan. California and other parts of the western United States were ravaged by huge, hot and fast-moving wildfires this year, driven by years of drought and a warming climate. Images of General Sherman - the world's largest tree - being wrapped in foil by firefighters to protect it from flames spread around the world. The tree, which looms 275 feet (83 meters) above the forest floor, was unscathed.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beijing, Nov 21: China reduced the level of its diplomatic relations with Lithuania to below ambassador level Sunday in retaliation for the Baltic nation allowing Taiwan, the island democracy claimed by Beijing as part of its territory, to open a representative office.

China earlier expelled the Lithuanian ambassador, reflecting its intense sensitivity over the status of Taiwan, which Beijing says has no right to conduct foreign affairs. China also withdrew its own ambassador from Lithuania. The Foreign Ministry said relations would be downgraded to the level of charge d'affaires, an embassy's No 2 official.

Lithuania's move reflects growing interest among governments in expanding ties with Taiwan, a major trader and center for high-tech industry, at a time when Beijing has irritated its neighbors and Western governments with an in-



creasingly assertive foreign and military policy.

Taiwan and the mainland have been ruled separately since 1949 following a civil war.

The Foreign Ministry accused Lithuania of "undermining Chinese sovereignty and territorial integrity." It called on the Lithuanian government to "correct the mistakes immediately."

Beijing refuses to have official relations with governments that recognize Taiwan as a sovereign

country. It has persuaded all but 15 countries, most of them small and poor in Africa and Latin America, to switch recognition to the mainland.

Many governments, including the United States and Japan, have official diplomatic ties with Beijing while maintaining extensive commercial ties with Taiwan. Many maintain relations with the island's democratically elected government through trade offices that serve as informal embassies.



Sequoias generally regenerate well after wildfire, though reports of inadequate regeneration in high severity areas are raising concerns. Regeneration failures could potentially occur if the cones and/or seeds were incinerated... seeds did not survive the smoldering fire, or seeds (were) washed away due to surface erosion
CLAY JORDAN | SEQUOIA AND KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARKS

The imposing giants are well adapted to fires, with thick bark that protects them from heat. In their lifetimes, which are measured in thousands

fires this year tore through 27 groves of the trees, which are only found in the Sierra Nevada mountains.

Forest officials say the intensity of some of these blazes was worrying.

The report noted, however, that this year's fire season was not all bad news, with previous "prescribed burns" having had their intended effect in reducing the amount of fuel available to uncontrolled blazes.

Some forestry experts say decades of zero tolerance of fires has left California's woodland packed with potential fuel that became like a huge tinder box as it dried out in the historic drought.

They say allowing some fires to burn this excess vegetation, or deliberately setting blazes in a controlled manner, helps to reduce the intensity and destructiveness of the fires.

MEMORIAL FOR VICTIMS



Thousands of flags were placed on the lawn in front of the observatory in memory of those who have died of Covid-19 in Los Angeles County
PTI PHOTO

Sudan military reinstates PM

AGENCIES

Khartoum, Nov 21: Sudan's military reinstated Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok Sunday and announced the release of all political detainees after weeks of deadly unrest triggered by a coup.

Under an agreement signed with military leader General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, Hamdok will lead a civilian government of technocrats for a transitional period. Hamdok said he had agreed to the deal to stop the bloodshed.

"Sudanese blood is precious, let us stop the bloodshed and direct the youth's energy into building and development," he said.

But the civilian coalition that shared power with the military previously said it opposed any talks with the putschists and called



Even as news of the deal spread, thousands of protesters marched towards the presidential palace in Khartoum in the early afternoon and called for the downfall of Burhan

for protests to continue on Sunday.

Hamdok was placed under house arrest when the military seized power Oct 25, derailing a transition towards democracy agreed after the overthrow of Omar al-Bashir in 2019 that ended his three decades of autocratic rule.

The military dissolved Hamdok's cabinet and detained a number of

civilians who held top positions under the power-sharing deal agreed with the military after Bashir was ousted.

The coup triggered mass demonstrations against the military and medics aligned with the protest movement say security forces have killed 40 civilians in increasingly violent crackdowns.

SHORT TAKES

Chaos erupts as gun goes off in airport

Atlanta: A passenger awaiting a search at the Atlanta airport's main security checkpoint reached in his bag and grabbed a firearm, and it went off, causing chaos among travellers and prompting a temporary FAA ground stop on flights Saturday afternoon, officials said. The man, later identified as a convicted felon, ran with the gun from the checkpoint and escaped out an airport exit, the Transportation Security Administration said. Authorities said it was not an active shooter incident and described the discharge as accidental.

Over half of Iran fully vaccinated

Tehran: More than half of Iran's population has been fully vaccinated against Covid-19, the health ministry said Saturday, as infection and death rates in the country have started to drop. More than 44.2 million of Iran's 83 million population have received two coronavirus vaccine doses since the country began its inoculation campaign in February, according to ministry figures. Another 12.2 million people have received a single vaccine dose.

Palestinian kills 1, injures 4 in Israel

Jerusalem: A Palestinian assailant killed one Israeli and injured four others before being fatally shot by Israeli police near the entrance to a flashpoint Jerusalem holy site Sunday, police said. Police said the attack took place near an entrance to a contested flashpoint shrine known to Jews as the Temple Mount and to Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary. Violence surrounding the site, which is considered holy by both faiths, has triggered previous rounds of fighting between Israel and the Palestinians, most recently in May.

S'pore, India to resume flights

Singapore: Singapore has reached an agreement with India's Ministry of Civil Aviation on the resumption of scheduled commercial passenger flights between the two countries, the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS) said Sunday. Singapore's vaccinated travel lane (VTL) with India will start November 29, with six designated flights daily from Chennai, Delhi and Mumbai. Applications for vaccinated travel passes for short-term visitors and long-term pass holders from India will start Monday.

Patanjali TV channels stir dispute in Nepal

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kathmandu, Nov 21: Two television channels owned by yoga guru Ramdev in Nepal has stirred controversy after they were being operated without registration.

During a function Friday, Sher Bahadur Deuba launched the two channels - Aastha Nepal TV and Patanjali Nepal TV - in the presence of Ramdev, Acharaya Balkrishna and other top leaders of major political parties.

"Foreign investment in the media sector is prohibited as per the Nepali law. We have not received any application to register these two television channels," Gogon Bahadur Hamal, Director General, Department of Information and Broadcasting, said.

"We have formed an investigation team to study the registration of the television channels. If they have started broadcasting without prior approval, we will take action."



It is said that multi-national company Patanjali has invested in the two channels where Ramdev and Acharaya Balkrishna are the main promoters. As per the Nepali law, foreign investment is not allowed in media and film sectors.

But if any foreign television channel needs to operate from Nepal, one should have fulfilled all required legal and other procedures.

During the function, Prime Minister Deuba had assured that he will provide land for Patanjali for medical purpose.

The two channels were part of Patanjali group's latest venture. Founded by Acharya Balakrishna in 2006, Patanjali went on from starting as an Ayurveda medicine manufacturing company to other fields including clothing (Patanjali Paridhan), dairy (Patanjali Daary), food items and more.

This is not the first time that a Patanjali product was landed in controversy in Nepal. Earlier in June, the Himalayan nation had banned the Coronil kit.

business



Northeast states will be taken care of to go on their own identity and not to rush either to Delhi or Kolkata for every issue
PIYUSH GOYAL | UNION MINISTER

CARS24 SIGNS MEGA DEAL IN DUBAI

CARS24, India's largest e-commerce platform for pre-owned vehicles has leased 1,000,000 sq/ft commercial facility in Jebel Ali, with a total contract value in excess of AED 40 million, in one of Dubai's largest ever leasing deals on record. With a company value of over \$2 billion, CARS24 is revolutionising the way pre-owned cars are bought in the UAE, through their next generation, ecommerce platform for used cars



of the day quote

We had a precipitous drop in revenue at the beginning of Covid-19. We've seen all of that come back This year (fiscal) for the first time in our history, we'll get close to half a billion dollars (revenue)

WARREN HARRIS | CEO AND MD, TATA TECHNOLOGIES

It is our choice to remain transparent and consistent, and that is the value add we are bringing into the world of social media

APRAMEYA RADHAKRISHNA | CO-FOUNDER AND CEO, KOOL

If you look at the market value that has been created in the fintech space in the last 2-3 years, it is close to \$5 trillion. We are looking for a fintech company which has a minimum asset valuation in the range of \$500 million and upper limit of \$2 billion

SAJA PILLAI | CHAIRMAN AND CEO, MCLAREN TECHNOLOGY ACQUISITION CORP

SHORT TAKES

FPIs at ₹19,712cr in Nov so far

New Delhi: Foreign portfolio investors (FPI) were net buyers in the Indian markets at ₹19,712 crore in November so far. As per depositories' data, they invested ₹14,051 crore into equities and ₹5,661 crore in debt segment between November 1-18. This translated into total net investment of ₹19,712 crore during the period under review. In October, FPIs remained net sellers at ₹12,437 crore.

SBI owes Jan Dhan a/c holders ₹164cr

New Delhi: State Bank of India (SBI) is yet to return ₹164 crore of undue fee charged from the account holders of Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) towards digital payments during April 2017 and December 2019, a report said. "On directions from the government, SBI has returned just about ₹90 crore, thereby withholding the bigger chunk of at least ₹164 crore with itself," said the report prepared by IIT-Mumbai. It said that during April 2017 to September 2020, SBI had collected over ₹254 crore towards at least 14 crore UPI/ RuPay transactions by charging ₹17.70 per transactions on BSDBA customers under the PMJDY.

Outdated IECs to be deactivated: DGFT

New Delhi: The Commerce Ministry's foreign trade arm DGFT will deactivate all importer-exporter codes (IECs) that have not been updated after January 1, 2014, with effect from December 6, 2021, a move which would help in knowing the actual number of real traders in the country. The Importer-Exporter Code (IEC) is a key business identification number that is mandatory for exports or imports. No person shall make any import or export except under an IEC number granted by the DGFT.

Bounce Infinity to be launched Dec 2

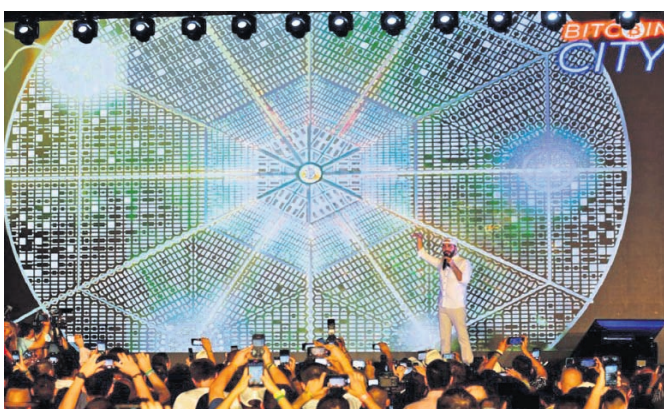
Mumbai: Electric scooter rental startup Bounce has said that its maiden consumer e-scooter, Infinity, is set to be rolled out early next month and the deliveries are expected to commence from early 2022. The Bangalore-based firm had acquired 22Motors, including its manufacturing unit at Bhiwadi, Rajasthan, in a deal valued at \$7 million.

El Salvador plans world's first Bitcoin City backed by bonds

THE CITY PLANNED IN THE EASTERN REGION OF LA UNION WOULD GET GEOTHERMAL POWER FROM A VOLCANO AND NOT LEVY ANY TAXES EXCEPT FOR VALUE ADDED TAX

AGENCIES

San Salvador, Nov 21: El Salvador plans to build the world's first "Bitcoin City," funded initially by bitcoin-backed bonds, President Nayib Bukele said on Saturday, doubling down on his bet to harness the crypto currency to fuel investment in the Central American country. Speaking at an event closing a week-long promotion of bitcoin in El Salvador, Mr Bukele said the city planned in the eastern region of La Union would get geothermal power from a volcano and not levy



any taxes except for value added tax (VAT).

"Invest here and make all the money you want," Mr Bukele said in English, dressed all in white and wearing a reversed baseball cap, in the beach resort of Mizata. "This is a fully ecological city that works and is energised by a volcano." Half of the VAT levied would be used to fund the bonds issued to build the city, and the other half would pay for services such as garbage collection. Mr Bukele said, estimating the public infrastructure would cost around 300,000 bitcoins.

El Salvador in September became the first country in the world to adopt bitcoin as legal tender.

Although Mr Bukele is a popular president, opinion polls show Salvadorans are skeptical about his love of bitcoin, and its bumpy introduction has fueled protests against the government.

"If you want bitcoin to spread over the world, we should build some Alexandrias," said Mr Bukele, a tech savvy 40-year-old who in September proclaimed himself dictator of El Salvador on Twitter in an apparent joke.

Tax kitty to surpass budget hopes: Secy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 21: With the net direct tax collection till October closing in on ₹6 lakh crore and average monthly GST mop-up likely around ₹1.15 lakh crore this fiscal, the government's tax collection kitty will surpass budget estimates this financial year, Revenue Secretary Tarun Bajaj said.

In an interview with PTI, Bajaj said the relief in excise duty on petrol and diesel and customs duty on edible oil will cost the exchequer about ₹80,000 crore this financial year, and the revenue department will start calculating the tax mop-up position vis-a-vis budget estimates for this fiscal after the December advance tax number.

"After refunds also, we have touched almost ₹6 lakh crore till October in direct taxes... It is looking good. Hopefully, we should exceed it."



"Though we have given a lot of relief in indirect taxes in petrol, diesel and edible oil, also there are some sunset that have come in customs duty where the total benefit would be about ₹75,000-80,000 crore, but still I think we should exceed the budgeted estimates on both direct and indirect taxes," Bajaj said.

With regard to the goods and

services tax (GST) revenues, Bajaj said the collections in November will also be good numbers but December mop-up will be little lukewarm. The pick-up in collections will be visible again in the March quarter.

"The revenues are looking good, GST revenues are also good. We crossed ₹1.30 lakh crore (in October). This month, I think we

The government has budgeted a 9.5 per cent growth in tax collections at ₹22.2 lakh crore for 2021-22 fiscal (April-March). In the last fiscal, the mop-up was ₹20.2 lakh crore

Of this, revenues from direct taxes are estimated to be around ₹11 lakh, including ₹5.47 lakh crore from corporate tax and ₹5.61 lakh crore from income tax

Customs collection in the current fiscal is budgeted at ₹1.36 lakh crore, excise duty at ₹3.35 lakh crore. Besides, Centre's GST revenues, including compensation cess, are pegged at ₹6.30 lakh crore

should get a good GST number. This was Diwali, our GST revenue will keep changing. But, I think the run rate should not go below ₹1.15 lakh crore. Overall, we should do well in GST, excise duty and customs duty, also we will achieve our budgeted estimates. So, overall, we will exceed," Bajaj said.

DUTY ANOMALY CORRECTED

12% GST notified on MMF, yarn, fabrics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 21: The finance ministry has notified uniform 12 per cent GST rate on manmade fibre (MMF), yarn, fabrics and apparel, thereby addressing the inverted tax structure in the MMF textile value chain.

The taxation of inputs at higher rates than finished products created build up of credits and cascading costs. It further led to accumulation of taxes at various stages of the MMF value chain and blockage of crucial working capital for the industry.

The GST Council, chaired by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and comprising state finance ministers, had in its previous meeting on September 17 de-



cidated that the inverted duty anomalies in the textile sector would be corrected from January 1, 2022.

Giving effect to this decision, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) November 18 notified 12 per cent GST rate for MMF, MMF yarn and MMF fabrics.

Experts said though there is a provision in GST law to claim the unutilised Input Tax Credit (ITC) as a refund, there were other complications and resulted in more compliance burden.

STRICTER EMISSION NORMS

Maruti to stay away from diesel segment

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 21: Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) has ruled out getting back into the diesel segment as it believes sale of such vehicles would further come down with the onset of the next phase of emission norms in 2023, according to a senior company official.

The country's largest carmaker believes the next phase of emission norms would jack up the cost of diesel vehicles, thus further impacting their sales in the market which for the last few years has seen a gradual shift towards petrol cars.

"We are not going to be in the diesel space. We had indicated earlier that we will study it and if there is customer demand we can make a comeback. But going forward, we will not be participating in the diesel space," MSI Chief Technical Officer C V Raman told PTI in an interaction.

He cited the upcoming stricter emission norms as a primary reason to avoid diesel-powered cars.

In 2023 the new phase of emission norms will come which is likely to drive up the cost. So we believe that diesel percentages may



further come down. We do not know about the competition but as MSI we do not have any intention to participate in the diesel space, Raman noted.

As per industry estimates, the share of diesel vehicles is currently less than 17 per cent of the overall passenger vehicle (PV) sales. It is a massive reduction from 2013-14 when diesel cars used to account for 60 per cent of the overall sales.

Already many of the automakers in the country have junked diesel trims of their respective portfolios with the onset of the BS-VI emission regime from April 1, 2020. MSI had discontinued diesel models from its portfolio with the onset of the stricter BS-VI emission norms.

INVESTORS BET BIG ON SIPs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 21: Inflows in the mutual fund industry through systematic investment plans or SIPs reached close to ₹67,000 crore in the first seven months of the ongoing fiscal, suggesting growing popularity of the route for investment among retail investors.

This comes following an inflow of ₹96,080 crore through the route in 2020-21, data with the Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi) showed. Moreover, mutual fund SIP contribution has seen more than two-fold rise during the last five years. It was at ₹43,921 crore during 2016-17.

Also, the monthly collection through SIP surged to an all-time high of ₹10,519 crore in October, higher than ₹10,351 crore in

INFLOWS AT ₹67K CR IN FY22



September. Further, SIPs' assets under management (AUM) climbed to ₹5.53 lakh crore at the end of October from ₹4.28 lakh crore in March-end.

Over the past five years, SIP AUM has grown 30 per cent annually, twice as fast as the growth in the overall mutual fund industry's assets base.

The number of new SIPs registered was 23.83 lakh in October.

Total registrations reached to 1.5 crore in the first seven months (April-October) of the current fiscal 2021-22. This was way higher than the 1.41 crore new SIP registrations in the entire preceding financial year.

Currently, mutual funds have about 4.64 crore SIP accounts through which investors regularly invest in mutual fund schemes.

"Staggered investment approach (via SIP or STP) in equity markets seems the ultimate solution to ride the wave of uncertainty as corrections would bring down the average cost of your total investments or in case the bull run continues, investor would not lose out on opportunity cost," said Akshat Garg, Manager, Research at Investica, platform for investing in mutual funds.

PNB server exposed customer data for about seven months

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 21: A vulnerability in the server of Punjab National Bank allegedly exposed the personal and financial information of its about 180 million customers for about seven months, according to cyber security firm CyberX9.

CyberX9 has claimed that the vulnerability provided access to the en-

tire digital banking system of PNB with administrative control. Meanwhile, the bank has confirmed about the glitch but denied any exposure of critical data due to the vulnerability.

PNB said customer data applications are not affected due to this and server has been shut down as a precautionary measure.

"Punjab National Bank kept severely compromising the security

of funds, personal and financial information of over 180 million customers for about the last 7 months. PNB only woke up and fixed the vulnerability when CyberX9 discovered the vulnerability and notified PNB through CERT-In and NCITPC," said CyberX9 MD Himanshu Pathak.

He said CyberX9 research team discovered a very critical security issue in PNB which was leading to admin-

9 of top-10 firms lose ₹1.47L crore

New Delhi: The combined market valuation of nine of 10 most valued companies declined by ₹1,47,360.93 crore last week, with Reliance Industries emerging as the biggest laggard. Infosys was the only gainer from the top-10 list. During the holiday-truncated week, the 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex tumbled 1,050.68 points or 1.73 per cent. Markets were closed Friday on account of 'Guru Nanak Jayanti'. The market valuation of Reliance Industries Limited tumbled ₹75,961.53 crore to reach ₹15,68,550.17 crore. In the ranking of top-10 firms, Reliance Industries Limited maintained its top position, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever Limited, ICICI Bank, HDFC, Bajaj Finance, SBI and Kotak Mahindra Bank.

Over 70K exporters gear up for BFCM sale via Amazon

BLACK FRIDAY IS CELEBRATED A DAY AFTER THANKSGIVING WITH RETAILERS WOOING POTENTIAL SHOPPERS WITH SPECIAL DEALS AND DISCOUNTS. ONLINE RETAILERS HAD STARTED OFFERING SPECIAL PROMOTIONS ON THE MONDAY THAT FOLLOWED THANKSGIVING WEEKEND, HENCE THE NAME CYBER MONDAY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 21: Amazon India Sunday said over 70,000 Indian exporters, who are part of its Global Selling programme, will offer millions of 'Made in India' products to global customers during the annual Black Friday and Cyber Monday (BFCM) sale.

The Black Friday and Cyber Monday sale starts November 25 and ends November 29.

Amazon customers globally will be able to discover and enjoy a range of products across categories, including Home and Kitchen, STEM Toys, Apparel, Health and Personal Care, Office Products, Jewellery, Beauty and Furniture by exporters across India, according to a statement.



INDIAN EXPORTERS ARE LAUNCHING OVER 52,000 NEW PRODUCTS ON AMAZON'S GLOBAL WEBSITES FOR THE UPCOMING HOLIDAY SEASON

AMAZON SAID IT WORKS WITH INDIAN EXPORTERS TO HELP THEM IDENTIFY KEY HOLIDAY SHOPPING TRENDS TO BRING IN RELEVANT PRODUCT ASSORTMENT; SUPPORTS THEM WITH LOGISTICS SOLUTIONS TO GET THEIR INVENTORY READY, AND GUIDES THEM TO MARKET THEIR PRODUCTS THROUGH A RANGE OF DEALS AND ADVERTISING OPTIONS

IN JANUARY 2020, AMAZON HAD MADE THREE IMPORTANT COMMITMENTS TO INDIA - DIGITALLY ENABLING 10 MILLION MSMEs IN INDIA, ENABLING EXPORTS WORTH \$10 BILLION AND CREATING ONE MILLION INCREMENTAL JOBS - BY 2025

season in India, it has traditionally been a key growth period for our selling partners and with more and more people relying on e-commerce for products globally, we believe that the 2021 BFCM sale period will help accelerate the exports business for our sellers," Amazon India Director of Global Trade Abhijit Kamra said.

He added that e-commerce exports help lower the entry barrier for Indian MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises) to build and scale their exports business.

"Through Amazon Global Selling, we will continue to make exports easy and accessible for MSMEs across India and contribute to the government's vision of boosting exports," he said. Some of the globally popular

Indian brands from Amazon Global Selling who would be offering their unique products and creations this holiday season include Skillmatics (toys); clothing brands like Virgin Crafts and Stylore; and Vahdam (tea brand).

Amazon Global Selling is one of Amazon's flagship programme that helps Indian MSMEs start or expand their exports business using e-commerce. The programme was launched in India in 2015 to help Indian exporters reach customers worldwide through Amazon's international websites and marketplaces.

Currently, there are more than 70,000 exporters across India on the programme. Amazon Global Selling has surpassed \$3 billion in cumulative sales till now.

Rohit, Axar lift India

Zverev denies Djoko final ticket

ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHAHAR, KISHAN TO JOIN INDIA A

Kolkata: Pacer Deepak Chahar and young wicketkeeper-batter Ishan Kishan have been added to India A squad, that will travel to South Africa for three four-day Test matches. "Yes, Deepak and Ishan have been drafted to the squad. They will finish the match in Kolkata and link up with the A team before they leave for South Africa," a senior BCCI official confirmed the development to PTI. It is understood that Ishan is being sent because the Chetan Sharma-led committee, by mistake, had kept only one wicket-keeper for the 'A' tour in Railways' Upendra Yadav.

order player:

Harshal Patel is a welcome addition with his sincere efforts but the middle order still remains a bit iffy as it didn't perform up to expectation in any of the games. A few like Ruturaj Gaikwad and Avesh Khan went untested but the skipper will surely use all his options going forward.

In Rohit's bid to test the team's character by batting first, the skipper led the way with five fours and three sixes in his sublime knock but despite a blazing start, the Indians stuttered in the middle overs before Harshal Patel (18, 11b) and Deepak Chahar (21 n o, 8b) used their long handles which fetched 50 runs in last five overs.

Ishan Kishan (29), Shreyas Iyer (25) and Venkatesh (20) all got starts but couldn't convert it into a big score. New Zealand's stand-in captain Mitchell Santner (3/27) was excellent with the ball for the visitors.

BRIEF SCORES

India 184/7 (Rohit Sharma 56, Ishan Kishan 29, Shreyas Iyer 25, Deepak Chahar 21 n o, Venkatesh Iyer 20, Harshal Patel 18; Mitchell Santner 3/27) **beat New Zealand 111** (Martin Gupthill 51; Axar Patel 3/9, Harshal Patel 2/26, Venkatesh Iyer 1/12) **by 73 runs.**

Turin, Nov 21: For the second time this year, Alexander Zverev has denied Novak Djokovic the chance to play for a big trophy. Following up his win over the top-ranked player in the semifinals of the Tokyo Olympics, Zverev beat Djokovic 7-6(7-4), 4-6, 6-3 at the same stage of the ATP Finals Saturday.

"Every time we play against each other, it's very high level," Zverev said. "This year we played each other five times. Every time we played for multiple hours and it was very physical."

The result means Djokovic can't match Roger Federer's record of six titles at the season-ending event for the top eight players. At least not this year.

Instead, Zverev will play second-ranked Daniil Medvedev in Sunday's final. "He's the greatest player of all time and I think people forget that sometimes," Zverev said of Djokovic, who shares the record of 20 Grand Slam titles with Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal.

Medvedev, the US Open champion, beat first-time qualifier Casper Ruud 6-4, 6-2 earlier as he seeks to defend his title in the first edition of the tournament in Turin — after 12 years in London.

Medvedev has won his last five meetings with Zverev, including a round-robin match earlier this week that was decided in a third-set tie-breaker. Zverev won this event in 2018.

Djokovic committed a series of uncharacteristic baseline errors to hand Zverev the decisive break midway through the third set. Zverev then held his nerve, saving a break point, before serving a slicing ace down the T on his first



his first set point that Djokovic couldn't return.

In September at the US Open, Medvedev ended Djokovic's bid for a calendar-year Grand Slam by beating the Serb in the final to lift his first trophy at a major.

Dictating play from the start against Ruud, Medvedev improved to 9-0 at the ATP Finals since going 0-3 in his 2019 debut.

An in-side-out forehand winner from Medvedev that concluded a 32-shot rally led to an early break in the opening set. Then Medvedev began varying his game more with forays to the net and drop shots as he again broke midway through the second set.

Ruud was broken again when he interrupted a point to challenge a call, which held up under review, handing Medvedev a chance to serve the match out.

Medvedev, who didn't face a single break point and won 11 of 15 points at the net, finished it off with a perfectly executed serve and volley on his first match point.

Ruud, who also lost to Djokovic in straight sets in his opening round-robin match, said that getting beat soundly by the top two players "makes me want to seek revenge and become a better player for the next year."



Rohit Sharma lofts one during his innings; (inset) Axar Patel celebrates a wicket against New Zealand, Sunday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Nov 21: Rohit Sharma (56, 31, 5x4, 3x6) batted in style and led with panache to script a near perfect tale on his full-time captaincy debut as India handed T20 World Cup runners-up New Zealand the ignominy of a 3-0 series defeat after a 73-run win in the third T20I here Sunday.

The Indian skipper first made a statement with the bat in India's 184/7 and then made some immaculate captaincy calls which witnessed New Zealand's surrender for a paltry 111 runs in 17.2 overs.

It was a second back-to-back bilateral T20I series triumph with a clean sweep for India after beating the Black Caps 5-0 in their own den in 2020.

Axar Patel (3/9) bowled accurately and also got one to turn as his three wickets in Powerplay literally ended New Zealand's resistance and the rest was a mere formality.

The New Zealand team looked bone tired after a gruelling T20 World Cup campaign and the result won't be a fair reflection of the team's capabilities as they went through the motions for the better part of the three games.

For India, who were aiming to reset the button, the series win will certainly give them a few pointers going forward. For Rohit and head coach Rahul Dravid, this series was about checking what kind of ammunition they have going forward.

Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Ravichandran Ashwin's return to form in white ball cricket augurs well as there is no substitute for experience.

Venkatesh Iyer has shown potential and needs to be persisted with. He bowled steadily and needs more game time to become a middle-order enforcer having been a top-

Xavi begins Barca job with win vs Espanyol



Xavi Hernandez is giving instructions to Sergio Busquets and Gerard Pique during the match, Saturday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Barcelona, Nov 21: Xavi Hernandez needed a penalty to start his return to Camp Nou as Barcelona coach in winning fashion.

Barcelona's 1-0 win against Espanyol Saturday began the way Xavi wanted, with his team dominating the ball like the Spain great had when he joined Lionel Messi and Andres Iniesta to forge one of football's greatest sides as its mid-field maestro.

But the same problems that had led to the demise of his predecessor soon emerged. Barcelona's attack failed to turn its huge advantage in possession into shots on goal other than Memphis Depay's second-half penalty, while its defense came apart in the final stretch.

Only Espanyol's misfiring forwards stopped the Catalan derby from ending in a draw.

The crowd of 74,000 chanted "Xavi! Xavi!" in the sixth minute in honor of the number Xavi wore for 17 seasons when he helped Barcelona win 25 titles. He was hired two weeks ago before an international break for club competition when Ronald Koeman was let go after one too many painful defeats.

Barcelona moved into sixth place in the Spanish league, eight points behind leader Sevilla and second-place Real Sociedad. Ivan Rakitic's stoppage-time goal lifted Sevilla to the top of the table after fighting back for a 2-2 home draw with Alaves. Atletico Madrid also needed a late goal by center back Felipe Monteiro to edge Osasuna 1-0 at home.

Man United fire Solskjaer

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, Nov 21: Manchester United fired Ole Gunnar Solskjaer after three years as manager Sunday after a fifth loss in seven Premier League games.

"Ole will always be a legend at Manchester United and it is with regret that we have reached this difficult decision," United said a day after a 1-4 loss to Watford.

Former midfielder Michael Carrick, who was on Solskjaer's coaching staff will be in temporary charge, starting with a trip to Spain for a Champions League match at Villarreal in the group stage Monday. United said it would look to then appoint a manager only until the end of the season. Solskjaer's future has hung in the balance before but he has finally lost his job at the club where he was adored as a player, notably for scoring the dramatic late winner in the 1999 Champions League final. He couldn't replicate that success as a manager, failing to win a single trophy.

"While the past few weeks have been disappointing, they should not obscure all the work he has done over the past three years to rebuild the foundations for long-term success," United said. "Ole leaves with our sincerest thanks for his tireless ef-



forts as manager and our very best wishes for the future.

"His place in the club's history will always be secure, not just for his story as a player, but as a great man and a manager who gave us many great moments. He will forever be welcome back at Old Trafford as part of the Manchester United family."

Liverpool rout Arsenal
Liverpool handed Arsenal a harsh reality check Saturday by tearing through the Gunners in the second half for a 4-0 win in the Premier League. A resurgent Arsenal side had the chance to climb above Liverpool in the

standings with a win, but Jurgen Klopp's side gave the visitors a reminder that there is still a big gulf in class between the teams.

Liverpool's unbeaten start to the season had ended at West Ham before the international break but the Reds looked back to their best at Anfield.

Sadio Mane scored the opener in the first half and Liverpool then dismantled Mikel Arteta's side after the break, with Diogo Jota, Mohamed Salah and substitute Takumi Minamino running up the scoreline.

Arteta got into a heated shouting match with Klopp on the touchline when the game was still scoreless, and the incident seemed to spark both the Anfield crowd and Liverpool's players. Arsenal were on a 10-match unbeaten streak.

Messi's 1st league goal helps PSG win

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, Nov 21: Lionel Messi scored his first goal in the French league (Ligue 1) and Kylian Mbappe grabbed the fastest goal of his career as Paris Saint-Germain beat Nantes 3-1.

Messi sealed PSG's win in the 87th minute from Mbappe's pass at the end of a counterattack. After receiving the ball, the Argentina star quickly advanced near the edge of the box, dribbled past a defender and curled one of his signature left-footed shots past Nantes goalkeeper Alban Lafont.

Messi, who joined from Barcelona this summer, had already scored three Champions League goals for his new team but had failed to find the net in five previous Ligue 1 appearances.

Playing in front of a buoyant crowd at Parc des Princes, the nine-time champions maintained their unbeaten record at home this season. PSG has a 12-point lead over Rennes, which moved to second place with a 2-0 win over Montpellier.

Ahead of a trip to Manchester City in the Champions League Wednesday, PSG coach Mauricio Pochettino started with the trio of attacking stars, Mbappe, Messi and Neymar.

PSG got the perfect start as the home side needed less than two minutes to take the lead, with



Mbappe scoring his seventh goal of the season. According to Opta, it was PSG's fastest league goal since May 2017, and Mbappe's fastest goal in his professional career.

PSG were reduced to 10 men in the 65th after goalkeeper Keylor Navas received a red card for a clumsy foul outside the penalty box on Ludovic Blas.

Nantes pushed hard for an equaliser and Randal Kolo Muani beat the offside trap to level the scoring in the 76th.

Nantes were unlucky when Dennis Appiah lobbed his own goal as he tried to intercept a low pass from Messi, instead deflecting the ball into the back of the net, before Messi opened his French league account.

Pramod bags 3 silver in Uganda tourney

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kampala, Nov 18: Odisha's Major Dhyana Chand Khel Ratna award-winning shuttler Pramod Bhagat settled for three silver medals, while his compatriot Sukant Kadam claimed a gold after two years at the Uganda Para Badminton International here, Sunday.

World No.5 Kadam defeated fellow Indian Nilesh Balu Gaikwad 21-16, 17-21, 21-10 in the SL4 category. In the men's singles SL3 finals, World No.1 Bhagat was defeated by Manoj Sarkar 19-21, 16-21. In the men's doubles, Bhagat and Sarkar lost 21-10, 20-22, 15-21 to Mohammad Arwaz Ansari and Deep Ranjan Bisoyee. In SL3-SU5 mixed doubles, the Tokyo Paralympics gold winner and Palak Joshi lost 19-21, 16-21 to Ruthick Ragupathi and Manasi Girishchandra Joshi.

'Missing Peng' reappears in public at Beijing event

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beijing, Nov 21: Missing tennis star Peng Shuai reappeared in public Sunday at a youth tournament in Beijing, according to photos released by the organizer, as the ruling Communist Party tried to quell fears abroad while suppressing information in China about Peng after she accused a senior leader of sexual assault.

The post by the China Open on the Weibo social media service made no mention of Peng's disappearance or her accusation.

The three-time Olympian and former Wimbledon champion was shown standing beside a court, waving and signing oversized commemorative tennis balls for children. The ruling party appears to be

trying to defuse alarm about Peng without acknowledging her disappearance after she, November 2, accused Zhang Gaoli, a member of the party's ruling Standing Committee until 2018, of forcing her to have sex.

Peng's disappearance and official silence in response to appeals for information prompted calls for a boycott of the Winter Olympics in Beijing in February, a prestige event for the Communist Party.

The women's professional tour threatened to pull events out of China. Comments on Chinese social media Sunday criticised the Women's Tennis Association. "When will the WTA get out of China?" said a comment on the Sina Weibo social media service, signed "Sleep Time."

Hamilton closes gap to Max



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Losail, Nov 21: Lewis Hamilton inched closer to the Formula One championship lead with a dominating victory Sunday in the inaugural Qatar Grand Prix to earn back-to-back wins and chip away at Max Verstappen's points advantage.

Hamilton, who also won last week in Brazil, has trimmed 17 points from Verstappen's lead in the title race in a week. Verstappen still holds an eight-point lead with two races remaining in one of the most dramatic F1 title fights in at least a decade.

The seven-time champion started from pole for Mercedes and was never challenged on the Losail International Circuit as Hamilton won his 102nd career race. It was his seventh victory of the season. Verstappen finished second for

Red Bull, nearly 25 seconds behind Hamilton. Verstappen was hit with a penalty before the race even began when he was dropped five spots on the starting grid for violating a yellow flag in Saturday's qualifying.

The Dutchman had qualified second but the stewards ordered him to drop back on the grid following Sunday hearings for Verstappen, Valtteri Bottas and Carlos Sainz.

Hamilton, winner of four straight titles, has all the momentum now. The British driver is seeking a record eighth F1 title, which would move him past Michael Schumacher.

Fernando Alonso of Alpine finished third for his first podium since 2014. Sergio Perez finished fourth to help Red Bull in its push to beat Mercedes for the constructors championship.

SCEB, JFC play out stalemate

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Vasco, Nov 21: SC East Bengal (SCEB) and Jamshedpur FC (JFC) played out an intense 1-1 draw in ISL here Sunday. Both goals came from set pieces. Croatian defender Franjo Pree (17th) scored for the Red and Golds while Peter Hartley (45+3) equalised at the stroke of half time for the Men of Steel.

For SCEB's goal, Bikash Jairu swung in a corner that goalkeeper Rehenesh TP managed to parry off. Antonio Perosevic brought it back into play for Hnamte to lay it in for Pree, whose back volleyed effort found its way into the net.

Hartley left it till the brisk of half-time to level scores. Alex Lima's flag-kick had Valskis flick it off for his captain who appeared to shoulder the ball past Arindam Bhattacharja.