



USEFUL TIPS

Actor Rashmika Mandanna's post on how to deal with fear has won hearts of many netizens

LEISURE P2



STEPHEN SONDEHEIM NO MORE

Broadway composer Stephen Sondheim, who helped American musical theatre evolve, died early Friday

INTERNATIONAL P10



AXAR'S DAY OUT IN KANPUR

Axar Patel bags a five-wicket haul to help India take a 49-run first innings lead in the first Test against New Zealand

SPORTS P12



Mamita's father records statement

Bolangir: Suchandra Meher, the father of Mamita Meher, recorded his statement under Section 164 CrPc before a magistrate, a report said Saturday. According to sources, Meher recorded his statement two days back. However, what he spoke before the magistrate while recording his statement is not yet known while the police are yet to make any disclosure on this. Meher initially had told media persons that Gobinda Sahu and MoS (Home) Dibyashankar Mishra were involved in the murder. Meher's statement was recorded as he had since been changing his words, prompting Opposition parties to allege he was under duress.



Dead man wins panchayat poll!

Jamui: A dead man has won a panchayat poll held Wednesday riding on a 'sympathy wave' generated by his own death. The real-life tragedy was detected in this impoverished district, situated about 200 km from the state capital, when officials were handing over certificates to candidates who won the polls held November 24. Sohan Murmu, who won ward no. 2 of Deepakarhar village, falling under Khaira block, was nowhere to be found. "On enquiry, we learnt that Murmu had died November 6, more than a fortnight before voting took place," Khaira BDO Raghavendra Tripathi said with a sense of bewilderment.

MORE P7

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IRREGULAR by MANJUL

HEALTH CARE NEW VARIANT

Govt doesn't want to be caught off guard...do keep some new variant of excuse ready!

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP. MAX	28.7°C	29.0°C
TEMP. MIN	28.8°C	20.5°C
Humidity	84%	80%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Partly cloudy sky	

INDIA SEAL QUARTERFINAL BERTH



MOVING FORWARD

Indian players acknowledge the support from spectators after their 8-2 victory over Poland in their final Pool B match, which helped them qualify for the quarterfinals of the FIH Odisha Men's Junior World Cup at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, Saturday. They will face one of the biggest powerhouses - Belgium - in the last eight stage, December 1.

PHOTO: BIKASH NAYAK

PM orders review of reopening amid Omicron concern

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Nov 27: Amid mounting global concerns over new coronavirus strain 'Omicron', Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday stressed the need to be proactive and directed officials to review plans for easing of international travel restrictions in light of the 'emerging new evidence'.

Modi, who chaired a comprehensive meeting to review the situation related to Covid-19 and vaccination in the country was briefed by top health officials about 'Omicron', described by WHO as a 'variant of concern', with its characteristics and the impact seen in various countries.

Its implications for India were also discussed during the meeting, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said in a statement.

A World Health Organisation panel has named the new Covid strain 'Omicron' and classified it as a highly transmissible variant of concern, the same category that includes the delta variant.

During the meeting which lasted for about two hours, Prime Minister Modi spoke about the need to be proactive in light of the new variant and urged people to be more cautious and take proper precautions like masking up and maintaining social distance, the PMO said.

The Prime Minister highlighted the need for monitoring all international arrivals, their testing as per guidelines, with a specific focus on countries identified 'at risk'.

He also asked "officials to review plans for easing of international travel restrictions in light of the emerging new evidence," the statement said.

26 girls of residential school test Covid +ve



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 27: At least 26 girl students of a government residential school in Mayurbhanj district were found Covid-19 positive while samples of another 15 students were sent for testing, officials said Saturday.

The students belong to Chamakpur residential high school under Thakurmunda block in the district. As some students were taken ill last Thursday, the school authorities conducted Covid-19 tests.

Out of the tested students, 26 reports came out positive for the virus while swab samples of 15 other students have been sent to Baripada District Headquarters Hospital for testing, officials said.

Karanja Sub-Collector Rajnikant Biswal, along with a medical team, visited the school Saturday.

As per sources, the boarding school for tribal students has a total of 256 students and 20 staff members. "We have sanitised the school and tests have been done. All the positive students have been put in isolation in the school and medicines are being given. A doctors' team is here and we are keeping a close eye on the students," said Biswal.

Bill to scrap farm laws Monday

Two days before the government is scheduled to introduce a bill to repeal the controversial farm laws in Lok Sabha, farmers defer their march to Parliament

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 27: To repeal the three contentious farm laws against which thousands of farmers have been protesting for the past one year, the government Monday will introduce in Lok Sabha a new bill, which states that though "only a small group of farmers are protesting" against these legislations, the need of the hour is to take along everyone for inclusive growth.

The Farm Laws Repeal Bill, 2021 has been listed for introduction and passage in Lok Sabha on the first day of the Winter Session of Parliament Monday. The ruling BJP and main Opposition party Congress have issued whips to their MPs to be present on the day.

Union Agriculture Minister



Farmer leader Darshan Pal along with others addresses a press conference at Singhu border in New Delhi, Saturday.

PTI PHOTO

Narendra Singh Tomar will introduce the bill in the house, which was approved by the Union Cabinet Wednesday.

In a special address to the nation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi November 19 announced that all three farm laws, which were passed by Parliament in September last year, will be repealed in the Winter Session and had said these laws were brought for the welfare of

farmers, especially small farmers, but his government could not explain the benefits to some farmers despite its efforts.

The Supreme Court had stayed the implementation of the three laws in January.

Senior Congress leader Manish Tewari, however, criticised the wording of 'Objects and Reasons' of the repeal bill, alleging that the government is demeaning the sac-

rifice of around 700 farmers who died during the protest.

Meanwhile, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha has suspended its November 29 tractor march to Parliament and will hold a meeting next month to decide its future course of action.

With farmers continuing their protests at Delhi borders, Tomar, in an official statement, appealed to them to end their agitations as the government has agreed to their initial demand of repeal of the three laws.

He said the Centre has also agreed to their demand of decriminalising stubble burning.

According to Lok Sabha's list of business for November 29, "Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar will move for leave to introduce a Bill to repeal the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020, the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020, the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020 and to amend the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. Also to introduce the bill."

Genome sequencing in high-risk areas of state

Govt instructs Collectors to put schools, colleges, and hostels under close surveillance

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 27: Expressing concern over the new strain of SARS-CoV-2 B.1.1.529 also called 'Omicron', the state government has asked Collectors to conduct genome sequencing of samples in high-risk areas at regular intervals.

The variant which has been detected in South Africa, Botswana and Hong Kong has now forced several countries including India to initiate precautionary measures to prevent its spread said Director, Public Health, Niranjan Mishra here Saturday.

The Centre has advised all states and UTs to conduct screening of passengers coming from the countries where the new variant has been detected. Accordingly, the state government has issued instructions to the collectors, Mishra said.

The collectors were asked to focus on strategy of testing-tracking-treatment-vaccination-enforcement of Covid appropriate

behaviour and containment measures, said an official.

"The foreign travellers who will test positive will be isolated and their samples will be sent for genome sequencing to find out whether the new sub-variant is there or not," said Mishra.

The virus has mutated over 30 times. So, everybody needs to be cautious, advised the director.

Following the detection of a huge number of Covid-19 cases in educational institutions in different parts of the state, the government has asked the Collectors for constant and close surveillance of hostels, schools, colleges and other congregations. They were instructed to discourage students with mildest of symptoms from attending the classes.

The government has also directed the collectors to enforce strict Covid appropriate behaviour in educational institutions and also in public places.

Besides, the district administrations have been told to intensify door-to-door campaign for vaccination, involving all field functionaries, PRI members and SHGs.

Legislature doesn't assess impact of laws it passes: CJI

The CJI said many people in the country believe that it is the courts that make the laws

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Nov 27: Chief Justice of India (CJI) NV Ramana Saturday said the legislature does not conduct studies or assess the impact of the laws that it passes, which sometimes leads to 'big issues' and result in over-burdening of cases on the judiciary.

He also highlighted that simply re-branding the existing courts as commercial courts, without creating a special infrastructure, will not have any impact on the pendency.

Addressing judges and lawyers, CJI Ramana said, "We must remember that whatever criticism or obstacle that we may encounter, our mission to render justice cannot stop. We have to march on in

pursuing our duty to strengthen the judiciary and protect the rights of the citizenry."

The CJI was speaking at the valedictory ceremony of Constitution Day celebrations in the presence of President Ram Nath Kovind and Union Law Minister Kiren Rijju.

"Another issue is that the legislature does not conduct studies or assess the impact of the laws that it passes. This sometimes leads to big issues. The introduction of Section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act is an example of this. Now, the already-burdened magistrates are further burdened by thousands of these cases. Similarly, re-branding the existing courts as commercial courts, without creating a special infrastructure, will not have any impact on the pendency," he said.

Section 138 of the Negotiable



The legislature does not conduct studies or assess the impact of the laws that it passes. This sometimes leads to big issues

NV RAMANA | CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

Instruments Act deals with dishonour of cheques for insufficiency of funds in bank accounts.

The CJI lauded the announcement of the Union law minister

that the government has allocated ₹9,000 crore, a substantial amount, for the development of judicial infrastructure. "However, as I have highlighted yesterday, funds are

not the problem. The problem is with some of the states not coming forward to match the grants. As a result, the central funds largely remain unutilised," he said.

"That is the reason why I am proposing a special purpose vehicle of judicial infrastructure authority I beseech the minister to take this proposal to a logical conclusion. I also urge the minister to expedite the process of filling judicial vacancies," the CJI said.

He added that the purpose of the two-day meet was to highlight the dedication to constitutional principles and Friday, he had mentioned how even the well-informed sections of the society are unaware of the importance of the Constitution.

"Although we are tirelessly working to uphold the Constitution, there is still a need to spread more understanding about the

Constitution. If people are unaware about their rights and entitlements, they cannot claim benefit from the same. People also need to know the scope and limitations of the roles ascribed to the different organs of the State. We need to clear the prevailing misconceptions," he said.

The CJI said many people in the country believe that it is the courts that make the laws and there is another set of misunderstandings relating to the belief that the courts are responsible for liberal acquittals and adjournments.

"However, the truth is that the public prosecutors, advocates and parties - all have to cooperate with the judicial process. Non-cooperation, procedural lapses and faulty investigation cannot be blamed on courts. These are the issues with the judiciary that need to be addressed," he said.

leisure



SELENA GOMEZ LAUNCHES NEW MENTAL HEALTH ONLINE PLATFORM

999 singer Selena Gomez is working with her mother and Daniella Pierson on new wellness platform Wondermind to help reduce stigma surrounding mental health. She launched the company in collaboration with her mother Mandy Teefey and Daniella Pierson, founder of lifestyle brand The Newsette.

SHERIDAN SMITH WANTS HER SON TO GROW UP AROUND ANIMALS

British actress Sheridan Smith was keen for her son to have pets - so they have six donkeys. She wanted her 17-month-old son Billy - who she has with former fiancé Jamie Horn - grow up around animals. They have six dogs also.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You will want to catch up with old friends that you have been neglecting for some time. The stars suggest that you will enjoy yourself. Your excitement will brighten up your activities. Your frankness and honesty are what set you apart from others, says Ganesh.

TAURUS
You will be very sensitive about the image you project socially and professionally. Ganesh sees you treating this very seriously and doing everything you can to make this right impression. Today, you will remain decent, dignified and focused in all that you do. Do not be too eager to please others.

GEMINI
You will try to think up creative ways to perform your daily routine to get a break from the boredom and the rut of your daily schedule. You need to mingle more with people and practice some humility. Guests will come visiting at your home. You will spend the evening in conversation with your family, friends or neighbours, says Ganesh.

CANCER
The day looks set to be so good that you may end up inviting jealousy and envy from people around you. The stars are favourable for matters pertaining to heart. In short, a great day for boosting love and relationships. Fantastic opportunities may come your way, if you have been looking to woo a sweetheart, whispers Ganesh.

LEO
Your decisions today will be not only be correct, but also resolute and steadfast. Your health will be fine. At the work-place, things ought to proceed as usual. However, you will concentrate more on work today. In personal relationships, some minor arguments could crop up.

VIRGO
Today will be a pleasant day full of surprises and unforeseen changes. You may go for a long drive with your beloved. The trip will be very interesting and will calm your frayed nerves. All in all, Ganesh says, it is an optimistic and happy day, so go ahead and get the best out of it.

LIBRA
Ganesh says that you shall soon be able to travel or plan a trip, not for family or business matters, but for getting away from the mundane life. You will pay more importance to your professional matters as opposed to your personal matters. Today you will be able to attain success in every thing you do with the blessings of Ganesh.

SCORPIO
You are one social butterfly today. However, shunning the gossips, you spread kindness and happiness in your social groups. People will look up to you today for this reason. What goes around, comes around; spread joy and you are sure to receive joy, says Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
Determined and dedicated, that's what you are when it comes to work. Well, this may even find you amidst heaps of files and loads of work. No wonder you become a workaholic. You are likely to enjoy during the latter half of the day. Have a fun-filled evening!

CAPRICORN
Though you leave no stone unturned to identify the opportunities coming your way, you need to keep your guards on whenever you are a part of a legal matter. Financially, you're likely to bear some heavy losses, and if you're a dealer or a broker, the chances of suffering from them are even higher.

AQUARIUS
You wish to have more than twenty-four hours in a day! You are determined to finish off your pending work but somehow you will find it extremely difficult to get the load off your shoulders. You will try everything; from canceling your vacations to postponing your dates, but nothing will seem enough, feels Ganesh.

PISCES
Ganesh feels that you will sympathize with people today. This will help you get people's good wishes. You can prove to be a good boss, co worker, husband or wife and son or daughter. Ganesh advises you to carry on with these virtues.

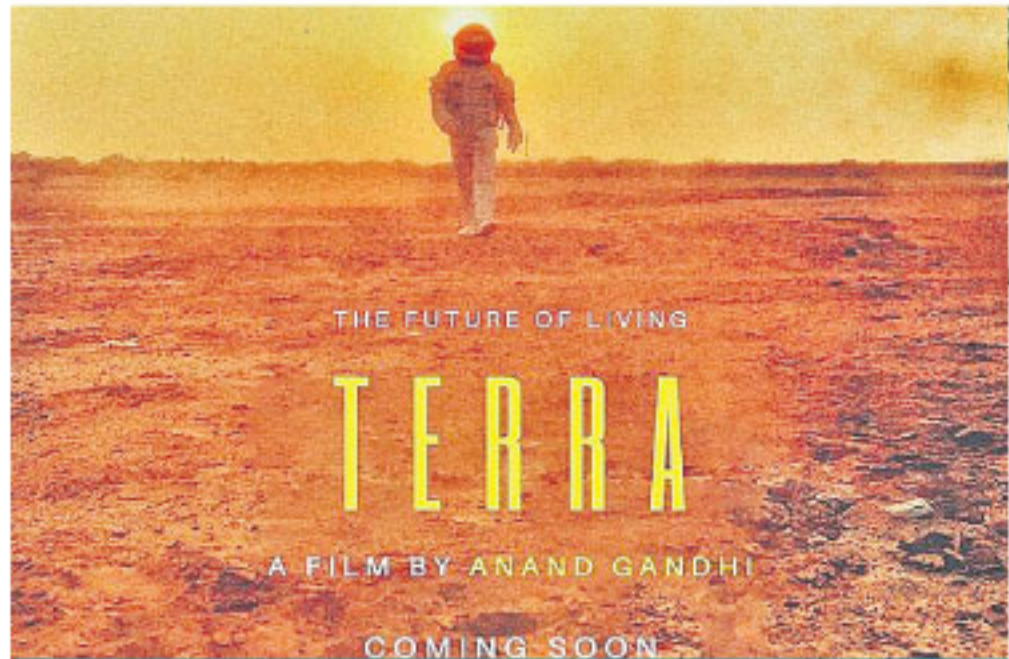
Dangerous to be an actress in Afghanistan: Leena Alam

Los Angeles: Leena Alam, one of Afghanistan's best-known actresses, is in character as she explains facing an unthinkable choice, reports Variety.

"Who would know better than me how dangerous it is to be an actress with the Taliban? You cannot inflict me with one more drop of fear than I already have," says the California-based Alam as part of a virtual performance of a monologue for the LA Writers Center.

"You offer me death and my children, or life without them? What would you do? I will go home." Tearfully, Alam, who starred in popular shows such as the feminist drama Shereen, rocks back and forth on Zoom in front of a backdrop of an airport waiting room with signs for Paris.

The monologue was spun from an interview with her close friend and former co-star Sabera Sadat, another of Afghanistan's top thespians. Earlier this month, in Kabul, Sadat was offered a rare ticket to France, but declined it when it turned out there were no seats for her two young boys.



Martian odyssey to come alive in reels

Mumbai: Anand Gandhi changed the landscape of Hindi cinema with his directorial and production ventures like *Ship Of Theseus*, *Tumbbad*, *An Insignificant Man* and *OK Computer*.

The filmmaker, who is known for a different kind of cinema surrounding offbeat topics, has announced his next titled *The Future of Living TERRA*, a 1-minute reel format short film, which follows the theme of terraforming Mars. Anand took to his social media to announce the film with its poster. He captioned the picture, "From Mars to Earth. From barren lands to regenerative cities. The future of human civilisation is #InTheMaking Tune into Instagram's Cinema Reels Film (a 1 Minute short) - Terra directed by me. Coming Soon on Voot Instagram & Voot."

The poster features an astronaut walking on what looks like the red crust of Mars, with his back facing the sun. Soon after, admiration started pouring in for Anand with fans and audience expressing their excitement. The film aims to tell a compelling story in the shortest possible time frame.

Antim: Aayush outshines Salman

Despite playing a noir character, actor Aayush Sharma draws the viewers emotionally to invest in him whereas Salman looks like a spent force



Mahesh Manjrekar's *Antim: The Final Truth* is a crime drama centred around the circle of fate. Based on the Marathi film *Mulshi Pattern*, the film is about the journey of Rahul Patil aka Rahulya, a farmer's son who joins forces with the ruthless underworld to survive.

After seeing his father Datta Patil (Sachin Khedekar), a farmer and one-time renowned wrestler, reduced to penury, Rahul becomes a rebel of sorts when he by happenstance comes in direct conflict with the local corporator Salvi's goons. His daredevil attitude impresses a small-time gangster Nanya (Upendra Limaye), who then takes Rahul under his fold.

Director: Mahesh Manjrekar
Cast: Salman Khan, Aayush Sharma, Mahima Makwana, Sachin Khedekar, Sayaji Shinde, Jisshu Sengupta

hero's waning spirit. Mahima Makwana playing Manda, the attractive tea vendor, and Rahul's love interest, is earnest and promising, but has limited screen time to display her histrionics. Sachin Khedekar, Upendra Limaye, Sayaji Shinde, who essays the role of Inspector Uday, Nitin Dheer and Jisshu Sengupta, who play the goons Daya and Pitya, respectively, are all in top form, and they deliver pitch-perfect performances making their characters believable.

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

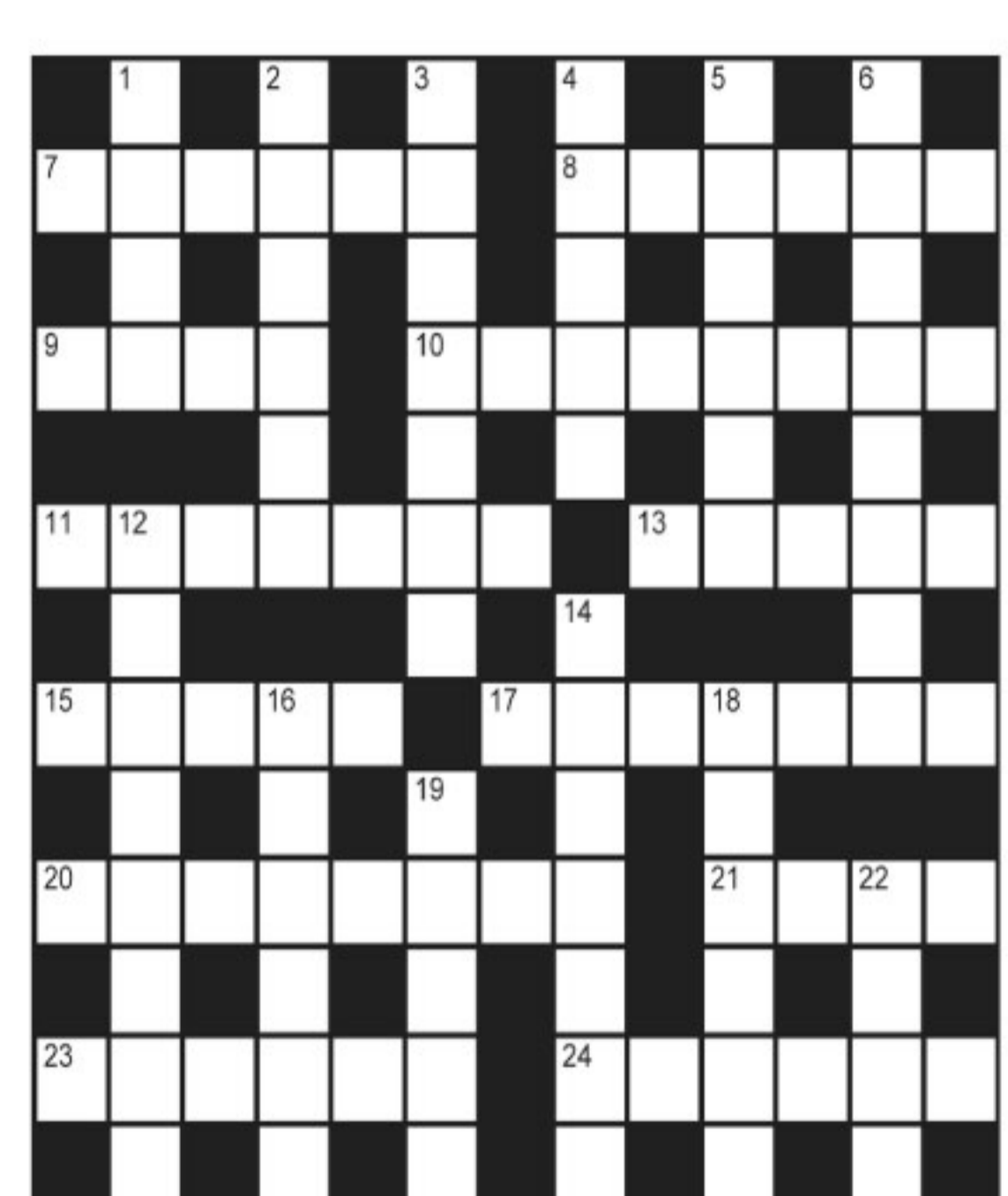


BREVITY



FUN post

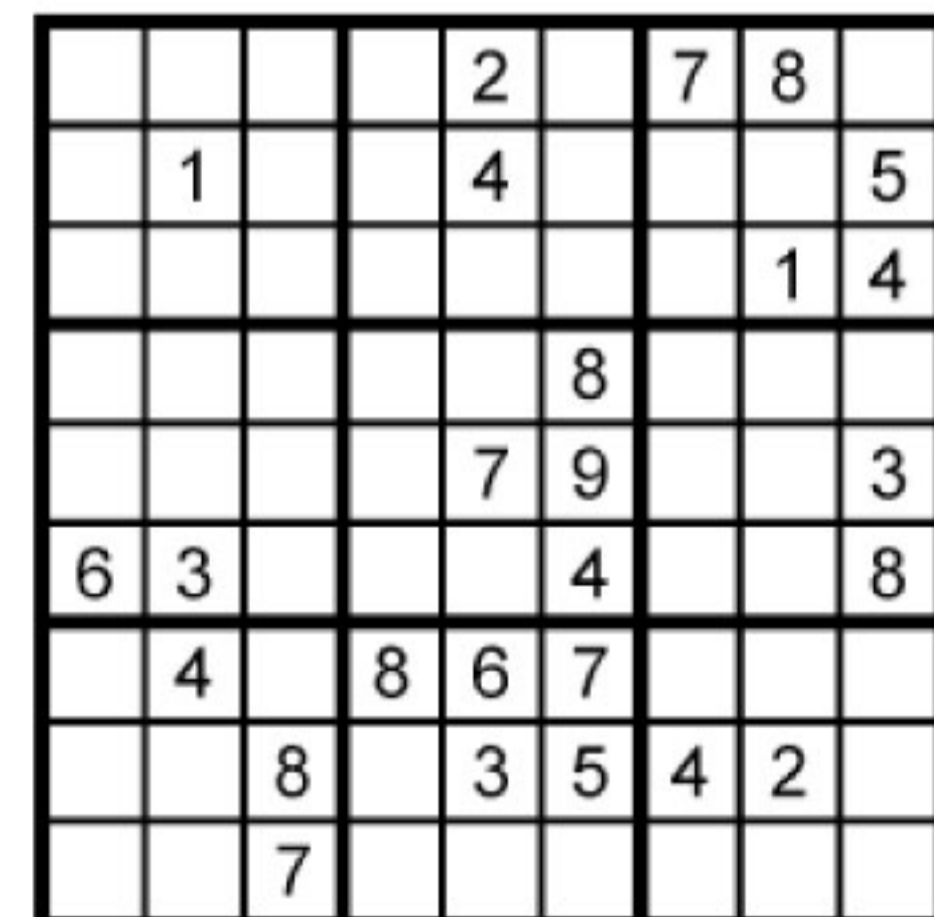
CROSSWORD



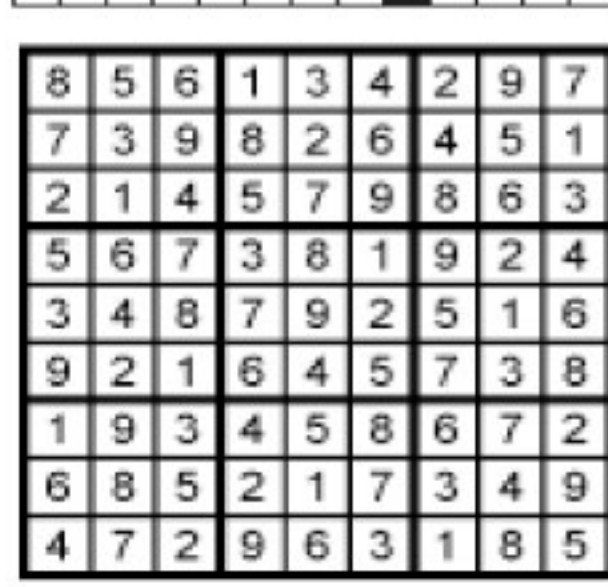
- Across**
- 7 European flatfish
 - 8 Ghost
 - 9 Garage occupant
 - 10 Just out (5-3)
 - 11 Whine
 - 13 Skips
 - 15 Eskimo boat
 - 17 War paint
 - 20 Self-important
 - 21 Crushing blow
 - 23 Kings and queens, e.g.
 - 24 Do a slow burn
- Down**
- 1 Know-it-all
 - 2 Flowering
 - 3 Farm buildings
 - 4 Op-ed piece
 - 5 Sagacity
 - 6 Kind of hotel (4-4)
 - 12 Comical
 - 14 Fiction genre
 - 16 Homes
 - 18 Bier
 - 19 Pool shot
 - 22 Stomach woe

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

downtown



UPHOLDING TRADITION
 A woman performs Prathamastami ritual before her firstborn in Puri, Saturday

COVID-19 TRACKER			
	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	26,11,42,235	23,59,12,819	52,10,450
India	3,45,63,749	3,39,88,797	4,67,933
Odisha	10,48,492	10,37,864	8,406

3 dead, 11 hurt as truck rams into picnic bus



The badly damaged bus
 OP PHOTO

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khurda, Nov 27: In a tragic incident, three persons were killed while 11 others sustained injuries after a speeding truck ramed into a picnic bus on NH-16 at Belapada Square under Balugaon police limits in Khurda in the wee hours of Saturday.

The deceased have been identified as Asit Behera of Alipur and Gangadhar Maharana and E Loi Das of Venkatraypur in Gopalpur area of Ganjam district.

According to an eyewitness, the mishap took place when a bus with around 20 picnickers on board was on its way back from Maa Tarini temple at Ghatagaon in Keonjhar.

Driver of a speeding truck lost control over the vehicle and ramed into the ill-fated bus thereby killing at least two per-

CM announces ex gratia
Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik condoled the death of three persons in the accident and announced ₹2 lakh ex gratia for the families of each victim. The deceased hailed from Rangeilunda under Gopalpur tehsil of Ganjam district. Wishing early recovery of the injured, Patnaik directed the district officials to extend all possible help for their treatment.

Five critically-injured persons—Bijay Sahu, RB Rao, P Madhusudan Rao, Basudev Sahu and J Balaji—were shifted to MKCG Medical College and Hospital (MKCGMCH) in Berhampur after their health conditions deteriorated.

“Our bus had halted at Belapada Square to let us relieve ourselves. A speeding truck hit the bus hard from the rear following which our vehicle skidded off to the roadside field,” an injured said.

On being informed, Balugaon police reached the accident site and registered a case in this connection before launching a probe.

“The picnickers belong to Gopalpur locality of Ganjam district. They had gone to Ghatagaon to visit Maa Tarini shrine,” an official said.

Halting of vehicles on NH-16 could be a probable reason behind the road mishap. Poor visibility at night due to fog could have also been a contributing factor, the police official added.

sons on the spot. Later, one more injured succumbed at the hospital while undergoing treatment, the eyewitness stated.

After hearing a loud sound of the smash some locals rushed to the accident site and rescued the injured persons. They were admitted to Balugaon community health centre (CHC) in critical condition.

GRACE AND GAITY



Students of Gunjan Dance Academy perform Odissi in the second evening of 25th Gunjan Dance and Music Festival at Saheed Bhawan in Cuttack, Saturday
 OP PHOTO

ITDA engineer sent to jail in DA case

THE ANTI-CORRUPTION WING OF THE STATE GOVT REVEALS THAT IT HAS SEIZED ₹41.77 LAKH IN CASH, THE HIGHEST DURING ANY RAID CONDUCTED BY THE AGENCY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 27: Vigilance sleuths Saturday arrested Santosh Kumar Das, assistant engineer of Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) at Baripada in Mayurbhanj district, on charges of amassing huge amount of ill-gotten properties.

A case (8/21) has been registered against Das and his wife at the Cuttack Vigilance cell under the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act, November 26, 2021.



He was Saturday produced before the Special Vigilance Court here

that sent him to judicial custody after rejecting his bail plea.

The anti-corruption wing of the state government revealed in a press note that it has seized ₹41.77 lakh in cash, the highest during any raid conducted by the organisation so far.

“On the allegation of possession of assets disproportionate to his known sources of income by Santosh Kumar Das, Assistant Engineer, Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), Baripada, Dist-Mayurbhanj, simultaneous house searches were conducted at 11 places on 25.11.2021 and 26.11.2021 by 11 teams of Odisha Vigilance led by 10 DSPs, 4 inspectors and 30 other staffers on the strength of search warrants issued by the Hon’ble Court of Special Judge, Vigilance, Bhubaneswar,” Vigilance sources said.

The Vigilance sleuths found Das possessing disproportionate assets worth ₹2.80 crore, which is 245 per cent of his known sources of income.

Koraput Coffee plantation in 5,000 more ha

With the launching of the smart health cards in two districts Saturday, 23 districts have been covered under the scheme so far

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 27: With a view to boosting livelihood of tribal families that depend on coffee cultivation in Koraput district, the state government has decided to expand the area of coffee plantation by 5,000 hectares in the next five years.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said this while launching distribution of smart health cards in the Koraput district Saturday.

The Koraput coffee has emerged



as a new coffee brand in the market and created livelihood opportunities for the tribal people, Naveen said.

The state government aims at undertaking coffee farming on 5,000 hectares of land in the next five years in Koraput, he said.

On this occasion, Patnaik also inaugurated several developmental projects worth ₹1,000 crore through virtual mode. Around 12 lakh poor people of Koraput district would get medical benefits under the smart health card programme.

Similarly, the Chief Minister launched projects worth ₹133 crore in Nabarangpur district Saturday. He also said that 11.30 lakh people would benefit under the BSKY scheme in Nabarangpur district.

The Chief Minister also dedicated 49 health institutions built at a cost of ₹45 crore for improvement in the health care system in the district.

With the launching of the smart health cards in two districts Saturday, as many as 23 districts have been covered under the scheme so far.

OHRC orders probe into sand mining in Baitarani

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 27: Odisha Human Rights Commission (OHRC) has directed Keonjhar Collector and Superintendent of Police (SP) to initiate a probe into the allegations of rampant illegal sand mining on Baitarani River bed affecting the natural equilibrium of the river and the life of the locals.

Petitioner Himanshu Sekhar Nayak informed the rights panel that illegal sand mining was lead-

ing to changes in river course and collapse of the embankment, thereby threatening the life of villagers. The OHRC has sought the probe reports by the next hearing scheduled for December 7.

Nayak alleged that sand mafia in connivance with government officials have been illegally extracting sand at Habaleswar, Jambhara and Girigaon of Samana Gram Panchayat, Dimiria and Bancho under Hatadihi tehsil of the district.

Robust mechanism in RERA to protect home buyers’ interest, Centre tells SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 27: The Centre has told the Supreme Court that there is a robust regulatory mechanism and draft ‘agreement for sale’ has already been prescribed under the provisions of RERA, which seeks to balance the rights and interest of home buyers and promoters in an accountable and transparent manner.

The Centre has filed an affidavit in the top court on a plea seeking direction to frame model pacts for builders and agent buyers to protect customers and bring in transparency in the realty sector in line with the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) Act, 2016.



THE CENTRE HAS FILED AN AFFIDAVIT IN SC ON A PLEA SEEKING DIRECTION TO FRAME MODEL PACTS FOR BUILDERS AND AGENT BUYERS TO PROTECT CUSTOMERS

THE AFFIDAVIT SAID THAT RERA MANDATES FOR REGISTRATION OF PROJECTS BEFORE ADVERTISING, MARKETING, BOOKING, SELLING AND THE LAW ENSURES THE TIMELY DELIVERY OF REAL ESTATE PROJECTS AND THE ENTIRE FUND FLOW IS ALSO SUBJECT TO STRICT MONITORING BY THE REGULATOR

“There is a robust regulatory mechanism and a draft ‘agreement for sale’ has already been prescribed under the provisions of RERA, which seeks to balance the rights and interest of home buyers and promoters in an accountable and transparent manner,” it said.

It said that according to Section 84 of RERA, the appropriate government that is state government save in the instances involving its application in the territory of union territories has to notify rules for carrying out the provisions of this Act.

The Union government said that it has shared the draft ‘agreement for sale’ in 2016 itself after the enactment of RERA with all the states and union territories and currently, all the states and union territories have notified rules under RERA except Nagaland

with which the Centre is in discussion.

“It must be brought before the consideration of this court that prior to 2014 Real Estate Sector was largely unregulated. Under the regulatory regime of RERA, the ongoing projects which have not received the completion certificate; need to get registered under RERA,” it said, adding that RERA ensures transparency, accountability, and financial discipline in the real estate sector.

The affidavit said that RERA mandates for registration of projects before advertising, marketing, booking, selling and the law ensures the timely delivery of real estate projects and the entire fund flow is also subject to strict monitoring by the regulator to avoid diversion of funds, which will also secure the interest of home buyers.

“RERA seeks to address vital is-

suess of fair transactions, timely delivery, and quality construction through speedy adjudication of disputes, thus empowering the home buyers,” it said.

The Centre said that under the provision of RERA, if the developer fails to complete the project as per terms of agreement for sale, a home buyer can either seek a refund of paid amount along with interest or ask for interest for every month of delay, till the handing over of the possession.

“RERA also provides for strict penal provisions of imprisonment in addition to provisions of refunds, interest, and penalty in case of non-compliance by developers, allottees, and agents,” it said.

On November 8, the top court while hearing the plea filed by advocate Ashwini Upadhyay had said that a model builder-buyer agreement is

needed in the real estate sector and the Centre should file its reply on the issue as it is an “important matter in the public interest”.

On October 4, the top court had said it is important for the country to have a model builder-buyer agreement in the real estate sector for consumer protection because developers try to put numerous clauses in it, which common people may not be aware of.

Upadhyay had said that there should be a model agreement prepared by the Centre as some states have it and some don’t, and there is no uniformity in those agreements.

The PIL has sought direction to the Centre to frame model pacts for builders and agent buyers to protect customers and bring in transparency in the realty sector in line with RERA Act, 2016.

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26th | 27th | 28th November 2021
 Saheed Bhawan, Cuttack
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Miscreant held in City; two firearms seized

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 27: A joint team of Commissionerate Police's special squad and Nayapalli police have arrested one miscreant and seized two firearms from their possession.

However, police sources claimed that all the details regarding the arrest and seizure of the weapons will be shared with media upon the completion of the investigation.

Following a tip-off, the joint team reportedly carried out a raid at Swarneswar Temple in IRC Village under Nayapalli police limits late Friday night. The miscreant was hatching a plot to commit some crime when cops raided the area.

Police have been conducting raids at different places to nab other members of the group.

The accused used to procure firearms from outside the state and later supply the same to antisocial persons here. He has contacts with KBN group too, claimed police sources.

State adds 264 fresh Covid cases, 3 deaths

The state currently has 2,424 active Covid-19 cases, while 10,37,609 patients have recovered from the highly infectious disease, including 222 in the last 24 hours

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Nov 27: Odisha's Covid-19 tally surged to 10,48,492 as 264 people tested positive for the infection, 45 more than the previous day, a Health department bulletin said Saturday.

Three new Covid-19 fatalities pushed the death toll to 8,406, it said. The deaths were reported from Bolangir, Jharsuguda and Kalahandi districts.

Of the 264 new cases, 41 were children. Khurda district, of which the state Capital Bhubaneswar is a part, registered the highest number of new cases at 127, it said.

Ten out of the 30 districts of the state did not record any new infection and nine districts have ac-

As many as 56,034 samples were tested in the last 24 hours with daily test positivity rate (TPR) at 0.37 per cent, same as the previous day

While the number of samples tested Friday was 58,715 which marked daily TPR at 0.37 per cent with 219 detections, as many as 335 positive cases out of 62,619 samples had marked the daily TPR for Thursday at 0.53 per cent

Over 2.76 crore have been inoculated with the first dose of Covid vaccine while around 1.52 crore have received both doses

GLORIOUS MOMENT



Governor Ganeshi Lal and other dignitaries release a special postage stamp during the platinum jubilee celebration of SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack, Saturday

NGT NOTICE TO STATE, CENTRE OVER CONSTRUCTIONS ON WETLAND

THE BIJLI BANDH WATER BODY IS STATED TO HAVE AN AREA OF 20.99 ACRES AND IT SERVES AS STORAGE RESERVOIR IN THE MONSOON-DEPENDENT AREAS OF SUNDARGARH

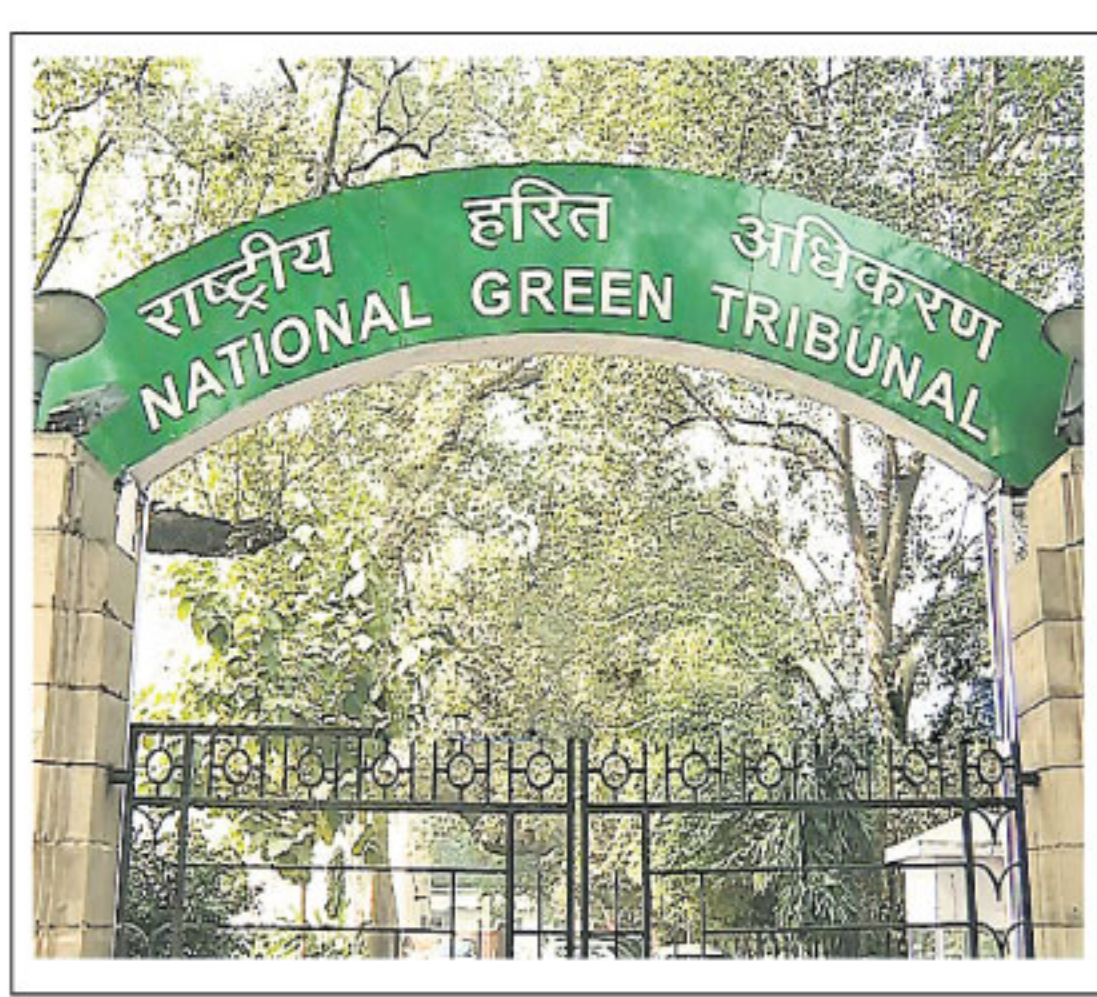
POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Nov 27: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has issued notice to Odisha and the Union Jal Shakti Ministry over illegal construction on Bijli Bandh, the largest water body in Sundargarh district.

A bench comprising Judicial Member B Amit Sthalekar and Expert Member Saibal Dasgupta took suo motu cognisance of media reports alleging that illegal structures have been constructed on a wetland known as Bijli Bandh in Sundargarh district.

It has also been alleged in the application that on the land, which falls within the wetland, residential quarters of the Chief District Medical Officer and the Superintendent of Police, Sundargarh have been built.

There is also one community centre namely 'Narikalyan Kendra' spread across 38.5 decimal of land. Added to that, the Public Health de-



ALLEGATIONS IN A NUTSHELL

Residential quarters of the CDMO and the Superintendent of Police, Sundargarh have been built on the wetland

There is also one community centre namely 'Narikalyan Kendra' spread across 38.5 decimal of land

Added to that, the Public Health department building has been constructed over an area of 18 decimal on the wetland

Tenders have been invited for ₹27.09 crore by the Water and Power Consultancy Services Limited (WAPCOS) under the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti for unauthorised development of Bijli Bandh water body

partment building has been constructed over an area of 18 decimal on the wetland.

The Bijli Bandh water body is stated to have an area of 20.99 acres and that it serves as storage reservoir in the monsoon-

dependent areas.

The bench noted it has also been alleged that tenders have been invited for ₹27.09 crore by the Water and Power Consultancy Services Limited (WAPCOS) under the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti for

unauthorised development of Bijli Bandh water body.

The tribunal observed that the matter requires consideration and asked the Union Ministry and the state government to file their responses within four weeks.

Sivaram's statue unveiling today

Bhubaneswar: The Odisha unit of CPI (ML) Red Star will unveil a statue of party leader Sivaram at its office, Inquilab Bhawan, here at 11am Sunday. Sivaram was party's Odisha secretary and its Politburo member. He had breathed his last May 28 this year. Sivaram was associated with trade union movements, slum dwellers' and farmers' outfits. CPI (ML) All India general secretary KN Ramachandran will unveil Sivaram's statue during a state-level event, said a release of the party Saturday.



PIC FOR REPRESENTATION

Learning centre for children

Bhubaneswar: Sasakawa-India Leprosy Foundation (S-ILF) has inaugurated a learning centre for children residing in the Leprosy Colony of Rourkela, marking 15 years of its establishment. This is the 11th such centre and the first in Odisha. Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) president and CEO- MD of Tata Steel, TV Narendran, inaugurated the centre. Narendran appreciated the initiative being undertaken to eliminate leprosy. Learning centres provide an opportunity to enable all-round development of children living in marginalised leprosy colonies, with an emphasis on both curricular and extra-curricular activities including sports and other hobbies. Tarun Das, S-ILF chairman, recalled the major milestones of the foundation in the 15 years of its journey.

tive Covid-19 cases in single digits. The state now has 2,424 active Covid-19 cases, while 10,37,609 patients have recovered from the highly infectious disease, including 222 in the last 24 hours, the bulletin stated.

As many as 56,034 samples were tested in the last 24 hours with daily test positivity rate (TPR) at 0.37 per cent, same as the previous day. While the number of samples tested Friday was 58,715 which

marked daily TPR at 0.37 per cent with 219 detections, as many as 335 positive cases out of 62,619 samples had marked the daily TPR for Thursday at 0.53 per cent. Fifty-three other patients have died due to comorbidities so far, according to official data. On Friday, Odisha had reported two fatalities.

Over 2.76 crore beneficiaries have been inoculated with the first dose of Covid vaccine while around 1.52 crore have received both doses.

ANNUAL DAY FETE



Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan addressing the 79th foundation day celebration of Utkal University in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

Varsity rights shouldn't be curtailed: Pradhan

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 27: The Utkal University Saturday celebrated its 79th foundation day which saw participation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

Addressing the faculty and students, Pradhan lauded university's role and efforts in promoting education. He said independence of the institution is essential for its progress. "University rights should not be curtailed and restrictions should not be put on intellectual expression. Thus, the state should reconsider changes in its education policy," he said.

He also said that the visionary National Education Policy-2020, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given us the opportunity to focus on globalising the university education. Pradhan launched the website of Centre for Innovation and Incubation (CII) at the university. The CII will hold young entrepreneurs and

startups and act as a catalyst in creating a vibrant entrepreneurship ecosystem in Odisha.

Interacting with the young entrepreneurs at the CII, Pradhan said, "I am amazed by the students' energy passion, innovative ideas and spirit. Driven by knowledge and innovation, these young entrepreneurs will be the change makers in Odisha."

"The intellectual intelligence that Utkal University provides to its students has been one of the most significant and exceptional in last 79 years. It's now our responsibility not only to score NAAC A++ grade for the university but also to have an exemplary position in the global rankings too."

While, university Vice Chancellor Sabita Acharya presided over the event, varsity Registrar Abhay Kumar Nayak read the annual report of the 2020-21 session in which he presented the achievements of the institution in various fields.

Pedalling through Raj for climate safety, diabetes in pets

Subroto Chatterjee, a London based sustainable products entrepreneur and environmental activist, will be cycling about 300 km in rural Rajasthan in December to raise funds for nurseries he supports in Rajasthan, and to raise awareness on diabetes in pets.

He works with plantation organisations in Odisha, Rajasthan, and Meghalaya. In Rajasthan, Chatterjee is working with Shaymsunder Jyani, plantation hero and winner of Land for Life UN award for 2021.

These nurseries give away free saplings to people who are willing to plant them as members of their

family. This unique concept (viz familial forestry) guarantees plants' survival to over 90 per cent. Jyani has managed millions of trees in Rajasthan and has received presidential award too.

With Odisha Paryavaran Sanrakshan Abhiyan, Subroto has pledged 10,000 mangrove saplings for 2022. In Meghalaya, Chatterjee in collaboration with Worldview Impact India will plant chestnuts and other fruit saplings. The nurseries that he supports via his sustainable products platform are helping in creation of jobs for locals.

Subroto will be visiting two parks that he developed in memory

Subroto works with plantation organisations in Odisha, Rajasthan, and Meghalaya

With Odisha Paryavaran Sanrakshan Abhiyan, Subroto has pledged 10,000 mangrove saplings for 2022

In Rajasthan, Chatterjee works with Shaymsunder Jyani, a plantation hero and winner of Land for Life UN award for 2021

In Meghalaya, Chatterjee in collaboration with Worldview Impact India will plant chestnuts and other fruits plantations



PIC FOR REPRESENTATION

of his friend's father and his own brother-in-law who passed away in 2021 in the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic. "This is the best way to pay tribute," said Subroto.

Another reason for this trip is to raise awareness on diabetes in pets. This is a common disease not many are aware of. As per studies, 1 out of 300 dogs get diabetes but the disease remains undetected leading to other complications later on. With proper diet, exercise and insulin injections, these diabetic dogs can live as long as non-diabetic dogs. "It will be a good idea to test glucose in your pet every six months," Chatterjee said.

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SHORT TAKES

Super chemical, ethanol plants in Chhatrapur

Chhatrapur: The state government is pushing for industries in Chhatrapur constituency in Ganjam to turn it into an industrial hub, a report said. Meanwhile, a decision was taken to set up a super chemical plant and IOCL's ethanol plant in the constituency. Initial formalities like survey and paper works for the two projects have been over, it was learnt. However, the government is yet to make an announcement in this regard. Chhatrapur MLA Subash Chandra Behera has hinted that the two projects have got green signals of the state government. These two plants will be set up at Tata Industrial Park near Chamakhandi. The two plants will create good scope of employment for local people, apart from ushering in economic development of the region.

₹3-cr Mukta fund for Bhanjanagar

Bhanjanagar/Chhatrapur: While over ₹20 crore has been sanctioned for an indoor stadium and other infrastructures in Bhanjanagar NAC, work on a few projects has started. Ahead of the civic body and panchayat polls, the state government has, meanwhile, sanctioned ₹3.22 crore under the Mukhyamantri Karma Tatapara Yojana (Mukta) for the civic body areas to carry out 44 development projects. These projects include four gymnasiums, four playgrounds, two foot tracks, a market complex (Rs 50 lakh) on the premises of Old Jail. Street vendors who were evicted will be allotted shops at the market complex. Besides, a project will be taken up around Hatibandhapokhari. Similarly, over ₹1.54 crore has been sanctioned for Chhatrapur NAC to carry out 36 development projects like a children's park, a public gymnasium and a foot track. Similarly, Palsara town has been sanctioned ₹3.92 crore under Mukta Yojana to carry out 109 developmental projects. BJD leaders have thanked the CM for the fund.

Police bust ₹4-cr loan fraud, BM absconding



POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Nov 27: A major loan fraud involving Andhra Bank to the tune of ₹4 crore was committed in Ganjam. The fraudsters furnished forged documents in names of 25 people and availed the loans. One of the accused has been arrested while police are in the lookout for the bank manager. The accused was identified as Gupteswar Patnaik (47), a resident of Kamapalli Ramanagar under Baidyanathpur police limits, informed SDPO Bishnuprasad Pati. A case has been registered about the scam. The accused was produced in court. The SDPO said the accused will be taken into remand for further investigation. According to police, Sudhansu Sekhar Padhi, an electrical con-

tractor of Ramnagar, had applied for a loan at the local branch of Andhra Bank in 2018. Gupteswar was known to Sudhansu. The former assured the latter that he would facilitate the loan. Sudhansu had mortgaged his lands at the bank and availed ₹10 lakh loan. Gupteswar and the bank manager at that time had got some documents signed by Sudhansu before sanctioning the loan.

At the time of applying for the loan, Sudhansu had also given his signatures on some papers. In August, 2019, Sudhansu received a notice from the bank for paying off ₹24 lakh loan. He was surprised and met the bank authorities, saying he had not taken ₹24 lakh loan. At that time, the bank manager had retired. Sudhansu filed a complaint at the police station. Police came to know that Gupteswar in collusion with the bank manager has taken ₹4 crore loan in the name of 25 people. Police are investigating how many people are involved in the scam and whose names were used for the loans.

BETTING ON FOWLS



Tribals organise a cockfight in a market in Kankadahada block of Dhenkanal district, Saturday. They bet money on the birds.

OP PHOTO

Jaga Mission spins off encroachments

IN NAYAGARH, MANY RICH PEOPLE HAVE GRABBED GOVT LANDS, SCUTTLING THE MISSION

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh, Nov 27: The Odisha Liveable Habitat Mission also known as Jaga Mission is giving rise to encroachments in Nayagarh district.

Encroachments are increasing in the district headquarters of Nayagarh after the beneficiaries received pattas (Record of Rights) for five times. The local civic body is clearing the encroachments through eviction drives but has failed to check rapid encroachments in the town. Moreover, well to do and affluent people are grabbing government lands taking advantage of the existing loopholes in the law.

These affluent persons are acquiring government lands despite having their own houses and lands in their villages. This has happened due to existing vote bank politics in the area which is favouring the encroachers in grabbing



government land.

On the other hand, local residents in the town despite paying their taxes in time have been deprived of receiving the minimum benefits. However, the encroachers after receiving the 'pattas' are allegedly being provided with all the benefits.

Some taxpayers have alleged that they have no objection in providing government benefits to the poor and the landless after providing them with land 'pattas' but objected to affluent persons grabbing government benefits on the pretext of being poor

and landless.

They claimed neglecting taxpayers is not good for the health of democracy. Reports said the intensity of encroachments can be gauged from the fact that houses have been built on hills and forested areas in the district headquarters of Nayagarh town.

Moreover, houses are being built on hilltops and foot hills of Jajangi, Rukhi and Balam hills after encroachment. The costly and high value lands are being encroached. This apart, government lands are being sold at prices between ₹40,000 and ₹4 lakh per gunth.

Kotia to get ambulance service from today

POST NEWSNETWORK

Koraput, Nov 27: The much awaited ambulance service is to commence in Kotia panchayat of Koraput district from Sunday, a source informed. However, health centres at Dasamantapur, Narayanpatna, Kotapad and Laxmipur will get an ambulance each, along with Kotia.

"Kotia is important for us, so we will keep one ambulance there. The existing ambulances at Laxmipur and Mathalput are old ones and will be replaced. Similarly, Dasamantapur and Kotapad did not have any ambulance, hence, the two health centres will be provided with one each," Koraput chief district medical officer (CDMO), Makarand Beura said while briefing mediapersons.

New ambulances have been sourced for the purpose out of the district mineral foundation (DMF) fund. It has been decided that the vehicles will be maintained by the health centres concerned, the CDMO added.

Worthy to note here that, Kotia

panchayat has always been abuzz in the media owing to the border row between Odisha and neighbouring Andhra Pradesh.

The state government has been facing serious criticism over its alleged neglect to the three disputed villages under Kotia panchayat.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy and his Odisha counterpart Naveen Patnaik have agreed to work closely on resolving interstate issues during an in-person meeting held November 9.

Several issues were discussed in the meeting, particularly in the fields of water resources, common boundary, energy and left-wing extremism. Reddy met Patnaik to settle issues between the two states, especially the dispute over a cluster of 21 villages under Kotia panchayat.

Odisha government has constituted an eight-member committee headed by Chief Secretary Suresh Mahapatra to deliberate on the pending bilateral issues of mutual interests with the neighbouring state.

Big leap for cashew farming in Koraput

Over 15 lakh saplings to be planted in undivided Koraput district to boost cash crop production



POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput, Nov 27: The undivided Koraput district has a conducive climate and a suitable soil condi-

tion for cashew plantation. The cash crop helps in livelihood generation for farmers, a report said.

As part of this move, the Odisha Cashew Development Corporation (OCDC), a state government undertaking, will plant over 15 lakh saplings in the district and provide help to farmers taking up the plantation on a priority basis, the report said.

This was stated here by Amarendra Das, chairman of OCDC. Das was speaking at a Krushak Mela at OCDC division office here Friday. Joining as chief guest, Das inaugurated the mela and informed participants about various schemes for cashew plantation. Over 400 lead farmers from various parts of the district attended the Krushak Mela.

In a bid to increase cashew pro-

duction in the state, this year the OCDC aims to plant high yielding hybrid cashew saplings for more output by spending over ₹1.20 crore in eight districts of the state, he said. This year, the OCDC aims to plant cashew saplings in over 1,000 hectares in undivided Koraput district.

As part of this programme, nurseries will be developed at Podagad and Borigumma to produce over 15 lakh saplings which will be planted in the area to increase cashew production.

Sanjib Kumar Mohanta, divisional manager, OCDC, presided over the meeting which was also attended by VN Haveli, director of National Cashew and Coco Development Corporation. Haveli advised the farmers to lay more focus on cashew cultivation and

take it forward.

Joining as guest of honour, Dr Manas Ranjan Nayak, scientist, Krushi Vigyan Kendra at Semiliguda, spoke on how to take care of soil and plants for cashew cultivation.

Scientist Dr Mihir Ranjan Mohanty spoke on how to prepare the land for cashew and paddy cultivation while Ashok Senapati, additional project director of soil conservation department, called on farmers to construct farm ponds free of cost.

Pratap Sahu, finance manager, OCDC, Dhruba Charan Sahu, officer, S&WCD, Sunabeda, Asish Singh, district manager, agri-industry corporation, Koraput, Bhaskar Mohanty from the OCDC division office and Subodh Kumar Das, JE, attended the meeting.

RAID ON GANJA TRADER

₹20.50L, properties worth ₹1.5cr seized in Angul dist

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhendipada, Nov 27: A special team of Angul police Saturday seized ₹20.50 lakh and properties worth over ₹1.5 crore during a pre-dawn raid on the house of a ganja trader at Sapoinali village under this police limits in Angul district.

Police raided the house of Chittaranjan Sahu alias Pintu, 41, in the village at 3 am Saturday and seized the cash and properties. But they failed to arrest Chittaranjan as he escaped.

Moreover, police also seized six passbooks in the name of six family members, over 15 land pattas, a luxury car, a mini truck, a trac-

tor, agricultural implements like paddy harvesting machine and other implements, paper plate machine, DJ sound systems, generators, tent house materials and large consignment of sal and teak wood timbers.

The price of the tent house ma-

terials is expected to be over ₹50 lakh. His is a rags-to-riches story as Chittranjan who started working as a car driver went on to become a rich man by entering into illegal ganja trade. His business empire is extended to Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it known to all the whom, my client, Basantilata Patra, W/o. Lt. Daitari Patra, R/o. Vill/P.O./P.S.-Chandabali, Dist.- Bhadrak, Odisha, PIN - 756133, has disowned for younger son "Sri Rajiv Kumar Patra (Raju)", aged about 35 yrs", from her all movable and immovable properties in any manner whatsoever and "Sri Rajiv Kumar Patra (Raju)" shall have no rights, title and interest in all movable and immovable properties of my client in future.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e"- PROCUREMENT NOTICE
Bid Identification No.S.E. GTN(R&B) - 15/2021-22
E-mail address- eeghatagaon2015@gmail.com
Letter No. 6580 dt. 23.11.2021
No. B-147

- The Superintending Engineer, Ghatagaon (R&B) Division on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate Bids in Single cover system in online mode from the eligible contractors for Civil works (Check Dam) as mentioned below.
 - Nature of work : Civil Works (Check Dam)
 - Numbers of work : 03 (Three) Nos.
 - Estimated cost : Rs.8.77 Lakhs to Rs.21.93 Lakhs (Approx.)
 - Period of completion : 3 (Three) Calendar Months.
 - Date & Time of availability of : From 11.30 A.M. of dt.01.12.2021 bid document in the portal to 05.00 P.M. of dt.10.12.2021
 - Last Date/Time for receipt of : 05.00 P.M. of dt.10.12.2021 bids in the portal
 - Date of opening of Bid : 11.00 A.M. of dt.13.12.2021
 - Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>. Any addendum/ corrigendum/ cancellation of tender can also be seen in the same website only.
- Sd/-D.K. Rout, Superintending Engineer, Ghatagaon (R&B) Division
OIPR-34140/11/0039/2122

After 22 years, millets back in tribals' plates

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh, Nov 27: About 22 years ago, millets were grown aplenty in tribal dominated pockets of Nayagarh district. Millets were their staple food. However, over years, the crop began to disappear in most pockets.

Now, the traditional crop has got a new lease of life courtesy Millet Mission of the state government. The Mission has tasted success in 18 tribal dominated villages under Dasapalla block. The cereal has returned to the menu of the tribals.

With the government pushing millet farming, the traditional crop has provided scope of earning for them.

Reports said, apart from paddy, millets were grown aplenty in various parts of the district about two decades ago. During floods, cyclones and droughts, paddy could not meet the food requirement of people in the district. Millets used to meet



their requirements during crises.

It was said that as poor people were provided with subsidised rice, they gradually shunned millet farming in tribal areas. Finally, it was stopped. Instead, many people took up eggplant cultivation. After millets vanished from the menu, tribals suffered malnutrition.

Owing to awareness about millet

farming, they realized the nutritional value of millets. Now, millet farming has spread for last two years at Barpali, Satajhari, Gothasahi and Andharkota in Sariganda panchayat; Gambharikola, Jamusahi, Raisara, Bidapaja and Jhunkamara in Laxmipur panchayat; Kadalibari, Siligadi, Champadai, Khajuridih,

Residents shunned millet farming in 18 tribal villages. Instead, many people took up eggplant cultivation. After millets vanished from their menu, tribals suffered malnutrition

Khalisahi, Khandadhara, Janisahi and Raimada in Ghungudipada panchayat. Millets have replaced eggplant farming in these villages.

Brahmani Behera, a resident of Raisara, said an organisation encouraged tribals to take up millet farming. Meetings were held in villages. The tribals are now preparing various cakes and *jau* with millets. "More people are keen to take up millet farming. It has a good market. But we are not able to cultivate millets in a big way. Many

people come to our village to buy millets. Ranjan Mallick of Gambharikola, said that millets do not require as much water as needed by paddy crop. Besides, it does not require fertilisers, he added.

The Millet Mission is meant to augment the income of farmers and meet the nutritional needs of people.

Notably, the mission aims to fulfill the nutritional needs of women, expectant mothers and kids so as to fight malnutrition in tribal areas.

The mission is vigorously pushed by the women and child welfare department and the agriculture department in tribal areas.

In tribal areas as well, the crop used to be cultivated on a large scale many years ago, but lack of marketing impacted its cultivation. Now, the focus is to revive small crops for income generation of tribals. The crop gets the much-needed attention across the state because of its high nutritional value.

FOCUS CHINA

XI'S BACKWARD ODYSSEY



Chinese President Xi Jinping is on track to become the most powerful Chinese leader since Mao Zedong – a change that will be felt far and wide. But by abandoning the principle of collective leadership and resurrecting absolutism, the ruling Communist Party of China is increasingly out of step with the times

Momentous changes are casting a long shadow on China. The country's political system will soon undergo a profound reform, pending final approval (a quasi-formality) at next year's congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC). President Xi Jinping, the party chairman and the "navigator" of the country, has decided on a new course, abandoning the principle of collective leadership. Xi is leading China away from the path taken by Deng Xiaoping after the terror of the Cultural Revolution, and back toward a system of absolute rule by one person without term limits, as under Mao Zedong.

From a Western perspective, these changes may look trivial. After all, the CPC's political monopoly remains untouched, leaving no possibility for genuine democratisation. But for China – which will soon be the world's largest economy and one of this century's two superpowers (along with the United States) – recent developments signal a return to a disastrous past. Xi's formal elevation to the same stature as Mao implies a transition from authoritarianism to personal dictatorship. Given the enormous increase in China's power and strategic importance since Mao's rule, this change will have far-reaching implications for the rest of the world.

For the time being, the CPC seems to have managed to combine its one-party system with Western-style consumerism. Communist ideology has been pushed into the background by mass prosperity and individual wealth, resulting in a successful hybrid system combining elements of both a market economy and a state economy – all under the CPC's sole and absolute control.

To be sure, China's swift rise from a developing country to the leading economy of the twenty-first century has had its downsides, not least widespread official corruption and a widening gap between rich and poor. But as long as the CPC keeps its commitment to pursuing broad-based social advancement, "core interests" like unchallenged control over

Hong Kong and Taiwan, and increased international influence; there will be no real risk to its rule domestically.

Moreover, the CPC leadership has already recognised that something needed to be done about the corrosive corruption, the scandalous distribution of wealth, the confrontation with America that started during Donald Trump's presidency, and the increasing power of the country's private sector. Successful entrepreneurs such as Jack Ma, the co-founder of the Alibaba Group, were gaining too much influence (from the CPC's perspective) and becoming too dependent on the US capital market.

When some leading Chinese private-sector figures even dared to express their opposition to domestic policies openly, they obviously crossed a red line and became a threat to the state's (and thus the party's) control over the financial sector and the broader economy. For the CPC, a change in direction was clearly needed. According to Xi, the Chinese hybrid model that has developed since Deng now needs a fundamental readjustment and social reorientation to account for the escalating political confrontation with the US and the decline of the

economy's growth rate.

But it remains to be seen how the Chinese hybrid model will fare with a politically weakened private sector and a public sector (state-owned enterprises) that has been ailing for some time. China is still posting impressive growth figures (especially compared to Western economies), and it managed to recover very quickly from the COVID-19 crisis. The question, however, is whether its growth trajectory – which will continue to weaken as a result of demographic trends – is sufficient for meeting the country's goals and ambitions.

Will Xi's course correction consolidate CPC control without sacrificing any of the country's economic dynamism, or will it derail China's global rise? If it does succeed, the West's own internal debates over regulation and redistribution would surely intensify.

Against this background, Xi is betting everything on a transition from collective leadership to indefinite one-man absolutism – despite the disastrous results of that approach under Mao. For China, now an economic giant, to resurrect it speaks to the weakness of the country's political system. Mao used the Cultural Revolution to attack the Chinese political

elite, with the aim of destroying and then renewing it on his own terms. But that was in the 1960s, when China was still wretchedly poor, not a global superpower. Its internal power structure and its national ambitions are increasingly incompatible, and it is here that the great risk of instability lies.

At first glance, dictatorships seem more decisive and assertive than democracies, with their cumbersome processes of deliberation and consent. But this is an illusion, because most authoritarian regimes are in fact consumed by their leaders' fear of losing power. The more a dictatorship acts on this fear by centralising power, the more brittle and unstable the whole edifice becomes.

Genuine systemic stability would require the exact opposite approach: a broadening of the government's base of support. That is the principle that China is now in the process of abandoning under Xi. That will make Xi's China a less predictable partner.

The writer, Germany's Foreign Minister and Vice Chancellor from 1998 to 2005, was a leader of the German Green Party for almost 20 years.

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Joschka Fischer

GIVEN THE ENORMOUS INCREASE IN CHINA'S POWER AND STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE SINCE MAO'S RULE, THIS CHANGE WILL HAVE FAR-REACHING IMPLICATIONS FOR THE REST OF THE WORLD



Aakar Patel

As South Asia's three large nations approach the 75th anniversary of their independence it is instructive to look at where they stand. The three nations are today all democracies and have been for some time, which makes this an unusual period in our history

In silence, the consciousness grows. It aspires to know You more and more perfectly.

THE MOTHER



Cusp of change

As South Asia's three large nations approach the 75th anniversary of their independence it is instructive to look at where they stand. The three nations are today all democracies and have been for some time, which makes this an unusual period in our history. Pakistan has been democratic for the last 13 years. Bangladesh has been democratic for the last three decades with a brief period of military intervention in the middle. India of course has been democratic throughout (it is not well known that the Emergency was Constitutional).

Pakistan appears to have put its phases of military rule behind it with the integration of the army into the nation's higher national security apparatus. Pakistan is also the most fragmented state politically, with a greater share for the Opposition in parliament. Bangladesh and India's ruling parties enjoy total domination.

Bangladesh Prime Ministers tend to be ruthless with the Opposition and the next election, a year from now, will be an indicator of where things are going. Opposition leader Khaleda Zia spent some time in jail as a convict and was unable to contest previous elections. Sheikh Hasina has been in charge for the last dozen years.

Under her, Bangladesh has outperformed both India and Pakistan economically. Its recent overtaking of India in per person GDP comes on the back of years of strong growth while India's has weakened. Bangladesh has managed to improve manufacturing's share of GDP in recent years from 16% to 20%. India's has fallen from 15% to 12% since 2014. Manufacturing is important because it provides employment to many people at the end of the economy where much skill is not required. And particularly the sector of garments manufacturing, in which Bangladesh is a champion, a lot of women are employed. India, on the other hand, has lost its way economically. This has been especially so since 2014. India has the lowest labour force participation rate (number of people either working or looking for work) in South Asia and one of the lowest in the world. This has been the case for the last few years and shows no signs of reversing. There are no jobs.

Pakistan has registered lower growth over the years but this may change in the near future. Tens of billions of dollars are being spent on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, an infrastructure project that connects western China to southern Pakistan. Rail, road and port facilities will give China alternative access to the world through a port in Balochistan without being forced to go through the Strait of Malacca. This CPEC corridor will also connect Pakistan to Central Asia and in case Afghanistan stabilises, Pakistan will be the pivot for a great deal of trade. On the other hand, if CPEC does not take off the fear is that it will leave Pakistan with unmanageable levels of debt.

But for now the three countries are not too far apart in terms of per person GDP at about \$1,800 dollars per year. This comes to about \$11,000 per month which is far from the median. Inequality haunts all three States and a disproportionate share of wealth and income goes to the top 5% in South Asia. India is the most unequal society in the region. The two wealthiest men in Asia are Indians while 800 million of their fellow citizens (60% of the population) must queue up for six kilos of free food grain every month.

In terms of their Human Development Index (a United Nations measure that looks at life expectancy, education and income) India is ranked 133rd in the world, Bangladesh at 135th and Pakistan at 154th. Here, India has fallen one place since 2014 while Bangladesh has risen by half a dozen. Bangladesh and now India have both brought their fertility rates to 2, which mean very soon the population will stop growing in these nations.

The NGO sector in Bangladesh is the most developed in South Asia and this is likely one reason why it is improving its HDI rank. The government does not necessarily see NGOs in hostile terms and often works with them. On the other hand, both Pakistan and India have expended a lot of their energy persecuting their civil society groups and individuals and the results show.

Today there is not much to separate the three nations, though it appeared about a decade or two ago that India would be the breakout nation here. Now it is clear that this will not happen. All three nations have experimented with communalism in their government and their politics.

Pakistan had its worst period in the 1980s while India is taking that path today with minority specific laws and policies ranging from where people cannot pray, what they cannot eat and who they cannot marry.

The outside world will likely have a great deal of influence on how South Asia performs over the next two decades. Automation and artificial intelligence are quickly closing the route for these nations to transition their hundreds of millions from poverty to the middle class. I expect that relations between the three States, which have been mostly hostile, will also change. Given the dramatic geopolitical changes around us, it is unlikely that we will be able to continue into the near future in the way we have since 1947.

WISDOM CORNER

You've gotta dance like there's nobody watching, love like you'll never be hurt, sing like there's nobody listening, and live like it's heaven on earth. **WILLIAM W. PURKEY**

Fairy tales are more than true: not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten. **NEIL GAIMAN**

When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us. **HELEN KELLER**

WORDSWORTH

Carbon footprint

It is very much the term of the moment, especially following the report in February 2007 by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on the effect of human activities on the world's climate. The term has received wider attention in the UK than in the US: newspaper articles here frequently tell readers how to reduce their carbon footprint by changing the way they live. Shortly after the report was published, the Bishop of London agreed not to fly for a year in order to reduce his footprint and to make the point that such profligate use of fossil fuels was selfish. The term carbon footprint refers to the amount of carbon dioxide – a potent greenhouse gas – that is given off by an organisation or an individual burning fossil fuels. This doesn't only include the obvious, such as car and plane travel, heating, cooking and the like, but also covers the cost in fossil fuel of creating and transporting every item that we use or consume, including such necessities as food and clothing (another term also used is embodied energy). The carbon footprint, measured in tonnes, is taken to be a measure of the extent to which such activities contribute to global warming. Footprint here is perhaps not the best term. It has been used figuratively for several decades to express an area over which an effect is felt, such as noise footprint.

SPECTRUM EDUCATION

A passion for teaching science

Dr Debapriya Mukherjee

A CENTRAL MOTIVATING FACTOR IN BECOMING A CHEMIST/ ENVIRONMENTALIST IS WONDERING ABOUT THE NATURE AROUND US AND HOW IT IS PUT TOGETHER AND WORK

My experience on the variety of activities in Central Pollution Control Board and frequent interactions with trainees from environment laboratories and students have made me obsessed with four things: teaching science, doing science demonstrations, assessing chemical behavior of pollutants in environment and research in it, including hobbies like vermi-composting, handicraft from water hyacinth, organic farming and aquaponics.

What I have realised is that as a teacher I must be congruent passionate and consciously polite and exude the feeling of my joy with them to compel the students to listen. I always maintain politeness in my demeanor throughout the period while I am delivering the lecture or answering questions. Most classes function with a "designated" student(s) who ask most of the questions. I tell these students that they are secretly admired by the rest of the class. The questions are repeated and answered. Then I ask the students on the adequacy of my answers. Finally I thank the questionnaire for helping me teach better. In this way my enthusiasm goes beyond the subject matter and embraces the students as friends.

While teaching I am always into my demonstration room to have fun and do what is most important to me in my life: teach and share and to be totally immersed in my students and my subject because I still remember being bored into catatonic states by some teachers. Many students while imparting training expressed the causes of their failure in understanding basic concept of science on account of rote learning. Everybody loves hearing stories, and all may be astonished about its relevance in a chemistry lecture. I have always told stories at all levels in my lectures. I learned over the years that a large number of the students forget the subject matter I was presenting, but they always remembered the stories. In this regard it is probably better for the story to be related to the subject matter of the day. I always started a general chemistry course with a full period chemistry demonstration show. This practice is followed while I deliver the lectures on general science courses. I always want that classroom to be a place where people are having fun, and in which they look forward to being. Thereby I communicate all the students after demonstrating the "blow up a balloon with yeast", "bend water

with static electricity", "fire in water", "magic sand" and many others. If you happen to learn something while I am doing that, I will be pleased. Otherwise, I might be just a bit sad.

According to my assessment, a central motivating factor in becoming a chemist/environmentalist is wondering about the nature around us and how it is put together and work. Thereby teachers must inculcate the passion among the students with awe and wonderment about chemistry. One amazing story is that a soft metal like sodium reacts with a green gas like chlorine to form the "salt of life. If we observe this salt with magnifying glass we will see that individual grains of salt are cubic. But the sodium alone flares up almost immediately upon reaction with water and burns out quickly. Similarly chlorine gas alone is toxic and extremely irritating to the eyes and mucous membrane.

However, the subject of chemistry is, in some ways, three times harder to learn than say history. The latter basically require mostly memory, while chemistry requires mathematics, memory, and abstract thinking. Balancing a chemical

equation needs an understanding of chemical equilibrium, and calculating an amount of product from amounts of reactants requires some mathematical skills. The understanding of the structure of an atom needs visualisation and abstraction. But, if one-half or fewer of your general chemistry students are functioning conceptually primarily in concrete terms, then they may be able to answer questions by rote, but not with understanding.

Finally I refer the wonders of chemical behaviour of pollutants in river. The formation of white particles containing high concentrations of aluminum, silica and sulfate at the confluence of Lukha river at pH4.5 was the major cause of the blue coloration of river and fish mortality. Many such chemical reactions in water are really incredible and presenting these reactions with practical demonstrations inculcates the passion among the students with awe and wonderment about chemistry.

Being overtly passionate about teaching and being willing to show that to your students is the essence of being a good teacher.

The writer is chairman, **Risti Prayas, Kolkata**

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**

OriṣṣaPOST
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Monitor cryptocurrency

Sir, Cryptocurrencies have recently become a craze in India, with people looking at them as an easy opportunity to make money. They have been around since 2009 and the amount mined, the types of competing cryptocurrencies, and their prices have all grown astonishingly. The reason why cryptocurrencies were floated was to avoid regulations by any authority. They would act as a decentralised medium of exchange and computer programmes and algorithms would determine prices and provide the security. The origins, the system of mining for additional units of currencies, the blockchain ledger system and its pseudo-anonymity are, however, obscure and complex. Yet trading for speculative gains in conventional money is easy to do. It is this possibility that has been pumping adrenaline in investors. The Centre is more concerned about the possibility of investors being misled and misinformed. But banning these currencies would drive the trade underground and make it opaque. Regulating them, on the other hand, would be difficult and defeat the purpose of the creation of cryptocurrencies. Cryptocurrency challenges this normal world of business and economy forcing several governments to think about regulating the emerging world of a potential parallel economy has no intrinsic value. But the concerns expressed by the government and RBI about terror financing and money-laundering are real and as it can threaten the country's financial and territorial security. Hence, cryptocurrency should be brought under government's oversight.

N Sathasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Christmas gifts

Sir, The tradition of giving gifts during Christmas has its roots that go back as far as the Nativity story, whereupon the three wise men gave gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to the infant Jesus. The Romans had their own tradition of giving gifts during Saturnalia, which was a festival that began on the December 17 and lasted until 23. St. Nicholas was perhaps one of the most famous gift givers in Christmas history, as he delighted children and adults alike in the surprise presents he left behind in the shoes that were left outside their homes. In the 13th century, many French nuns made and gave gifts to the needy on the eve of the feast of St Nicholas, which is celebrated December 6. But it was in the 18th century that gift-giving became a central tradition of the Christmas festivities. The gifts that were given were to remind those of the wise men's journey and of God's selfless gift to humanity, and to help those who were unfortunate.

Jubel D'Cruz, MUMBAI

national

of the day quote

New variant is a serious threat. High time GOI (government of India) gets serious about providing vaccine security to our countrymen

RAHUL GANDHI | FORMER CONGRESS CHIEF

I urge Hon'ble PM to stop flights from those countries which are affected by new variant. With great difficulty, our country has recovered from Corona. We should do everything possible to prevent this new variant from entering India

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CHIEF MINISTER

It is not possible to make a law on MSP as doing so will put pressure on the government to buy all the crops, which is not possible

MANOHAR LAL | HARYANA CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Flight makes emergency landing

Nagpur: A Patna-bound Go First flight from Bangalore with 139 passengers on board made an emergency landing at Nagpur airport on Saturday due to a glitch in one of the engines of the aircraft, an official said. The flight landed safely at the airport at 11.15 am, the official said. "The pilot of the Go First flight contacted Nagpur ATC to inform that one of the engines of the plane is facing a problem, and made a request for emergency landing at Nagpur airport," director of the airport, Abid Ruhi, told PTI. There were 139 passengers on board apart from the crew members, he said.

Army man booked in rape case

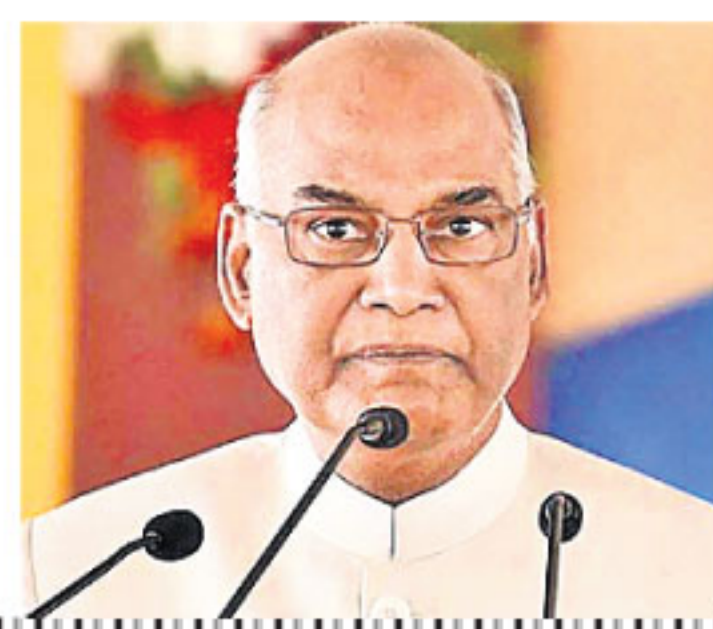
Mathura: An Army personnel has been booked on charges of drugging and raping a 21-year-old woman, police here said Saturday. The accused, Tejveer, was arrested Wednesday and was booked for raping a woman he befriended through social media. On Saturday, he was slapped with a few more charges, including section 376 D (rape by more than one person) and 328 (drugging a person) of the Indian Penal Code, Superintendent of Police (SP) rural Srish Chandra said. He said a process to book them under Gangster Act has also been started.

Two HM terror associates held

Srinagar: Security forces Saturday arrested two Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) militant associates in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir and recovered ammunition and incriminating material from them, police said. A police spokesman identified them as Muzamil Ayoub Bhat and Suhail Manzoor Mohand -- both residents of Shahabad Kharpora Bala Lalgam Awantipora.

IT dept seizes cash, jewellery

New Delhi: The Income Tax department has seized over Rs 4 crore worth jewellery and cash after it raided two real estate developers of Ludhiana in Punjab about two weeks back, the CBDT said Saturday. The raids were conducted on November 16 and 40 premises of the un-identified groups were covered. The major finding after the operation against the groups is about the receipt of unaccounted cash on property transactions, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said in a statement.



Indiscreet remarks, even if made with good intention, give space for dubious interpretations to run down the judiciary

RAM NATH KOVIND | PRESIDENT

NOBLE ACT

India now ranks third in the world in organ donation and transplantation as the total number of organ transplants done per year in the country has increased to 12,746 in the year 2019, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) Mansukh Mandaviya said



RISK FOR HUMAN HABITATION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pithoragarh (Uttarakhand), Nov 27: Dar -- the first village of Darma valley in Dharchula subdivision of the district -- is gradually sliding down the slope as a result of the weakening land surface on which it stands making it unfit for human habitation, a geologist who surveyed the village on the orders of the district administration said.

"At least 35 families out of a total of 150 living in the village

need to be shifted immediately as the houses they live in are slowly sliding down the slope," said Pradeep Kumar, who led a team of geologists to the village for a survey recently, Saturday.

The cause of the downward slide of the village is the widening work on the Sobla-Tidang road besides underground water bodies that are making their way downwards resulting in weakening of the land surface on which the village is situated, he said.



These water bodies went underground after being buried under tonnes of landslide debris around 200 years ago and are

gradually receding further downwards making the upper layers of the soil even weaker, Kumar said.

"The village is situated on landslide debris and already has weak soil, having no hard rocks beneath," he said.

Nearly 200 villages of Dharchula and Munsyari subdivisions are situated on debris that accumulated following landslides in the surrounding hills over centuries and are highly sensitive to landslips, he said. Gram Pradhan of Dar village Savita Devi had written to the administration complaining about the sliding slope of some houses

in the village. A team of geologists led by Pradeep Kumar was sent by the district administration to the village for a survey following her complaint.

"The families living in endangered houses need to be immediately shifted to safe places as a calamity might occur any moment," she warned.

Dharchula SDM A K Shukla said further action will be taken after he receives the survey report from the team of geologists and studies it in detail.

'Omicron' fear grips India



Representational image

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Nov 27: Amid the detection of a new coronavirus variant and surge in cases elsewhere, the WHO Saturday asked countries in the southeast Asia region to scale up surveillance, strengthen public health and social measures, and enhance vaccination coverage.

The global health body said festivities and celebrations must include all precautionary measures and crowds and large gatherings must be avoided. "At no cost should we let our guards down," said Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, Regional Director, WHO, South-East Asia Region.

As the world reopens after 18-20 months of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns, a new variant of the coronavirus -- called Omicron (B.1.1.529) -- has been identified in South Africa that has left the scientific community worried, as they

fear that this new strain could fuel outbreaks in several countries and cripple health systems once again.

Over 100 cases have been detected in South Africa, where the new strain is slowly becoming the dominant one. Here are five

Two SA nationals test Covid +ve in B'lore

Bangalore: Two South African nationals have tested Covid-19 positive at the Kempegowda International Airport here, creating panic among the health authorities over the new Omicron variant of the lethal virus. Bengaluru Rural Deputy Commissioner K. Srinivas Saturday said further test reports would ascertain whether the South African nationals are infected with the Omicron variant. The test results will take another 48 hours to arrive, the Health Department said.

things you should know about this deadly super Covid variant that has forced a number of countries, including the UK, Israel, Italy and Singapore, to restrict travel from South Africa and other countries in the region.

Maha very cautious

Mumbai: The Maharashtra government has decided to screen air passengers arriving to the state from at least 10 known countries where the much-feared new Coronavirus variant 'Omicron' has been detected, as per Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's directives, Urban Development Minister Eknath Shinde said here Saturday. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) in consultation with the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport will make available a list of all the passengers who have arrived from abroad in the past 14 days to the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. The officials will check the passengers who have arrived here from the 10 'high risk countries' where the new and more dangerous Omicron variant has been detected -- South Africa, Botswana, Brazil, China, Israel, Belgium, Hong Kong, Mauritius, New Zealand and others. The Tamil Nadu government has directed to intensify screening at Chennai international airport and other airports in the state after the Union Health Ministry issued an alert on the risk posed by a new Covid-19 variant.

Two merchant vessels collide, no casualty: ICG

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, Nov 27: Two merchant vessels (MVs) with at least 44 crew members from India and the Philippines on their boards collided in the Gulf of Kutch in the Arabian sea off the Gujarat coast but no casualty or oil slick has been reported in the incident which occurred in the area considered to be a very sensitive marine diversity reserve, officials said Saturday.

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) is continuously monitoring the area of collision for an oil spill, if any, they said.

The collision between oil/chemical tanker MV Atlantic Grace and bulk carrier MV Aviator occurred

around 21:30 hours on November 26 in the area considered to be a very sensitive marine diversity reserve, the ICG said in a release.

ICG ships and a helicopter deployed for area assessment have reported no oil spills or marine pollution from both the MVs, it said. As soon as the information was received, the ICG deployed two ships to assess the area, as it is a "very sensitive marine diversity reserve".

A Coast Guard pollution control vessel, ICGS Samudra Pavak, was diverted for assessment and to initiate preventive measures towards marine oil pollution, the release said. An ICG helicopter is also carrying out a pollution assessment and assisting, it said.

Dead man wins Panchayat poll

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jamui (Bihar), Nov 27: A dead man has won a Panchayat poll held Wednesday riding on a "sympathy wave" generated by his own death.

The real-life tragicomedy was detected in this impoverished district, situated about 200 kms from the state capital, when officials were handing over certificates to candidates who won the polls held on November 24.

Sohan Murmu, who won ward no. 2 of Deepakarhar village, falling under Khaira block, was nowhere to be found.

"On enquiry, we learnt that Murmu had died November 6, more than a fortnight before voting took place", Khaira BDO Raghavendra Tripathi said with a sense of bewilderment. Deepakarhar happens to be a remote hamlet situated



along the state's border with Jharkhand, which perhaps explains the demography of the village which has a predominantly tribal population.

Old residents also recall that it was this village which was first hit by Naxal activity, in the 1990s, in the district that later became one of the worst infested by ultra-Left insurgency, according to a list published by the Union Home Ministry a few years ago. Nonetheless, Tripathi's account of

what has happened suggests that the village and its residents retain an amazing simplicity, bordering on downright sentimentality.

"Family members of Murmu, who defeated his rival by 28 votes, said it was the last wish of the deceased, who had been ailing, to win the election. So they kept quiet. No resident of the village informed us either. It appears that they all voted in his favour to honour his last wish", said the BDO. The naivete of the bereaved family members and fellow villagers, nonetheless, has brought meant more work for the officials.

"The winner's certificate cannot be issued to anybody. We are going to write to the state election with the request that election for the ward concerned be nullified and fresh polls held", said Tripathi in a matter of fact way.

More women take part in polls than men: CEC

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Nov 27: There has been a 235.72 per cent increase in female electors since the 1971 elections and their participation has exceeded that of men to stand at more than 67 per cent in the 2019 general election, as per Chief Election Commissioner of India.

"India has witnessed a 235.72 per cent increase in female electors since the 1971 elections and after seven decades and 17 General Elections since Independence, women's participation in India has exceeded that of men and stood at more than 67 per cent in the 2019 General Election."

"The gender gap, a crucial parameter, which was -16.71 per cent in 1962, has not only closed but reversed to +0.17 per cent in 2019," said



Representational image

Sushil Chandra at an international webinar on the theme 'Enhancing electoral participation of Women, Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)

& Senior citizen Voters' on Friday which was attended by nearly hundred delegates from 24 countries.

Highlighting various initiatives taken by the ECI to enhance women participation, including associating more women as the polling booth officials, Chandra said that a larger number of all women managed polling stations, creche facility at polling stations, separate toilets and waiting area at the polling booths, ensuring ease of registration with women Block level Officers motivating women in their socio-cultural milieu, amongst others led to it.

The gender gap, a crucial parameter, which was -16.71 % in 1962, has not only closed but reversed to +0.17% in 2019

SUSHIL CHANDRA | CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER

During his address, Sushil Chandra also elaborated on the concept of Absentee, voter facilitation, introduced by ECI in 2020 to ensure voting facility at the doorstep especially for 80+ senior citizens, PwDs and Covid-affected voters, adding, "Such postal ballot facility had been successfully implemented across six state Assembly elections, including Bihar, Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and UT Puducherry, which had a cumulative elector base of 73.6 million."

In the last five state Assembly elections, 4.5 times higher electors participated in the electoral process through postal ballots and there is scope for widening the outreach and facilitation efforts, he said, adding that there are around 15 million 80+ electors today in the country.



OUT OF GEAR

Traffic jam on a road, due to protest rally of nurses of various West Bengal Government run hospitals over alleged discrimination in their pay scale and unnecessary transfer, in Kolkata

India, SL, Maldives maritime ops to tighten security in Indian Ocean

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi/Colombo, Nov 27: A two-day maritime operation between India, Sri Lanka and Maldives to tighten security in the Indian Ocean started Saturday.

"The Tri-lateral Focused Operations, between India-Sri Lanka-Maldives commenced at Sea from 27-28 November 2021. The exercise under the aegis of Colombo Security Conclave (CSC) is a pioneering effort to collaborate efforts towards the Pillar of Maritime Security," Indian High Commission in Colombo said in a statement.

The CSC Focused Operations are aimed at streamlining Standard



Operating Procedures (SOPs) and enhanced interoperability amongst the three navies.

"The Indian Navy is represented by INS Subhadra Offshore Patrol Vessel and P8I Long Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft, whilst SLNS Samudura and MNDF

Maritime Reconnaissance Aircraft Dornier are participating from Sri Lanka Navy and Maldives National Defence Forces respectively".

The two-day operation is to have a platform for a coordinated maritime surveillance in respective Exclusive Economic Zone for counter narcotics, search and rescue at sea, air tracking and establish effective communication.

With the aim to tackle common Security Challenges in the region, the CSC was started during the 4th National Security Adviser Tri Lateral meeting in last November and the Secretariat was established in Colombo in March 2021.

J&K Assembly polls likely before 2022 Amarnath Yatra

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, Nov 27: With the assembly elections likely to be held by May-June next year, various political parties in Jammu and Kashmir have started increasing their foothold on the ground first time after August 5, 2019 when article 370 was scrapped.

Top sources indicate that the delimitation commission has completed its draft report of new and re-alignment of some old assembly seats in J&K.

The commission is headed by retired Supreme Court judge, Ranjana Desai.

"The draft report is ready. It will now be shared with the associate members, including three Lok Sabha members from the National Conference (Farooq Abdullah, Hasnain Masoodi and Akbar Lone) and the BJP's Jitendra Singh and Jugal Kishore Sharma", top sources told IANS adding that the commission has already been communicated that there would be no further extension of its time period which ends in March 2022.

All major political players including leaders of the National Conference (NC), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Indian National Congress (INC), J&K National Panthers Party (JKNPP), J&K Apni Party, Peoples Conference (PC) and other smaller groups have started public interactions through meetings and rallies.

The BJP has already told its party cadre that the assembly elections would not be deferred further and these are being held next year before the annual Amarnath Yatra which begins in the last week of June each year, but was called off due to the pandemic this year.

After 20 months, Maha lifts all lockdown curbs

The govt has decreed that only the fully vaccinated persons shall be permitted to travel vide all modes of public transport as also for entry to malls, shops etc



AGENCIES

Mumbai, Nov 27: In a significant decision, the Maharashtra government Saturday lifted all lockdown restrictions with conditions, allowing economic, social, cultural, sports and entertainment activities as before the pandemic days, with major emphasis on full vaccination, after nearly 20 months.

As part of the easing, strict Covid appropriate behaviour will remain mandatory as per the rules, said Chief Secretary Sitaram Kunte in

a 5-page order.

The government has decreed that only the fully vaccinated persons shall be permitted to travel vide all modes of public transport as also for entry to malls, shops, establishments, ticketed or non-ticketed events, programmes, shows, public gatherings, where all the organisers shall also be fully vaccinated.

All fliers to Maharashtra from any international destination shall be governed by the Central government rules, but all domestic pas-

sengers must be fully vaccinated or carry an RT-PCR test report with 72 hours validity.

As earlier, only 50 per cent attendance will continue for theatres, cinemas, marriages, conventions, etc held in closed spaces, and up to 25 per cent of the capacity of any open-to-sky venues.

In case the total people attending such events exceeds 1,000, then the organisers must inform the District Disaster Management Authority which will send its officials to ensure compliance of CAB, and if the same are violated may order closure of part or full venue.

All people must observe the Covid-19 norms like wearing face-masks, maintain at least 6 feet physical distance, ensure hygiene, sanitise/wash hands frequently, and those found violating the CAB shall be fined ₹500.

All establishments which do not ensure their guests/visitor implement these norms would be penalised ₹10,000, or otherwise flouting the same may face closure till the disaster norms are in force.

Defaulters in public transport like buses or taxis shall be fined ₹500 along with the driver, conductor, etc, while the operators will be slapped with ₹10,000 penalty, or withdrawal of licence till the disaster norms remain in force.

8 killed in Tamil Nadu rain fury

SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES HAVE BEEN CLOSED IN 23 DISTRICTS OF TAMIL NADU AFTER THE IMD ISSUED A RED ALERT WARNING

AGENCIES

Chennai, Nov 27: Tamil Nadu Disaster Management Minister KKSSR Ramachandran said eight people have died in rain-related incidents in the state, of which three people lost their lives Friday. Two teams of NDRF have been deployed in Chinglepet and one in Kanchipuram for rescue and relief operations.

A red alert has been issued in the coastal districts on Tamil Nadu Saturday by the India Meteorological Department (IMD), which has warned of isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall.

Schools and colleges have been closed in 23 districts of Tamil Nadu following incessant downpour over the last 24 hours, which has led to severe waterlogging and flooding in several areas.

According to an official order, educational institutions in Chennai, Chengalpattu, Tiruvallur, Kallakurichi, Tuticorin, Nellore, Ramanathapuram, Pudukkottai, Tanjore, Thiruvallur, Nagai, Cuddalore, Ariyalur, Perambalur, Trichy, Villupuram, Salem, Thiruvannamalai, Vellore, Ranipettai and Kanchipuram districts remained closed Saturday.

Waterlogging has been reported at 220 places in Chennai, out of which water has been cleared at 34 places, said minister KKSSR Ramachandran. The process to pump out floodwater is ongoing



Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin visits a waterlogged area following heavy rain in Chennai, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

at 127 locations in the city.

Warning of heavy to very heavy rain in isolated places have been sounded in Chennai, Tiruvallur, Kanchipuram, Chengalpattu, Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi, Ramanathapuram, Karikal, Nagapattinam, Pudukkottai, Mayiladuthurai and Pudukcherry.

The weather department has warned fishermen against venturing into the sea due to "squally weather with wind speed reaching 40-50 kmph gusting to 60 kmph" likely to occur over "Comorin area, south coastal Tamil Nadu and southwest Bay of Bengal".

Thunderstorm with light to mod-

erate rain over the next three hours has been forecast in Chennai, Chengalpattu, Kancheepuram, Tiruvallur, Villupuram, Salem, Dharmapuri, Tiruvannamalai, Kallakurichi, Perambalur, Cuddalore, Vellore, Ranipet and Tirupattur districts and Pudukcherry.

Officials are bracing for waterlogging, severe crop damages, uprooting of trees, damage to cattle and increase in water levels in the rivers and lakes following the heavy rainfall warning.

Meanwhile, Chennai and the neighbouring districts of Tiruvallur, Kanchipuram, and Chengalpattu have received 56 to 67 per cent more than average downpour this monsoon season.

The IMD has also predicted isolated very heavy rainfall on the southern coast of Andhra Pradesh, including the Rayalaseema region and Yanam in East Godavari district November 27 and November 28.

Power supply was disrupted in parts of Chennai city due to waterlogging. Electricity has been temporarily snapped in Bazulath Road, part of Usman Road, Giriappa Road, parts of Perumbakkam, Aziz Nagar and KK Nagar.

The weather agency said that a cyclonic circulation lies over Comorin area and adjoining Sri Lanka coasts and strong north-easterly winds are prevailing over Tamil Nadu coast and south coastal Andhra Pradesh at lower levels.

Central agencies trying to frame me: Nawab Malik

Maharashtra minister and NCP leader Saturday claimed that some unidentified persons tried to conduct a recce of his residence in Mumbai

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Nov 27: Maharashtra minister and NCP leader Nawab Malik Saturday claimed that some unidentified persons tried to conduct a recce of his residence in Mumbai and also tried to gather information about himself and his family members. He also alleged that some Central agencies are trying to implicate him in false cases.

Addressing a press conference here, Malik said he will file a formal complaint with Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Mumbai Police Commissioner Hemant Nagrale in this regard.

"I have proof that my house and my family members are being watched. When I was in Dubai last week, two persons with a camera tried to conduct a recce of my residence. They were trying to collect information about my home, schools, office, and grandchildren. When they were stopped by some people and questioned, they fled," Malik alleged.

He also claimed that one of the two persons writes against him

on Koo handle.

Malik, also a spokesperson of the Nationalist Congress Party, further claimed that some officers from Central investigating agencies were preparing a Whatsapp draft of a complaint against him to be sent through email.

"I have proof of Whatsapp chats about this. If Central agencies are planning to lodge false cases against ministers then this is a serious matter and it will not be tolerated," he said.



Malik has been targetting the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) and its Mumbai zonal director Sameer Wankhede after the anti-drugs agency raided a cruise ship and claimed to have recovered some contraband last month.

Hindi film superstar Shah Khan's son Aryan and others were arrested in connection with this case. They were later granted bail by the Bombay High Court.

Malik had claimed that the raid conducted by the NCB was a ploy to extort money from Aryan Khan and this conspiracy was hatched by a purported BJP functionary of which Wankhede was part.

A HELPING HAND



Young men sit in a tub as another man pushes them on a waterlogged street following heavy rain in Chennai, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

3 female elephants killed by speeding train

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Nov 27: Three female elephants aged 12, 18 and 25 were killed while they were hit by the Mangalore-Chennai Express at Mahendramedu near Navakkara in Coimbatore district.

The incident occurred Friday night.

The elephants were hit while they were crossing the railway track near Marappalam thottam on A-Line between Walayar and Madukkarai sections.

One elephant was found on the track while two others seem to be



thrown off the track and on the ground below. The loco pilot stopped the train and informed the Palakkad division of Southern Railway to

alert the forest department.

The train was stopped for a couple of hours at Walayar with the passengers and resumed its jour-

ney later.

Sunil Menon, an environmentalist and wildlife student from Palakkad told IANS, "The railways should give guidelines to its loco pilots on the probable areas where the elephant herds are likely to cross the track and forest department can provide valuable inputs regarding this. It is really unfortunate that three elephants died like this and there has to be a proper understanding between the Union Environment and Forest Ministry and the Indian Railways regarding this across the country."

20-year-old girl raped, murdered in Mumbai

AGENCIES

Mumbai, Nov 27: A 20-year-old woman was allegedly raped and murdered in Kurla in Mumbai by unidentified person(s). The police have registered a case under Sections 376 and 302 of the Indian Penal Code and a search for the accused is underway.

The woman's body was found in the lift room on the terrace of a vacant building in HDIL colony in Kurla. The post-mortem report confirms that she was sexually assaulted, the police said. She also had serious head injuries.

Deputy Commissioner of Police Pranay Ashok said, "Some boys went to the vacant building to shoot a video on Thursday evening. When they reached, they saw the body covered with blood and informed the police."

The statement of the boys has been recorded by the police. The police are also scanning CCTV footage.

When found, the victim's body had started decomposing and she has not yet been identified.

Maha: Four 'warkaris' killed, 23 injured

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pune, Nov 27: Four warkaris (devotees of Lord Vitthal) going on foot were killed and at least 23 of their fellow pilgrims were injured after being hit by a mini pickup truck near Kanhe village in Pune district of Maharashtra early Saturday police said.

The pilgrims were on their way to Alandi, a temple town located approximately 25 kms from Pune city, when the incident took place around 6 am in Maval tehsil, they said.

"A group of warkaris was coming on foot from Raigad district. When they reached Sate Phata on old Mumbai-Pune highway, a mini-truck hit them, in which around 27 of them suffered injuries," said inspector Vilas Bhosale of Wadgaon Maval police station.

"The injured were shifted to different hospitals, where four of them died during treatment," he said. The police have detained the driver of the vehicle and a probe is on, Bhosale added.

Warkaris take annual 'wari' (pilgrimage) to Pandharpur town in Solapur district in the state, famous for its Lord Vitthal temple. The annual pilgrimage, which generally begins in June, culminates on the day of Ashadhi Ekadashi, which usually falls in the month of July.

Patriarchal mentality deeply imbibed in women's mind: Survey

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION, "IN YOUR OPINION, IS A HUSBAND JUSTIFIED IN HITTING OR BEATING HIS WIFE...," FROM AS MANY AS 18 STATES AND JAMMU & KASHMIR ARE TELLING

AGENCIES

Mumbai, Nov 27: A falling fertility rate and a surge in their bank accounts point to the growing empowerment of women but when it comes to attitudes regarding domestic violence, the latest National Family Health Survey shows the distance that needs to be travelled.

Responses to the question, "In your opinion, is a husband justified in hitting or beating his wife...," from as many as 18 states and Jammu and Kashmir are telling.

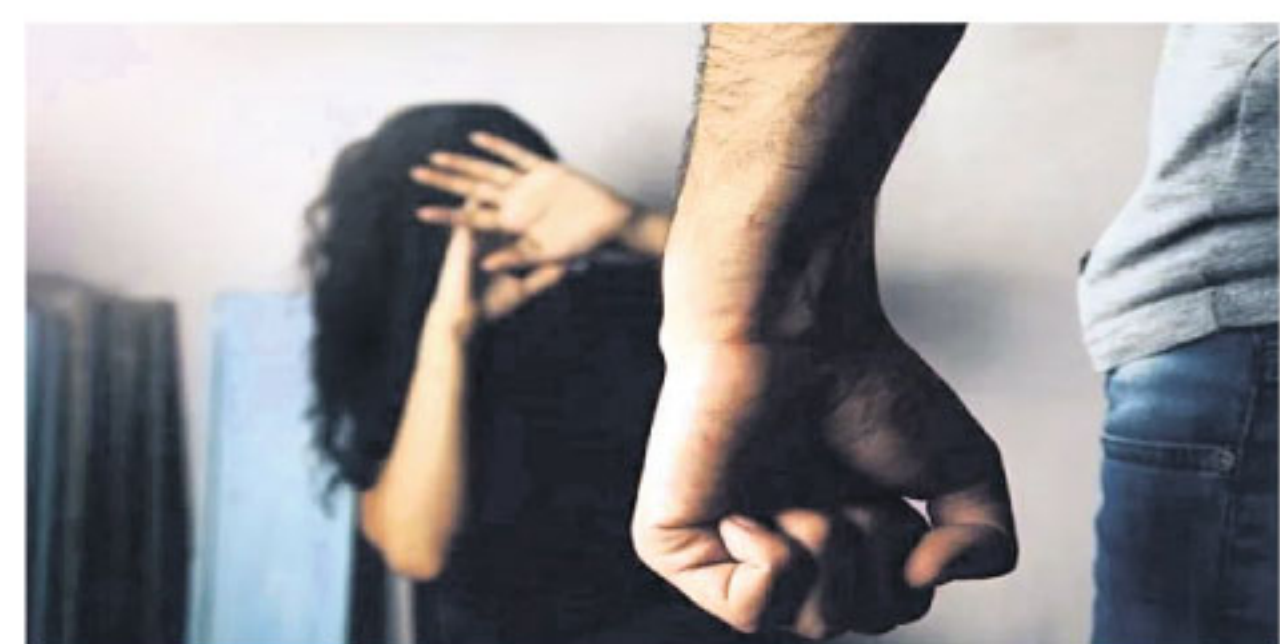
The survey asked the question and then listed the "seven situations" as reason to hit or beat the wife: If she goes out without telling him; if she neglects the house or the children; if she argues with

him; if she refuses to have sex with him; if she doesn't cook food properly; if he suspects her of being unfaithful; if she shows disrespect for in-laws.

According to the survey, the most common reasons cited to justify domestic abuse: showing disrespect to in-laws, neglecting the house and children.

Data pertaining to surveys held in 2019-21 was released this week. These surveys were undertaken in Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Goa, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Telangana, Tripura and West Bengal.

The other states which have a



high percentage of women who justify domestic violence are Andhra Pradesh (83.6 per cent), Karnataka (76.9 per cent), Manipur (65.9 per cent) and Kerala (52.4 per cent). Men from Himachal Pradesh and Tripura had the lowest ac-

ceptance of domestic abuse with only 14.2 per cent, 21.3 per cent respondents agreeing.

Data from the NFHS-4 (2015-2016) for the entire country released in January 2018 said that while 52 per cent of women surveyed be-

lieved it was reasonable for a husband to beat his wife, only 42 per cent of men agreed with it.

In the latest survey, of the 18 states, women respondents in 13 - Manipur, Gujarat, Nagaland, Goa, Bihar, Assam, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana, Nagaland,

Himachal Pradesh, Kerala and West Bengal - chose 'disrespect to in-laws' as the main reason for justifying beating.

This is followed by the second option: 'neglecting house and children' for accepting spouse violence. 'Being suspected of being unfaithful' has got the least number of justifications for beating. Only women (21%) in Mizoram choose it as the main reason for physical abuse over the other two options.

Sharada AL, director of Population First, an NGO working for women rights, said: "This kind of patriarchal mentality is deeply imbibed in the minds of the women who think that serving their family and husband should be their first priority."

of the day quote

One cannot be in a situation where it becomes difficult to implement laws passed by the legislature and verdicts delivered by the judiciary

KIREN RIJU | UNION LAW MINISTER

Avoid sedentary habits, unhealthy diet and undertake regular physical activity like yoga or cycling

M VENKAIAH NAIDU | VICE PRESIDENT

Sale and placing of orders worth over Rs 12 crore took place at the Hunar Haat here with exquisite indigenous products of artisans and craft persons getting a major boost

MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI | MINORITY AFFAIRS MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

IAF chief to visit Egypt

New Delhi: Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhari will pay a five-day visit to Egypt beginning Sunday which is expected to bolster ties between the two countries. The Indian Air Force (IAF) said he is visiting the country to attend the Egypt Air Power Symposium and Egyptian Defence Exposition (EDEX) which will take place in Cairo from November 28 to December 2.

New pay scale for govt employees

Shimla: Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur Saturday announced a new pay scale for government employees with effect from January 2016. Addressing the Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) of the Himachal Pradesh Non-Gazetted Employees Federation here, the Chief Minister said that all pensioners and family pensioners would also be given the revised pension and other pensionary benefits with effect from January 2016.

Surrendered Maoist to get house, stipend

Wayanad (Ker): Senior Maoist leader Lijesh, who surrendered before Kerala police last month, is likely to get a house of his own, stipend and a job soon. The district rehabilitation committee, headed by the district collector, recommended to the government to provide a house, job, stipend and other livelihood means to him under the state government's 'surrender-cum-rehabilitation' package announced in 2018. As per the package, a liberal approach would be taken by the authorities in the cases involving Maoists who return to the mainstream giving up their armed struggle, a police statement said Saturday.

Mukesh Goyal joins AAP

New Delhi: Senior Congress leader Mukesh Goyal Saturday joined the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in the presence of Deputy Chief Minister of Delhi, Manish Sisodia. In the 2020 Assembly elections in Delhi, Goyal had lost to Pawan Sharma of AAP from the Adarsh Nagar constituency.

4 charred to death

Pakur (Jharkhand): Four people were charred to death after two heavy vehicles they were travelling in caught fire following a head-on collision in Jharkhand's Pakur district Saturday, police said. The incident took place near Kadwa village in Littipara police station area early in the morning, officer-in-charge Abhishek Rai said.



In Arunachal Pradesh, BJP government lets China to build villages. In Ladakh, the government surrenders and cedes our territory to Chinese. BJP has transformed into Beijing Janata Party

MALLIKARJUN KHARGE | LEADER OF OPPOSITION IN THE RAJYA SABHA

NO RESPIRE

The air quality in Delhi was recorded in the "severe" category on Saturday due to a low wind speed that prevents effective dispersion of pollutants



WINTER SESSION

TMC 'disinterested' in coordinating with Cong in Parl



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Nov 27: The Trinamool Congress on Saturday said it is "disinterested" in coordinating with the Congress during the upcoming winter session of Parliament but maintained that it would cooperate with other opposition camps on various issues concerning people's interest, a party leader said Saturday.

The TMC "most probably will not attend" the opposition parties' meeting convened by Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge November 29, he said. "The TMC's snub to the Congress came days after Kharge, the leader of opposition in the Rajya Sabha, had said the grand old party would coordinate with all opposition camps, including the TMC, during the winter session. Amid the strained relationship between the two, the TMC advised the Congress that it should have "proper internal coordination and set their own house in order".

"We are disinterested in coordinating with the Congress during the winter session. Congress leaders should first coordinate among themselves. They should set their own house in order and then think about coordinating with other camps," a senior TMC leader privy to the party's decision told PTI on condition of anonymity. Asked whether the TMC would coordinate with other opposition parties, he said, "We will raise several issues concerning the people's interest and will coordinate with them. We most probably will not attend the opposition parties' meeting convened by the Congress." Speaking about aversion to the Congress in the fight against the BJP, he said, "their leaders lack the determination to take on the safe

fron camp". The TMC will hold its national coordination committee meeting on November 29 at West Bengal Chief Minister and party supremo Mamata Banerjee's residence here.

The party will discuss various issues, including its strategy in the winter session of Parliament, the TMC leader said. Banerjee, in July, was unanimously chosen as the chairperson of the TMC parliamentary party.

TMC's Rajya Sabha party leader Derek O'Brien, while listing out the topics that the party would raise during the winter session, said the issues "self-select themselves". "The issues to be taken in the winter session of Parliament self-select themselves. For example, we will raise the issues of repealing farm laws, legislation to ensure MSP, extension of tenures of ED and CBI directors, BSF's increased jurisdiction, weakening of the federal structure, fuel prices and bank privatisation," he said. The Trinamool Congress has been up in arms over the Congress' alleged failure to fight against the BJP.

Recently, it had termed the Congress as an "incapable and incompetent" party and asserted that Mamata Banerjee-led TMC can't be blamed for their leaders jumping the ship. Last month, the relationship between the two camps reached a new low after Banerjee's party took a dig at Rahul Gandhi's defeat at Amethi in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, wondering whether the Congress would erase it through a Twitter trend.

The ties between the Congress and the TMC got strained recently after the latter's mouthpiece Jago Bangla' claimed that Banerjee, and not Rahul Gandhi, has emerged as the face of the opposition against Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

SCIENTISTS ON ALERT

JOHANNESBURG: Researchers are racing to track the rise of the new variant of the SARS-CoV-2, which is found to harbour a large number of the mutations found in other variants, including Delta. The new variant, known as B.1.1.529, has been detected in small numbers in South Africa. The WHO on Friday assigned the Greek letter Omicron to the variant. Researchers spotted B.1.1.529 in genome-sequencing data from Botswana. The variant stood out because it contains more than 30 changes to the spike protein -- the SARS-CoV-2 protein that recognises host cells and is the main target of the body's immune responses, Nature reported. Many of the changes have been found in variants such as Delta and Alpha, and are linked to heightened infectivity and the ability to evade infection-blocking antibodies. "There's a lot we don't understand about this variant," said Richard Lessells, an infectious-diseases physician at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban, South Africa, at a press briefing organized by South Africa's health department on November 25.

Workplace disruptions boost diversity, inclusion at firms

THE PANDEMIC HAS BEEN A CATALYST FOR BUSINESSES TO REIMAGINE THE WORKPLACE MODEL AND ADAPT TO NEW WAYS OF WORKING, WHICH WERE HISTORICALLY UNIMAGINABLE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Nov 27: Business leaders in India see the state of inclusion at their offices changing, as workplace disruptions during the pandemic have had a positive impact on diversity, equity and inclusion at the organisation in the country, a study has revealed.

In India, more than 200 top business leaders across the country (out of more than 3,000 business leaders across 17 countries) said they plan to build inclusive and diverse companies going forward, according to the study by chip giant Intel.

Nearly 81 per cent of the business leaders surveyed in India said that



these workplace disruptions caused by the pandemic have had a positive impact on diversity, equity and inclusion in their organisations,

CENTRE DECRIMINALISES STUBBLE BURNING

'Give in writing', says farmer leader

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 27: After Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar informed that the Centre has decriminalised stubble burning, Bharatiya Kisan Union (Haryana) president Gurnam Singh Chaduni said that those are mere words and nothing has been given in writing yet.

"He (Narendra Singh Tomar) has said it right now but has not given anything in writing. They should give us in writing that they will decriminalise stubble burning, roll back electricity bills," said Mr Chaduni.

Ahead of Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), an umbrella body of farmer unions, meeting, Chaduni said "In today's meeting, there are two-three main issues, MSP, withdrawal of cases, compensation to the farmers died, electricity bill, among others. We will discuss our pro-



gram which we have scheduled for November 29." On Mr Tomar's statement that the government will constitute a committee on the issue of MSP, the farm leader said, "Many times committee has been formed, not just one time. I do not agree with the committee. We will not get satisfied with the committee. Until we get any solid written proof that

how they will work on MSP and in how much time they will make laws for it, we will continue to fight for it." Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar urged the farmers on Saturday to return home as their demands have been met. "After the announcement of the repeal of the three farm laws, there is no point in continuing

Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar urged the farmers Saturday to return home as their demands have been met

farmers' agitation. I urge farmers to end their agitation and return their homes," he added. Farmers have been protesting against the farm laws on various borders of Delhi since November 26, 2020. Last week, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that the Centre will bring necessary bills in the Winter Session of Parliament beginning later this month to repeal the farm laws. The Prime Minister also said that the government will constitute a committee to work on a new framework for Minimum Support Price (MSP).

VERY RISKY



A worker is cleaning glass windows of a high-rise building at Dadar in Mumbai

UNI PHOTO

MSRTC suspends another 3,010 striking employees

AS MANY AS 18,090 OUT OF 92,266 EMPLOYEES JOINED DUTY SATURDAY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Nov 27: The Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) Saturday suspended another 3,010 striking employees and terminated the service of 270 daily wages workers, while over 18,000 employees reported to work, officials said.

An MSRTC spokesperson said operations resumed at 50 out of 250 bus depots in the state. As many as 937 buses including 728 ordinary ones were operated as of 5 pm.

The strike of employees who want the cash-strapped corporation to be merged with the Maharashtra government continued on the 31st day. So far, the corporation has



suspended 6,277 employees and terminated services of 1,496 daily wage workers for remaining absent from work. Ten bus depots in Sangli division and five each in Ratnagiri and Raigad divisions remained functional. Stone-pelting on MSRTC buses was also reported at

13 places in Nashik, Dhule, Jalgaon, Solapur and other districts. Windshields and window panes were damaged in some cases while a driver sustained a minor hand injury in Nashik, officials said, adding police cases have been filed.

As many as 18,090 out of 92,266 employees joined duty on Saturday, including 2,130 drivers and 2,112 conductors. At some depots like Mangaon in Raigad district all the employees joined duty. On Friday, after a meeting with the action committee of MSRTC labour unions, Maharashtra Transport Minister Anil Parab had appealed to the employees to resume duty and warned of stern action if they continued to remain absent from work.

Court concerned over 'unarmed' policemen on duty

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Nov 27: A Delhi court has expressed its concern over Naib Courts -- policemen who act as a liaison between a local police station, jail authorities, and the court having the jurisdiction of a particular area -- doing their duty 'unarmed' despite warnings and sought a report on this regard from the Commissioner of police.

The bench of Additional Sessions Judge Sonu Agnihotri noted that the Naib Courts, despite earlier circular issued by Police Department, prosecution attend Court unarmed.



The Court also sought separate reports in this regard be sought from CP, Delhi, and DCP, South East. The bench asked the officials concerned to place before it a charter of duties of prosecution Naib Court, if any, as it found the behaviour of one naib strange, who left the Court without informing.

"Let charter of duties of prosecution Naib Court if any be called from DCP South East and CP, Delhi and let it be clarified as to whether prosecution Naib Courts are required to be present till Court is functioning as functioning in a Criminal Court has its own security requirements particularly in the scenario when Supreme Court has also taken cognizance of security threat to Trial Court Judges," the Court said.

AIRCEL MAXIS CASE

Delhi court issues summons to PC, Karti

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Nov 27: A Delhi Court Saturday issued summons to former Union Minister P. Chidambaram, his son Karti Chidambaram and others in ED and CBI cases in connection with the Aircel Maxis case.

The Court has taken cognizance of the charge sheets filed by the probe agencies in corruption and money laundering charges.

Earlier, the court had reserved its order on the point of cognizance on the CBI-ED charge sheet in the Aircel Maxis case involving Chidambarams and others. Additional Solicitor General Sanjay Jain, appearing for probe agencies had earlier informed the court that agencies have sent Letters Rogatory -- documents making a request through a foreign court to obtain information -- to different countries and there are some developments on that. The CBI had earlier submitted that it is working on a new lead. Both agencies have filed the status report too in court earlier. The court had earlier directed the agencies to file a status report in the Aircel Maxis case involving P. Chidambaram and his son Karti Chidambaram which was adjourned sine die.



Thirteen years have passed since the 26/11 terrorist attack in Mumbai. On today's anniversary, we remember the victims, including six Americans, and the resiliency of Mumbaiers. It is long overdue for the perpetrators to face justice

CHINA LAUNCHES NEW SATELLITE China successfully sent a new satellite into space from the Xichang Satellite Launch Center in southwest China's Sichuan Province Saturday. The satellite, Zhongxing-1D, was launched by a Long March-3B carrier rocket and entered the planned orbit successfully



of the day quote

I will consider all options, including possessing so-called enemy base strike capability, to pursue strengthening of defense power that is necessary

FUMIO KISHIDA | PM, JAPAN

The government is ready to talk about this. There are no bad debates, as long as those debates serve to resolve the real everyday problems of people in Guadeloupe

SEBASTIEN LECORNU | GOVERNMENT MINISTER, FRANCE

Leaders are spiraling the country down to a path where the risk of commission of atrocity crimes, including genocide, is real and must be addressed as a matter of utmost urgency

ALICE WAIRIMU NDIRITU | UN SPECIAL ADVISER ON THE PREVENTION OF GENOCIDE

World scurries to contain new variant

A host of countries, including Australia, Brazil, Canada, Iran, Japan, Thailand, the US, the EU and the UK impose restrictions on southern African countries in response to warnings over the transmissibility of the new variant against the advice of the WHO

ASSOCIATED PRESS

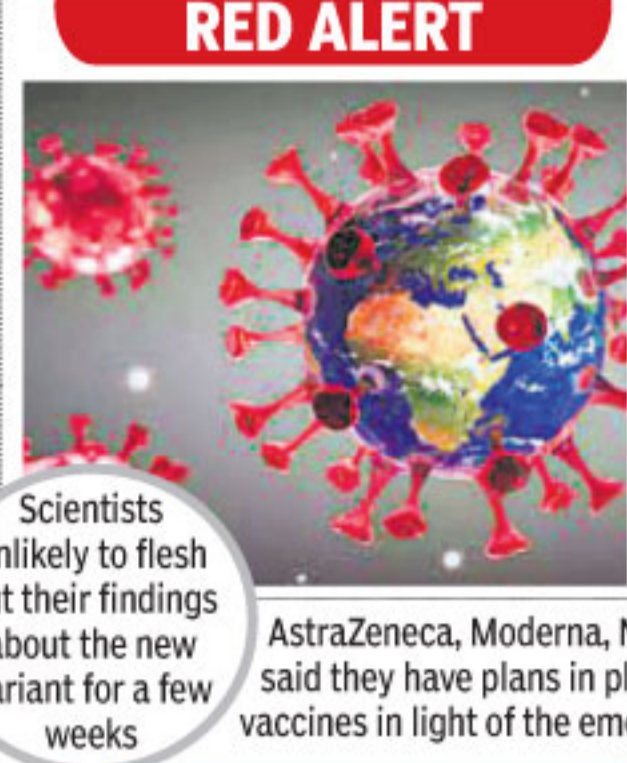
The Hague, Nov 27: With each passing hour, new restrictions were being slapped on travel from countries in southern Africa as the world scurried Saturday to contain a new variant of the coronavirus that has the potential to be more resistant to the protection offered by vaccines.

Cases have been reported in travellers in Belgium, Israel and Hong Kong, and Germany also has a probable case. Dutch authorities are checking for the new variant after 61 passengers on two flights from South Africa tested positive for Covid-19.

The global health body has named the new variant 'Omicron',

WHO has named the new variant 'Omicron', labelling it a VOC because of its high number of mutations

Despite the shutdown of flights, there was increasing evidence that the variant is already spreading



Dutch authorities have isolated 61 people who tested positive for Covid-19 on arrival from South Africa

Nearly two years on since the start of the pandemic that has claimed more than 5 million lives around the world

labelling it a variant of concern (VOC) because of its high number of mutations and some early evidence that it carries a higher degree

of infection than other variants. That means people who contracted Covid-19 and recovered could be subject to catching it again. It could

UK EXPERTS BACK VACCINE EFFICACY

London: The new potentially highly-transmissible variant of Covid-19, named Omicron by the WHO, is not a disaster as vaccines are still likely to protect against the serious disease from it, a UK scientist, who advises the government, said Saturday. Professor Calum Semple, a microbiologist from the UK government's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), struck a note of caution on the worldwide headlines around the new B.1.1.529 variant detected in South Africa.

Families stuck after sudden ban in SA

Johannesburg: Hundreds of foreigners on family or business trips in South Africa desperately tried to get back home on the last available flights as several nations imposed restrictions on travellers due to the discovery of the new Omicron variant of Covid-19 in this country. Reacting to the travel bans, South Africa's Health Minister Joe Phaahla said that the travel restrictions on South Africa are "unjustified" at this point.



I want to assure South Africans and people elsewhere in the world that some of the reaction has actually been unjustified. I am referring to especially the reaction of countries in Europe, the UK and a number of others

JOE PHAAHLA | HEALTH MINISTER, SOUTH AFRICA

SHORT TAKES

Uganda loses key airport to China

Kampala: The Ugandan government has lost its major airport to China for failing to repay a loan, African media reported. The government has failed to reverse a loan agreement with the Chinese which had repayment conditions of attaching its only airport, Today reported.

Portugal okays surrogacy law

Lisbon: Portuguese parliament has approved the law authorising surrogacy, which is the commercial contract that allows the hiring of a woman to be pregnant and give birth to a child who will be delivered to other people.

19 dead, 32 hurt in bus crash

Mexico City: Nineteen people died and 32 more were injured after a bus apparently carrying pilgrims to a religious site in central Mexico crashed. State officials said the bus apparently lost its brakes and slammed into a building in the State of Mexico Friday.

Taliban kill young doctor

New Delhi: Taliban security men have killed a young physician in the western Herat province of Afghanistan on Thursday, local sources confirmed, Khaama Press reported.

Cash-strapped Pak to get \$3bn from Saudi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, Nov 27: Cash-strapped Pakistan will soon get \$3 billion as loan from Saudi Arabia as the Cabinet led by Prime Minister Imran Khan has approved an agreement to keep the amount in the country's central bank, media reports said Saturday.



Pakistan's entire liquid foreign reserves, according to the central bank, stood at \$22.773 billion as of November 19, according to Geo News. The numbers indicate that the SBP held \$16.254 billion in foreign reserves, while commercial banks kept \$6.519 billion in net foreign reserves.

The SBP's reserves declined by \$691 million to \$16.254 billion during the week ended November 19, primarily owing to external debt repayments.

According to sources, Saudi Arabia has agreed to provide \$1.2 billion for the supply of refined Petroleum Oil Lubricants (POL) products, with the Economic Affairs Division (EAD) negotiating on behalf of the Pakistani government.

CLIMATE CHANGE FUELS OZ BUSHFIRES

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Canberra, Nov 27: Climate change has been found to be an overwhelming factor in the increase in Australian bushfires in both frequency and intensity, according to a report by the country's national science agency.

The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) Friday published an analysis of bushfire activity in 324,000 square kilometres of forest over the last 32 years, reports Xinhua news agency.

According to the report, the average area of forest burned annually was 800 per cent higher between 2002 and 2019 than from 1988 to 2001.

Since 1988 the average burned area has increased five-fold in winter, three-fold in autumn and ten-fold in spring and summer.

The report found that factors such as the amount of vegetation, time elapsed since the last fire in an area and hazard burning reduction all impact the intensity of fires but that climate change was the overwhelming factor in the increase in frequency and intensity since 1988.

PADDLE PARADE



Stand Up Paddle (SUP) sport activists wearing various costumes participate in a parade to enliven the water sports championship organized by the Indonesian Navy, at Ancol Beach in Jakarta, Indonesia

Outrage in Iran's city over drought concerns

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dubai, Nov 27: Police fired tear gas and birdshot while fighting protesters with batons Friday in a central Iranian city that has seen days of demonstrations demanding government action over a drought, online videos show.



The videos correspond to reporting by The Associated Press and satellite images of the area, as well as some semiofficial Iranian news agency accounts of the unrest.

while others depict bloodied protesters, including one man who appeared to have wounds in his back from birdshot.

They also show similar unrest in nearby streets in Isfahan, which is 340 kilometres south of the capital Tehran. The Iranian semiofficial Fars news agency said a heavy presence of security forces brought the gathering of some 500 people in Isfahan to an end.

BROADWAY LEGEND

Musical theatre icon Stephen Sondheim leaves world stage

Six of Sondheim's musicals won Tony Awards for best score, and he also received a Pulitzer Prize for Sunday in the Park, an Academy Award for the song Sooner or Later from the film Dick Tracy, five Olivier Awards and the Presidential Medal of Honor. In 2008, he received a Tony Award for lifetime achievement



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, Nov 27: Stephen Sondheim, the songwriter who reshaped the American musical theatre in the second half of the 20th century with his intelligent, intricately rhymed lyrics, his use of evocative melodies and his willingness to tackle unusual subjects, has died. He was 91.

Sondheim's death was announced by Rick Miramonte, president of DKC/O&M. Sondheim's Texas-based attorney, Rick Pappas, told The New York Times the composer died Friday at his home in Roxbury, Connecticut.

Sondheim influenced several generations of theatre songwriters, particularly with such landmark musicals as Company, Follies and Sweeney Todd, which are considered among his best work. His most famous ballad, Send in the Clowns, has

been recorded hundreds of times, including by Frank Sinatra and Judy Collins. Tributes quickly flooded social media as performers and writers alike saluted a giant of the theatre. "We shall be singing your songs forever," wrote Lea Salonga.

Aaron Tveit wrote: "We are so lucky to have what you've given the world." "The theatre has lost one of its greatest geniuses and the world has lost one of its greatest and most original writers. Sadly, there is now a giant in the sky," producer Cameron Mackintosh wrote in tribute.

Music supervisor, arranger and orchestrator Alex Lacamoire tweeted: "For those of us who love new musical theatre: We live in a world that Sondheim built."

Sondheim's music and lyrics gave his shows a dark, dramatic edge, whereas before him, the dominant tone of musicals was frothy and comic. He was sometimes crit-

icised as a composer of unhumorous songs, a badge that didn't bother Sondheim.

To theatre fans, Sondheim's sophistication and brilliance made him an icon. A Broadway theatre was named after him. A New York magazine cover asked "Is Sondheim God?" The Guardian newspaper once offered this question: "Is Stephen Sondheim the Shakespeare of musical theatre?" A supreme wordsmith—and an avid player of word games—Sondheim's joy of language shone through.

Taught by no less a genius than Oscar Hammerstein, Sondheim pushed the musical into a darker, richer and more intellectual place. "If you think of a theatre lyric as a short story as I do, then every line has the weight of a paragraph," he wrote in his 2010 book, 'Finishing the Hat', the first volume of his collection of lyrics and comments.

business

of the day quote

We urge the government to rationalise the GST rates into three major slabs of 5 per cent, 10 per cent and 15 per cent along with a few Sin Goods in the slab of 28 per cent

PRADEEP MULTANI | PRESIDENT, PHD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Our effort, along with the states, is to eliminate burdensome compliances, or reduce the need for licensing, reduce the regulatory burden, permissions, and rationalise the renewal process. Self regulation and self certification should be the way forward

PIYUSH GOYAL | COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

We believe this measure of increased promoter holding will be of benefit to all stakeholders: the regulator, the banking institution and its clients, particularly at this time when Indian economy is poised for exponential growth

ASHOK HINDUA | CHAIRMAN, IIFHL

SHORT TAKES

Airtel withdraws extra data benefit

New Delhi: Airtel has withdrawn certain data benefit coupons it was offering through its app on some of the prepaid plans, a move it said will help "avoid any confusion" among consumers about the offerings and comparisons between various plans. The telecom operator had announced 20-25 per cent tariff hikes for various prepaid offerings, including tariffed voice plans, unlimited voice bundles and data top-ups, and the new rates came into effect from Friday.

Welcomhotel gets LEED Platinum tag

Bhubaneswar: GBCI India, the nation's foremost authority on sustainability in building design, construction and operation, announced that it has awarded ITC's newly launched Welcomhotel in Bhubaneswar with the prestigious LEED Platinum rating. GBCI is the world's leading sustainability and health certification body, responsible for administering the LEED green building program. Welcomhotel Bhubaneswar becomes the state's first LEED Platinum certified hotel.

Samsung unveils new refrigerators

Bhubaneswar: Samsung, India's consumer electronics brand has ushered in the next generation of kitchen design with the launch of 'Bespoke', its new generation of refrigerators in India. Samsung's Bespoke French Door refrigerator lineup, available in 4-Door Flex Family Hub and 4-Door Flex French Door models, is a unique blend of personalised aesthetic and premium refrigeration.

EV maker Bounce partners with Park+

Mumbai: Electric scooter rental startup Bounce, which is set to launch its first e-scooter Infinity early next month, announced Saturday its collaboration with parking solution platform Park+ for setting up battery swapping infrastructure at more than 3,500 locations, spread over 10 cities. This smart framework will be available at locations like residential societies, key parking spaces, malls, corporate offices, among others, for customers to find the nearest swapping station on their Bounce App or Park+ app, the company said.



Give the size of the internet and cyberspace, which does not have boundaries, it needs cooperation. The world needs to think about it, especially democratic countries and societies

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR | MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND IT

WTO DELAYS 12TH MC IN GENEVA

The World Trade Organization (WTO) has postponed the ministerial level meet, scheduled from November 30 in Geneva, for an indefinite period due to an outbreak of a particularly transmissible strain of the Covid-19 virus. According to a WTO statement, no date has been set for the rescheduling of the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC)



WhatsApp gets nod to double payments offering

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Nov 27: WhatsApp has won regulatory approval to double the number of users on its payments service in India to 40 million, a source with direct knowledge told agencies Friday.

The company had requested that there should be no cap on users of its payment service in India. Instead, the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) this week told the company it could double the user base to which it can offer its payment service - currently restricted

to 20 million - the source said.

WhatsApp is owned by Facebook, which recently changed its name to Meta.

The source said the new cap would still hinder the company's growth prospects given that WhatsApp's messenger service has more than 500 million users in India, the company's biggest market. It was not clear when the new cap would come into effect.

WhatsApp did not immediately respond to a request for comment, while the NPCI declined to comment.



WhatsApp competes with Alphabet Inc's Google Pay, SoftBank and Ant Group-backed Paytm and Walmart's PhonePe in India's

crowded digital market.

The NPCI gave WhatsApp approval to start its payments service last year after the company

Oil producers cannot hold consumers to ransom: Puri

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Nov 27: Petroleum minister Hardeep Singh Puri said oil producing countries cannot hold consumers to ransom, underlining the nation's growing frustration with OPEC+ for not raising production to cool prices.

India, the world's third-biggest oil importer and consumer, imports about 85% of its oil needs and has been hit hard by rising oil prices. Oil prices eased Friday, however, on concerns about a new Covid-19 variant detected in South Africa.

"The producing countries cannot hold the consuming countries to ransom for a variety of reasons. We will make transition and we will do our production and in the short-term we will also deal with it may be by re-orienting our own priorities," India's oil minister, Hardeep Singh Puri, said at an industry awards event.

India has repeatedly urged OPEC+, which consists of countries belonging to the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies including Russia, to raise output to calm prices.

Ahead of the OPEC+ meeting next week to set output policy, Puri blamed the key producers for keeping supplies lower than demand.



We have told the producing countries if you don't exercise caution you will be in a situation where your desire to maximise profit in the short run will undermine the global economic recovery. If global economic recovery gets undermined, then to whom do you sell the oil

HARDEEP SINGH PURI | PETROLEUM MINISTER

"Oil prices are determined by Saudi Arabia, UAE and Russia as part of OPEC+," Puri said in a separate event hosted by Republic TV.

"They have kept the supply curve below demand. They are saying that it's temporary for one to two

months, after that there will be more supply available than demand," Puri said in Hindi at the Indian Economic Summit hosted by Republic TV.

He said India will continue to be a major driver of global energy demand for the next 20 to 30 years despite planned steps to move closer to green energy.

India, along with other major oil consumers China, Japan, South Korea and the United States, Tuesday announced plans to release oil from strategic reserves in an attempt to cool prices.

"Release of strategic oil, whether that is symbolic or real, I don't know, but it is a very bold move," Puri said.

MCL to set up 50MW solar power plant

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 27: Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) will set up a 50 Mega Watt solar power plant in Odisha at a total cost of Rs 301.92 crore, moving steadily towards its goal to achieve carbon neutrality by 2024, the company's statement said.

MCL has placed a turnkey order to set-up a 50 MW solar power plant with a Chennai-based firm M/s Hild Energy Ltd, which will establish this green energy project within a timeline of 10 months, it said. This solar plant would cater to the captive power requirement of MCL, which had successfully set-up a 2MW solar power plant in Sambalpur in 2014.

MCL has pledged a target of installing 182 MW of solar power by 2024 in order to become a net zero energy company, aligning itself to use cleaner forms of energy for coal production.

This 50MW solar power project will reduce CO2 emission by 91,020 tonne per annum and carbon offsets of around 24824 tonne per annum.

MCL is the leading production subsidiary of Coal India, having mining operations in Angul, Jharsuguda and Sundergarh districts of Odisha.

Having achieved the highest ever Capital Expenditure of Rs



The coal India subsidiary will invest ₹301.92 crore to set up the plant in Sambalpur to achieve carbon neutrality by 2024

2419 crore in Financial Year 2020-21, the company has coal production and dispatch targets of 163 million tonne and 182 million tonne respectively.

MCL was the coal mining company to introduce environment-friendly surface miner technology, which contributes over 95% in coal production. As another environment-friendly initiative, the company has successfully introduced Vertical Rippers for blast-less overburden removal in Hingula and Kaniha opencast projects.

Paytm Sept net loss widens

The stock has recouped some of its initial losses but remains 17% below its issue price

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Nov 27: India's One 97 Communications Ltd, the parent of fintech firm Paytm, said Saturday its net loss for the three months through September widened by 8.4% as expenses rose.

Paytm, reporting its earnings publicly for the first time since this month's stock market debut, reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 4.74 billion (\$63.2 million) compared with Rs 4.37 billion in the same period a year earlier. Revenue rose 49.7% to Rs 11.35 billion.

"We have maintained the growth momentum in our payments services business, expanded our financial services business aggressively and are on our way to pre-Covid volumes for Commerce



and Cloud services," Paytm's management said in a statement.

Paytm, which counts China's Ant Group and Japan's SoftBank Group Corp among its backers, raised \$2.5 billion in what was India's biggest IPO this month, but made a dismal debut on the stock exchanges last week. "Paytm faces stiff challenges in its customer acquisition engine, which would slow down its revenue growth in the core payments business," brokerage JM Financial said in a note to clients a day ahead of Paytm's earnings.

Strong demand to boost textile sector

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Nov 27: Strong domestic as well as export demand will improve year-on-year (YoY) sales volumes of overall textile sector in FY22, said India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra).

According to the agency, domestic as well as export demand will sustain during the rest of FY22. Besides, it has maintained the rating outlook of the sector at 'Stable' for the remainder of FY22, expecting a sustained improvement in the sector players' profitability and the continued deleveraging of their balance sheets.

The strong operating cash flows will lead to an improvement in their credit metrics, despite the likely increase in the working capital requirement on the back of the higher sales volumes and increased capital expenditure.



The benefits of integrated business operations, healthy balance sheet liquidity and operating efficiencies over FY22 have already been factored into the ratings.

As per the agency, the domestic demand improved over '2HFY21' before declining marginally during '1QFY22', due to the closure of malls and retail spaces in cities.

The demand is likely to improve from '2HFY22' with the easing of re-

strictions but remain vulnerable to any further restriction. Also, the demand from spinning mills seems to be recovering ahead of festivities in India.

During '1QFY22', players witnessed a rise in volumes YoY, although it declined marginally QoQ. Accordingly, segments such as cotton yarn and fabrics witnessed a higher YoY demand from downstream players during '1HFY22'.

Crypto assets big threat to people, climate: Swiss report

CRYPTOCURRENCY MINING ALSO THREATENS TARGETS TO LIMIT GLOBAL WARMING TO 1.5 DEGREE CELSIUS UNDER THE 2015 PARIS AGREEMENT, ACCORDING TO THE SWEDISH FINANCIAL SUPERVISORY AUTHORITY AND THE SWEDISH ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Nov 27: As India and the US prepare to fix an unregulated world of cryptocurrencies, top Swedish financial and environment authorities have called for an European Union (EU)-wide ban on cryptocurrency mining, saying the consumer risks are significant as crypto assets are commonly used for criminal purposes such as money laundering, terrorist financing and ransomware payments.

"The social benefit of crypto-assets is questionable. The Swedish Financial Supervisory Authority, like other international organisations such as the International Monetary Fund and the US Federal Reserve Board, considers that there

are aspects of crypto-assets that are problematic," Erik Thedein, director of the Swedish Financial Supervisory Authority, said in an open letter.

"Crypto assets also have a significant negative impact on the climate as mining leads to both large emissions of greenhouse gases and threatens the climate transition that needs to happen urgently. This is alarming, and crypto-assets therefore need to be regulated," Thedein added.

The letter comes at a time when the banking regulators in the US have announced a plan to clarify the rules and regulations around how banks can use cryptocurrencies over the next year, at a time when governments the world over, including India, are weighing the



THE OFFICIALS CALLED FOR AN EU-LEVEL BAN ON THE ENERGY-INTENSIVE MINING METHOD PROOF OF WORK

risks associated with cryptocurrencies and safeguard investors. In India, the upcoming Cryptocurrency and Regulation

of Official Digital Currency Bill, 2021 seeks to prohibit all private cryptocurrencies in India. "To get a better sense of this

The most common method for producing crypto-assets requires enormous amounts of electricity and generates large CO2 emissions

The University of Cambridge and Digiconomist estimate that the two largest crypto-assets, Bitcoin and Ethereum, together use around twice as much electricity in one year as the whole of Sweden

Digiconomist estimates that crypto-assets at their current market value lead to release of up to 120 million tonne of CO2 in the atmosphere per year

Emissions Calculator and adding the high elevation effect shows that the emissions from the two largest crypto-assets' today is equal 100 million round-trip flights between Sweden and Thailand," said Bjorn Risinger, Director General at the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency

Since the value of Bitcoin has increased so much, this has also extended the life of old fossil-based energy producers, the authorities noted. "It is important that Sweden and the EU lead the way and set an example in order to maximise our chances of meeting the Paris Agreement. We should also strongly encourage other countries and regions to follow suit," the open letter read.

number, we can compare it with emissions from long-distance flights. Using the aviation industry's own data from ICAO Carbon



AXAR PUTS INDIA IN CONTROL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kanpur, Nov 27: Axar Patel (5/82) continued his golden run in not-so-favourable home conditions, grabbing another five-wicket haul to put India in the driver's seat after New Zealand were bowled out for 296 despite an opening stand of 151 on the third day of the first Test here Saturday.

The left-arm spinner had a couple of dream sessions when he finally found the ideal pace and turn off the surface to completely derail New Zealand's steady first innings. India got a crucial 49-run first innings lead, which increased to 63 at stumps.

Ravichandran Ashwin (3/82) was also on the money, inching closer to becoming the third highest Indian wicket-taker in Test cricket.

Gujarat man Axar has been terrific since he donned the India whites at the start of the year and now has as many as 32 wickets in just three and half Tests. The five-for was his fifth having already got four in the three Tests against England.

However, he will cherish this one a bit more considering that the track was not as diabolical as the ones in the England series (second Test in Chennai and the Pink Test in Ahmedabad).

At stumps, the hosts were 14/1 after losing Shubman Gill (1) for the second time to Kyle Jamieson, who again found a gaping hole between his bat and pad.

With the deliveries keeping wickedly low, New Zealand's chances of fighting it out in the fourth innings will be pretty low unless skipper Kane Williamson produces one of his steady knocks.

On the day, however, he managed just 18 and when Umesh Yadav's in-cutter brought about his downfall at the stroke of lunch, the wheels of fortune turned in favour of India.

This was after openers Will Young (89, 214b, 15x4) and Tom Latham (95, 282b, 10x4) added 151 for the opening stand but both, de-



SUPER SUB: Indian players congratulate substitute wicket-keeper KS Bharat after he was involved in a Kiwi wicket, Saturday

spite their dogged display, missed out on hundreds.

It was the second new ball that did the trick just before lunch as Umesh (1/50) pitched one on off-stump, which cut back enough to find Williamson's pads. The next two sessions belonged to India as they got eight wickets for just 99 runs.

Axar's perseverance paid off as he changed his line from leg-middle to off-middle and the release was at a greater speed when compared to what he did on the second evening.

He removed Ross Taylor (11), Henry Nicholls (2) and Latham within a space of 13 runs to completely upset Black Caps' rhythm. It was in the post-lunch session that Axar finally sent down a classical left-arm spinner's delivery.

There was a delivery that had a bit of air and pitched on length drawing Taylor forward and then turned enough to take an outside edge which went to substitute keeper KS Bharat. Bharat came in after regular stumper Wriddhiman Saha complained of a stiff neck.

Nicholls also tried sweeping a much fuller delivery which turned back in and he was found leg before. Having understood that on a slower track like this one, the pace off the pitch needed to increase, Axar gave

it a tweak at decent clip which saw Latham beaten all ends up. Bharat fumbled before he could effect the stumping.

Later on, Axar got Tom Bundell (13), who looked to merely survive and finally got a 'shooter' that cleaned his defence. Southee became his fifth victim trying to play inside an arm ball which turned enough to hit the off-stump.

The pitch on the third day didn't change its character as it stayed low and slow but the Indian spinners did better as the time progressed by varying the pace of their deliveries.

During the session, Ashwin was seen involved in an animated discussion with umpire Nitin Menon after he decided to come round the wicket against Williamson and cautioned for walking on the dangerous area on his follow-through, which also obstructed the umpire's view.

The intention was to create a few roughs with his bowling spikes in the region.

Menon, having understood the motive, had a word with Ashwin and skipper Ajinkya Rahane and after some discussions, normalcy prevailed. Later at the flag end of the day, Ashwin cleaned up the visiting team's tail.

Left-arm spinner bags five-wicket haul to help the hosts gain 49-run first innings lead before they reaching 14/1 at stumps on Day 3 of the first Test against New Zealand

BRIEF SCORES

INDIA 345 & 14/1

(Cheteshwar Pujara batting 9, Mayank Agarwal batting 4; Kyle Jamieson 1/8);

NEW ZEALAND 296

(Tom Latham 96, Will Young 89, Kyle Jamieson 23; Axar Patel 5/62, Ravichandran Ashwin 3/82, Umesh Yadav 1/50, Ravindra Jadeja 1/57). Match to continue.

FIH MEN'S JUNIOR WORLD CUP

Colts set up last 8 date with Belgium



Odisha's Sudeep Chirmako (R in blue), who was adjudged 'Player of the Match', gets a high-five from a teammate after scoring against Poland, Saturday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Nov 27: Sudeep Chirmako, Sanjay Kumar and Arajiet Singh Hundal scored a brace each as defending champions India trounced Poland 8-2 to qualify for the quarterfinals of the FIH Men's Junior Hockey World Cup here Saturday. India will now face last edition's runners-up Belgium in the quarterfinal December 1.

After scoring hat-tricks in the first two games, vice-captain Sanjay (fourth & 58th minutes) continued his goal-scoring spree for India while Hundal (eighth & 60th), who scored a hat-trick against Canada, too registered his name on the scoresheet.

Odisha's Chirmako (24th & 40th), who was adjudged the 'Player of the Match' for his wonderful performance, also contributed in team's win while Uttam Singh (34th) and Shardanan Tiwari (38th) were the other goal scorers for the hosts in the Pool B game.

Belgium top Pool A

BHUBANESWAR: Top contenders Belgium scored a facile 3-0 win against Chile to tie with Malaysia on seven points but topped the group on goal difference in the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's Junior World Cup 2021 here on Saturday. Former champions Pakistan kept alive their chances of finishing second in Pool D by beating Egypt 3-1. While Belgium defeated Chile 3-0, Malaysia edged South Africa 4-3 in what was a must-win match for the Africans who had three points to four of Malaysia.

Poland scored both their goals in the fourth and final quarter through Wojciech Rutkowski (50th) and Robert Pawlak (54th).

After a shock 4-5 defeat against France in their tournament opener, India thrashed Canada 13-1 in their second pool match to stay alive in the competition.

Up against Poland in a must-win final pool match, the Indians started from where they left against Canada Thursday and put pressure on the Polish goal from the onset.

Their efforts bore fruit as early as in the fourth minute of the match when star dragflicker Sanjay scored his seventh goal of the tournament, yet again from a penalty corner. The Indians stayed aggressive and four minutes later doubled their lead through another penalty corner, this time from the stick of Hundal. Sudeep extended India's lead in the 24th minute through a fine field goal to go into the half time leading 3-0.

Four minutes into the third quarter, Uttam extended India's lead with another field strike before Tiwari converted a penalty corner to make it 5-0 in India's favour.

Sudeep once again found himself in thick of things, scoring another field goal. Trailing 0-6, Poland came all out attacking in the final quarter. They earned a barrage of penalty corners and in the process found the net twice to reduce the margin.

But India finished on a strong note when Sanjay and Hundal scored from field play to register an emphatic win for the hosts.

Manika in quarters of 2 events at TT Worlds



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Houston, Nov 27: Manika Batra has reached the quarterfinals in the mixed and women's doubles events at the World Table Tennis Championships, putting India just one win away from a historic medal.

Manika and Archana Kamath defeated Hungary's Dora Madarasz and Georgina Pota 11-4, 11-9, 6-11, 11-7 in the women's doubles round of 16 here Friday.

They face Luxembourg's Sarah de Nutte and Xia Lian Ni for a place in the semifinals. Bronze medals will be awarded to all the losing semifinalists in the competition.

In the mixed doubles, Manika and G Sathiyar scripted a valiant comeback against USA-China combine

of Kanak Jha and Wang Manyu after losing the first two games to reach the quarterfinals.

The Indian pair won 15-17, 10-12, 12-10, 11-6, 11-7. They will meet Japan's Harimoto Tomokazu and Hayata Hina in the quarterfinals.

"It has been an amazing tournament. It was a superb comeback against a strong pair. We both combined extremely well. Looking forward to keep up the momentum. It is certainly going to be tough against the top Japanese pair but we will give our everything," Sathiyar, the World No.37 in singles, told this agency.

However, the mixed doubles pairing of Sharath Kamal and Archana lost their round of 16 match to France's Jia Nan Yuan and Emmanuel Lebesson.

Indonesia Open: Sindhu, Satwik-Chirag out

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bali, Nov 27: Ace Indian shuttler PV Sindhu's impressive campaign at the Indonesia Open came to an end after she lost her hard-fought semifinal to former world champion Ratchanok Intanon, here Saturday.

Third seed Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medallist, lost 21-15, 9-21, 14-21 to World No.8 and second seeded Ratchanok in 54 minutes for her third semifinal finish on the trot.

The 26-year-old Sindhu had made it to the last four in Indonesia Masters last week and also at the French Open in October.

World No.11 men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, seeded sixth, lost ex-



ited the Super 1000 tournament after a 16-21, 18-21 defeat to top seeded Indonesian combination of Marcus Fernaldi Gideon and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo in the semifinals.

It was 10th straight defeat for the Indian pair against the world number one pair, a two-time former All England Open champions and reigning Asian Games gold medalist. It was thus curtains for India at the USD 850,000 tournament.

Sindhu, ranked seven in the world, came into the match with a 4-6 head-to-head count, having lost to the Thai player in the last two meetings.

Sindhu, the reigning world champion, last reached the finals, was at the Swiss Open.

2022 FIFA WC to be without Italy or CR7's Portugal

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Geneva, Nov 27: The 2022 World Cup in Qatar is sure to be without either Italy or Cristiano Ronaldo. Italy and Portugal, the current and previous European champions, were drawn into the same qualifying playoff bracket Friday, meaning at least one will fail to qualify for next year's tournament.

Italy will first face North Macedonia at home in a playoff semifinal next March, and the winner will play away at either Portugal or Turkey for a spot at the World Cup.

Four-time champions Italy failed to qualify for the 2018 World Cup, missing the tournament for the first time since 1958 after losing in the playoffs to Sweden. Now, after winning Euro 2020 in July, it may have to beat Euro 2016 champion Portugal to avoid a second straight failure.

Ronaldo has led Portugal to every World Cup since 2006 and this could be his last attempt at winning international soccer's biggest trophy. He will turn 37 before next year's tournament starts.

Also in the 12-team draw, Scotland will face Ukraine at home, and the winner will play at Wales or Austria in the final of their bracket.

Scotland look to end a 24-year wait to play at the World Cup while Wales' only appearance was in 1958.

Russia will host Poland for the right to face Sweden or the Czech Republic in their bracket final. Russia or Poland will host the final.

ATKMB ease past arch-rivals SCEB

AGENCIES

Goa, Nov 27: Two thousand kilometres away from their regular stomping ground, it was ATK Mohun Bagan (ATKMB) with a 3-0 scoreline, leaving SC East Bengal out of answers in the first episode of the Kolkata derby in the ISL at the Tilak Maidan in Vasco, Saturday.

Roy Krishna (12th minute) kept his record of scoring in each derby intact as Manvir Singh (14th) and Liston Colaco (23rd) ensured the job was done halfway through the first period itself.

With two wins from two, ATK Mohun Bagan jumped to the top of the table, two points clear of Jamshedpur FC.

NEWS IN BRIEF

ICC calls off Women's WC Qualifier

DUBAI: The ICC Saturday called off an ongoing qualifier for next year's Women's ODI World Cup in Harare following the emergence of a new COVID-19 variant in the African region, paving the way for Pakistan, West Indies and Bangladesh to make the cut on the basis of rankings. Travel restrictions have been introduced from a number of African countries after detection of the new variant in South Africa stoked fears around the world. The ICC said the decision to stop the event was based on its concerns about how the participating teams would head back in the wake of Omicron variant's rise.

Arsenal secure 2-0 win over Newcastle

LONDON: Newcastle's winless start to the Premier League season extended to 13 games after a 0-2 loss at Arsenal Saturday. Bukayo Saka and the player who replaced him as a substitute, Gabriel Martinelli, scored goals in the second half to consign last-place Newcastle, which has recently come under Saudi ownership, to a seventh loss of the season. Arsenal stayed in fifth place but is now level on points with fourth-place West Ham as the team continues its recovery from losing its opening three games of the season.

Djoko lifts Serbia

INNSBRUCK (AUSTRIA): Top-ranked Novak Djokovic secured a victory for Serbia, 40-year-old Feliciano Lopez got defending champion Spain off to a solid start, and a young Italian team rolled past the 32-time champion United States in the Davis Cup Finals here. Djokovic beat Dennis Novak 6-3, 6-2 to give Serbia a 2-0 lead over host Austria after Dusan Lajovic had defeated Gerald Melzer in three sets to open the best-of-three series in Group F Friday. Lopez gave Spain an early lead over Ecuador in Group A with a 6-3, 6-3 win over Roberto Quiroz at home in Madrid. Then Pablo Carreno Busta edged Emilio Gomez 5-7, 6-3, 7-6(7-5).