



DISTRESSED LOVERS

Actor Priyanka Chopra Jonas concedes that long-distance romance with her hubby Nick Jonas has been hard for the couple

LEISURE P2



NAVEEN'S DIRECTIVE

CM Naveen Patnaik asks officials to reactivate Covid protocols amid WHO's warning on new variant Omicron

DOWNTOWN P4



MAJOR EXCEPTION

Girls have been able to go back to classrooms in Afghanistan's Herat province due to efforts of parents and teachers

INTERNATIONAL P10

Resumption of int'l flights put off

New Delhi: The government decided Wednesday not to resume scheduled international flights from December 15, less than a week after announcing the decision in the wake of rising concerns over the Covid-19 variant Omicron. Aviation watchdog DGCA said the effective date for resumption of scheduled commercial international passenger services will be notified in due course. Scheduled international flights remain suspended since March 23, 2020, due to the coronavirus pandemic. The DGCA said that an appropriate decision will soon be taken in this regard.

P7



Tiger pugmarks found in Kuldiha

Balasure: Forest department teams have collected evidence about the presence of three big cats in Kuldiha Wildlife Sanctuary in Balasure district, an official said Wednesday. The pugmarks were spotted during the enumeration of the big cats in the sanctuary. Officials asserted that none of the pugmarks were similar to each other and added that in all probability they belong to Royal Bengal tigers. At the moment, there is no consensus on the official figures of tigers in the Kuldiha as the headcount exercise which started November 26 is still on.

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IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I remember my behaviour in the House when I was in opposition. But that was old India. Such things are not allowed in new India

Ganjam wagon project derailed

Former Railway Minister Mamata Banerjee had proposed the setting up of the wagon factory in Sitapalli of Ganjam district. However, it now appears that the project has been shelved for good

POST NEWS NETWORK

justify immediately the construction of a new coach factory. Significantly, the project at Sitapalli was announced by the then Railway Minister Mamata Banerjee in 2011-12 and was supposed to be implemented in PPP mode. However, the project was shelved in 2017 as the ministry cited lack of demand for wagons. However, following Vaishnav's visit to Odisha, the ministry decided to review the decade-old project in September this year. The decision was taken after different organisations reiterated their demand for setting up the factory during Vaishnav's visit to Berhampur in September.

East Coast Railway had written a letter to the Revenue and Disaster Management department to expedite handing over the land for wagon project. A total of 101.6 acres land had also been identified for the project near Jagannathpur railway station, around 20 km from Berhampur. However, in May, the Railways had asked the state government to cancel allotment of land. But after the minister's visit it changed its stance.

"Since the project is under review, the letter on cancellation of land allotment is withdrawn. Therefore, kindly arrange to forward the land schedule. Handing over of land may be expedited," a letter to the Revenue Department from East Coast Railway stated.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had also written several letters to successive Railway Ministers since the launching of the project. Vaishnav's latest declaration certainly will come as a huge jolt to the state as the project would have created employment opportunities both directly and indirectly.

New Delhi, Dec 1: The Centre did a U-turn Wednesday over the proposed setting up of a wagon construction factory at Sitapalli in Ganjam district with Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav informing in the Lok Sabha that there is no such plan. Replying to a question by Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MP Achyutananda Samanta, the minister said that factories are set up keeping in mind the overall demand for wagons for the Railways and as of now there is no such requirement.



Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav

"The existing wagon manufacturing capacity in India is adequate. At present, there is no proposal to set up a wagon factory at Sitapalli in Ganjam district of Odisha," the minister said.

Vaishnav also said that requirement of coaches via-a-vis available manufacturing capacity has been reviewed recently. Requirement of main line coaches in the near future also does not



Indian players celebrate with goal-scorer Shardanand Tiwari (3rd from left) who scored the only goal of the match against Belgium played Wednesday to seal a semifinal spot for the hosts in the Junior World Cup hockey tournament

PHOTO: BIKASH NAYAK

A STEP CLOSER TO GLORY

High drama in Odisha Assembly

The first day of the Winter Session saw both the Congress and BJP members creating a ruckus demanding the sacking and arrest of Dibya Shankar Mishra

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: The Winter Session of the Odisha Assembly began on a stormy note Wednesday as BJP and Congress members created ruckus inside and outside the House over the Mamita Meher murder case.

Congress members carrying placards first locked the Assembly gates. Then they sat on dharna in front of those demanding the arrest and sacking of Minister of State (MoS) for Home, Dibya Shankar Mishra for his alleged involvement in the Mamita murder case. Among them were senior leaders like Suresh Routray, Taraprasad Bahinipati, Santosh Singh Saluja and Mohammed Moquim.

Later, employees of the Assembly broke the locks and opened the gates for the House to start proceedings. "We staged a demonstration to prevent the entry of the minister in the House. We will not allow the tainted minister to impure the sanctity of the sacred House," Bahinipati later said.

BJP members also met Speaker Surya Narayan Patro and urged him not to allow the minister to



Congress MLAs (from left) Ramesh Jena, Mohammed Moquim and Taraprasad Bahinipati hold banners demanding a fair probe in the Mamita Meher murder case at the Assembly premises

OP PHOTO

enter the Assembly. The members were seen holding banners and black flags. They raised slogans against the government and Mishra on the floor of the House during the second half. They also demanded a CBI probe in the case.

However, all these issues did not seem to bother Mishra who had managed to enter the Assembly premises much before the Congress began their demonstration.

The House proceedings began at 11.00am with strict adherence to Covid-19 protocols. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik attended the first day of the session through video-conference from his residence 'Naveen Nivas' here, while two members participated while sitting in conference halls of the State Secretariat and another from the district headquarters. **MORE P4**

4 COPS BOOKED FOR MURDER

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: The Crime Branch of Odisha Police has booked four police officers for murder over their alleged involvement in the custodial death of a person at the Jeypore Town police station in Koraput district in 2017. Akash Mahuria was allegedly beaten to death inside the police station, January 30, 2017.

The police had then washed their hands off the matter stating that Akash died as he suffered a bad fall while trying to evade the cops who were trying to arrest him.

The four police personnel who have been named in the case are Jeypore police station's former inspector-in-charge Tapan Narayan Rath, former sub-inspectors Siba Prasad Sahu and Rajesh Baliarsingh and former Jeypore sub-divisional police officer Rajendra Prasad Senapati. A case has been registered against the accused under Sections 302, 323, 342, 325, 505 and 34 of the IPC.

A team of the Crime Branch led by ASP Ramchandra Thamba will probe into the case.

The deceased's mother Prabina had lodged a complaint with the Crime Branch, recently. The woman alleged that Tapan and others took her son forcibly and assaulted him at the police station, which led to his death.

Supplementary budget of ₹19K crore tabled

BHUBANESWAR: On the first day of the Winter Session of the Odisha Assembly, Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari tabled Wednesday the supplementary budget of ₹19,833 crore for the year 2021-22. Out of the total supplementary provision, ₹13,568 crore has been allocated towards programme expenditure, ₹4,577 crore towards administrative expenditure, ₹1,682 crore towards disaster management funds and ₹6 crore for transfer to local bodies (Panchayati Raj institutions and urban local bodies), said Pujari. He added that ₹8,256 has been provisioned for State Sponsored Schemes (SSS), ₹5,249 crore for Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) and ₹63 crore for Central Sector Schemes.

Odisha gears up for 'Jawad'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: The Odisha government, asked Wednesday collectors of all coastal districts to step up preparations against the approaching Cyclone 'Jawad'. Even though the IMD is yet to predict the exact course of the cyclone, district administrations have been asked to remain alert. The IMD has said that 'Jawad' may hit coastal areas of Odisha as an Extremely

Severe Cyclonic Storm (ESCS). Notably, cyclonic storms having wind speed of 167-221 kmph are categorised as Extremely Severe Cyclonic Storm by the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) PK Jena said that the decision to put the coastal districts on high alert was taken in a high-level meeting chaired by the Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra. Apart from the coastal belt, the collectors

of Mayurbhanj and Nayagarh districts have also been asked to be on high alert.

IMD DG, Dr Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said Wednesday that accurate prediction of the route will only be possible when the current low pressure system will intensify into a depression by Thursday. The IMD also issued 'pre-cyclone watch' for north Andhra Pradesh-Odisha coasts as the storm is likely to approach by December 4 morning. **MORE P3**

No 'record', so no aid for deceased farmers' kin: Tomar

The Centre will not provide any financial help as it does not have 'data' on farmers who died during the protests against the farm laws

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 1: The government has 'no record' of the deaths of farmers who were protesting the three contentious laws - that have now been cancelled - over the last one year, Agriculture Minister Narendra Tomar informed the Parliament in a written reply, Wednesday.

Tomar was questioned on the data of deaths at farmers' protest

sites near Delhi borders. He was also asked if the government is planning to give financial relief to the affected families. "The Ministry of Agriculture has no record in the matter regarding the deaths of farmers, and hence the question (of aid) does not arise," Tomar said.

Tomar's statement will certainly attract flak from the opposition. It comes in the wake of the Telangana government announcing ₹3,00,000 ex-gratia to the kin of the 700 farmers who died during the protests. Tomar's statement is quite close to the Centre's remark in Parliament on 'no oxygen deaths' data during the second Covid-19 wave. It also faced a lot of criticism.



More than 700 farmers have died, opposition and farmer lead-

ers have said, during the year-long protests at Delhi borders

against the farm laws that were cancelled Monday in Parliament in one of the fastest repeals the country has recently seen.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi also attacked the Centre for not allowing a discussion on this issue. "We wanted to discuss MSP, the Lakhimpur Kheri incident where four farmers were run over and the 700 farmers who died in this agitation. However, the discussions were not allowed, stated the Congress leader.

While the rollback of the farm laws has taken place in Parliament, as sought by the protesters, farmers are now pressuring the Centre for assurance on the minimum support price (MSP) for their produce - another key demand.

PREZ ASSENT FOR FARM LAWS REPEAL

New Delhi: President Ram Nath Kovind gave Wednesday his assent to the Farm Laws Repeal Act 2021 that was passed by both Houses of Parliament by voice vote Monday. First, the Lok Sabha and then the Rajya Sabha passed 'The Farm Laws Repeal Bill 2021' by voice vote sans a debate amid heavy sloganeering by the Opposition that wanted a discussion on the issue. In both the houses, the Bill was passed within minutes of introduction by the government. Farmers across India under the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) banner had been agitating since last one year demanding repeal of the three farm laws.

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	57684.79	↑ 619.92
NIFTY	17166.90	↑ 183.70
DOLLAR	74.84	↓ ₹0.25
EURO	84.89	↓ ₹0.22
GOLD	₹47,601	↓ ₹5
SILVER	₹61,715	↑ ₹69

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	28.4°C	28.0°C
TEMP MIN	15.6°C	18.2°C
Humidity	75%	77%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Partly cloudy sky	



JENNIFER COOLIDGE: I WAS EATING MYSELF TO DEATH

Actress Jennifer Coolidge has said that she was eating herself to 'death' and put on between 30 to 40 pounds amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The *Legally Blonde* star has opened up about her comfort eating during the global health crisis, and how she didn't want to do film after over-indulging on Vegan pizzas.

NICOLAS CAGE TO PLAY DRACULA IN RENFIELD

Hollywood actor Nicolas Cage will be seen playing the role of Dracula in the upcoming film *Renfield*, a monster movie centering not on the infamous vampire, but rather his notorious lackey. The movie is expected to take place in the present day.



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ARIES

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

TAURUS

This day you are likely to be prone to daydreaming and fantasizing. Ganesh sees you losing touch with reality and making errors in judgment, in your assessment of facts. You will, by sheer force of your tenacity and determination ensure that things work out in the end.

GEMINI

You will lend your innovative and imaginative spark to your initiatives, which will be quite a few, says Ganesh. Love will bring you immense satisfaction. And you will develop a special bond with your spouse or beloved.

CANCER

Today, you will need to rise above your emotional leanings and will have to choose between doing the right thing and keeping your loved ones happy. So far, you have managed to strike a balance. It is about time that you learn to deal with your fears, suggests Ganesh.

LEO

The oath of friendship that you once took as a bunch of raggedy misfits still holds true, and your best buddies are the ones who will stand by your side through hell or high water. Ganesh sees in you the desire to cherish such friends and prove your appreciation by treating them with graceful munificence. Money is never an issue when it comes to people close to your heart, says Ganesh.

VIRGO

You are the banner carrier for those around you today, giving hope and inspiring. Clad yourself in robes of the perfect family man. This should spread warmth and love, and will work wonders in improving relationships.

LIBRA

Connect and Express — these are the two things you must aim for at work today. You tend to do both things supremely well, be it in a business dialogue on phone, in writing, or in meetings. Getting across to people is not an issue today. But all this work aside, the lingering feeling of wanting to chill out with your sweetheart may become more substantial towards the evening. Watch a film together, suggests Ganesh.

SCORPIO

You may find yourself sulking in your shell today, feels Ganesh. One event or another may lead you to shut out work. Hindsight and bitterness will not lead you anywhere, so Ganesh advises that you must steer clear of negativity.

SAGITTARIUS

A nice, easy and pleasant day is on the cards. Your professional approach will bring you much appreciation, especially in the way you handle complicated problems. The way you balance people's opinions will help you make many friends.

CAPRICORN

Recognition and rewards are awaiting you at work, and unlike in most cases, colleagues won't be envious of your success. They will, in fact, provide the much-needed motivation for taking up new and challenging projects, says Ganesh. For those of you looking to switch jobs, wait awhile, this may not be the right time.

AQUARIUS

Today, your social butterflies will set hearts fluttering! Also, whatever you have been working on will reach completion now. You do have a great vision, but you're lost when it comes to executing your plans. Ganesh assures success if only you are a little more practical!

PISCES

Your day today will be like a tug-of-war competition. Try to come out on top in this competition. Ganesh advises you not to underestimate your enemies. It is advisable to find a solution or avoid conflict so that you don't need to waste your energy in this.

Long-distance romance has been hard: Priyanka

Los Angeles: Priyanka Chopra Jonas has been filming her upcoming series *Citadel* in London over the last 12 months, but the actress says it's been tough to be apart from her husband American pop singer Nick Jonas for so long.

Priyanka shared: "This year has been really tough. It was really really tough to be away from home for an entire year, especially at a time when you can't travel to see your family. I was just alone."

The actress and Nick, 29, have needed to quarantine before they've been able to spend time together at various points over the last year, reports *femalefirst.co.uk*.

Priyanka concedes that it's made life 'tricky' for the loved-up duo.

She told the *Ladies First With*

Laura Brown podcast: "It was tricky but we managed."

Priyanka and Nick both understand individual situations and their long-term career ambitions.

The *Baywatch* star said: "We talk all the time. We know each other's hearts. We prioritise each other in everything that we do."

However, Priyanka appreciates how flexible Nick has been over the last year.

She said: "Like I said, this year was hard for me being in London. He would just drop everything, come in for even like a day, just to have dinner with me and fly back."



5-day Konark Festival off to colourful start



While the carnival is set to enthrall lovers of Indian Classical dance, the pristine Chandrabhaga beach will witness renowned sand artists competing to sculpt unique creations

POST NEWS NETWORK

KONARK: Konark Festival 2021, the five-day Indian classical dance extravaganza was inaugurated by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik here, Wednesday.

Ministers Samir Ranjan Das (School & Mass Education), Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi (Tourism and Odia Language, Literature & Culture), Tusharkanti Behera (Electronic & IT, Sports & Youth Services), as Honourable Guests of the event, lit the ceremonial lamp as part of the inaugural ceremony. The five-day programme

is organised by the Department of Tourism, Government of Odisha in association with Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi and Odisha Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC).

Organised every year from 1st to 5th December since 1986 at the open-air auditorium with the backdrop of the iconic Konark Sun Temple, the festival serves as a platform for renowned classical dancers in India to showcase India's cultural depth through various dance forms including Odissi, Kathak, Satriya, Mohiniyattam, Bharatanatyam, and Kuchipudi among others.

The inaugural show witnessed Odissi performance by Madhavi Mudgal & Group led by Odissi exponent Padma Shri Madhavi Mudgal from Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, New Delhi. The performances showcased Odissi dance recitals on Nartan Ganesh, Pallavi, Abhinaya and Trayi. This was followed by Kathak performance by Vaswati Mishra & group of 'Dhwani' from Lucknow Gharana of Kathak.

Panchakshar, Rasamanjari, Nayika - Three Parables and Taraana are the four Kathak dance recitals performed during the event.

Simultaneously during these five days, the pristine Chandrabhaga Beach witnesses renowned sand artists competing to sculpt unique creations. The International Sand Art Festival 2021 was inaugurated earlier in the day by the above said ministers and noted sand artist Sudarshan Patnaik.

This year 100 sculptors from 10 states - Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Gujarat, West Bengal, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Odisha - are participating in the event. The theme for the inaugural day was Culture and Monuments.

Both the festivals are organised in strict adherence to Covid-19 protocols with measures being taken for efficient crowd control including reducing the seating capacity to one-third at Konark Festival.

Dia Mirza bats for frontline forest warriors

The actress, beginning with her 40th birthday December, will donate Rs one lakh each day for the next 40 days towards the welfare of the forest guards who lost their lives during the ongoing pandemic

Mumbai: Dia Mirza, who will celebrate her birthday December 9, has decided to dedicate the special day to the frontline forest warriors who died due to the Covid pandemic.

The actress has pledged financial aid of Rs 40 lakh to the families of forest warriors, who lost their lives during the ongoing pandemic.

In an appeal, posted on fundraising platform Milaap and on her social media handles, Dia said, "On my birthday this year, I would like to take the opportunity to request all those who may want to send me flowers or gifts to instead make a donation to WTI to help our 'VanRakshaks' (forest warriors)."

She continued, "There

could be no better birthday gift! Your gift will help support the bereaved families of India's 'Guardians of the Wild' who lost their lives to Covid-19 while protecting our natural heritage."

Elaborating her plan, the actress said, "Beginning with my 40th birthday on 9 December, for the next 40 days, I will donate a lakh each day and hope that that you all will as we seek to maximise our collective impact."

IAN S



MK Raina ready with film script

Veteran theatre director, MK Raina has finished a film script on his family's forced exodus from Kashmir when militancy erupted in the valley in the 1980s.

"It is about what my family and hundreds of others had to face. Filmmaker Sudhir Mishra has shown much interest in it. Now let's see who directs it - either him or me. If I don't, I'll be acting in it," says the actor.

Raina has been quite busy lately - working in different mediums - OTT, films and theatre. The director recently wrapped up an OTT series in which he acted and signed a film with Rajat Kapur.

Speaking on sidelines of the recently concluded Mahindra Kabira Festival in Varanasi where the classic play *Kabira Khada Bazaar Mein* directed by him decades back was reimaged as a *Rock Opera* by Dastan Live, he feels that whenever the younger generation reinterprets a production, it ignites new

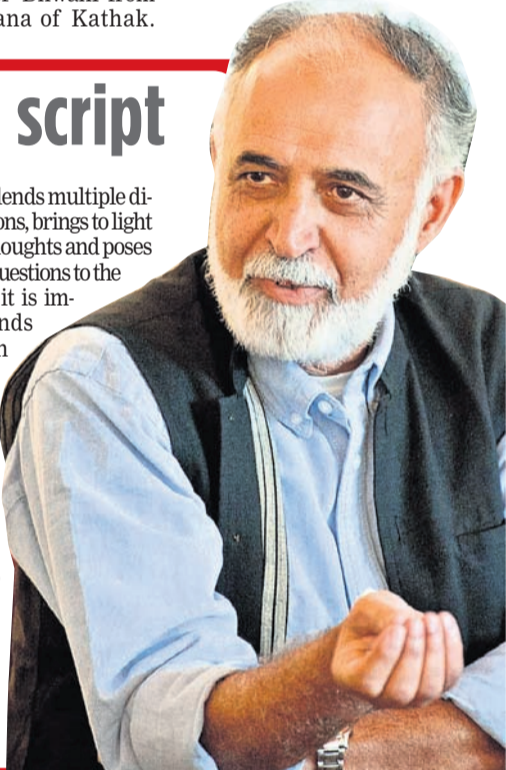
PANDITS' EXODUS FROM KASHMIR

ideas, lends multiple dimensions, brings to light new thoughts and poses fresh questions to the

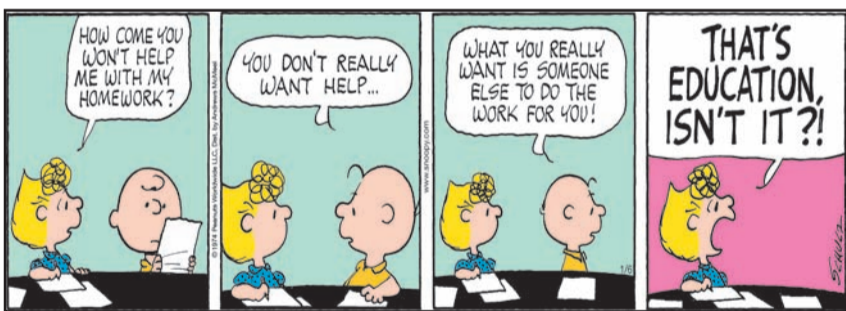
audience. "Precisely why it is important to keep our minds opened to reinterpretation and reimagination," Raina asserts.

Raina, who has been going and staying in Kashmir for months for the past 20 years and working with urban and rural theatre artists there says, "It was impossible for me to abandon my people. Initially, I worked with urban artists and later Kashmiri folk artists (Bhands), where I got more results."

IAN S



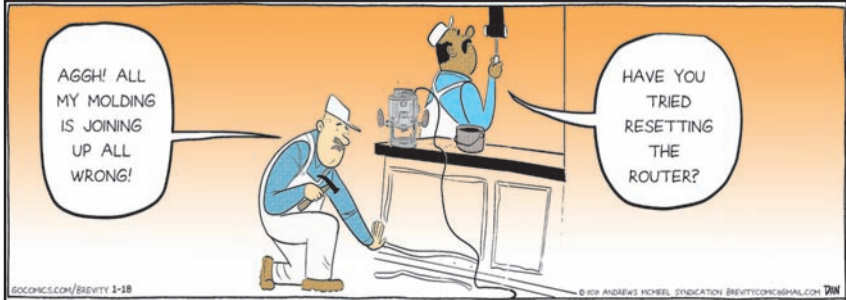
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

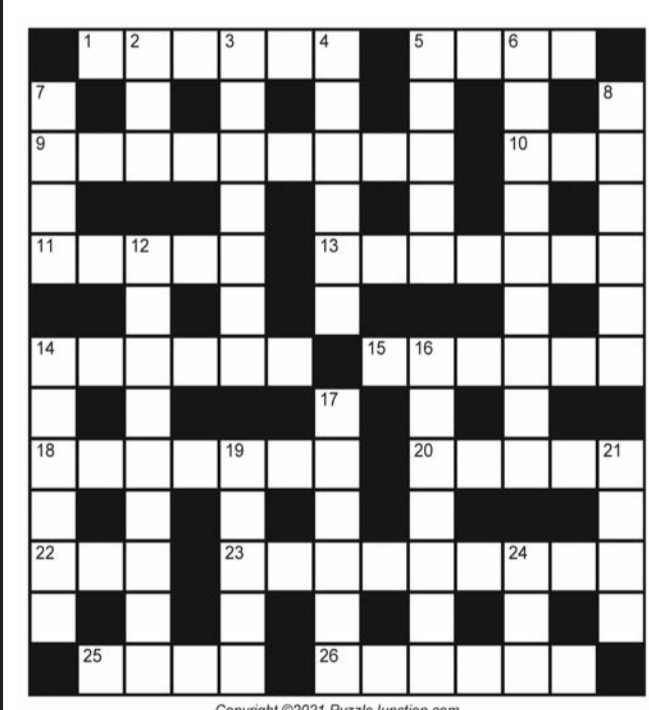


BREVITY



FUN post

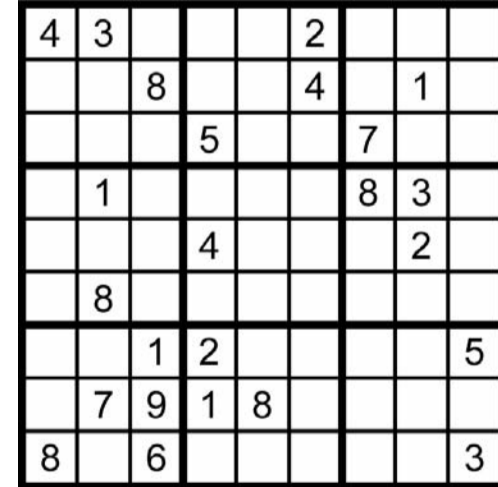
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Calamitous
 - 5 Distress signal
 - 9 Twilled fabric
 - 10 Large snake
 - 11 Kick out
 - 13 Taxing
 - 14 Kind of fin
 - 15 Confused
 - 18 Cry weakly or softly
 - 20 Guitar relative
 - 22 Stately tree
 - 23 Soar upwards
- Down**
- 2 Swindle
 - 3 Silverback
 - 4 Kind of tie (4-2)
 - 5 Sharp narrow ridge
 - 6 Folklore creature
 - 7 Malarial fever
 - 8 Took a breather resembling a plum
 - 12 Orange fruit
 - 14 Depressing experience
 - 16 Uncertain
 - 17 Colouring implement
 - 19 Basil-based sauce
 - 21 Swear words
 - 24 New Zealand parrot

SUDOKU

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

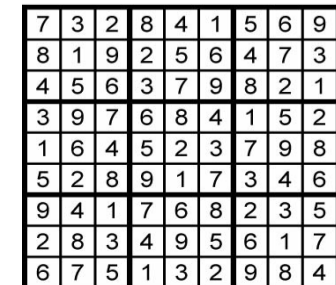


SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU



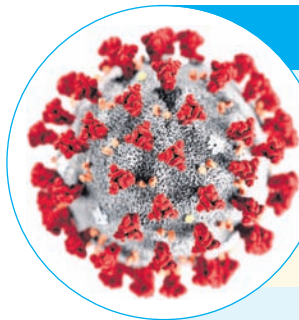
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



AWARENESS DRIVE

School students participate in an awareness campaign in Cuttack on the occasion of World AIDS Day, Wednesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	26,33,26,758	23,77,64,591	52,37,709
India	3,45,96,776	3,40,28,506	4,69,247
Odisha	10,49,345	10,38,509	8,413

Ensure street vendors trained on food safety: CS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: The state government Wednesday asked the officials to sensitise street food vendors on the adverse effects of adulterated food on health.

Holding the state-level food safety advisory committee meeting on digital mode, Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra said selling adulterated food is a crime akin to selling adulterated drugs. And it must be dealt with an iron hand.

Highlighting the need to sensitise street food vendors on the ill effects of adulterated food, the Chief Secretary asked the officials to ensure food vendors are oriented and trained on preparation of safe food.

Mahapatra asked the officials to collect intelligence from public and police on the quality of food being sold in towns.

The Chief Secretary asked the



officials to hold district-level food safety meetings regularly in a bid to keep tabs on sale of safe food by street vendors and food business operators.

Food Safety Commissioner Yamini Sarangi said the State Food Testing Laboratory's capacity has been upgraded. "The lab has been accredited by the National Accreditation and Calibration

Board. Besides, a mobile laboratory has been rolled out for testing food quality at fairs and public functions," added Sarangi.

The meeting decided to explore possibilities for providing accommodation to food safety officers at the district headquarters hospitals.

Additional Chief Secretary RK Sharma directed the Food Safety Commissioner to assess require-

Odisha's rank in Food Safety Index, which was 26 in 2018-19 and 13 in 2019-20, has gone up to four in 2020-21

ments for up-scaling collection and testing of food samples.

Sources said as many as 3,049 food samples were collected and tested by way of surveillance and enforcement in 2020-21. Out of it, 576 samples were booked under adulteration and misbranding. Similarly, 1,984 samples were tested by end of October of 2021-22. Out of it, 446 were booked under adulteration or misbranding. This apart, 280 cases were compounded with fines.

It was learnt that Odisha's rank in Food Safety Index has gone up to four in 2020-21. It was 26 in 2018-19 and 13 in 2019-20.

SYMBOL OF WEALTH



A woman buys a bunch of paddy panicles for Manabasa Gurubar festival in Ranihaat area of Cuttack, Wednesday. PHOTO

STA to hone skills of heavy vehicle drivers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: The State Transport Authority (STA) Wednesday initiated a training programme, 'Vahak', in a bid to improve the skills of heavy vehicle drivers, thereby reducing road mishaps and the consequent casualties.

The programme, which is jointly being executed by STA, Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC) and Ashok Leyland Ltd, will provide training to 1,000 drivers of OMC during the first phase. Drivers in batches of 60 will undergo training on skills, fuel efficiency, first aid, road safety and road signage for three days. The drivers will be provided with stipend for three days' training programme.

Inaugurating the event, Odisha Skill Development Authority chairman Subroto Bagchi said, "We lost around 10,000 people during the tsunami. India loses 1.5 lakh lives due to road accidents every year which is equal to 15 tsunamis. Unfortunately, we don't realise the graveness of the situation because these are isolated incidents. Road



accidents are a serious cause of concern for all of us. This has serious impact on families and our economy."

Appreciating the efforts of truck drivers during Covid 19 lockdown, Bagchi added, "Truckers are the ultimate lifeline who maintained critical supply chains of food and goods that were high in demand during the lockdown. The refresher training programme will hone the skills of drivers which in turn will help reduce accidents in the state."

Meanwhile, Transport Commissioner Arun Bhoira said, "In India, there is hardly any formal training for HMV drivers. There are very few HMV drivers training tracks in the country. Generally, helpers over a period of time become HMV drivers without proper training. Project Vahak is conceived to bridge the gap and enhance the skills of these drivers."

Commercial surrogacy should not be criminalised: BJD MP

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Dec 1: The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Wednesday termed the Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill, 2020 as violative of Article 21 of the Constitution as the Bill excludes LGBTQ couples from its ambit.

Speaking on the Bill in Lok Sabha, BJD MP Anubhav Mohanty said, "This Bill discriminates against the LGBTQ community and it needs reconsideration."

He said that commercial surrogacy should not be criminalised and prohibited. It is also a source of earning for women. It is difficult to find a close relative to become a surrogate mother, Mohanty pointed out.

The BJD MP highlighted the difficulties to be faced by inter-caste couples. He said that the inter-caste couples are often expelled from the community. "Where will these people find close relative for surrogacy. Inter-faith and inter-caste couples will be left out if these surrogacy rules are followed," he said.

Mohanty also said there should be a separate ministry for children—Ministry of Child Welfare. "Over 1.5 lakh children are victims of parental alienation. These children often indulge in anti-social activities. Some are taking up guns and committing crimes. We have to support them," he added.

The BJD MP said that the Bill should not come in haste.

Significantly, the Bill seeks to regulate fertility clinics. All such clinics will have to be registered under the National Registry of Banks and Clinics of India.

Moving the Bill for consideration and passage in the Lok Sabha, Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said the Bill was tabled in Parliament in September 2020 and the Lower House had referred it to a standing committee.

Many suggestions came from the standing committee and the government considered them, he said. The standing committee's report on the Bill was submitted in March this year, added the minister.



ODISHA IN PARLIAMENT

Ulaka seeks Vistadome coaches for Rayagada, Koraput

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Dec 1: Congress MP Saptagiri Ulaka Wednesday urged the Union Ministry of Railways to introduce Vistadome coaches in Koraput and Rayagada to boost tourism sector.

Speaking during the Zero Hour in Lok Sabha, the Congress MP said Koraput and Rayagada are scenic places with lush green trees and waterfalls. Introduction of Vistadome coaches will boost tourism in these areas.

"Now, Vistadome coaches are available in Visakhapatnam-Araku route. This facility should be extended up to Koraput. We urge the Railway Ministry to restart trains from Koraput to Rayagada and introduce Vistadome coaches to give fillip to tourism sector," Ulaka said.

The Koraput MP also pleaded for revival of Gunupur-Therubali rail line. He claimed that there was a disagreement between the state government and the Centre over financing the project.

"This project should be approved at the earliest and a committee,



Koraput and Rayagada are scenic places with lush green trees and waterfalls. Introduction of Vistadome coaches will boost tourism in these areas. SAPTAGIRI ULAKA | CONGRESS MP

Rayagada Railway Division, which was announced before the 2019 elections. "Rayagada Railway Division work is yet to begin. The project was announced before the elections," he said.

The parliamentarian also pleaded for raising the frequency of Rajarani Express, extension of Bhubaneswar-Palasa memu train to Gunupur and train stoppages at Jimidipeta, Therubali and Laxmipur.

Orange warning issued for 8 districts

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Wednesday issued orange warning for eight districts as the low pressure area is all set to intensify into a deep depression Thursday and later a cyclonic storm.

The IMD said, "Cyclone 'Jawad' is likely to move west-northwest-

wards and concentrate into a depression over southeast and adjoining east-central Bay of Bengal by December 2."

Subsequently, by December 4 the system is likely to move northwestwards, intensify further and reach near north Andhra Pradesh—Odisha coasts," IMD director Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said.

However, Mohapatra also said the

cyclone may change its course and may not cross the coast. It may rather move in north-northeast direction. Or, it may cross the coast and move towards West Bengal. However, in both cases, Odisha will experience rainfall activities.

The IMD also predicted that intensity of rainfall in Odisha will increase from December 4, especially in coastal districts while interior dis-

tricts will experience heavy to very heavy rainfall.

Orange warning has been issued for Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapada, Jagatsinghpur, Jajpur, Cuttack, and Puri for December 5. Some places of Keonjhar, Angul, Dhenkanal, Nayagarh, Khurda, Ganjam and Gajapati districts are also likely to witness heavy rainfall on that day, the Met centre said.

NATIONAL POLLUTION CONTROL DAY

CURBING POLLUTION THE SOLAR WAY

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: National Pollution Control Day is observed December 2 every year in remembrance of those who lost their lives in the Bhopal Gas tragedy when the deadly gas, methyl isocyanate, leaked out of the Union Carbide plant on the intervening night of December 2 and 3 in 1984.

The day is observed to spread awareness about pollution and its disastrous consequences.

Among all sources of energy, solar power is one of the best ways to reduce pollution, including water and air pollution. Solar power does much more than just saving money on energy bills. Increased use of solar power is one way to significantly diminish water pollution caused by coal and oil-fired power plants.

Similarly, solar energy production does not contribute to release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. According to sources, Odisha government is taking a slew of measures to promote solar energy and the Odisha Renewable Energy Policy, 2016 sets a target of generating 2,200MW additional solar power by 2022. This includes rooftop and other non-land based solar projects.

For states like Odisha, which is prone to cyclone, rooftop solar panel



system installation helps in generating electricity when conventional power remains cut off for weeks.

Urban planner Piyush Ranjan Rout, who has been using 1-KW off-grid solar panel since 2011, said, "Rooftop solar is handy. It helped us during natural disasters such as Cyclone Fani and in other emergencies. We now have plans to expand it so as to make it climate smart. I wish every other household and real estate developer invest in climate neutrality by installing solar projects."

JK Rath, an industrialist who had installed 3KW rooftop solar power system in 2018, said, "You can get your investment back within five years. Five years ago, I was paying a monthly electricity bill of around ₹4,500-5,000. When I installed a solar geyser, the

bill got reduced by ₹600-800 a month."

Many institutions in the city like Unit VIII DAV School, Xavier University and others have installed rooftop solar power system. Unit VIII DAV School officials spoke about generation of 80 per cent of their energy need from rooftop solar panels.

Jayant Sahoo, an engineer at SolarSack, said, "People understand that solar power helps in reducing carbon emission as well as energy bills. People in Capital city usually prefer on-grid system to off-grid system. We have seen 20-30 per cent of the city population shifting to solar power. We also provide 30-40 per cent subsidy on individual solar projects."

Odisha Renewable Energy Development Agency (OREDA) joint director Ashok Choudhary said,

HARNESSING SUNRAYS

Solar power is harnessed using solar photovoltaic (PV) technology that converts sunlight (solar radiation) into electricity by using semiconductors. When the sun hits the semiconductor within PV cell, electrons are freed and bus bars collect the running electrons which results in electric current. Solar energy also slashes electricity bills upto 50% and has long life of upto 25 years. The two types of solar power system which are normally used are: On-grid solar power system/grid interactive system and off-grid solar power system/standalone system.

"Bhubaneswar is one of the 60 cities identified by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy for Solar City project. We are preparing a concept note which will be submitted to the Energy department."

He also said the state government with assistance from the Centre is working hard to make Konark India's first ever zero emission town by September 2022.

The government agencies involved in the work claimed that several aspects of the project have already been completed.

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House condoles demise of ex-MLAs, Covid warriors

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: The Odisha Legislative Assembly Wednesday joined the Leader of the House to condole the demise of former legislators, security personnel and Covid warriors who passed away during the intervening period of the last session and the Winter Session. Moving the obituary reference through videoconference from his residence, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik expressed his profound grief over the death of former Assembly Deputy Speaker Prahalad Dora, former members Umesh Chandra Swain and Ram Raj Munda, former Sepoy Sitaram Murmu and all Covid warriors who have laid down their lives for the service of the people. Patnaik said the sad demise of the former members, the security personnel and the Covid warriors is a great loss to the state and their

BJD cries Central apathy over PMAY

The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) members Wednesday marched towards Raj Bhawan on a rally alleging step-motherly attitude of the Centre towards Odisha on implementation of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY). The members also submitted a memorandum to the Governor in this regard. "On the basis of a baseless and false complaint filed by BJP MPs, the rural development ministry has stopped the PMAY in some dis-

tricts of Odisha. It is yet to sanction 15 lakh housing units, while funds under the scheme are being sanctioned to the BJP ruled states. We strongly protest it," said BJD lawmaker Byomkesh Ray. Meanwhile, Leader of Opposition (BJP) Pradipta Kumar Naik, who had attended the House from the AIIMS here during last session, could not participate in the proceedings on the first day. He is still under treatment.

family members. He requested Speaker SN Patro to convey the sympathies of the House to the bereaved family members. Opposition Deputy Leader Bishnu Sethi, Congress Legislature Party leader Narasingha Mishra and the Speaker supported the obituary ref-

erence moved by the Chief Minister, condole the deaths and expressed their sympathies to the bereaved family members. The House later observed one-minute silence as a mark of respect to the departed souls. After the obituary reference, the House was adjourned till 5pm.



BJD members march towards Raj Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday, alleging step-motherly attitude of the Centre towards Odisha on implementation of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana

Gopalpur Port launches health check-up centre

BHUBANESWAR/CHHATRAPUR: Gopalpur Ports Limited (GPL) under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) wing Wednesday inaugurated a primary health check-up centre building at Takiria in Berhampur. The centre was inaugurated by Ganjam Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange in the presence of Sandeep Agarwal, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Gopalpur Port and Port Medical Officer Subash Chandra Sahu. Kulange said, "The primary health check-up centre will be helpful for the residents of the village as well as those in the nearby hamlets. People from all the age groups of the nearby villages will be benefitted from this facility." Agarwal said, "We are happy to contribute to the community under our CSR initiative. The health camp is our step and support towards creating a healthier society and lifestyle."

Normal to above normal min temp in winter: IMD

INDO-ASIAN NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Dec 1: The winter season from December 2021 to February 2022 is likely to experience normal to above normal minimum temperature over many parts of northwest India, most parts of south and northeast India and some areas along the foothills of the Himalayas, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Wednesday. Below normal minimum temperature is most likely over some parts of north-interior peninsula that comprises north Karnataka, parts of Telangana and Marathwada. In its seasonal outlook for winter temperatures, the IMD said that below normal maximum temperature is likely to prevail over most parts of the country except for some parts of northwest India and most parts of northeast India, where



normal to above normal maximum temperature is most likely. Stating that weak La Nina conditions are prevailing over the equatorial Pacific region currently, the IMD said its forecast models indicate that La Nina conditions are likely to strengthen and peak to moderate conditions during the

Below normal minimum temperature is most likely over some parts of north-interior peninsula that comprises north Karnataka, parts of Telangana and Marathwada

The IMD has been using the latest Monsoon Mission Coupled Forecasting System (MMCFS) model for its forecasts this year. It assesses five global models and takes the best of them. La Nina refers to the large-scale cooling of the ocean surface temperatures in central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean, coupled with changes in the tropical atmospheric circulation, namely

winds, pressure and rainfall. It usually has the opposite effects on weather and climate as El Nino, which is the warm phase of the El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO). "As the changes in the Sea Surface Temperature (SST) conditions over the Pacific and the Indian Oceans are known to influence the Indian climate, the IMD is carefully monitoring the evolution of sea surface conditions over these Ocean basins," he said. Even the Polar Vortex influences India's conditions and the ensemble models account for all such factors, he added. Elaborating on a question about the winter temperature forecast, the IMD DG said, "What we are saying is an average of the whole country. It does not mean that the temperature in a given area cannot go below normal or above normal against what we have predicted."

One dead over property dispute

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Dec 1: A tiff between two brothers over sharing of properties turned tragic when one among them lost his life at Sagadiasahi near Mangalabag police limits here Wednesday. The deceased has been identified as Prasanna Kumar Nayak, police said. Prasanna had a dispute with his brother Pradosh over their ancestral properties. An iron rod pierced through Prasanna's back when he was pushed by Pradosh during a heated exchange in the afternoon, police said. A critically-injured Prasanna was rushed to SCB Medical College and Hospital, where he was declared dead on arrival. "The accused has been detained. We will register a case in this regard tomorrow," said ACP Ajay Das.

Positivity rate at 0.38%

BHUBANESWAR: Odisha recorded 237 new coronavirus infections Wednesday, nine more than the previous day, pushing the tally to 10,49,345. Two more persons succumbed to the disease, taking the Covid death toll to 8,413. At least 61,851 samples were tested in the last 24 hours and the positivity rate was 0.38 per cent, the bulletin stated.

University's real mission is to create a universal man: Guv

POST NEWS NETWORK

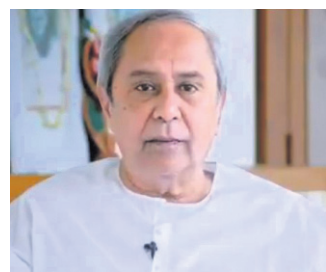
Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: Birla Global University (BGU), Bhubaneswar organised its 4th Annual Convocation for PG 2019-21 and UG 2018-21 batch students at its campus here. Chancellor of the University Governor Ganeshi Lal presided over the convocation. Gracing the occasion, the Governor said, "The universe, the university and the universal man are all interwoven. The real mission of a university is to create a universal man who can combine academic excellence with spiritual excellence, material energy with spiritual energy." AR Nanda, Former Secretary of Health & Family Welfare at the Centre, urged the students to develop a humanitarian approach, the idealism of compassion and humility to be suc-

cessful in life. Welcoming the Chancellor and other dignitaries, Vice-Chancellor, BGU Prof PP Mathur presented the annual report of the university outlining its activities and plans. The MBA Batch Topper & Marketing Topper Poushali Halder, Area Topper in Human Resources Ankita Prasad and Area Topper in Finance Shailaja Rohillah were awarded gold medals. From M.Com, Saswati Sutapa, Preeti Payal, SGeetanjali were given away medals for being area toppers in Accounting, Finance & Forensic Accounting & Fraud Prevention respectively. From the undergraduate courses, Manaswini Panda from BBA, Annapurna Paikray from BCom, Iravan Rath from BA Economics were the toppers of their respective batches, Iravan being the best graduate. Patnaik asked the officials to re-

OMICRON THREAT Need to reactivate Covid protocols: CM

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: The World Health Organisation (WHO) has warned that the new Covid variant, Omicron, poses a very high risk to the people across the globe. Many countries in Europe are witnessing a surge in Covid cases in recent weeks, said Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik at a review meeting here Wednesday. Patnaik said Odisha has adopted a cautious approach towards the pandemic from the beginning. "We have been able to successfully control the first and second waves of Covid in spite of challenging situations. We are now battle hardened and I am sure we will be able to successfully tackle this resurgence as well," he said. Patnaik asked the officials to re-



We have to enforce the Covid safety protocols strictly. I urge the DGP to continue the good work done by the police since the first wave

NAVEEN PATNAIK | CHIEF MINISTER

activate the Covid protocols and keep the health facilities and personnel on high alert. "I would like to hear from the

Health department about the emerging situation and the related preparations. We have to enforce the Covid safety protocols strictly. I urge the DGP to continue the good work done by the police since the first wave," said the Chief Minister. The I&PR department should resume the awareness campaign to sensitise the citizens to follow Covid norms including face mask, hand hygiene and social distancing, suggested the Chief Minister. "Collectors should involve all sections of the society including the PRI members and Mission Shakti self-help groups (SHGs) and ensure awareness and enforcement. I appeal to all the people of Odisha to be alert and follow the Covid safety norms," he said.

4 sports coaches get the boot

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: The state government Wednesday ordered compulsory retirement of four coaches of Odisha Council of Sports on the grounds of inefficiency and dereliction of duty. The coaches given compulsory retirement included two volleyball coaches, one boxing coach and one handball coach. Official sources said volleyball coaches Praveen Tripathy and Jnanendra Prasad Badhe, boxing coach Shankar Prasad Adhikari, and handball coach Manoj Das were given compulsory retirement on the basis of the recommendations made by the Review committee for premature retirement of government employees in the Sports & Youth Services department.

Cycle rally to spread awareness on human trafficking

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: A group of 16 people from Hyderabad comprising students, volunteers and social activists, who are on a 14-day cycle rally reached here Wednesday to spread awareness on human trafficking. The team under the banner 'Red-Ride' will travel across migration-prone districts of Ganjam, Khurda, Cuttack, Bargarh, Nuapada, Bolangir, Kalahandi and Koraput to sensitise the vulnerable communities about the crimes on human trafficking and ways to prevent it. The expedition that was flagged off from Vishakapatnam November 27 reached the state capital Wednesday. It will culminate at Central University, Koraput December 10. The cyclists will cover a distance of 1,500 km including rural and urban areas and organise events at different educational institutions to maximise their outreach.

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AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Notary Public, Daspalla, I, Suhasini Sahoo, W/o. Late Jaladhar Sahoo, R/o. Vill. Jagapur Road, PO.-Satapatna, Dist.-Nayagarh declare that my actual name is Suhasini Sahoo. But in the pension book of my deceased husband Jaladhar Sahoo bearing PPO No. 08/1478/12517/1996, my name has been mentioned as Subhashini Sahoo instead of Suhasini Sahoo. That Suhasini Sahoo and Subhashini Sahoo is of one and same person.

DEMO OVER MSP



Farmers from Cuttack and Bargarh stage a demonstration at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday, demanding legalisation of paddy MSP

ECoR freight loads up 22% during April-Nov

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: The East Coast Railway (ECoR) Wednesday stated that it has loaded 150.56 MT of freight during the period from April 1 to November 30 in the current fiscal. It was 123.72MT in the corresponding period of last fiscal. With this, ECoR loaded 26.84MT incremental cargo during the current financial year by registering an increase of 22 per cent. During the same period, 100.65 MT of freight carried from Khurda Road Division, 42.15 MT of freight from Waltair Division and 7.76 MT of freight carried from Sambalpur Division. In November, the zone also loaded 19.71 MT of freight as against 18.84 MT carried in the correspon-

ding month last year - an increase of 5 per cent in loading. "The zone has also surpassed the loading target 145.53MT fixed by the Railway Board during the period. This could be possible due to outstanding performance of all the three divisions of East Coast Railway - Khurda Road, Waltair and Sambalpur," ECoR's release said. The statement also said that during the period, ECoR has loaded 84.93MT of coal, 5.25MT of raw material for steel plants, 14.06 MT of iron & steel, 20.37MT of iron ore, 0.75MT of cement, 1.98MT of food grains, 3.39MT of fertilizer, 1.74MT of petroleum oil and lubricants (POL), 2.73MT of freight loaded in containers and 14.96MT of other cargo.

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SHORT TAKES

NCST seeks DMF report from Sundargarh DM

Sundargarh: The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes has sought a report on utilisation of the District Mineral Foundation funds (DMF) from the Collector of Sundargarh. Rajendra Kumar Nayak, a resident of Ratanpur under Hemagiri block, had lodged a complaint relating to misutilisation of DMF funds in the mineral-bearing areas in the district, September 23, 2021. Acting on the complaint, the commission has asked the Collector to submit a report within 15 days detailing about the utilisation of the funds. The Commission has warned of legal action in case of a delay in submitting the report.

Taparia launches home tool kits for housewives

Bhubaneswar: Taparia Tools Ltd (TTL), a pioneer in hand tools, has launched a variety of home tool kits for housewives, kids and utility sets for vehicles. The company launched the implements in response to the demand from quality conscious consumers. Foreseeing a huge demand for these products, the company has started showcasing the products in shopping malls and utility stores. The company commands 70 to 75 per cent market share in the organised market. Its products are marketed through a well-knit network of distributors in India and abroad.

Bharatmala project hits hurdle in Koraput

PEOPLE WARN TO SCUTTLE WORK IF ACTUAL PRICE OF THEIR LAND IS NOT PAID

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput, Dec 1: The Bharatmala Pariyojana, a Centre-funded road and highways project, has hit a roadblock in Koraput district with land owners warning to scuttle work if they are not paid the actual price of their land to be acquired, a report said.

The matter came to the fore at a meeting of the stakeholders. The meeting was held under the aegis of Bharatmala Jami Suraksha Committee, an outfit under which land losers have come together to protect their cause.

Reports said the present distance between Raipur in Chhattisgarh and Vishakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh is 514km. The distance will be reduced by 50 km when the highway project is implemented. After passing 124 km in Chhattisgarh, the highway will enter Nabarangpur.

The highway will pass through Nabarangpur for 115km before entering Koraput district. There it will pass through Borigungma, Dasamantpur, Koraput, Semiliguda and Pottangi tehsils before entering Andhra Pradesh.

Experts have claimed the project will usher in a chain of prosperity and progress for Koraput district as the project is included in the economic corridor scheme of the Centre.

Hundreds of people in the above



The highway will pass through Nabarangpur for 115km before entering Koraput, Dasamantpur, Borigungma, Semiliguda and Pottangi tehsils and then Andhra

tehsil areas will have to part with their lands.

Sarat Chandra Buruda, convener of the committee presided in the meeting. Tara Prasad Bahinipati, Jeypore MLA, Babula Benia, MP nominee, Lakshmi Hanjria, sarpanch of Padmapur panchayat,

Taidu Dora, convener of Dora community, Jagdish Khosla, Zilla Parishad member and Prem Kandpan attended the meeting and demanded that actual price of the land be paid to the land losers.

The issue of land price has sparked resentment among people. Buruda warned that they would resort to an agitation if their pleas are not addressed in time.

Bahinipati warned that the under-construction road in Bharatmala project was not for poor people for which he will make a demand in the State Assembly for payment of actual price of land. Bahinipati was elected as the new president of the outfit.

Two bank robbers shot at in Bhadrak

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak, Dec 1: Two criminals sustained bullet injuries following an encounter with Gramanchal police near Barapada village in Bhadrak district Wednesday. The two have been identified as Prahallad Das from Soro area and Sushant Mallick from Nilagiri area in Balasore district.

Prahallad and Sushant are suspected to be involved in an ATM loot to the tune of Rs 29 lakh at Charampa in Bhadrak. Further investigation is expected to reveal their involvement in more crimes.

Bhadrak police got information that the criminal duo was present near Barapada. A police team led Bhadrak Rural IIC Alok Kumar Jena raided the place. The two opened fire at the cops and tried to escape. In retaliation, the raid team fired at them.

"An encounter took place following face-off with the criminals during a raid by Bhadrak police. The two sustained bullet injuries on their legs and were admitted to Bhadrak district headquarters hospital for treatment," a senior official said. Later, the two were shifted to Cuttack for advanced treatment.

Three guns, two swords and four magazines and cash have been recovered from the criminals, the senior official informed. Police have also detained four of their accomplices and are questioning them in this connection.

Notably, armed miscreants had looted around Rs 29 lakh from an ATM at Charampa area November 26 night. The video of the loot captured in a CCTV camera shows a masked man attacking three persons while they were loading the kiosk with the amount.

CUSTODIAL DEATH

Case filed against five including three cops

POST NEWS NETWORK

Gopalpur, Dec 1: Berhampur district police registered a murder case against five persons including three police officials over the custodial death of Ganesh Dakua on Golanthara police station premises in Ganjam district May 3 this year, police said Wednesday.

The accused were identified as Babuli Nayak, then police IIC of Golanthara police station, ASI Prakash Chandra Acharya, Dipti Prakash Jena, constable, Ajit Kumar Dash, vice-chairperson, Rangeilunda block and his brother Amit Kumar Dash. A case 332/21 was registered in the Golanthara police station.

Reports said the deceased's mother Sobha Dakua had filed a petition in the High Court after she failed to get justice over her son's death.

The matter came up for hearing in the High Court which is-



sued a notice to the state home department, Berhampur SP and Golanthara police asking them to file a status report on the case.

The deceased had a spat with Ajit and Amit over some issue at a brick kiln under Golanthara police limits, May 3. On being informed, Golanthara police picked up Ganesh from the place and brought him to the police station where they detained him in the reception room and questioned him about the fight he had with the siblings. Later, Ganesh died in the custody the same day.

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Complete details & tender documents will be available at website www.irps.gov.in

Dy. CME (Poh)/CRW Manchewar

PR-592/M/21-22

Chorus for merger of 3 villages with BeMC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Dec 1: A chorus for merger of three villages on the outskirts of the city with Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC) has gained momentum.

A joint action committee (JAC) formed by the denizens living on the city's outskirts has been making this demand for long. The JAC led by its president Sanjiv Kumar Pattnaik has questioned why the authorities are delaying in fulfilling their demand and if there are any hurdles in the merger of these areas with the civic body. The committee has demanded that



the state government make it clear whether there is any political or legal reason behind the delay in merging the villages with the civic body.

The members have alleged that the local public representatives are keeping mum when they raise the demand for merger of the areas on the city's

outskirts with BeMC. They reminded that the Berhampur MP and MLA at a meeting of the committee in the past had assured them that the areas in city outskirts will be definitely merged with the BeMC before the panchayat elections.

However, they are yet to fulfill their

promise though the panchayat elections are drawing near and are scheduled in February next year.

They said a resolution was passed to include three villages of three panchayats with BeMC but it is yet to be implemented. The members alleged that the state government gives priority to its political interest instead of the demand.

As a result, the areas in city outskirts have been neglected and are bereft of any development. Pattnaik warned that the committee will prepare a special strategy and intensify its agitation for fulfillment of its demand in coming days.

As BJD expands in number, rebels rear

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Dec 1: As the three-tier panchayat elections are drawing closer, supporters of other political parties are reportedly headed for the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) in Ganjam. The development may have enthused the state leadership, but the newbies desiring to join the ruling party with ambitions of fighting elections have caused heartburn among old party men. The ruling party is feared to face resentment from the rebels at the grassroots level in the district.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has also intensified its organisational activities in all constituencies of the district. However, the popularity of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, and the organisational network of the BJD has elbowed out the opposition parties.

The ruling party has an edge over the BJP and woos people with smart health cards under the Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana. The BJP has only banked on the image of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Amid such political jockeying, exodus and merger of party workers are going on in the BJD and the BJP. The Congress, which was humbled in 2017, has failed to match with the two parties.

Party deserters are being welcomed into the BJD and the BJP. The BJD has focused on Gopalpur constituency since MLA Pradip Panigrahy was ousted from



the party. For over a year, Gopabandhu Das, the political secretary to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, has been looking after the organisational work in the constituency.

There are 37 panchayats and four zilla parishad zones in the constituency. In the 2017 panchayat elections, the BJD had grabbed two ZP zones even though the ruling party had tried its level best to perform well in all the ZP zones.

Gopabandhu Das works hard to ensure that the BJD should win in all ZP zones this time. There is every effort by the BJD to wean away supporters from other parties.

November 28, the BJD held a *misrana parba* at Bhairabi peetha where two BJP backed sarpanch candidates along with scores of party workers joined the BJD.

That day, a meeting of the party workers from eight panchayats was held in Gothagaon panchayat (ZP zone-10) under Kukudakhandi block where Das deliberated on strategies to win elections. Acting on the instruction of the Chief Minister, Das had told the party workers to work unitedly to ensure win of the party nominees.

Gania college girl kidnapped

Gania (Nayagarh): Tension ran high after some miscreants kidnapped a girl student of Shree Shree Raghunath Jew (Degree) College at this locality of Nayagarh district in a car, Wednesday. The girl, accompanied by her friends, was en route to the college on a bicycle. A car without registration number came from the direction of Gania market. The two occupants of the car then forced the girl into the vehicle. As her friends raised an alarm, the car drove away towards Daspalla. Students of the college then blocked the Gania-Daspalla road for hours demanding prompt police action. On being informed, Gania tehsildar Kishore Kumar Panda, Gania police IIC Bimal Kumar Mallick rushed to the spot and tried to placate the agitating students. Officials said the girl will be rescued and the culprits arrested. Police launched an investigation after the girl's mother lodged a complaint at the Gania police station. Efforts are on to locate the girl, police said.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. O-1018
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER RURAL WORKS DIVISION, PHULBANI
Phone: 06842-253708, E-mail: rw_phulbani@yahoo.co.in
No. 5627/RWDP Dated the 16.11.2021

Government of Odisha e-Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. Online Tender/15/SERWDP/PHULBANI/2021-22

- Name of the work : Building Works (1 No.)
- Estimated Cost : Rs.23.00 lakhs
- Period of Completion : 2 (Two) Calendar Months
- Date & time of availability of Bid documents in the portal : From 03.12.2021 to 13.12.2021
- Last date/time for receipt of Bids in the portal : 13.12.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.
- Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid : Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division, Phulbani

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal website: <https://tenders.ori.nic.in/nicgep/app>

Sd./ Superintending Engineer Rural Works Division, Phulbani
OIPR-25077/11/0011/2122

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER RURAL WORKS DIVISION, BALLIGUDA
rw_balliguda@yahoo.com, Tel.: 06846-243114

Government of Odisha, e-Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. Online Tender/10/SERWDP/BLG/2021-22
Letter No. 6124/RWDBLG Date: 23.11.2021

- Name of the work : Road works
- Estimated cost : Rs.21.00 lakh to Rs.38.00 lakh
- Period of Completion : 2 (Two) Calendar months as per Annexure
- Date & time of availability of Bid documents in the portal : From 04.12.2021 at 10.00 A.M. to 10.12.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.
- Last date/time for receipt of Bids in the portal : 10.12.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.
- Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid : Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division, Balliguda

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal website: <https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>

Sd./ Superintending Engineer Rural Works Division, Balliguda
OIPR-25150/11/0007/2122

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. O-1113
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION, RAIKANGPUR (MAYURBHANJ)
E-mail ID: eerwraikangpur@yahoo.com
Letter No. 6509 "e" Procurement Notice for Road Works Bid Identification No. RWRDRP - 20 / 2021-22 Date: 25.11.2021

- Name of the Work : Periodical Maintenance for the year 2021-22
- Estimated Cost : From Rs. 8.85 to 15.93 lakhs (Approximately)
- Class of Contractor : "D" & "C" Class (of Odisha P.W.D.) or relevant Class of Works License.
- Period of Completion : 01 (One Calendar Month)
- Tender Paper Cost : As per Annexure

The details are as follows:

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender Online for bidding	Last date & time of seeking tender clarification	Date & time of Opening of Tender in O/o. S.E.R.W. Division, Raikangpur.
1	2	3	4	5
S.E.R.W. Division, Raikangpur	RWRDRP-20/2021-22	03.12.2021 at 11.00 A.M.	13.12.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.	10.12.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.
				14.12.2021 at 11.30 A.M.

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

Sd./ Er. D. Behera
Superintending Engineer, R.W. Division, Raikangpur
OIPR-25107/11/0021/2122

NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, PURUSHOTTAMPUR (GM)
E-mail: purushottampurnac@gmail.com, Ph. No. 06811-275333
Letter No. 2466 Date: 01.12.2021

QUOTATION CALL NOTICE

Sealed quotations are invited from the Electrical Contractor having ISI/ISO certified firms/manufacturers/authorized dealer having GST Clearance Certificate, PAN Number, HT Licence issued by ELBO, Civil Licence with "C" Class and above, Labour Licence, EPF, ESI, ISO, Dealership Certificate & Special Authorization Certificate of the company for fitting and fixing of 150 x 6W 16mtr High Mast LED Flood Light as mentioned below. Joint Venture of Civil and Electrical are not applicable. The quotation documents can be obtained from the office of N.A.C., Purushottampur, Ganjam on payment of Rs.4480/- (Rupees four thousand four hundred eighty only) (non-refundable) in shape of Bank Draft drawn in favour of Executive Officer, NAC, Purushottampur, Ganjam payable as Purushottampur during office hours from 02.12.2021 to 07.12.2021 (excluding holidays) towards cost of quotation papers. The quotationer shall have to quote the price (the rate should be inclusive of all taxes) item/unit wise of their respective company & the quotation paper with the above mentioned quotation should be submitted to the undersigned on or before 08.12.2021 by 3.00 P.M. and the quotation will be opened on 08.12.2021 at 3.30 P.M. in presence of the quotationer (supplier) or their authorized agent. No quotation will be entertained after stipulated date or receipt of quotations. The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all quotations without assigning any reason thereof. The quotationer should deposit an amount of Rs.6061/- (Rupees six thousand sixty one only) in shape of Bank/Demand Draft in favour of Executive Officer, NAC Purushottampur, Ganjam payable at Purushottampur towards EMD.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work	Qty.	Estimate Cost (In Rs.)	Cost of Tender Paper	EMD 1%	Time of Completion
1	Provision of Supply, erection, testing and commissioning of 16mtr. High Mast Light Structure with all accessories (Three suspension type) with provision of 6 x 150W LED fittings and 3 Phase Power Supply with 5KW (LT) Load at Kali Mandir Chhaka, Purushottampur	1 No.	6,06,123/-	4,480.00	6,061.00	30 days
2	Provision of Supply, erection, testing and commissioning of 16mtr. High Mast Light structure with all accessories (Three suspension type) with provision of 6 x 150W LED fittings and 3 Phase Power Supply with 5KW (LT) Load at Swapneswar Mandir Chhaka, Purushottampur	1 No.	6,06,123/-	4,480.00	6,061.00	30 days
3	Provision of Supply, erection, testing and commissioning of 16mtr. High Mast Light structure with all accessories (Three suspension type) with provision of 6 x 150W LED fittings and 3 Phase Power Supply with 5KW (LT) Load at Ratha Sahi Chhaka, Purushottampur	1 No.	6,06,123/-	4,480.00	6,061.00	30 days
4	Provision of Supply, erection, testing and commissioning of 16mtr. High Mast Light structure with all accessories (Three suspension type) with provision of 6 x 150W LED fittings and 3 Phase Power Supply with 5KW (LT) Load at Kumari Chhaka, Purushottampur	1 No.	6,06,123/-	4,480.00	6,061.00	30 days

Sd./ Executive Officer, N.A.C., Purushottampur (Gm.)

FOCUS TECHNOLOGY

AI & SUSTAINABILITY



With the explosion of AI applications running on vast amounts of data and massive computing power, the technology's energy consumption and carbon footprint are of grave concern

"If you are not interested in Artificial Intelligence, then you are not interested in interesting things," says Prof Patrick Winston of MIT, a researcher of AI. If you used your smartphone to type a message and found the autocorrect feature altering your spelling or grammar, it is thanks to AI. Suppose you see your e-commerce platform Amazon suggesting products that you may want or need, then it is using the recommendation engine powered by AI. If Google photos can pull all the images that match your face from all over the internet, it is using AI-powered face recognition technology. In other words, AI is becoming ubiquitous in our everyday life whether we like it or not.

The history of AI goes back to 1956 when John McCarthy first coined the term. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, AI is "the ability of a digital computer or computer-controlled robot to perform tasks commonly associated with intelligent beings." One of the fundamental concepts of AI, and perhaps the best known, is 'machine learning,' owed to Arthur Samuel. In particular, he was famous for his Checkers-playing programme created in 1959, one of the first that ended up beating the creator in the game he created. The subsequent conquest of AI in various games such as IBM's Deep Blue in Chess, and Google's Deep Mind in the board game 'go' is legendary.

Similarly, an increasingly popular subset of AI is 'deep learning,' a concept introduced in 1986 by Rina Dechter. Deep learning is a specific class of machine learning methodologies based on artificial 'neural networks', systems inspired by the neural logic of the brain. Going further than 'basic' machine learning, deep learning uses several layers of so-called 'neurons' or a set of logic gates to extract more complex properties from raw data. These methods, particularly deep learning, are used for various end applications such as facial recognition systems or automatic speech recognition. Finally, there are two types of AI. First is the narrow AI, or 'weak AI.' It is the AI that is being actively studied and used today - an AI is confined to one or even a few specific tasks with a controlled environment and data. Later, it is expected to evolve into artificial general intelligence (AGI), or 'strong AI.' Google recently unveiled its 'Pathways' project, which promises to provide a general-purpose AI tool for solving heterogeneous problems that process mixed-mode data such as visual, audio or electro-magnetic in a more efficient manner.

AI can be a double-edged sword when it comes to the biggest question facing humanity - climate change and sustainability. With the explosion of AI applications running on vast amounts of data and massive computing power, the technology's energy consumption and carbon footprint are of grave concern. It is projected to grow exponentially over the next decade at a CAGR of nearly 44% globally through 2025. At the same time, AI is being increasingly deployed to address questions like the energy consumption of buildings that account for almost 40% of all emissions. For example, Google's Deep Mind division has developed AI that teaches itself to minimise the use

of energy to cool Google's data centres that have a very significant carbon footprint. As a result, Google reduced its data centre energy requirements by 35%.

AI can be a net positive contributor to environmental sustainability in many industries. In agriculture, AI can help reduce both fertilizer and water use, all while improving crop yields. AI can use deep predictive capabilities and intelligent grid systems to manage the demand and supply of renewable energy. In transportation, AI can help reduce traffic congestion, improve cargo transport, and eventually help with the 'last mile' delivery problems. In facilities management, AI can help recycle heat within buildings and maximise heating and cooling efficiency. It can help optimise energy use in buildings by tracking the number of people in a room or predicting the availability of renewable energy. ONLY TIME CAN TELL whether AI will be an energy-guzzling monster that will make the climate crisis worse or help save humanity from the impending disaster.

Prof Marcus du Sautoy, a mathematician from Oxford University, in his book 'Thinking Better - the Art of the Shortcut in Math and Life,' makes an interesting observation. He believes that the very reasons that make AI and machine learning so powerful in solving intricate problems are what will ultimately save humanity. Humans discover all the intelligent shortcuts while confronted with complex issues that result in most innovations, including AI. Being endowed with great computing power and data, AI would never look for shortcuts, unlike humans. That may be the saving grace that ultimately helps humanity sustain or prosper irrespective of the intelligent machines!

The writer is a civil engineer, academician and technologist with a strong interest in the sustainability of the built environment. He is currently based in Hong Kong.



Dhanada K Mishra

AI IS BECOMING UBIQUITOUS IN OUR EVERYDAY LIFE WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT

sample using a set of 70,000 labelled handwritten image samples of numbers 0-9. This is the equivalent of the 'hello world' programme of machine learning in computer vision. There are three main categories, or paradigms of machine learning: supervised learning, where defined (so-called 'labelled') data and examples are submitted to carry out the task as above; unsupervised learning, where the task is carried out autonomously and usually allows for the identification of structures and trends; and finally, reinforcement learning, where actions are learned through the experiences themselves, as the programme is told when it goes wrong as in the case of the game-playing AI.

The easiest way to understand AI is to know that it is a paradigm shift in our approach to problem-solving. The conventional approach relies on a rule or mathematical formula that processes input data to answer. Whereas machine learning, a core concept in AI, comes up with the rule given enough input data with answers are known a priori. For example, one of the fascinating early applications of AI was for computers to read handwritten numerals - for example, a postcode on letters. The AI programme can be trained to recognise any new unlabelled

Each new dawn brings the possibility of a new progress.
THE MOTHER



Cost of Vax Inequity

The damage caused by COVID-19 - exacerbated by the continued appearance of new variants, most recently Omicron - has been catastrophic. More than five million lives worldwide have already been lost to COVID-19, and with confirmed cases on track to swell from 260 million today to 460 million by next autumn, the WHO estimates that five million more people may die from the disease in the coming months.

So, when the World Health Assembly (WHA) gathered for a special session that started November 29, its task was nothing less than preventing the recurrence of such a tragedy. Specifically, the world now needs an internationally binding agreement to prevent future infectious-disease outbreaks from becoming pandemics.

As Tedros Ghebreyesus, the WHO's director-general, has argued, a new agreement should be underpinned by a high-level commitment to health for all, grounded in equity and solidarity between countries. Everyone, regardless of their wealth or income, should have fair access to what they need to maintain their health, and the international community should ensure the equitable use and distribution of available medical resources. That will require a fully functioning global surveillance system, fast-tracking and sharing support in emergencies, and predictable finance.

Nothing illustrates more clearly the need for such an arrangement than the world's collective failure to ensure the promised equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines. Although brilliant science and a strong manufacturing effort mean that we will have produced 12 billion doses by the end of 2021 - enough to vaccinate every adult in the world - 95% of adults in low-income countries remain unprotected. This is perhaps the greatest public policy failure of our times.

The WHO's internationally agreed target of vaccinating 40% of the adult population of every country by December 2021 looks set to be missed by 82 countries. On current trends, it will take until next Easter to get close to 40%, and even then, dozens of countries may fall short. In fact, since the G7 summit in June, when leaders pledged that the whole world would be vaccinated against COVID-19 by 2022, the gap between the vaccine haves and have-nots has widened rather than diminished.

In high-income countries, vaccination rates have risen from 40% in June to roughly 74% now, but they have increased at a glacial pace in low-income countries - from 1% to less than 5%. For every adult now being inoculated in a low-income country, six adults in middle- and high-income countries are receiving their booster shots. And 73% of African health workers remain unprotected.

True, important regional initiatives have taken steps to address the inequity gap. The African Union's vaccine-purchasing facility, the African Vaccine Acquisition Trust, has bought 400 million single-shot vaccine doses from Johnson & Johnson and, thanks to the Trust's chair, Strive Masiyiwa, and the US government, a further 110 million doses from Moderna, with 50 million to be delivered by March. But this is still not enough to meet the needs of Africa's 1.3 billion people.

This inequality is not difficult to explain: a recent survey by Airfinity has shown that the world's richest countries have bought 89% of all COVID-19 vaccines, and currently retain control of 71% of future deliveries. The Global North has fallen short of its pledges to donate vaccines to the Global South. The US has sent only 25% of what it promised, while the EU, the UK, and Canada have performed even worse, dispatching just 19%, 11%, and 5%, respectively, of their pledged doses. The COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) facility, which had hoped to distribute two billion vaccines by December, now expects to deliver just three-quarters of that amount.

Such is the scale of vaccine hoarding in rich countries that Airfinity estimates that by the end of 2021, 100 million doses in the G20 stockpile will pass their expiration date and be wasted. For G20 countries to hoard life-saving vaccines and deny them to the poorest countries, while allowing tens of millions of doses to go to waste, is a morally indefensible act of medical and social vandalism that should never be forgotten or forgiven.

Vaccine inequities show why more fundamental changes are needed in the international global public-health architecture of health decision-making. Of course, among international organisations, only the Appellate Body of the WTO and the International Criminal Court, whose decisions are final, have the freedom and authority to make binding decisions that national governments are obliged to follow. And because of that, these bodies are under assault from a coalition of anti-internationalists. Securing a binding treaty will not be easy.

There is already a global-health treaty to reduce tobacco demand and supply, and a 2011 agreement to ensure that the WHO can commandeer supplies of flu vaccine when needed. But the legally binding international pact necessary to enable global-health authorities to do more to prevent, detect, prepare for, and control a pandemic has so far eluded us. At a time when new variants of COVID-19 are appearing, it is imperative that the special summit launches a process to develop a legally binding agreement under the auspices of the WHO constitution.

A robust agreement should contain several key elements. First, global-health leaders must have more authority to develop and upgrade health surveillance. Second, we need to build on the pioneering work of the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) and COVAX, and ensure equitable manufacturing and distribution of personal protective equipment, tests, treatments, and vaccines, so that all countries can protect themselves better against current and future pandemics. Third, we need a global pandemic preparedness board.

But such arrangements will work only if leaders devise a sustainable financing mechanism to address the glaring global inequalities in health provision. Too often in times of global crises, we are reduced to passing the hat or convening ad hoc donor conferences. Ideally, pandemic preparedness should be financed according to a burden-sharing formula that allocates the costs among countries with the greatest capacity to pay. Even now, less than 20% of the WHO's budget is covered in this way. The eradication of smallpox in the 1960s and 1970s was historic not least because the final push was initiated by a cost-sharing agreement among the richest countries.

Failure to meet global COVID-19 vaccination targets could cost \$2.3 trillion in lost GDP by 2025. Given that prospect, the G20 high-level independent panel's proposed \$10 billion annual budget for pandemic prevention and preparedness would offer one of the greatest returns on investment in history. But we must act now - and this week's WHA summit is the place to start.

The writer is a former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

@PROJECT SYNDICATE

WISDOM CORNER

- The fear of death follows from the fear of life. A man who lives fully is prepared to die at any time. **MARK TWAIN**
- Prejudice is a burden that confuses the past, threatens the future and renders the present inaccessible. **MAYA ANGELOU**
- Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes. **CARL JUNG**

SPECTRUM REGULATIONS

The internet is not the enemy

We live in an age of wonder in which half the world now has access to a technology - the internet - that supports people's health and education, can be a lifeline in a time of disaster or disease, and was designed to be open to everyone but owned by no one. And the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted both its importance and its potential by forcing the world to connect remotely, contact-free, and in real time.

Unfortunately, we also live in an age of fear and suspicion. You don't even need to 'doomscroll' to find claims that the internet is worse than any previous pestilence or war. The internet is the scapegoat for many of today's problems, including terrorism, child abuse, and even the end of democracy.

But think about it. To believe, for example, that fake news is somehow the internet's fault is to forget the state propaganda machines perfected in the twentieth century. Likewise, excessive wealth concentration and overly powerful monopolies are not products of the digital age; once upon a time, there were firms like US Steel, Standard Oil, and the British and Dutch East India companies. Some even hold the internet responsible for the decline of civic values and even civility, as though lying politicians and incendiary speech were not possible

before Twitter. Transformative technologies have far-reaching effects on societies and individuals. We are now in a period of social change that is unquestionably attributable in part to the rise of the internet, because the tool has created new opportunities.

Some of those opportunities are socially valuable: people can now communicate easily and cheaply with friends or family far away. Some of them are socially harmful: scammers are almost certain to make money. And some are socially ambiguous: traditional authorities and gatekeepers are losing influence because people have more channels and ways to access information.

But while many of the harms people ascribe to the internet are neither new nor caused by it, governments are seeking to regulate the internet as though they are. Before heading down that path, we had better be sure we are regulating the right thing.

Consider the problem of today's giant tech corporations and their effects on commerce and public discourse. Some advocate applying special regulations to these companies when they reach a certain market capitalisation or level of revenue. But this is hardly the first time the issue of corporate

concentration has arisen. After Standard Oil came to dominate the petroleum industry in the United States and many other countries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, governments addressed the firm's power using antitrust policy, not 'oil policy.'

Many people also express concern about internet-enabled political interference, both within a given country and from foreign actors. But it is careless and historically inaccurate to attribute this phenomenon entirely to the internet. The US, France, Russia, and China each underwent violent revolutions in pre-internet times. And long before anyone had sent a datagram on the internet, countries were interfering in other countries' political processes, as both the Soviet Union and the US frequently did during the Cold War.

Political systems, and democracies in particular, depend on the efficient functioning and legitimacy of their governments. It is not possible to solve the problem of popular disaffection with a political regime by controlling information flows from abroad. That was just as true of Russia before 1917, when information was printed on paper, as it is now when it comes in packets of data.

To be sure, some challenges are unique to the internet. For starters,

the technology enables more communication at a greater speed than ever before. It is also exceptionally difficult to be confident of the identity of someone online (or even to be confident that it is a person). But these are the types of narrow issues where internet-specific regulation might make sense, if policymakers can be sure that introducing such measures will not negatively affect the internet itself.

The internet is an ecosystem that we need to protect. When considering possible regulations, the best way forward is to undertake an Internet Impact Assessment, much like how we conduct environmental or traffic assessments before deciding whether to build new infrastructure. The evaluation can determine whether a given action will benefit or harm the internet's underlying health.

Above all, we need to ensure that the internet is not made a scapegoat for problems caused by the legal, economic, and political systems where it is used. The internet must remain a tool for all of us. That means protecting it as we would any precious resource.

The writer is President and CEO of the Internet Society, a global nonprofit focused on internet policy, technology, and development.

@PROJECT SYNDICATE



Andrew Sullivan

WE NEED TO ENSURE THAT THE INTERNET IS NOT MADE A SCAPEGOAT FOR PROBLEMS CAUSED BY THE LEGAL, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS WHERE IT IS USED

What's killing the big cats?

Sir, Madhya Pradesh is the 'Tiger State' of India. Five hundred and twenty six big cats - nearly one-fourth of the country's tiger population - were said to be present in the forests of the state as of 2019. Therefore, when the state loses tigers, eyebrows are raised. Reason for apprehension has come from the 'Tiger State' itself. As many as 40 tigers have lost their lives over the last one year in different forest areas of the state. The 40th tiger casualty was reported a couple of days back even as the Madhya Pradesh High Court asked the Centre, the state and the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) to explain the tiger deaths. The latest feline to die was a radio-collared tigress. Earlier, another radio-collared tiger was found dead, and de-skinned. Contact with live wires of electric farm fencing is attributed as a reason for the spate of tiger deaths though de-skinning of the animals could only have been done by over-active poachers. So, the unscrupulous elements are taking advantage of either the 'man-tiger' conflict or are on their own. Any tiger death should be ascribed to poaching unless proved otherwise. In all the big cat casualties in Madhya Pradesh, this year, apart from electrocution and poaching, food poisoning could be another reason. Infighting over territorial domination is another major reason why tigers die. Diseases and accidents are not uncommon causes. Be that as it may, safeguarding ecologically sensitive areas, forests, water bodies and grasslands cannot be overlooked anymore by the state government. Villagers and tigers can co-exist and this should be stressed upon by officers of the state's tiger reserves.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

The growth saga

Sir, India's gross domestic product (GDP) growing 8.4 per cent in the July-September 2021 quarter, on the back of improving private consumption and industrial activities, has come as a pleasant surprise. The growth engine picking up speed gives the government hope that the country could record double-digit growth in the current financial year. This is the fourth consecutive quarter of growth in the economy after two quarters of contraction last year. The recovery in the economy was broad-based, with manufacturing, mining and services sector showing considerable improvement. But the extent and durability of this recovery are being discussed in many quarters.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

national

of the day quote

Even after 75 years of Independence, we have not been able to bring in a Uniform Civil Code. I urge the government to soon bring a law to implement a Uniform Civil Code

NISHIKANT DUBEY | BJP MP

Uttarakhanditya and its protection will be the core plank of our poll strategy in the state. It will be built around the three symbols of Uttarakhanditya - mandua, ganna and shilp (millet, sugarcane and crafts)

HARISH RAWAT | SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER

In the last five years, 4,358 km of National Highway (NH) have been constructed in the mountainous and border areas with an expenditure of Rs 70,733 crore

NITIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER FOR ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

SHORT TAKES

SAD leader joins BJP

New Delhi: Shiromani Akali Dal leader and Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee chief Manjinder Singh Sirsa joined the BJP here Wednesday ahead of the upcoming assembly elections in Punjab, in what is being seen as the ruling party's efforts to woo Sikh voters. He joined the BJP in the presence of senior party leaders and Union Ministers Dharmendra Pradhan and Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and later met Home Minister Amit Shah and party president J P Nadda, signifying the importance the party attached to his induction.

Woman brutally thrashed; 2 held

New Delhi: A woman and her daughter were brutally assaulted by four people, including two women, at the city's Shalimar Bagh area, Delhi Police sources said here Wednesday. The sources told IANS that the incident took place November 19 at around 10.10 p.m. when a 38-year-old woman and her daughter were attacked mercilessly by four people. "An FIR was lodged on the complaint of the victim," the source said, adding that the two women who were involved in the attack were arrested by the police November 22.

Unseasonal rains in Maha, Gujarat

Mumbai: Mumbai, its satellite cities, north and central Maharashtra and south Gujarat received rains Wednesday, owing to a low-pressure area in the Arabian Sea and a western disturbance, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said. The rainfall is likely to continue December 2, the IMD added. The unseasonal rains pushed the maximum temperature to 24 degree Celsius, eight degrees below normal, the IMD said.

15 lose vision

Muzaffarpur (Bihar): A hospital in this north Bihar district is in the eye of a storm over alleged botched up cataract surgeries at a free camp held by it recently which has resulted in complete loss of vision in the operated eye of at least 15 patients. According to Muzaffarpur civil surgeon Vinay Kumar Sharma, a three-member team has been set up to look into the matter involving Muzaffarpur Eye Hospital, a well-established medical centre located in the town. "I have asked the management of the hospital to provide me with a complete list of the patients who underwent surgery at the camp", he said.



The revocation of Article 370 was in BJP's manifesto but there is no logic behind withdrawal of statehood and division of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir

OMAR ABDULLAH | NATIONAL CONFERENCE LEADER

STRICT RULE

Twitter has announced to ban sharing of private media, such as photos and videos, without permission from the individuals that are shown in those images



SKM condemns govt's attempt to 'divide' unions

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 1: Stating that the BJP government should stop attempting to divide farmers even at this stage - two days after the three farm laws were repealed in the Parliament, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha Wednesday condemned the government's statement that it does not have data about farmers' death.

It also criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for not re-initiating formal dialogue and not responding formally to the letter sent by the SKM reminding the government about the pending demands. "Farm unions stand united in their demands to the Government and SKM is awaiting formal communication with all required details from the Government," it said.

The SKM statement came in wake of the fact that there were informal attempts to reach out to the farmers Tuesday by the government asking for five names to be included in a Committee purportedly for discussing farm related issues, including the Minimum



Support Price (MSP). Asserting that the farmers' unions are all united, the SKM - a consortium of 40-odd organisations - said, morchas/campsites around Delhi borders will continue with more tractor-trolleys reaching the protest sites and the struggle will continue.

"More farmers are coming so that everyone can go back together victorious - SKM appeals to farmers and media not to believe falsehoods being spread about protests winding down - SKM will hold its meeting December 4 as announced earlier," the statement said. There is no meeting that has

The SKM condemns the response of the government of India in the Parliament saying that it has no information about deaths in the farmers' movement and therefore, the question of financial assistance does not arise! SKM reiterates its demand for compensation and rehabilitation of the kin of more than 689 martyrs in the ongoing agitation

SAMYUKT KISAN MORCHA

happened between Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar and farm union leaders of that state, the SKM claimed. "In the Haryana SKM meeting, it was reiterated that the agitation will continue until the pending demands are met by the government, and until formal communication is received regarding the same. Haryana farmers' organisations will join the SKM meeting December 4 like other

constituents and a collective stock-taking will take place on that day."

Meanwhile, the All India Kisan Sabha, a component of SKM, said: "The BJP Government has been incessantly peddling lies to cover up for their loss of face, having suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of the united Kisan movement. Narendra Modi is graceless in defeat and insincere in the apology tendered, he has no remorse for the death of over 700 farmers and immense hardship farmers have had to undergo."

A bill was passed in Parliament Monday to repeal the three contentious farm laws. Repeal of the farm laws was one of the main demands of the thousands of protesters. But the stalemate continues as their other demands such as legal guarantee of MSP, compensation to families of farmers who died during the movement and withdrawal of cases against them are still to be met.

The Centre Tuesday demanded five names from the SKM for a panel to deliberate on MSP and other issues.

Assam lynching case: Main accused killed in 'escape bid'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Dec 1: The prime accused in the lynching of AASU leader in Jorhat died after being hit by a police vehicle when trying to escape from custody in the early hours on Wednesday, which prompted jubilation by people across Jorhat city and Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to say that the state will become crime free.

The opposition on the other hand accused the police of extra judicial killings and some to express concern. Neeraj Das alias 'Kola Lora' (black boy) was arrested Tuesday, a day after the gruesome incident, and was to be produced before the court Wednesday. Jorhat superintendent of police Ankit Jain said that during interrogation the prime accused Neeraj Das alias 'Kola Lora' (black boy) had revealed that a big drug consignment was coming and a police team set out with him at around 2 am Wednesday in a bid to intercept the consignment.

Das tried to escape by jumping off the police vehicle in the lonely stretch on Chinamora-Mariani road and while trying to flee, he was accidentally hit by the police vehicle which was moving at a high speed. "The driver of the vehicle then lost control of the vehicle which ramed into a wall and was damaged," Jain told PTI.

Das was taken to the hospital, where he was declared "brought dead". Three policemen were injured in the incident.

A total 13 people, including Das, were arrested Monday and Tuesday in connection with the lynching of All Assam Students' Union (AASU) leader Animesh Bhuyan. Two others, including a reporter, who was accompanying Bhuyan were injured in the incident on Monday. As the news of Das' death spread people came out to the streets in Jorhat city, which is a major educational hub of upper Assam, and burst crackers in jubilation. Sarma wrote on Twitter, "Assam will be free of crime and criminal - come what May" and retweeted a post by Special DGP (Law and Order) G P Singh.

MONITORING OMICRON SITUATION, SAYS GOVT

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 1: The Indian government, before taking any final decision on the resumption of international flight operations, is "closely monitoring" the situation emerging out of the detection and spread of coronavirus' Omicron variant.

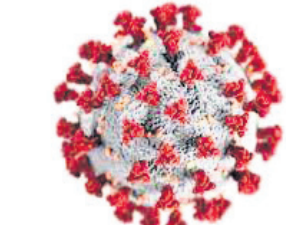
According to civil aviation regulator DGCA, stakeholders are being consulted on the evolving situation.

"In view of the evolving global scenario with the emergence of new Variants of Concern, the situation is being watched closely in consultation with all stakeholders," the DGCA said in a circular issued Wednesday. "An appropriate decision indicating the effective date of resumption of scheduled commercial international passenger services shall be notified in due course."

Lately, a chorus has grown against the opening of normal international flight operations from December 15 against the backdrop of the new and reportedly more infectious variant.

The demand coincides with the Centre's advisory to states and Union Territories (UTs) to ensure preparedness of health infrastructure like availability of ICU, O2 beds, ventilators, among others, and to focus on rural areas.

At present, several nations have



6 Covid cases from 'at-risk' countries

Six Covid-19 cases were reported Wednesday after screening 3,476 passengers of 11 flights that arrived in India from "at-risk" countries and the samples have been sent for genomic sequencing, the Health Ministry said amid concerns over the 'Omicron' variant of coronavirus. The Centre's revised guidelines for international travellers came into effect on Wednesday. The fresh guidelines have been issued because of the new SARS-Cov-2 variant which has been designated as a 'variant of concern (VOC)' by the World Health Organisation.

either closed their air spaces or placed strict restrictions on incoming passengers. In this environment, especially after suffering the massive second wave of Covid-19 which was unleashed by the Delta variant, many are ques-

tioning the Centre's move to open up the sector. On Wednesday, the Ministry of Civil Aviation clarified on post-arrival testing protocols.

"Travellers undergoing random sampling may give the sample and be allowed to leave. Now, the random sampling would be limited to 2 per cent as per latest Ministry of Health and Family Welfare guidelines and it would be on a self-paid basis." "Airlines or airports may coordinate with the officials of state or UT governments to select the passenger at random sampling."

The ministry also said that post-arrival testing can be exempted "if a person is travelling from a 'not at risk' country and has only a transit in 'at risk' country before taking the destination flight".

A total 1,013 passengers from four 'at-risk' flights successfully completed arrival formalities due to availability of Rapid Antigen Test along with RT-PCR test, the Delhi International Airport Ltd said in a tweet on Wednesday morning. As many as 792 passengers decided to take the Rapid PCR Test and 221 passengers opted for the RT-PCR test, it added.

As per Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, under the latest directive issued by the Maharashtra government, passengers from high-risk countries will be segregated from passengers arriving from low-risk countries.

LS passes ART Bill

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 1: The Lok Sabha Wednesday passed the Assisted Reproductive Technology (Amendment) Bill 2021 by voice vote as the amendments moved by some parliamentarians including Trinamool Congress MP Saugata Roy and Shiv Sena MP Vinayak Raut were negated.

Replying to the debate on ART Bill, the Union Health and Family Welfare Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said this Bill was sent to the Standing Committee and the suggestions of the committee have been considered in this Bill. He further said that there are many provisions in the Bill to correct the current scenario such as in case of the mother's death, there has been a provision for insurance.

"We respect doctors, but any unethical practice will be punished. Sex of the child cannot be revealed. In many Acts, the punishments are clearly mentioned for unethical practices by doctors," he added.

The Minister also said that every woman, above 21 years of age can now become a mother with this Bill. Even divorcees and widows can use the ART Bill.

Earlier, initiating the debate on the ART Bill, Congress MP Karti Chidambaram highlighted the existing lacuna in the Bill and also asked that if the donor was anonymous then why to take their Aadhaar number.

"Will there be a contact tracing if the child wishes to do so after turning adult?" he asked and also



questioned about the pricing regulation as this treatment cost a huge money.

Raising the issues of LGBT couples and single men from using this technology, Chidambaram also said that every Indian who is physically and financially fit to parent a child should be able to be a parent. He also raised his objection to the provision that only married women who had a child should be a donor.

Supporting the Bill, BJP MP Heena Gavri herself is a medical professional, said that unregulated surrogacy made renting a womb a booming business and vulnerable women became victims.

Ransomware top threat for Indians in 2021

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 1: Cybercriminals continued to exploit people's screen habits formed during lockdown to spread scams and ransomware was the top threat for Indians in 2021, followed by crypto scams, a new report showed Wednesday.

Cybersecurity researchers observed a 38 per cent increase in ransomware attacks targeting consumers globally, when comparing the last five months of 2021 to the first five months of the year, whereas for India, that number stands at 65 per cent. On the mobile side, adware and fleecware were among the top threats, according to global security company Avast. "The pandemic has changed nearly every aspect of everyone's lives, and that includes the cyberworld too," said Michal Salat, director of threat intelligence at Avast.

"Attackers' methods are becoming more sophisticated. Cybercriminals are using techniques that make them harder to spot and carrying out more personalised cyber attacks. They are also adding new spins on tried and tested techniques, especially in social engineering type of attacks like scams," Salat added. Businesses globally also experienced an increased number of attacks during the June-October period to the tune of 32 per cent.

However, for India, this number was less than the global average and stood at 19 per cent. In general, phishing attacks continued to increase during 2021.

The chances of businesses encounter-

CRYPTO SCAMS SURGE

This year, a wide variety of new threats aimed at profiting from or mining cryptocurrencies as users' expenses were reported. Some of the main ones that impacted many countries around the world were Crackonosh, and BluStealer. In addition to Crackonosh and BluStealer, the researchers also found cryptocurrency-stealing malware that was distributed through HackBoss, a Telegram channel which, at the time of discovery, had stolen over \$560,000 from victims.

ing phishing scams has increased globally by 40 per cent in the last five months of the year but was much lower in India with 13 per cent. "Consumers, too, continue to be targeted by phishing scams with the increase in global (24 per cent) and India (23 per cent) figures being nearly the same," the report noted.

In September, the researchers found more than 19,300 Android apps that potentially exposed user data due to an incorrect configuration of the Firebase database - an Android tool that developers can use with the purpose of storing user data. "Cybercriminals kept up many of their tricks this year, using social engineering to spread malware to get their hands on people's money, abusing technology such as stalkerware to violate people's privacy or deceiving vulnerable audiences into paying for fleeceware apps or unneeded tech support," said Salat.

OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, PARALAKHEMUNDI, GAJAPATI No. C-1444

'e'-Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. 04/PKDM-2021-22
Letter No. 3758 Date: 01.12.2021

1 Nature of the Work	25 (Twenty Five) Nos. of Civil Construction works
2 Estimated Cost	Varies from Rs.5.28 lakhs to Rs.17.85 lakhs
3 Period of Completion	Two to Two Calendar Months
4 Date and time of availability of bid documents in the portal	From 02.12.2021 at 10.00 A.M. to 12.12.2021 at 5.00 P.M.
5 Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal	12.12.2021 at 5.00 P.M.
6 Submission of Financial Documents (Bid Cost & EMD) by Registered Post or Speed Post	On or before 14.12.2021 by 5.00 P.M.
7 Date and time of Opening of Bid	15.12.2021 at 11.00 A.M.
8 Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid	Executive Officer, Paralakhemundi Municipality

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "https://tendersorissa.gov.in".

Sd./- Executive Officer
Paralakhemundi Municipality
OIPR-13145/11/0004/2122

ST & SC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
INTEGRATED TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY, BONAI
DIST: SUNDARGARH
Ph.No.: 06626-244429, email: itdabni@nic.in
No.CAD-2100- Govt. of Odisha 'e' Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. 05/ITDA BNI of 2021-22

1 No. of work	7 (Seven) Nos.
2 Estimated cost	Rs. 11.67 lakhs to Rs. 161.00 lakhs
3 Period of completion	6 (Six) months to 8 (Eight) months [The repair, renovation and beautification works included in the bid must be completed by 15.02.2022 without fail. In case of any deviation, the entire expenditure shall be forfeited]
4 Date & time of availability of bid documents in the portal	02 December 2021 at 5 P.M.
5 Last date / time for receipt of bids in the portal	09 December 2021 upto 5 P.M.
6 Date of opening of bids	10 December 2021 upto 11.00 A.M.
7 Name and address of the officer inviting bid	Project Administrator, ITDA, Bonai

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <http://tendersodisha.gov.in>. Any addendum/ corrigendum/ cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website only. OIPR-26050/11/0002/2122 Sd./- Project Administrator, I.T.D.A., Bonai

Government of Odisha No. B-716
"e" Procurement Notice
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER DHENKANAL (R&B) DIVISION, DHENKANAL
Bid Identification No. - 26 of 2021-2022

1. Name of the work	: Bridge Works - 2 Nos.
2. Estimate Cost	: Rs.64,99,727.00 & Rs.95,40,141.00
3. Period of Completion	: 04 (Four Calendar Months)
4. Date & time of availability of the Bid documents in the portal	: 10.00 A.M. of 03.12.2021 to 5.00 P.M. of 17.12.2021
5. Last date/time of receipt of the bid in portal	: 17.12.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.
6. Date of Opening	: 18.12.2021 at 11.00 A.M.
7. Name and address of the Office	: Office of the Superintending Engineer, Dhenkanal (R&B) Division, Dhenkanal

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "https://tendersorissa.gov.in".

Sd./- Superintending Engineer
Dhenkanal (R&B) Division
OIPR-34016/11/0013/2122

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA 'e' mail - sebicbpd@gmail.com
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER, BARIPADA IRRIGATION CIRCLE, BARIPADA
No. A-680 'e' Procurement Notice No. ACEBIC - 04/2021-22

Procurement Officer	Name of work	Bid Identification No.	Cost of work (Rs. in lakhs)	Bid Security Declaration (Annexure - III of Section - 6)	Cost of bid documents (In Rs.)	Class of Contractor	Period of Completion	Bid documents available online for bidding		Date of opening of Technical Bid (Cover-I)
								From	To	
Additional Chief Engineer, Baripada Irrigation Circle, Baripada	Restoration and protection to left bank of river Sono near Village: Kulhupal	ACEBIC-BLS (1) of 2021-22	178.15	"Bid Security Declaration" (Annexure - III of Section - 6)	10,000.00	'B' Class & 'A' Class	6 (Six) Calendar Months	03.12.21 from 10.30 A.M.	18.12.21 upto 5.00 P.M.	20.12.21 at 11.00 A.M.
	Restoration and protection to right bank of river Sono near Village: Kathpal	ACEBIC-BLS (2) of 2021-22	179.25	"Bid Security Declaration" (Annexure - III of Section - 6)	10,000.00	'B' Class & 'A' Class	6 (Six) Calendar Months	03.12.21 from 10.30 A.M.	18.12.21 upto 5.00 P.M.	20.12.21 at 11.00 A.M.

Further details conditions can be seen from the Govt. website: www.tendersorissa.gov.in. OIPR-32162/11/0005/2122 Sd./- Additional Chief Engineer, Baripada Irrigation Circle, Baripada

Modi, Gowda bonhomie adds to buzz around BJP, JD(S) poll pact

POLITICS OF POSSIBILITIES



The possible pact between BJP and JD(S) gains significance ahead of 2023 Assembly polls and upcoming taluk and zilla panchayat polls

H.D. Kumaraswamy had headed the BJP-JD(S) coalition government for 20 months from January 2006, under a power sharing agreement of leading the coalition for 20 months each

The JD(S) had then reneged on its commitment to share the power for the remaining 20 months with the BJP and refused to hand over the mantle to BS Yeddyurappa, leading to the collapse of the government

Congress, also a former coalition partner of the JD(S) having run the government in alliance with it, after 2018 assembly polls, has been alleging internal understanding between the regional party and BJP in various bypolls held so far. The Congress has even called JD(S), the 'B-team' of BJP

and come with a proposal, and that former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy will take a decision on behalf of the JD(S).

"...Finally, it's up to the BJP to take a call on this issue, since your party is in power. Kumaraswamy hasn't spoken negatively on this (proposal). It is up to the BJP to take a final call on Yeddyurappa's opinion (on seeking JDS support)...I told (PM) it is up to you people to take a decision," he said.

"He (PM) said he will discuss with Pralhad Joshi (Union Minister from Karnataka) on the matter

concerning the state," Gowda added.

Meanwhile, reacting to the developments in Delhi, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai in Hubballi Wednesday said Yeddyurappa and Kumaraswamy will take a final call on the possible pact.

"Among several issues discussed between PM and Deve Gowda during their meeting, this matter has been left to local leadership. Our leader Yeddyurappa and Kumaraswamy will take a final decision on this," he said.

This election is crucial for BJP to gain a majority in the 75 mem-

ber 'upper house' of Karnataka legislature.

According to JD(S) sources, the party is open to supporting the BJP in the seats it is not contesting, but the national party will have to reach out to its leaders officially in this regard and hold talks.

Asked whether JD(S) will seek any 'return favour', a party functionary said, "maybe, it's natural...Let's see how things will go, let them reach out first. We will also have to see on which seats we can support them, keeping our party's prospects in the future elections."

Comic Kunal Kamra's Bangalore shows 'cancelled after threats'

This comes days after stand-up comedian Munnawar Faruqui was denied permission to perform in the city with the police calling him a 'controversial figure'



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 1: Comedian Kunal Kamra Wednesday said his upcoming stand-up shows, scheduled to be held in Bangalore, have been cancelled after the organisers received threats.

The cancellation of Kamra's shows comes just days after another stand-up comedian Munnawar Faruqui was denied permission to perform in the city with the police calling him a 'controversial figure.'

Kamra, who has criticised the BJP-led NDA government over a number of issues in the past, posted a sarcastic statement on Twitter to inform his followers and detractors about the cancellations of his shows that were to be held in the city in the coming days.

"Hello Bangalore people. I'm happy to inform that my shows in Bangalore which were scheduled

over the next 20 days have been cancelled. They've been cancelled for two reasons."

"Firstly, we didn't get special permission to seat 45 people in the venue that can seat more. Secondly, threats have been made to shut down the venue if I were to ever perform there. I guess this is also part of the Covid protocol & new guidelines. I suppose I am seen as a variant of the virus now," the comedian said. Kamra said now that his shows have also been cancelled after Faruqui, it proves that the 'ruling class' is at least trying to 'oppress with equality.'

"For those on Twitter that have been wondering how 'A Kamra goes on to perform while a Farooqui has had to quit comedy' we can

find solace in the fact that the ruling class is at least trying to oppress with equality.

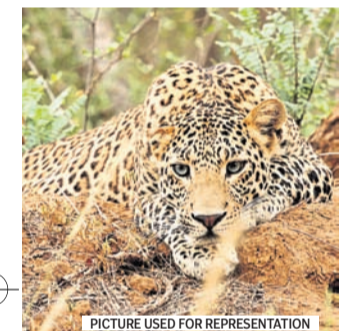
"Maybe if we continue down the road of equal oppression, we would get to a point of equal liberation, in a post climate change era," he said.

Comedian Munnawar Faruqui last Sunday indicated to quit standup comedy after his scheduled show in Bangalore was cancelled amid protest by the Hindu right-wing outfits who alleged that the artist had hurt the Hindu sentiments in one of his shows.

Reacting to the latest cancellation, in a social media post, Faruqui said, "Nafrat jeet gayi, artist haar gaya (hate has won, artist has lost). I'm done, goodbye. Injustice."

Tribal woman fights off leopard, snatches her son from its claws

The act of strength and grit earns applause from Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan



buffer zone of the Sanjay Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh's Sidhi district, located over 500 from the state capital Bhopal.

Kiran, a Baiga tribe woman, was sitting beside a fire with her three children to keep them warm outside their hut.

Suddenly, a leopard appeared there and in a split moment caught hold of her son Rahul with its jaws and ran away, a senior forest official said Wednesday.

The woman was shocked by the sudden turn of events, but kept her cool. She made her other two children stay put inside the hut and immediately ran towards the forest where she saw the leopard taking away with her son, the tiger reserve's director, YP Singh, said.

She chased the leopard for about a kilometre, but the big cat took cover in the bushes and then held the child with its claws.

Kiran also did not relent. She kept trying to scare away the leopard with a stick and also raised an alarm, the official said.

"The leopard probably got scared with the woman's courage and left the child. While Kiran immediately took her son in her arms, the feline attacked her. However, she overpowered the animal with her valour," the official said.

In the meantime, other villagers also reached the spot on hearing Kiran's call for help and the leopard then disappeared into the forest, he said.

Indore health dept trying to trace 100 foreign returnees

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Indore, Dec 1: Amid concerns over the potentially more contagious new Omicron variant of coronavirus found recently, the health department in Madhya Pradesh's Indore is looking for 100 people, who returned here from abroad over the past one month.

"So far, we have traced 50 people, out of about 150 who have returned home in Indore from abroad during last one month. Samples of the 50 traced persons were tested and none of them were found to be infected with COVID-19," Chief Medical and Health Officer (CMHO) Dr B S Saitya said Wednesday.

"However, we are searching for the remaining 100 people so that their samples can also be collected and tested," he said.

Meanwhile, Indore Collector Manish Singh asked the industrial and business establishments in

the district to ensure that all their employees get the second dose of COVID-19 vaccine within the stipulated period, failing which an FIR will be registered against the employers concerned under the Epidemic Diseases Act 1897.

Singh said the district administration is currently sealing such establishments, where the employees have not received a second dose of the vaccine in the stipulated time limit.

"If this situation does not improve, we will also file an FIR against the employers concerned," he said.

According to officials, 30.82 lakh eligible people in Indore have received their first dose of the vaccine while 24.87 lakh of them have been administered both the jabs.

Officials said that about 3.25 lakh people in the district have not turned up for the second dose even after the time limit elapsed.

FOR A CAUSE



Medical students and doctors hold candles to mark the World AIDS Day and demand the government to consider restructuring the academic fees according to the 2018-19 academic year, payment of COVID-risk allowance, and timely payment of stipend to postgraduates and interns, at Victoria hospital in Bangalore.

Bhopal tragedy: 37 yrs on, ground zero continues to haunt

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhopal, Dec 1: Spread over 85 acres, the Union Carbide factory premises gives an eerie feeling with falling buildings and ever-growing shrubs, a remnant of an unparalleled tragedy that saw thousands die and lakhs suffer. Thirty-seven years after the Bhopal gas tragedy, December 3 is one of those blots of history that can never see closure.

Around half a dozen buildings, which include offices, guestrooms, canteen for employees and workers, situated at different locations of the land are in a dilapidated state. Each one of these buildings had a specific role to play in the process of making and storing of the highly toxic methyl isocyanate (MIC).

Surrounded by dense bushes, and a warning note as a prohibited zone for general public, the only building appearing to be in a better condition - is the three-storey structure, which used to be the office and the residence of senior employees of the Union Carbide Corporation (UCC), an American chemical corporation owned by Dow Chemical company. In other buildings, time and thieves have imprinted their mark.

Apart from the buildings, some other residues such as big size tanks, iron pipes along with flare towers and some other materials

are also available. A heavily concrete portion of land within its boundary, located hardly 300-350 meters away from the MIC production site, appeared to be a helipad.

One of the three iron tanks (Tank - E610), whose malfunctioning had resulted in the leakage of toxic MIC gas and caused deaths of around 3,000 people within the next few hours after the leak, is seen lying along the roadside within the premises. The reports suggest that the Bhopal UCIL facility had housed three underground - 68,000 litres liquid MIC storage tanks, named - E610, E611 and E612.

As per the government's data, over five lakh people were exposed to methyl isocyanate (MIC) gas, however, estimates vary on the death toll. A total of 2,259 deaths were immediate, the activists, however, said that around 8,000 people died within two weeks, and another 8,000 or more died from gas-related diseases over the following years.

Underground tank - E610, that had stored around 42 tonnes of MIC gas at the time of disaster - the intervening night between December 2 and 3 - was removed from its foundation and set aside later in 2010.

To protect the factory assets from thieves and to prohibit the general public's entry within its premises, the Madhya Pradesh government in 2010 set up a concrete



JUSTICE ELUDES SURVIVORS

MORE THAN FIVE LAKH PEOPLE WERE AFFECTED AND OVER 15,000 WERE KILLED AFTER METHYL ISOCYANATE GAS LEAKED FROM THE PESTICIDE PLANT OF UNION CARBIDE INDIA LIMITED (UCIL) ON THE INTERVENING NIGHT OF DECEMBER 2-3, 1984 WHICH WAS THEN LOCATED ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF BHOPAL

NGOS WORKING FOR THE RIGHTS OF THE SURVIVORS OF THE BHOPAL GAS DISASTER ALLEGE THAT VARIOUS GOVERNMENTS IN MADHYA PRADESH AND AT THE CENTRE HAVE FAILED TO BRING THE CULPRITS OF THE WORLD'S BIGGEST INDUSTRIAL TRAGEDY TO JUSTICE EVEN AFTER 37 YEARS

We would like the world to know that even after 37 years of the world's worst industrial disaster, justice remains elusive for survivors... Our democratically-elected governments continue to collude with American corporations

RASHIDA BEE | ACTIVIST

boundary wall. The state government has also deployed Bhopal police for security concerns. However, only three police personnel, who are permanently deployed for the security, could be seen playing cards inside. The building,

in which the police personnel are residing, is also in a poor state, with broken iron rods and damaged parts. "A total of 15 police personnel are deployed for security of the premises. Thieves would enter from the back side and break the

iron rods to make a quick buck. No one is allowed to enter here without the permission from the state government," one of the police personnel told IANS, while enjoying cards with two other colleagues.

national



The farmers will continue their agitation and will not return home until all their demands are met
RAKESH TIKAIT | BHARTIYA KISAN UNION (BKU) LEADER

UNDER PRESSURE

WhatsApp Wednesday said that it banned over two million accounts in India in October in compliance with the new IT Rules 2021. The Meta-owned platform also WhatsApp also received 500 grievance reports in the same month, and took action on only 18 of those



of the day quote

Earlier a job in the Railways was an honour, today there are no jobs in the Railways. Soon, the Railways will no longer be what it was earlier. Stop the injustice to the people. We want #JusticeForRailwaysStudents
RAHUL GANDHI | FORMER CONGRESS CHIEF

It is hilarious if not tragic for Rajya Sabha Secretariat to inform me today that my Question whether the Chinese have crossed the LAC in Ladakh, cannot be allowed, because of national interest
SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY | RS MEMBER AND BJP LEADER

Increase in drug peddling along the Mizoram-Myanmar border has led to increased proliferation of narcotics, as well as a high rate of HIV infections in the north eastern state
PS SREEDHARAN PILLAI | GOA GOVERNOR

SHORT TAKES

Narrow escape for pilgrims in AP

Tirupati (AP): Twenty pilgrims to the holy Tirumala had a narrow escape Wednesday when the driver of the bus they were travelling in stopped the vehicle at the right time after noticing boulders rolling down the Ghat road due to rain-triggered landslides. The second ghat road leading to the famous hill shrine of Lord Venkateswara been indefinitely closed to vehicular traffic after massive boulders, some of the car-sized, fell on the stretch, a temple official said.

Road mishap: Six dead, 25 injured

Betul (MP): Six persons were killed and 25 others injured, five of them seriously, when a passenger bus carrying them collided with a truck in Betul district of Madhya Pradesh Wednesday, a police official said. The accident occurred around noon near Narkhed village on Multai-Prabhatpattan road, some 65 kms from the district headquarters.

Three killed in explosion

Nodakhali (WB): Three persons were killed and as many injured in an explosion at an illegal firecracker manufacturing unit in Bengal's South 24 Parganas district Wednesday, the police said. The explosion occurred around 8 am at a two-storey house that belonged to one Ashim Mondal in Nodakhali area of the district, a senior police officer said. One fire tender was rushed to the spot to douse the flames at the building, a portion of which was blown off in the incident.

Elephant found dead in tiger reserve

Bijnor (Uttar Pradesh): A male elephant, about 40 years old, was found dead in Amargah Tiger Reserve (ATR). A forest team ventured into the reserve and found the carcass, lying in a six-foot-deep ditch Monday evening.

Bus fares to go up

Hyderabad: The Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) has submitted a proposal to the state government to increase the hike in bus fares. The state-owned transport operator has mooted a hike of 25 paise per km for ordinary service including 'Palle Velugu' (rural) services and 30 paise per km for express and higher services including city services.

'There is no UPA now', swipes Mamata at Cong

At the much-anticipated meeting with Nationalist Congress Party President Sharad Pawar, Mamata discussed the strategy for all Opposition parties to take on the BJP unitedly in the next elections

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, Dec 1: Taking a broad swipe at the Congress, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Wednesday said that there is no UPA left now but called upon all the like-minded Opposition parties to unitedly fight the Bharatiya Janata Party in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

At the much-anticipated meeting with Nationalist Congress Party President Sharad Pawar, Mamata discussed the strategy for all Opposition parties to take on the BJP unitedly in the next elections. Pawar, who met Banerjee along with his senior party leaders, said that they held a long discussion on various political issues.

"We agreed upon the need to strengthen the collective efforts and commitment towards safeguarding democratic values and ensuring the betterment of the people," he said.

Banerjee urged the need for creating "a firm alternative course" as nobody is fighting "ongoing Fascism" in the country. "Sharadji is the senior most leader and I have to come to discuss our political strategies. I am fully agreeable with whatever Sharadji has said," said Banerjee, who is also President of the Trinamool Congress.

She said the Shiv Sena is a strong regional party which is fighting the BJP and all such parties must post a collective challenge to the saffron party in the 2024 elections. Lauding Banerjee for sweeping



NCP President Sharad Pawar with West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee after a meeting at his residence in Mumbai

the April-May Assembly polls in her home state, Pawar said her intention for the 2024 elections is clear. "In the current situation, all like-minded forces must unite together at the national level and set up a collective leadership to tackle the BJP."

He said the need was to provide a strong alternative leadership, not just today, but for the future election and in this background Banerjee visited to hold "very positive discussions" with all the leaders.

Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut, who along with Tourism Minister Aaditya Thackeray, met Banerjee last night, said that she is a product of the Congress and has left the party for whatever differences they may have had.

"It's their mutual matter and they will sort it out. She has secured a historic win in West Bengal, where not only the BJP, but also the Left and the Congress have been wiped out. All those who left the Trinamool to join the BJP are now coming back," Raut pointed out.

The meeting was the prime political highlight of Banerjee's two-day Mumbai trip but she could not meet Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray as he is currently convalescing after undergoing a spine surgery last month. Banerjee said she was very keen to meet the CM and was unable to do so, but said she prayed for his quick recovery and looked forward to meeting soon in the future.

PETROL PRICES CUT BY ₹8/LITRE IN DELHI

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 1: Petrol prices in national capital fell by ₹8 per litre Wednesday after the Delhi government cut down Value Added Tax (VAT) on the fuel to 19.40 per cent from earlier 30 per cent.

New rates will come into effect from midnight. This decision came after Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal chaired a Cabinet meeting this morning.

Currently, the petrol is being sold at ₹103.97. In early November, the Centre had reduced petrol and diesel rates by ₹5 and ₹10 per litre respectively. Post the move, the Opposition parties in Delhi have been urging the AAP-led state government to cut VAT on petrol by at least Rs 10 per litre.



In India, fuel prices differ from state to state depending on the local taxation (VAT) and freight charges. Besides, the central government charges an excise duty on auto fuels. After adding excise duty, dealer commission and VAT, the retail selling price of the petrol gets nearly doubled. From June 2017 onwards, the petrol and diesel prices in India are being revised daily at 6 a.m. via the dynamic fuel price method. Earlier, this exercise used to take place every fortnight.

Nov breaks record for 'heavy', 'very heavy' rainfall

AS PER THE IMD, "HEAVY" RAINFALL IS BETWEEN 64.5 TO 115.5 MM WHILE "VERY HEAVY" RAINFALL MEANS 115.6 TO 204.5 MM



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 1: The country saw 645 events of heavy rainfall and 168 events of very heavy rainfall in November, the highest in the month in five years, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Wednesday.

Peninsular India reported most of the extremely heavy to very heavy rainfall events which claimed 44 lives in Andhra Pradesh, 16 in Tamil Nadu, 15 in Karnataka and three in Kerala. The IMD said India recorded 11 extremely heavy rainfall (more than 204.5 mm) events this November, equalling the number reported last year. The country reported zero, four and one event of extremely heavy rainfall in November in 2019, 2018 and 2017, respectively.

The country saw 645 events of heavy rainfall (64.5 mm to 115.5 mm) and 168 events of very heavy rainfall (115.6 mm to 204.5 mm) in November, the highest in the last five years, according to the IMD's data.

To put things in perspective, the number of heavy rainfall events this November was more than the total such events in the last four years - 247 in 2020; 116 in 2019; 135 in 2018 and 139 in 2017.

The Met office also said peninsular India gauged 160 per cent more rainfall - 232.7 mm against the average of 89.5 mm - in November, the highest in the month since 1901. The country as a whole received 56.5 mm of rainfall against the normal of 30.5 mm - an excess of 85.4 per cent - in November.

Five low-pressure systems in November this year against the average of 2.4 is the reason behind the copious rainfall in peninsular India this time, officials said.

Peninsular India comprises five meteorological subdivisions - Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry and Karaikal; coastal Andhra Pradesh and Yanam; Rayalaseema; Kerala and Mahe, and South Interior Karnataka.

The IMD said the region is most likely to see above-normal rainfall (more than 132 per cent of the long period average) in December.

Based on the data of the 1961-2010 period, the long period average of rainfall in peninsular India in December is 44.54 mm.

The Met office said below-normal rainfall is most likely over most areas of northwest India and some parts of central and northeast India. Normal rainfall is most likely over the remaining parts of the country.

FACING ODDS



School children holding umbrellas walk along a road amid rain at Sion in Mumbai

J&K ENCOUNTER Jaish's IED expert, foreign terrorist killed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Dec 1: The Army secured a major breakthrough on Wednesday when it killed Yasir Parray, an IED expert of the banned Jaish-e-Mohammed terror group, and a foreign militant in South Kashmir's Pulwama district, officials said.

The nerve-racking operation began at Parray's home village,

Qasabgar, at 11 pm Tuesday after the Army received an input from police about presence of terrorists in the locality. Col A K Singh, Commanding Officer of the 44 Rashtriya Rifles, led the operation and ensured that there was no collateral damage, the officials said.

The presence of two terrorists was confirmed at 3 am as they were hiding in a cavity created between the roof and the top floor,

they said. Parray, a Category A terrorist carrying a cash reward, was behind the IED blast on the multi-vehicle patrol of the 44 Rashtriya Rifles in June, 2019, when it was moving on the Arihal-Pulwama road. Two soldiers were killed and 17 were injured in the incident.

An emotional Col Singh, while talking to reporters after the incident in 2019, had said, "You (mil-

itants) can hide anywhere under the sun, we will find you, hunt you... Because we never forget, never forgive." On Wednesday, while supervising the entire operation, Col Singh summoned Parray's father to make the terrorist surrender but it could not be achieved because of heavy firing from the foreign militant, who was identified as Furqan, the officials said.

Study shows Covid ups risk of death within a year

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi/New York, Dec 1: People who survived severe Covid-19 infections are more than twice at risk of dying over the following year, compared with those who experience mild or moderate disease or remain uninfected, finds a study.

The study, published in the journal Frontiers in Medicine, showed that the increased risk of death was greater for patients who are under 65.

Researchers at the University of Florida, in the US, found that severe Covid-19 patients aged under 65 demonstrated a 233 per cent increased chance of dying, compared with the uninfected. This was larger

than the increased chance of dying experienced by severe Covid-19 patients aged over 65, compared with the uninfected. As these deaths frequently occurred long after the initial infection had passed, they may never have been linked to Covid-19 by the patients' families or doctors.

Moreover, 80 per cent deaths that occurred in severe Covid-19 survivors were not linked with common complications from the disease, such as respiratory or cardiovascular issues. This suggests that the patients had experienced an overall decline in their health that left them vulnerable to various ailments, the researchers said.

Mild or moderate Covid-19 pa-



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

80 per cent deaths that occurred in severe Covid-19 survivors were not linked with common complications from the disease, such as respiratory or cardiovascular issues

tients did not have a significantly increased mortality risk compared with the uninfected, highlighting

the importance of reducing the chances of severe disease through vaccination. "Since we now know

that there is a substantial risk of dying from what would likely be considered to be an unrecognised

complication of Covid-19, we need to be even more vigilant in decreasing severe episodes of Covid-19, a said lead author Prof Arch Mainous of the University of Florida. "Taking your chances and hoping for successful treatment in the hospital doesn't convey the full picture of the impact of Covid-19. Our recommendation at this point is to use preventive measures, such as vaccination, to prevent severe episodes of Covid-19."

For the study, the team tracked electronic health records of 13,638 patients who underwent a PCR test for Covid-19, with 178 patients experiencing severe Covid-19, 246 mild or moderate Covid-19 and the rest testing negative.

international



We are witnessing a paradox not seen before in human history. While billions of people have been effectively grounded by COVID-19, tens of millions of others have been displaced within their own countries

WORLD'S COSTLIEST CITY

Tel Aviv is the world's most expensive city to live in as soaring inflation has pushed up living costs globally, according to a survey published Wednesday. Paris and Singapore came joint second, followed by Zurich and Hong Kong



of the day quote

No one should underestimate the resolve, determination, firm will and strong ability of the Chinese people to defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity

We are asking the court in no uncertain terms to make history. We are asking the Supreme Court of the United States to overturn Roe v. Wade and restore the sanctity of life at the centre of American law

We also must assure that people with HIV in all countries have early access to effective COVID-19 vaccines and therapeutics while their supply of anti-HIV drugs also is maintained

'85% of Chinese citizens will use Mandarin by 2025'

THE MOVE APPEARS TO PUT THREATENED CHINESE REGIONAL DIALECTS SUCH AS CANTONESE AND HOKKIEN UNDER EVEN GREATER PRESSURE, ALONG WITH MINORITY LANGUAGES SUCH AS TIBETAN, MONGOLIAN AND UYGHUR

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beijing, Dec 1: China is launching an aggressive campaign to promote Mandarin, saying 85% of its citizens will use the national language by 2025.

The order issued Tuesday by the State Council, China's Cabinet, said use of Mandarin, known in Chinese as "putonghua" or the "common tongue", remains "unbalanced and inadequate" and needs to be improved to meet the demands of the modern economy. Critics have sporadically

protested changes to the education system and employment requirements that have steadily eroded the role of minority languages, calling it a campaign to eradicate cultures that don't conform with the dominant Han ethnic group.

Along with the 2025 goal, the policy aims to make Mandarin virtually universal by 2035, including in rural areas and among ethnic minorities.

The promotion of Mandarin over other languages has sparked occasional protests, including last



year in the Inner Mongolia region when the Mongolian language was replaced by standard Mandarin as the language of instruction. China's ruling Communist Party

has denounced all such movements as a form of separatism and repressed them ruthlessly. It says language conformity is necessary for the sake of the economy and national unity.

The policy is backed up by legal requirements and the document issued Wednesday demanded strengthened supervision to "ensure that the national common spoken and written language is used as the official language of government agencies and used as the basic language of schools, news and publications, radio, film and

television, public services and other fields.

It calls also on officials to "vigorously enhance the international status and influence of Chinese in academia, international organizations and at global gatherings."

Government attempts to promote Mandarin through its worldwide network of Confucius Institutes have been controversial, with critics denouncing them as an attempt to promote the party's agenda and quash discussion of topics such as human rights record.

WWII era bomb blasts in Munich

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Berlin, Dec 1: A World War II bomb exploded at a construction site next to a busy railway line in Munich Wednesday, injuring three people, one of them seriously, German police said.

A column of smoke was seen rising from the site near the Donnersbergerbrücke station. The construction site run by Germany's national railway is located on the approach to Munich's central station, which is a bit over a km (about a half-mile) to the east. Trains to and from that station, one of Germany's busiest, were suspended.

Unexploded bombs are still found frequently in Germany, even 76 years after the end of the war, and often during work on construction sites.

They are usually defused or disposed of in controlled explosions, a process that sometimes entails large-scale evacuations as a precaution. Bavaria's state interior minister, Joachim Herrmann, said the 250-kilogram (550-pound) bomb was found during drilling work, German news agency dpa reported.

It wasn't immediately clear why it wasn't discovered earlier; in general, sites in central Munich are scanned carefully for possible unexploded bombs.

Ukraine urges NATO for sanctions in case of Russian invasion

REUTERS

Riga, Dec 1: Ukraine urged NATO Wednesday to prepare economic sanctions on Russia to deter a possible invasion by tens of thousands of Russian troops concentrated within reach of its border.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said he would make the request to NATO foreign ministers meeting for the second day in Latvia to discuss how to respond to the Russian build-up and avert potentially the most dangerous crisis in relations with Moscow since the Cold War.

We will call on the allies to join Ukraine in putting together a deterrence package, Kuleba told reporters as he arrived for the talks in Riga.

This should include preparing economic sanctions against Russia, in case it decides to choose the worst-case scenario, Kuleba said, adding that NATO should also boost military and defence cooperation with Ukraine.

Ukraine is not a member of NATO but the US-led alliance has said it is committed to preserving the sovereignty of the former Soviet republic, which has tilted towards the West since 2014 and aspires to join both NATO and the European Union.

That has enraged Russia, drawing a warning from President Vladimir Putin Tuesday that Russia was ready with a newly tested hypersonic weapon in case NATO crossed its red lines and deployed



- Ukraine calls for deterrence package including sanctions threat
- Russia says Ukraine massing forces in eastern conflict zone
- Ukrainian leader calls for direct talks
- Russia starts winter military drills in south
- Russian foreign minister to meet Blinken Thursday

missiles in Ukraine.

Putin said Wednesday that Moscow wanted serious negotiations with the United States and its allies to extract legal guarantees that would rule out any further NATO moves to the east and the deployment of weapons systems that threaten us in close proximity to Russian territory.

That is unlikely to be acceptable to the United States, which has said no country has the right to veto Ukraine's NATO ambitions. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken is due to meet Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Stockholm Thursday.

Omicron: World jittery as more info drips out

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Brussels, Dec 1: The coronavirus's omicron variant kept a jittery world off-kilter Wednesday as reports of infections linked to the mutant strain cropped up in more parts of the globe.

At the same time, the dominant delta variant continued to unsettle nations, especially in Europe, where many are still dealing with a surge in infections and hospitalisations and some are considering mandatory vaccinations.

Much is still unknown about omicron, including how contagious it is and whether it can evade vaccines. But governments have nevertheless rushed to impose restrictions they hoped would keep it out — moves that appeared increasingly futile, as Wednesday brought the first known cases in West Africa and the Gulf region. Showing an increasingly complicated web of contagion, Japan reported an omicron case in a man who came from Peru via Qatar.

South African researchers alerted the World Health Organization to omicron last week, but it is not known where or when the variant first emerged, though it's clear it was circulating in Europe before that alert.

Regardless, the cases were the first reported in West Africa, while Saudi Arabia detected the first for a Gulf nation, a day after Brazil reported the first known



Air travellers to US to face tougher COVID-19 testing

EU says combating variant is a 'race against time'

Japan expands travel ban to some foreign residents

WHO warns against blanket travel bans over Omicron

one in Latin America.

Many countries around the world have barred travelers from southern Africa, and some have gone even further. Japan has banned foreign visitors and asked international airlines to stop taking new reservations for all flights arriving in the country until the end of December — among the most severe measures anywhere.

The US is working toward requiring that all air travelers to the country be tested for COVID-19 within a day before boarding their flight.

Leaders also continued to ham-

mer home that the best way to contain the pandemic remains vaccinations.

The UK's health service Wednesday began preparations to speed up the rollout of its COVID-19 booster vaccinations for the most vulnerable groups and eventually for all adults aged over 18 in the hope of slowing down the spread of the new Omicron variant of coronavirus and buying more time as further data emerges.

Germany's intensive care association warned Wednesday that the number of COVID-19 patients requiring intensive care will hit a new high before Christmas — and that it expected the all-time high from last year to be exceeded.

South Korea, which is also seeing a delta-driven surge that has pushed hospitalizations and deaths to record highs, also extended a lockdown. The country on Wednesday reported a daily jump in coronavirus infections that exceeded 5,000 for the first time.

SHORT TAKES

Pak elected Chair of G-77 for 2022

Islamabad: Pakistan has been elected as the next Chair of the Group of 77 for the year 2022 with Islamabad promising a development agenda focusing on debt restructuring, concessional financing, climate finance and ending illicit financial flows. The 45th Ministerial meeting of 'Group of 77 and China' was held virtually Tuesday, the Pakistan Foreign Office (FO) said here in a statement.

Russia ousts some US diplomatic staff

Moscow: Russia said Wednesday it was ordering US embassy staff who have been in Moscow for more than three years to fly home by Jan 31, a retaliatory move for what Moscow said was a US decision to limit the terms of Russian diplomats. The step, the latest in an escalating diplomatic row, comes after Russia's ambassador to the United States said last week that 27 Russian diplomats and their families were being expelled from the United States and would leave Jan 30.

30K in UK without power after storm

London: Some 30,000 people in the north of England and in Scotland have been without electricity for the better part of a week after a storm brought snow, ice and the most severe disruption to infrastructure in years, British officials said Wednesday. Storm Arwen delivered wind gusts of almost 100 miles per hour to northern and western parts of the UK Friday and over the weekend. The weather disrupted transportation and caused residential power outages, especially in rural and hard-to-reach areas.

NZ to send forces to Solomon Islands

Wellington: New Zealand will send up to 65 military and police personnel to the Solomon Islands in the coming days after rioting and looting broke out there last week over several issues, including concerns about the country's increasing links with China. New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said Wednesday she was "deeply concerned" by the civil unrest that unfolded in the capital, Honiara, and wanted to help restore peace and stability. The New Zealand deployment follows similar actions from Australia, Papua New Guinea and Fiji after the Solomon Islands government requested international help.

FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN



Fire burns along the lower sections of Pilot Mountain in North Carolina, USA

AP PHOTO

Unique effort reopens girls' schools in an Afghan province

ASSOCIATED PRESS

FOR WEEKS, GIRLS IN THE WESTERN PROVINCE OF HERAT HAVE BEEN BACK IN HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOMS — THE FRUIT OF A UNIQUE, CONCERTED EFFORT BY TEACHERS AND PARENTS

Herat, Dec 1: High school girls are sitting at home almost everywhere in Afghanistan, forbidden to attend class by the Taliban rulers. But there's one major exception.

For weeks, girls in the western province of Herat have been back in high school classrooms — the fruit of a unique, concerted effort by teachers and parents to persuade local Taliban administrators to allow them to reopen.

Taliban officials never formally approved the reopening after the lobbying campaign, but they also didn't prevent it either when teachers and parents started classes on their own in early October.

"Parents, students and teachers joined hand in hand to do this," said Mohammed Saber Meshal,



the head of the Herat teachers' union who helped organize the campaign. "This is the only place where community activists and teachers took the risk of staying and talking to the Taliban."

The success in Herat highlights a significant difference in the Taliban's current rule over Afghanistan from their previous

one in the late 1990s. This time, they appear to recognize they cannot be as ruthless in an Afghanistan that has changed dramatically in the past 20 years.

When the Taliban seized power in August, most schools were closed because of COVID-19. Under heavy international pressure, the Taliban soon reopened schools for girls in

Taliban officials never formally approved the reopening after the lobbying campaign, but they didn't prevent it either

grades 1-6, along with boys' schools at all levels. But they have not allowed girls in grades 7-12 to return, saying they must first ensure classes are held in an "Islamic manner." The Taliban also barred most women from government jobs, their largest place of employment.

In Herat province, however, teachers quickly began to organize.

The teachers kept pressing. About 40 female principals met with senior Taliban education of-

ficials in September to address their main concerns.

By October, the teachers felt they had the Taliban's tacit agreement not to stand in the way. Teachers began spreading the word on Facebook pages and messaging app channels that girls' high schools would reopen October 3. Parents created a telephone chain to pass along the news, and students told classmates.

eh Ismailzadeh, a 14-year-old in the ninth grade, said she cried with happiness at the news. "We had lost all hope that schools would reopen," she said.

On a recent day, girls in a 10th grade chemistry class took notes as a teacher explained the elements that make up water. Lines of younger students marched through the halls to the schoolyard.

business



It may be the time to resurrect the concept of a gold bank – a bank which will accept gold deposits that provides gold loans exclusively or predominantly

R GANDHI | EX-DEPUTY GOVERNOR, RBI

ADB SIGNS PACT FOR \$250MLN LOAN

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has signed a pact with the Government of India to provide a loan of \$250 million (about ₹1,872 crore) to support the country's National Industrial Corridor Development Program (NICDP). ADB said India has initiated significant reforms to increase the manufacturing sector's productivity and competitiveness



of the day quote

Digital Payments transactions have been steadily increasing since last few years. Over the past four years, digital payment transactions have grown manifold from 1,004 crore in FY2016-17 to 5,554 crore in FY2020-21

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR | MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND IT

We believe, we in the next few quarters will be able to not just expand revenue but increase more number of monetisation methods and subsequently increase contribution margins in due course

VIJAY SHEKHAR SHARMA | CHAIRMAN AND CEO, PAYTM

The company had to resort to non-production days in November 2021. We have been selling our entire production stock during the last few months and making all efforts to meet the market demand as much as possible

RAJESH GOEL | SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT, HONDA CARS INDIA LTD

SHORT TAKES

Cane arrear reaches ₹4,445 crore: Centre

New Delhi: Cane dues to be paid by sugar mills to farmers stood at ₹4,445 crore during the 2020-21 season (October-September), with maximum arrears in Uttar Pradesh, Parliament was informed Wednesday. During the 2020-21 season, a total of ₹2,804 crore was to be paid towards sugarcane price to the farmers. Out of which ₹88,359 crore has been paid and the balance ₹4,445 crore dues are pending, as per the data placed before Lok Sabha by Minister of State for Food Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti.

Popular plans \$100mn listing

New Delhi: Popular Vehicles & Services, India's biggest auto dealer, is planning a \$100 million listing next year, a source with direct knowledge of the matter said. Papers filed in August with India's markets regulator seeking approval for its listing show the dealer plans to raise \$20 million by issuing new shares. Those funds have been earmarked to acquire smaller cash-strapped dealers in India and expand Popular's repairs and services business, Naveen Philip, a shareholder and member of Popular's founding family, told agencies.

India-China trade deficit at \$30bn

New Delhi: Trade deficit between India and China stood at \$30.07 billion during April-September 2021, Parliament was informed Wednesday. India's exports to China during the April-September 2021 period was \$12.26 billion, while imports were aggregated at \$42.33 billion, according to data given by Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Anupriya Patel in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.

Royal Enfield ties up with Belstaff

Mumbai: Mid-sized motorcycle maker Royal Enfield Wednesday said it has joined hands with British brand Belstaff to market an exclusive range of apparel. Launched in 1924, Belstaff is one of the leading British Heritage brands, known worldwide for its high-performance outerwear and jackets. "As we celebrate our 120th anniversary this year, we have exciting plans to further take these experiences a notch above with a series of collaborations that resonate with our heritage and legacy," said a spokesperson from Royal Enfield.

Upstox allows IPO applications via WhatsApp

WITH THIS INTEGRATION, UPSTOX AIMS TO ACHIEVE A FIVE-FOLD GROWTH IN IPO APPLICATIONS

New Delhi, Dec 1: Online brokerage Upstox Wednesday said it will allow investors to invest in initial public offerings (IPOs) and open demat accounts through WhatsApp.

Also, the company aims to increase its customer base to 10 million by the end of FY2022 from 7 million currently, Upstox said in a statement. It has grown its customer base by 1 million in October 2021 alone.

Upstox provides end-to-end support for IPO applications via WhatsApp, empowering customers by easing the process of account opening, it said.

The key highlight of the latest feature is that all investors, whether

they are registered with Upstox or not, can now subscribe to any IPO



without moving out of the WhatsApp chat window at any point during the application journey. "With an aim to further strengthen our customer base in deep India and encourage more millennials to invest, we have integrated with WhatsApp, which is being widely used by users across the country," Upstox co-founder Shrini Viswanath said.

He further said the integration would serve as an enabler for novice investors and make investing an easy, accessible and effortless experience.

"With a huge uptick in IPOs and investors rushing to invest in IPOs, we see this as an opportunity to encourage more investors to open an account and invest through Upstox," he added.

SECOND HIGHEST SINCE ROLL OUT

Nov GST mop up at ₹1.31L cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 1: Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection in November grew 25 per cent to ₹1.31 lakh crore – second highest since its implementation – indicating economic recovery with normalisation of business activity and increased compliance, a finance ministry statement said Wednesday.

This is the fifth month in a row that the revenues from goods sold and services rendered was over ₹1 lakh crore.

The gross GST revenue collected in the month of November 2021 is ₹1,31,526 crore of which CGST is ₹23,978 crore, SGST is ₹31,127 crore, IGST is ₹66,815 crore (including ₹32,165 crore collected on import of goods) and Cess is ₹9,606 crore (including ₹653 crore collected on import of goods), the statement said. CGST refers to Central Goods and Services Tax, SGST (State Goods and Services Tax) and IGST (Integrated Goods and Services Tax).

"The GST revenues for November 2021 have been the second highest ever since introduction of GST, second only to that in April 2021, which related to year-end revenues and higher than last month's collection, which also included the impact of returns required to be filed quarterly. This is very much in line with the



trend in economic recovery," the ministry said.

The recent trend of high GST revenues has been a result of various policy and administrative measures that have been taken in the past to improve compliance. GST, which subsumed a host of indirect taxes like excise duty, service tax, VAT, was rolled out July 1, 2017.

"A large number of initiatives undertaken in the last one year like, enhancement of system capacity, nudging non-filers after last date of filing of returns, auto-population of returns, blocking of e-way bills and passing of input tax credit for non-filers has led to consistent improvement in the filing of returns over the last few months," the ministry added.

ICRA Chief Economist Aditi Nayyar said collections may dip in December 2021, as suggested by

The revenues for the month of Nov 2021, are 25 per cent higher than close to ₹1.05 lakh crore Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue in Nov 2020, and 27 per cent higher over Nov 2019 revenues

In Oct 2021, the revenues were at ₹1,30,127 crore, while in April 2021 it was the highest at ₹1,39,708 crore

The finance ministry Wednesday revised downwards the GST collection figures for April, May and June

We expect Central GST collections to rise to ₹5.8 trillion in FY2022, exceeding the FY2022 BE by ₹50,000 crore

ADITI NAYYAR | CHIEF ECONOMIST, ICRA

the deceleration in the daily average e-way bill generation in the first three weeks of November 2021.

"We expect Central GST collections to rise to ₹5.8 trillion in FY2022, exceeding the FY2022 BE by ₹50,000 crore," Nayyar added.

The finance ministry Wednesday revised downwards the GST collection figures for April, May and June. Earlier the figure for April was over ₹1.41 lakh crore, May ₹1.02 lakh crore and June ₹92,849 crore, respectively.

The revised numbers of current fiscal stands at April ₹1,39,708 crore, May at ₹97,821 crore, June (Rs 92,800 crore), July (over ₹1.16 lakh crore), August (over ₹1.12 lakh crore), September (over ₹1.17 lakh crore), October (over ₹1.30 lakh crore) and November (Rs 1.31 lakh crore).

10-MONTH HIGH

Factory growth rises on strong demand



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 1: India's manufacturing sector activities gained further strength in November, and witnessed the strongest increase in production and sales since February on improving market conditions, a monthly survey said Wednesday.

The seasonally adjusted IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), increased from 55.9 in October to 57.6 in November, signalling the strongest improvement in the health of the sector in ten months. Moreover, the headline figure was well above its long-run average of 53.6.

The November data pointed towards tentative signs of an improvement in hiring activity, following three successive months of job shedding.

The October PMI data pointed to an improvement in overall operating conditions for the fifth straight month. In PMI parlance, a print

above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

"The Indian manufacturing industry continued to expand in November, with growth gathering pace and forward-looking indices generally pointing to further improvements in the months to come," Pollyanna De Lima, Economics Associate Director at IHS Markit, said.

"For now, companies are absorbing most of the additional cost burdens and lifting output charges only moderately. Should raw material scarcity and shipping issues continue to feed through to purchasing prices, substantial increases in output charges could be seen, and demand resilience would be tested," the report said.

On the price front, the cost-inflationary pressures remain elevated. The rate of purchase price inflation was little changed from October's recent high, owing to raw material supply-demand mismatches and rising transportation costs.

Imports in April-November 2021 grew by 75.39 per cent to \$384.44 billion. Trade deficit stood at \$121.98 billion during the eight-month period of this fiscal. As per the data, the trade deficit in November more than doubled to \$23.27 billion as gold imports grew by about 8 per cent to \$4.22 billion.

The gap between imports and exports totalled \$10.19 billion during November 2020. Outward shipments of engineering goods, which accounted for 28.19 per cent of total exports in November, jumped about 37 per cent year-on-year to \$8 billion.

Exports of petroleum products soared 145.3 per cent on an annual basis to \$3.82 billion. However, the outbound shipments of gems and jewellery dipped by 11 per cent to \$2.4 billion during the month.

India's merchandise exports in April-November 2021 was \$262.46 billion, an increase of 50.71 per cent over \$174.15 billion in April-November 2020 and an increase of 24.29 per cent over \$211.17 billion in April-November 2019, the commerce ministry said.

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Exports surge 26.49% in Nov

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 1: India's merchandise exports in November rose by 26.49 per cent to \$29.88 billion on account of healthy growth in sectors such as engineering, petroleum, chemicals and marine products, according to provisional data released by the government Wednesday.

The exports stood at \$23.62 billion in November 2020. Imports in November were at \$53.15 billion, an increase of 57.18 per cent over \$33.81 billion in the same month of 2020, leaving a trade deficit of \$23.27 billion.

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States' debt-to-GDP ratio worryingly high

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 1: The combined debt-to-GDP ratio of states is expected to remain at 31 per cent by end-March 2022 which is worryingly higher than the target of 20 per cent to be achieved by 2022-23, according to a RBI report.

The Reserve Bank's annual publication titled 'State Finances: A Study of Budgets of 2021-22' further said as the impact of the second Covid-19 wave wanes, state governments need to take credible steps to address debt sustainability concerns.

"The combined debt to GDP ratio of States which stood at 31 per cent at end-March 2021 and is expected to remain at that level by end-March 2022, is worryingly higher than the target of 20 per cent to be achieved by 2022-23, as per the recommendations of the FRBM Review Committee," it said.

In view of the pandemic induced slowdown, in its projections, the 15th Finance Commission expects the debt-GDP ratio to peak at 33.3 per cent in 2022-23 (in view of the higher deficits in 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23), and gradually decline thereafter to reach 32.5 per cent by 2025-26.

The RBI report noted that the budgeted consolidated gross fiscal deficit (GFD) of 3.7 per cent of GDP for states for the year 2021-22 - lower than the 4 per cent level as recommended by the FC-XV (15th Finance Commission) - reflect the state governments' intent towards fiscal consolidation.

According to the report, improvements in the fiscal position of state governments will be contingent upon reforms in the power sector.

BIZ BUZZ

D'Signia showroom launched in Patia

Bhubaneswar: Senco Gold & Diamonds, one of the largest jewellery retail chains of India, launched their first premium luxury showroom D'Signia at Patia in City. This is company's second store in Bhubaneswar and eighth in the state. Actress Devika Arundhati Samal inaugurated the new store in the presence of Suvankar Sen, CEO, Senco Gold & Diamonds. To celebrate this grand opening the brand is offering a host of offers. Up to 25% off on making charges of gold jewellery, up to 100% off on making charges of diamond jewellery and attractive festive offers on platinum, silver and gossip collection to delight the customers.



TPCODL celebrates Quality Month in Nov

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: Reiterating its commitment to quality, TP Central Odisha Distribution Limited (TPCODL), a joint venture between Tata Power and Government of Odisha, observed the month of November as Quality Month with the intention to enhance level of quality awareness among the consumers and the employees.

The theme for this year's Quality Month, 'Sustainability: Improving our products, people and planet', emphasised on adoption of sustainable approach to meet overall needs. Multiple initiatives, including training programs by internal and external industry experts, quality awareness sessions, project presentations, Kaizen competitions etc, were conducted during the month for the employees to imbibe the culture of continuous improvement in them. About 26 innovative projects were



demonstrated during the opening and closing ceremonies of Quality Month celebration.

TPCODL has received tremendous success in the recently concluded Chapter Convention Quality Concepts (CCQC) organised by Quality Circle Forum of India (QCFI) at New Delhi. It bagged 6 awards in gold category out of 10 Quality Control Circle (QCC) projects.

"At TPCODL, quality is recognised as one of the most important pillars for business sustenance. As part of our vision, we aspire to provide reliable power supply and world class service to all our customers by ensuring the best quality in every aspect of our operations," said M Shenbagam, CEO, TPCODL, during the closing ceremony of Quality Month celebration.

HMSI unveils BigWing in Angul

Angul: Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India Pvt Ltd (HMSI) inaugurated a premium big bike business vertical - the Honda BigWing in Angul. It is located at Panchamahalia, Karadagadia, in Angul. Yadvinder Singh Guleria, director (sales & marketing) of HMSI said, "Our focus is on expansion of Honda BigWing (Honda's exclusive premium motorcycle network) to deliver a truly differentiated immersive experience closer to customer. Today, we are delighted to inaugurate BigWing in Angul. Through this new premium outlet, we aim to take Honda's fun motorcycles closer to customers in Angul and bring to them our mid-size range of premium motorcycles."



SEMICONDUCTOR SHORTAGE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 1: With semiconductor shortage continuing to impact production, top passenger vehicle makers Maruti Suzuki India and Hyundai Motor India Wednesday reported decline in wholesales in the domestic market in November 2021.

However, homegrown major Mahindra & Mahindra and Tata Motors along with Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) posted increase in their respective domestic passenger vehicles wholesales last month.

Maruti Suzuki India Ltd (MSIL) said its total domestic sales were down 18 per cent at 1,17,791 units last month as compared to 1,44,219 units in November 2020.

"The shortage of electronic com-

ponents had a minor impact on the production of vehicles during the month. The shortage primarily affected the production of vehicles sold in the domestic market. The company took all possible measures to minimise the impact," MSIL said in a statement.

Similarly, Hyundai Motor India Ltd said its domestic sales were down 24 per cent to 37,001 units, against 48,800 units in November 2020, the company added.

On the other hand, M&M said its domestic passenger vehicle sales were up 7 per cent at 19,458 units last month, compared to 18,212 units in November 2020.

"Our growth in SUVs continues with an 8 per cent increase in the month of November. The demand remains strong across our



product portfolio of SUVs, pickups, and small commercial vehicles," M&M Chief Executive Officer Automotive Division Veejay Nakra said.

He further said, "The issues

around semiconductor related parts continue to remain a challenge for the industry. We are monitoring the situation closely and taking appropriate steps."

Another homegrown major Tata

- Maruti Suzuki's total domestic sales were down 18%
- Hyundai Motor witnessed sales decline by 24%
- Honda Car India sales plummeted by 45.3%
- Tata Motors sales in the domestic market were up 38%
- Toyota Kirloskar Motor domestic wholesales increased by 53%

Motors said its passenger vehicle sales in the domestic market were up 38 per cent at 29,778 units in November, as compared to 21,641 units in the same month last year.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) reported that its domestic wholesales increased by 53 per cent to

13,003 units in November as against 8,508 units in the same month last year. Honda Cars India Ltd (HCIL) said its domestic sales were down at 5,457 units in November 2021 as compared to 9,990 units in the year-ago month.

Another automaker Nissan India reported domestic sales of 2,651 units as compared to 1,017 units in November 2020.

In the two-wheeler segment, TVS Motor Company said its domestic two-wheeler sales stood at 1,75,940 units in November 2021 compared to 2,47,789 units in the same month last year, a decline of 29 per cent.

Likewise, Bajaj Auto Ltd said its domestic sales last month fell 20 per cent to 1,58,755 units against 1,98,933 units in November last year.

COLTS ENTER SEMIFINALS

Sharda Nand's strike from penalty corner enough for India to set up last-four date with six-time champions Germany at FIH Men's Junior World Cup



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: Defending champions India beat European giants Belgium by a solitary goal to progress to the semifinals and keep alive their title hopes in the FIH Junior Men's Hockey World Cup at the Kalinga Stadium here Wednesday.

India, who beat Belgium 2-1 in the final en route to their title triumph in the last edition in Lucknow in 2016, continued their domination over the European side in junior hockey.

Sharda Nand Tiwari's penalty corner conversion in the 21st minute was enough for India to seal their place in the last four.

The match was a classic example of defensive class from both the sides but the Indians did just

enough to edge past their opponents. India will take on last edition's bronze medallist Germany in the semifinals Friday.

The Belgians started aggressively and created pressure on the Indian defence in the first few minutes. But the Indian backline produced good men-to-men marking and stayed calm under pressure to deny Belgium.

In the 13th minute Belgium had the first shy at the goal but Indian custodian Prasanth Chauhan was up to the task to deny Thibaut Stockbroeck from close range.

India's first scoring chance came just seconds from the first quarter through a creative Uttam Singh, but his effort was kept at bay by Belgium goalkeeper Boris Feldheim.

India kept growing in confidence as the match progressed

and six minutes into the second quarter, secured their first penalty corner, which was converted by Tiwari.

Tiwari was brilliantly set by vice-captain Sanjay Kumar's dummy and the dragflicker made no mistake in putting the ball into the net.

Two minutes later, Manjeet hit the side netting with a reverse hit. Belgium got a penalty corner in the 26th minute but Jeff de Winter's flick went wide as India went into half time leading by a slender 1-0 margin.

The Belgians came out attacking in the third quarter but failed to break the resolute and determined Indian defence. There were no clear cut chances for both the teams in the third quarter, but the Indians were guilty of hold-

ing on to the ball, resulting in less open chances.

The Belgians went all out in the fourth and final quarter and controlled the proceedings but the Indian defence did enough to thwart their opponents.

In the 50th minute, India's second goalkeeper Pawan made a brilliant diving save to his right to keep Roman Duvkot's attempt away from the goal.

Trailing, Belgium continued to press hard and secured a penalty corner in the 52nd minute, which was saved by the Indian defence.

Three minutes from the final hooter, Belgium withdrew their goalkeeper for an extra player and also secured a penalty corner just two minutes from whistle, but once again, Pawan made a fine save to deny De Winter.

Germany, Argentina, France through



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Dec 1: Six-time champions Germany and Argentina earned hard-fought wins over Spain and Netherlands respectively while France cruised past Malaysia to enter the semifinals of the FIH Junior Men's Hockey World Cup here Wednesday.

In the first quarterfinal of the day, Germany eked out a narrow 3-1 win over Spain in shoot-out after both the teams were locked at 2-2 in regulation time, before Argentina beat Netherlands 2-1. In the third quarterfinal, the tournament's surprise package France beat Malaysia 4-0.

Germany took the lead from a penalty stroke through Christopher Kutter in the fifth minute but the lead was shortlived as Ignacio Abajo equalised for Spain from a penalty corner six minutes later.

After two barren quarters, it was Spain who shocked the

Germans in the 59th minute when Eduard de Ignacio-Simo scored a fine field goal to give his side the lead.

There was more drama in store as just at the stroke of the hooter, Germany secured a penalty corner and Masi Pfandt stepped up to take the match into shoot-out. In the shoot-out, Paul Smith, Michel Struthoff and Hannes Muller found the back of the net, while Matteo Poljaric missed.

Spain were awful from the one-on-one situation as Abajo, Guilemo Fortuno and de Ignacio-Simo missed while only Gerard Clapes scored.

Germany are the most successful team in the history of the Junior World Cup having won the tournament six times. The Germans won consecutive titles in 2009 and 2013 in New Delhi, which was their last crown. They secured the bronze medal in the last edition of the tournament in 2016 in Lucknow.

In the second last-eight round

match, it took 24 minutes to break the deadlock when Argentina, the 2005 champions, surged ahead through Joaquin Kruger's field strike.

But Netherlands responded in no time when Miles Bukkens converted a penalty corner in the very next minute to go into half time locked at 1-1. The game eventually turned out to be a heartbreak for Netherlands as an own goal in the 59th minute put paid to their hopes.

Sheldon Schouten was at the wrong end of the proceedings when he deflected in Floris Middendorp's cross from the left flank.

The match between France and Malaysia turned out to be a one-sided affair as the Europeans converted four penalty corners through skipper Timothee Clement (14th, 24th, 60th minutes), who scored a hat-trick and Mathis Clement (31st) to seal their place in the last four round, where they will face Argentina Friday.



World Tour Finals: Sindhu, Srikanth sail on

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bali, Dec 1: Top Indian shuttlers PV Sindhu and Kidambi Srikanth registered straight-game victories to make impressive starts to their respective women's and men's singles campaigns at the season-ending BWF World Tour Finals here Wednesday.

Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medallist, saw off Denmark's Line Christophersen 21-14, 21-16 in a lop-sided Group A contest after former world number 1 Srikanth beat France's Toma Junior Popov 21-14, 21-16 in 42 minutes in his opening match of group B.

The reigning World Champion, the only Indian to win the year-ending tournament in 2018, will meet Germany's Yvonne Li next.

Srikanth, who had reached the



knockout stage of the 2014 edition, will next face Thailand's three-time junior world champion Kunlavut Vitidsarn.

The women's doubles pair of Ashwini Ponnappa and N Sikki Reddy, however, lost 14-21, 18-21 to second-seeded Japanese combination of Nami Matsuyama and Chiharu Shida in their opening group B match.

Sindhu looked in great control as she opened up a 5-2 lead and though Line made it 7-6, the Indian quickly reeled off 10 straight points to march to 16-8 and seal the opening game comfortably.

After the change of sides, Line put up a slightly better show as she led briefly at 4-2 before Sindhu grabbed a slender 11-10 advantage at the interval. After resumption, Sindhu zoomed to 17-13, and soon,

shut the door on her opponent.

Srikanth also displayed a compact game. He was alert and agile on the court and found points with his attacks against the world number 33 Frenchman. The opening game was a tight affair in the initial part with the duo fighting tooth and nail. Srikanth managed to eke out a slender 11-9 lead at the break and then came out with five straight points to move ahead to 16-10 and soon closed out the game.

In the second game, Srikanth lagged 1-4 initially but he soon recovered to once again grab a two-point advantage at the interval.

Just like the first game, he made his way to a healthy 14-9 lead before moving to 19-14. A long shot from his opponent gave Srikanth four match points and he sealed it with some superb net play.

Germans beat Brits, in Davis Cup semis

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Innsbruck, Dec 1: Germany came from behind to upset Britain in the Davis Cup quarterfinals after Kevin Krawietz and Tim Pütz won the decisive doubles match. The German pair defeated British teammates Joe Salisbury and Neal Skupski 7-6(12-10), 7-6(7-5) after the best-of-three tie was level following the two singles.

Krawietz and Pütz saved four set points in the tiebreaker before taking the opening set and won the second tiebreaker after winning seven straight points from 5-0 down.

Daniel Evans had given Britain the lead by beating Peter Gojowczyk 6-2, 6-1, but Jan-Lennard Struff pulled Germany even with the 10-time champion by beating Cameron Norrie 7-6(8-6), 3-6, 6-2.

Germany has won the Davis Cup three times but not since 1993. In its first semifinal since 2007, Germany will meet either Sweden or the team from Russia Saturday. Croatia will face either Serbia or Kazakhstan in the other semifinal.

Britain was seeking its fourth semifinal berth in the last six editions of the tournament. It last won the event in 2015, and it had beaten Germany 2-0 when the teams

also met in the quarterfinal two years ago.

The 12th-ranked Norrie failed to serve out the opening set against Struff when leading 6-5, and the Briton missed two set points in the tiebreaker. One break halfway through the set was enough for Norrie to take the second, but the 51st-ranked Struff won the third by taking four games in a row.

In the first singles match, Evans built a quick 4-0 lead and didn't face a break point all day. Gojowczyk earned only two points on Evans' serve in the second set and double-faulted for the fourth time on match point.

Gojowczyk was a surprise pick by Germany captain Michael Kohlmann. The 86th-ranked player replaced Dominik Koepfer, who is ranked 32 places higher and played in the two group matchups Germany won against Austria and Serbia.

Gojowczyk had never played Evans in an ATP level match but beat the Briton twice in lower-ranked tournaments, in 2013 and 2016.

No spectators were allowed in the OlympiaWorld arena amid a nationwide lockdown in Austria to fight the spreading of the coronavirus. Madrid will host the rest of the Davis Cup Finals.



Kevin Krawietz (L) and Tim Pütz during their Davis Cup match against Britain

Jack Leach takes cues from Jadeja clippings

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Brisbane, Dec 1: England spinner Jack Leach on Wednesday said he has been watching clippings of India's spin bowling all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja as part of his preparation for the upcoming Ashes contests against Australia.

He was inspired by the Jadeja after the Indian team's exploits during a Test series in Australia last summer. "I don't think (Jadeja) did too much different to what he does in India," said Leach, who

has played 16 Tests, taking 62 wickets, but none in Australia. "That's another nice thing to see. He's taken what he does, is doing pretty similar things and having success."

Leach also said that Australian counterpart Nathan Lyon was "impressive" and he had been observing how he bowls in the conditions here. "For years I've watched Nathan Lyon and he's very impressive," said Leach, who played a part at Leeds in 2019 as England snatched victory from Australia.

"Just how strong his stock ball is and on wickets that don't necessarily offer a lot spin wise he's found ways to extract extra bounce, dip, and all the other things," he told reporters. "They're the kind of things that I've been trying to add in but still sticking to my strengths as well."

Star all-rounder Ben Stokes has declared himself "fit and hungry" for the marquee assignment after a long break from the game, and Leach believed it should help the team perform better.

The Ashes starts at the Gabba in Brisbane, December 8.

PBKS unhappy with Rahul row



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 1: IPL franchise Punjab Kings is unhappy about KL Rahul leaving the team despite getting "all the freedom" as captain over the past two seasons and says it would be unethical if he has already been approached by a new franchise.

Rahul had replaced R Ashwin as captain ahead of the 2020 sea-

son and though he did excel with the bat, he failed to take the team to play-offs. He is now linked to new franchise Lucknow and it has been reported that he is set to lead the team owned by the RPSG Group.

"We wanted to retain Rahul but he wanted to go back into the auction. If he has been approached by another franchise before that, it would be unethical," Punjab