



**GREAT EXPECTATIONS**  
Mumbai-based Odia actor Kavya Keeran looks forward to the release of her content-driven Hindi films and web series

LEISURE P2



**RESCUE WORK RESUMES**  
With improvement in weather conditions, rescuers resumed search after the highest volcano on Java island killed 15 people

INTERNATIONAL P10



**INDIA SEAL SERIES**  
India secured the two-match series 1-0 after handing New Zealand a 372-run loss in the second Test

SPORTS P12

**HONOUR KILLING**  
**Mom, bro chop off pregnant woman's head**

**Aurangabad, Dec 6:** In a grisly instance of "honour killing", a 18-year-old youth, and his 40-year-old mother, were arrested in Maharashtra's Aurangabad after he allegedly chopped off his pregnant sister's head with a sickle, the duo clicked selfies with the corpse and shared them with friends, officials said on Monday.

The incident happened Sunday afternoon in Goygaon village in Vaijapur tehsil of Aurangabad, said a member of the probe team, Police Patil Suryakant R. Mote. Soon after committing the ghastly murder, accused Sanket S. Mote, 18, along with his mother Shobha S. Mote, 40, calmly went to the police station and gave themselves up, and even confessed to their crime, that has left the state shaken.

PP Mote said primary investigations point to a case of "honour killing" as the accused and his mother were enraged after his daughter Kishori, alias Kirti, 19, and her boyfriend Ajay S Thore, both living in the same village, had eloped June 21.

After getting married six months ago at Alandi, Pune, the young couple returned to the village a few days ago. The girl's family was deadly against the relationship and the subsequent wedlock as Thore, who is a farmer, allegedly had a dubious reputation. Upon learning of their return, the mother-son duo went to meet Kirti - who was around 3 months pregnant - at her husband's home, spoke cordially and hinted at a rapprochement, following which Kirti went to the kitchen to prepare tea and snacks for them.

With a macabre plan in their mind, the mother-son followed her into the kitchen, where Shobha Mote grabbed her daughter's legs and pinned her down, while son Sanket whipped out a sickle and beheaded her. Later, the mother-son clicked selfies which they sent to friends and others, before throwing Kirti's head outside the house. From there, they went to the police station, surrendered themselves and admitted to the crime, said PP Mote.

AGENCIES

**900 STAFF TERMINATED OVER ZOOM CALL**  
**Washington:** The chief executive of a US-based digital mortgage lending company fired 900 people on a Zoom call ahead of the holiday season, it has been reported. About 15 per cent of the company's employees in the US and India were abruptly laid off as part of the cost-cutting exercise, Vishal Garg, the head of Better.com, can be heard saying in the video call that reportedly took place last week. A recording of the call, which has not been verified, was widely shared on YouTube. "If you're on this call, you are part of the unlucky group that is being laid off. Your employment here is terminated, effective immediately," Garg said.

**ECONOMY SHOWS STRONG SIGNS OF RECOVERY**  
**New Delhi:** Indian economy is showing strong signs of recovery from the devastation caused by the pandemic, with an upswing being reported in 19 out of the 22 economic indicators as compared to the pre-Covid levels. High-frequency indicators (HFIs) are being monitored to track the progress of economic recovery in India since the first COVID-19 case was reported in the country in January 2020. The latest information indicates that among 22 HFIs, full recovery has been achieved in respect of 19 HFIs.

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**CATTLE TRAFFICKING**  
Cattle being pulled across an overflowing Saveri river near Motu in Malkangiri district for their eventual handover to a slaughter house in Andhra Pradesh

**Farmer ends life as Jawad razes crops**

**POST NEWS NETWORK**  
**Patrapur, Dec 6:** A 57-year-old sharecropper was shattered as his crops were damaged by unseasonal rain triggered by cyclonic storm 'Jawad'. Kailash Sabar of Uluma village of Turubudi panchayat under Patrapur block in Ganjam district committed suicide by consuming pesticide, Sunday afternoon.

Kailash was the sole breadwinner of his family. He had cultivated paddy, tomato, brinjal and a few other vegetables on three acres owned by T Nameswar Patra. Unfortunately, he suffered crop losses owing to incessant rainfall triggered by the cyclone.

His family said, the sharecropper had gone to see the crops earlier in the day after rain lashed the region. He was very depressed over the extent of damages caused to his crops and decided to take the extreme step and ended life.

"My husband had gone to Turubudi market Sunday morning to sell vegetables. After returning home, he took the extreme step. Perhaps he had purchased a pesticide bottle from the market and later consumed it. We came to learn about it when he started vomiting in the afternoon," wife of the sharecropper Padma Sabar stated. Family members of Kailash rushed him to Patrapur community health centre (CHC) for treatment. However, doctors at the government-run health facility pronounced him as 'dead' about half an hour later.

Kailash had cultivated paddy exclusively on two acres of the three-acre farmland. He had availed a loan from a private money-lender. After the crops got spoiled, the sharecropper got upset.

Jarada police registered a case in this connection and launched a probe into the incident which is underway, an official informed.

**Centre says 'sorry'**

**New Delhi, Dec 6:** Expressing regret over the Nagaland firing incident, Home Minister Amit Shah Monday said a probe by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) will be completed within a month and asserted that all agencies must ensure such happenings do not recur while taking action against insurgents.

In a statement in Lok Sabha, he said the government is keeping a close watch on the evolving situation and necessary measures are being taken to ensure peace and tranquility in the region. The state authorities, as a precautionary measure, have imposed prohibitory orders in the affected areas, he informed the House.

Shah offered deepest condolences to the families of those killed in the case of mistaken identity December 4 and subsequent episodes. "The Government of India sincerely regrets this unfortunate incident in Nagaland and offers



Home Minister Amit Shah makes a statement in the Lok Sabha on Nagaland killings. Shah announced formation of an SIT to probe the killings

its deepest condolences to the families of those who have lost their lives," the home minister said. Security forces opened fire on civilians killing 14 and injuring 11 more in Nagaland's Mon district in three consecutive episodes, the first of which was a case of mistaken identity, police said on Sunday. One soldier also died in rioting which followed.

Narrating the sequence of events, Shah said the Army received information on the movement of insurgents in Nagaland's Mon and '21 Para Commando' unit laid an ambush. A vehicle was signalled to stop but it tried to speed away. Suspecting the presence of insurgents in the vehicle, the security personnel

opened fire, he said. Six out of eight occupants of the vehicle died in the firing by security forces, Shah said, adding that later; it was found to be "a case of mistaken identity". Two persons who sustained injuries were evacuated to the medical facilities by the Army personnel.

He said local people, on getting news of the firing, attacked the troops and one soldier was killed in the violence while several others were injured. Shah said that in self-defence and to disperse the crowd, the troops had to open fire in which seven more civilians were killed. He said that Sunday evening, an agitated crowd targeted Assam Rifles company operating base and forces had to open fire in which one civilian was killed.

**STALEMATE FOR 5TH DAY RUNNING**  
**MAMITA LOGJAM CRIPPLES HOUSE**

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 6:** Pandemonium continued to prevail in the State Assembly for the fifth consecutive day Monday as opposition BJP and Congress created an uproar in the house over the Mamita Meher murder case. On the other hand, the ruling BJD created a ruckus in the house raising slogans against the Centre's refusal to recognize Paika Rebellion-1817 as India's first war of Independence.

The opposition members continued their protest demanding dismissal and arrest of Minister of State for Home Dibya Shankar Mishra for his alleged involvement in the Mamita murder case.

While the Congress demanded a court-monitored SIT probe into the incident, the BJP insisted on a CBI inquiry into the murder case.

As soon as the house assembled for the day, Congress members carrying posters climbed to the Speaker's podium and surrounded it from both sides and behind. The BJP members also stormed into the well and shouted slogans demanding a CBI probe and dismissal of minister Mishra.

At the same time, the BJD members wearing masks of freedom fighter Jayee Rajguru protested the Centre's apathy in not according the first war of independence tag to the 1817 Paik Rebellion.

As this situation continued, Speaker Patro adjourned the house till 4 pm. Then BJP members marched to the PMG office and posted a letter to the Chief Minister urging the latter to attend the Assembly. Comparing the Anjana Mishra gang rape case with Mamita case, the letter said, Patnaik, then a Union Minister, had alleged that the law and order situation in the state had collapsed and women in the state were not safe during the rule of JB Patnaik and demanded the resignation of JB.

However, now in Mamita Meher murder case, the Chief Minister is following a double standard. In the post-lunch session, when the opposition continued their protest, the Speaker called an all-party meeting. But, the meeting failed to resolve the logjam.

**India, Russia ink AK-203 rifle deal**

**New Delhi, Dec 6:** India and Russia Monday inked an agreement for joint production of over six lakh AK-203 assault rifles at a manufacturing facility in Uttar Pradesh's Amethi besides firming up another pact on military cooperation for 10 years.

The rifles will be manufactured for the Indian armed forces at a cost of around ₹5,000 crore. The agreements were signed at the 20th meeting of the India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Military and Military-Technical Cooperation (IRIGC-M&MTC).

The meeting, co-chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and his Russian counterpart Gen Sergey Shoigu, also discussed ways to further boost strategic cooperation including ramping up of joint production of military equipment.

The two sides also inked a pact on amending the agreement on cooperation in the field of manufacturing of the Kalashnikov series of small arms that was originally sealed in February 2019. Another agreement was signed on the protocol of the 20th IRIGC-M&MTC, officials said.

The most important of the four agreements was the pact on manufacturing of 6,01,427 AK-203 assault rifles (7.63X39mm) through an Indo-Russia Rifles Private Limited (IRPL). The 10 year pact on military cooperation is a renewal of an existing framework.

Singh termed Russia as India's long-standing special and privileged strategic partner, and said that the relations were "time-tested" and based on common interests in multilateralism, global peace and prosperity, mutual understanding and trust.

**IRREGULAR by MANJUL**

This is how he walks usually, sir. He's from one of those insurgency-infested states!

**MARKET WATCH**

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	56747.14	↓ 949.32
NIFTY	16912.30	↓ 284.40
DOLLAR	75.33	↑ ₹0.10
EURO	85.05	↓ ₹0.05
GOLD	₹47,879	↓ ₹24
SILVER	₹61,136	↓ ₹380

**WEATHER**

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	26.8°C	26.8°C
TEMP MIN	20.4°C	19.5°C
Humidity	96%	95%
Rainfall	13.6mm	6mm

Forecast: Light rain likely

**Court sentences ousted leader Suu Kyi to 4 years**

**Bangkok, Dec 6:** A special court in Myanmar's capital sentenced the country's ousted leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, to four years in prison Monday after finding her guilty of incitement and violating coronavirus restrictions, a legal official said.

The sentencing was the first in a series of cases in which the 76-year-old Nobel laureate is being prosecuted since the army seized power February 1, preventing her National League for Democracy party from starting a second five-year term in office. The ousted leader faces verdicts on other charges as early as next week.

If found guilty in all the cases she faces, she could be sentenced to more than 100 years in prison. The court on Monday did not make clear whether Suu Kyi would be sent to prison for the two convictions or placed under house arrest, the legal official said. In her long struggle for democracy, she has served 15 years of house arrest starting in 1989.

The official also said that Suu Kyi would be credited with 10 months for time already served in detention on the incitement case, leaving her with one year and two months to serve on that charge. There was no similar reduction on the charge of violating coronavirus restrictions.

The convictions were met quickly with severe criticism. Yanghee Lee, the former UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Myanmar, described the charges as well as the verdict as "bogus", declaring that any trial held in the country is unfair as the judiciary is subservient to the military-installed government.

Rights groups also deplored the verdicts, with Amnesty International calling them "the latest example of the military's determination to eliminate all opposition and suffocate freedoms in Myanmar."

China, a neighbour which has maintained friendly ties with Myanmar's military leaders, declined to criticise the verdict against Suu Kyi. Beijing hopes "all parties in Myanmar will bear in mind the long-term interests of the country, narrow differences and carry on the hard-won democratic transition process."

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian told reporters at a daily briefing Monday.



# leisure



## KYLIE, TRAVIS SCOTT ARE STILL A COUPLE: KHLOE

Reality TV personality Khloe Kardashian has put rumours about make-up mogul Kylie Jenner and rapper Travis Scott (II)'s split to rest. Khloe confirmed that her younger sister and the rapper are a couple despite *W Magazine's* claims about their separation, reports *aceshowbiz.com*.

## HOLLAND TO PLAY LEGENDARY ACTOR FRED ASTAIRE IN UPCOMING BIOPIC

*Spider-Man* star Tom Holland will portray legendary actor, dancer and singer Fred Astaire in an upcoming biopic for Sony. According to sources, deals for the project are still being finalised, reports *deadline.com*. Astaire's career spanned 76 years before his death in 1987 from pneumonia.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Today, you are raring to go. It's best you put that adrenaline to good use. This is the time to WORK and not plan. It's a day you can lift mountains and cross the seas. You can party hard later, says Ganesha.

**TAURUS**  
The three Es will rule your mood throughout the day: energy, exuberance and excitement. Such enthusiasm is always contagious and near and dear ones will be charmed by it. Things will get better as the day progresses. Take a break from work to relax and recharge if you feel weary, says Ganesha.

**GEMINI**  
You will feel that your personal life is much more important than your professional needs today. Therefore you will concentrate more on your family members and their needs. It is a day filled with joy and happiness, says Ganesha.

**CANCER**  
There is a strong possibility that you will reach an important milestone in your life today, says Ganesha. Your emotional health is important for your physical well-being. How about spending some good time with like-minded people who can light up your mood?

**LEO**  
There's more to glittering gold than meets the eye, says Ganesha. But today, you can be rest assured that monetary problems, which were troubling you for so long, will finally be solved as you make money from various sources later in the day. Still, this does not mean you incur avoidable expenses. Ganesha foresees you generating wonderful results at the workplace towards the end of the day.

**VIRGO**  
Ganesha predicts that your leadership qualities may come to the fore today, and you may control the work agenda. You may go window-shopping in the afternoon, checking out on gifts that you want to give to your beloved.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesha says that officials and colleagues will be very impressed with your working capacity and your skills and you will do your work satisfactorily with your never give up ability and your intelligence. You will be able to meet and get along with unknown people and circumstances. Around evening you may get impatient and edgy.

**SCORPIO**  
A systematic organiser and a perfect planner, that's what you are, when it comes to work. According to Ganesha, this attitude of yours would help you develop fondness towards your work. You may even have the knack of solving problems and hurdles in the professional field.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Ganesha sees you being the good Samaritan, heralding better things for a brighter future. Household affairs will remain quiet and sublime. At work, however, expect smoother sailing in the latter part of the day.

**CAPRICORN**  
If you do something, you put your heart and soul into it. Such dedication gets you the best. You tend to exert your energies though, says Ganesha, so you will need to learn the art of delegation. It will not only take load off your shoulders but also enhance the quality of final output.

**AQUARIUS**  
Your curiosity will work wonders for you today. You have spent a lot of time and energy for planning your future, be it a business venture or higher studies, and now you will start executing those plans, foresees Ganesha. Keep working hard, you will surely get the rewards for your efforts.

**PISCES**  
You will be ready to lay down your life for your near and dear ones today. Even if you don't do anything so melodramatic, you will end up sacrificing your comfort to benefit someone close to you. It is best to postpone important decisions for a day, or three.

## Padmini takes trip down memory lane

**Mumbai:** The new version of the iconic song *Yeh Galiyan Yeh Chaubara* from *Prem Rog*, sung by veteran actress Padmini Kolhapure, has been released by Dhamaka Records and Saregama.

The song features Aimee Misobbah and Amaira Bhatia. Padmini Kolhapure, who featured in the original track, says, "While working on this song, it took me back to the memories of shooting the song back in the day. It makes me so happy to feel that zest again and I'm elated to be able to recreate the iconic song once again."

Padmini's son, Priyaank Sharma, and Paras Mehta are the brains behind Dhamaka Records.

Talking about the idea behind the recreated track, Priyaank said, "I wanted to recreate this song even before we started the label. This has been my mother's most special song for me and to get a chance to recreate it and release it on our label is more than special."

Paras added, "The iconic song and the legendary Padmini is a win-win combo and makes it the perfect anthem for this wedding season."



KatVic Wedding

## Vicky's gesture for paparazzi wins hearts

**Mumbai:** Amid the hullabaloo of his wedding with Katrina Kaif, Vicky Kaushal's sweet gesture for the paparazzi has won the Internet. The actor sent out food packets prepared by his chef for the media persons stationed outside his house.

Paparazzi account *Viral Bhayani* shared a video of the food that was neatly packed in containers. The wedding festivities began last night with a function at Vicky's home for which Katrina and her mom reached Vicky's place.

Katrina was dressed in a white saree for the function. The car that Vicky earlier put at his mother-in-law's disposal was seen with Sham Kaushal as he stepped out for some work in Mumbai's Lokhandwala area.

Wedding bells will soon be ringing for Vicky Kaushal and Katrina Kaif as the two reached the venue Monday evening. The wedding will take place at the plush heritage property of Six Senses Fort Barwara Hotel with 120 guests attending the wedding, all of whom will be required to undergo mandatory RT-PCR tests.

## Kavya Keeran's got her hands full

**Bhubaneswar:** Mumbai-based Odia actor Kavya Keeran, who made her debut in Odia film industry with horror movie *Kaunri Kanya*, has a number of films lined up for release. "I am looking forward to the release of a couple of interesting content driven projects. My Odia film *Bhoka*

will soon be screened in various festivals. I am doing Krishna Reddy's bilingual *Devi* (Hindi and Odia) and also shooting *Lahora*, a Hindi mythological web-series, in Kashmir. This apart, I am doing a short film *Thirteen* and web-series titled *Expose*."

Kavya is busy shooting Odia romantic flick *To Na Ra Mane Han* where she shares screen space with Sambit Acharya and Riya Dey. Directed by Sudhanshu Mohan Sahoo and produced by Amulya Kumar Das and Brundaban Guru under the banner of Joker Plus Entertainment, the movie also features Mahasweta Ray, Pradyumna Lenka, Pintu Nanda, Asit Pati and Soma Bhowmik. Talking about the plot, the actress says, "This is a soft triangular love story. The hero here is seen confused between love and infatuation. But he finds love in the climax."

For the unversed, Kavya appeared in Odia movies like *Rahasya*, *Raghu Sardar* and *Khusi*. The last one fetched her a state award. Besides, she teamed up with renowned singer Sukhwinder Singh for a musical *Nartakee*. Earlier, she was part of Hindi films *Rang-E-Ishq* (2015) and *Ramratna* (2017). She also essayed important roles in web series *3G*, *72 Hours*, and Rajiv Walia's documentary song *Betiyan*.

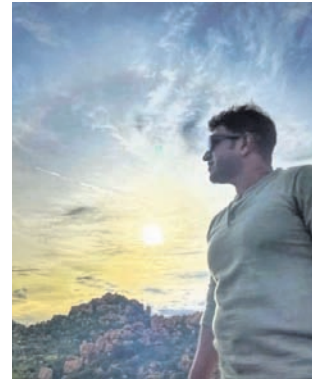


### FOND MEMORIES

## Puneeth's nature docu teaser wows viewers

**Bangalore:** The teaser of late Kannada star Puneeth Rajkumar's dream project - nature documentary *Gandhada Gudi* - was released Monday to wide acclaim and appreciation from all corners.

The documentary film is slated to be released in theatres in 2022. The teaser of 1 minute and 20 seconds reflects technical finesse and breathtaking shots and promises a wonderful experience. The project has taken one year to shoot. Puneeth has acted without make up and had wished to appear before audiences naturally. The documentary takes a journey through the state's wildlife, deep jungles, underwater habitat and wonderful beaches.



*Gandhada Gudi* director Amoghavarsha JS, a well-known wildlife filmmaker of Wild Karnataka nature documentary,

explained it is not a small project. "Importantly, we didn't have control over the situation while shooting amid jungles and wildlife. Being a huge star Puneeth Rajkumar remained a simpler person than a common man," he explained.

Puneeth's brother, senior actor Shivarajkumar said that it is an important subject.

"Appu (Puneeth) acted as a common man without bothering about stardom. It's about nature. The title of movie *Gandhada Gudi* is named after our father's (Kannada film industry legend Rajkumar) movie which brings beautiful memories of Nature save floods, natural calamities," he stated.

### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

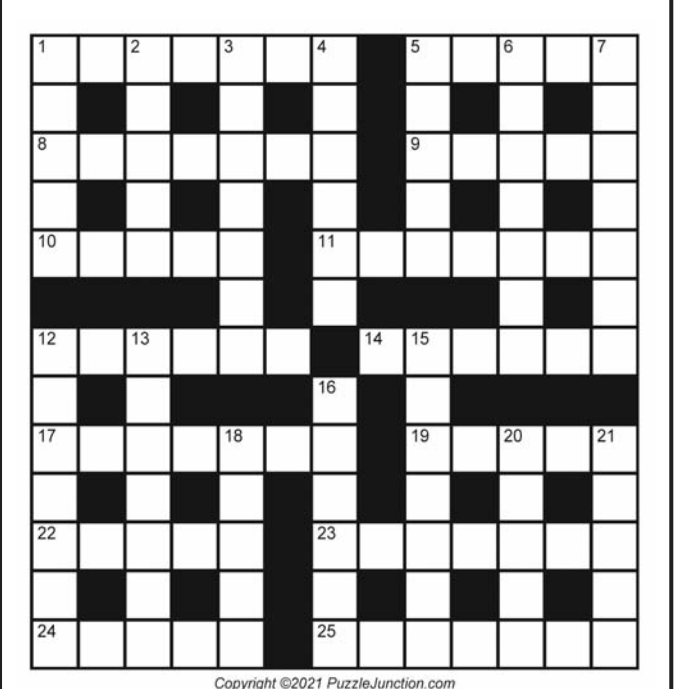


### BREVITY



### FUN post

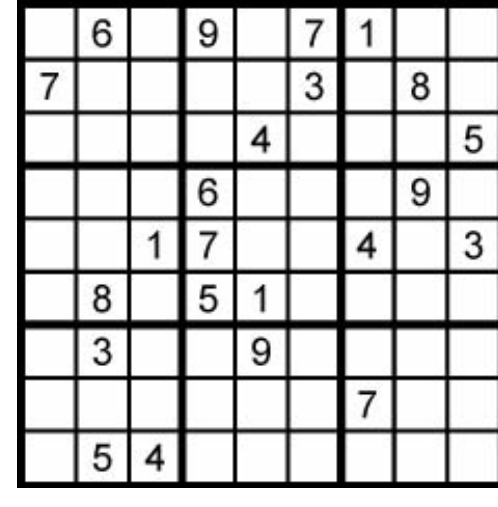
### CROSSWORD



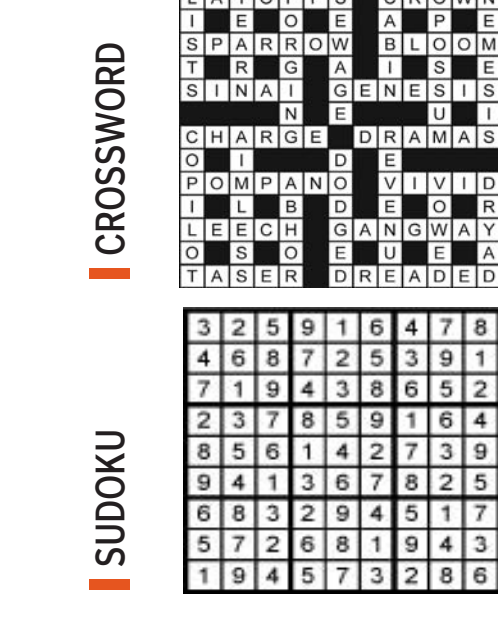
- Across**
- 1 Small in range or scope
  - 5 Practical joker (3-2)
  - 8 Garnish
  - 9 Lay to rest
  - 10 Come from behind
  - 11 Dress material
  - 12 Cane reed
  - 14 Throwing competition
  - 17 Nonanalytic (1,6)
  - 19 Strangely
  - 22 Strong espresso coffee
  - 23 Country house
  - 24 Marsh plant
  - 25 Avoiding detection
  - Down**
  - 1 Once a colony in Hawaii
  - 2 Fable finale
  - 3 Hunt cry (5-2)
  - 4 Plant disease (3-3)
  - 5 Adhere
  - 6 Immense
  - 7 Maybe
  - 12 British rock group
  - 13 Deserved
  - 15 Sequester
  - 16 Big top venue
  - 18 Rotund
  - 20 Inhabit
  - 21 Spring chicken

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS



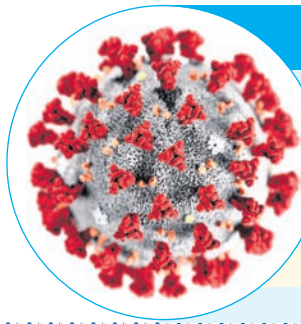
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



## BARABATI RENOVATION

Hyacinth being removed from a water body as part of Barabati Fort renovation project in Cuttack, Monday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	26,63,07,995	23,99,13,580	52,74,095
India	3,46,41,561	3,40,69,608	4,73,537
Odisha	10,50,354	10,39,921	8,423

## Anganwadi workers up in arms for wage hike

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Dec 6: Thousands of Anganwadi workers staged a demonstration in Bhubaneswar Monday over various demands, including wage hike.

The demonstrators were led by the All Odisha Anganwadi Ladies Workers' Association, which is under the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh.

Shouting slogans against the government, the protesters staged a sit-in at the Lower PMG square, which is near the Assembly where the winter session is going on.

The agitators have a 13-point demand, including recognition as government employees, raising the monthly salary to ₹21,000 for them and ₹10,500 for helpers.

They also sought the benefits of the Employee Provident Fund and the Employees' State Insurance.

"The government had earlier met only one demand - raising the retirement age to 62," a protester said. They threatened to intensify the agitation if the demands were not met.

## ON WARPATH



Thousands of members affiliated to 'All Odisha Anganwadi Ladies Workers' Association' stage a sit-in at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar, Monday, to press for fulfillment of their 13-point charter of demands

## Ex-MLA Prafulla Majhi expelled from Cong

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 6: Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) Monday expelled former Talasara MLA Prafulla Majhi from the party.

OPCC Media Coordinator Deepak Mohapatra said Majhi was expelled from the party for indiscipline and anti-party activities.

Majhi was elected to the Assembly from Talasara constituency on Congress ticket first in a byelection in 2006 and then in 2009 and 2014. He, however, lost the election to BJP candidate Bhavani Shankar Bhoi in 2019 election.

## PSMT scholarship to 1k students

Bhubaneswar: The School and Mass Education department Monday awarded ₹10,000 each to 1,000 meritorious students of Class XII under Pathani Samanta Mathematics Talent (PSMT) Scholarship for 2020-21 and 2021-22. The scholarship is awarded to the students who excel in matriculation exams in general and in mathematics in particular. Of the top 2,000 students who excelled in matriculation exams, 1,024 had applied online through the State Scholarship Portal <https://scholarship.odisha.gov.in>.

## Omicron patients recover within three days: Study

Patients hospitalised with Omicron in South Africa show less dependence on oxygen, and early recovery, according to a new report.

The report, which analysed symptoms and severity of patients with Omicron from Tshwane - an epicentre of the outbreak - also showed a marked difference in patient condition from that of previous waves seen in the two years of pandemic.



Between November 14 and 29, a sharp rise was observed in admissions at the Steve Biko Academic and Tshwane District Hospitals (SBAH/TDH) Complex. Of the 166 new admissions, 42 patients are currently in the Covid wards. And most patients had other medical, surgical or obstetric reason, and SARS-CoV-2 has been an incidental finding in them.

"The main observation that we have made over the last two weeks is that the majority of patients in the Covid wards have not been oxygen dependent," according to Fared Abdullah, the Director of the Office of AIDS and TB Research at the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC).

"Majority of the hospital admissions are for diagnoses unrelated to Covid-19. The SARS-CoV-2 positivity is an incidental finding in these patients and is largely driven by hospital policy requiring testing of all patients requiring admission to the hospital," he added.

Of the 42 patients in the ward, 29 (70 per cent) were not oxygen dependent and the "patients were saturating well on room air and did not present with any respiratory symptoms".

"This is a picture that has not been seen in previous waves. The numbers of patients in high care on double oxygen, High Flow Nasal

# Centre damaged Odia dignity: BJD

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Dec 6: Days after the Union government refused to declare Paika Vidroha as the first War of Independence, a delegation of Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MPs Monday met Union Minister of State for Culture Arjun Ram Meghwal and submitted a memorandum stating that the Centre's decision has damaged 'Odia Asmita, Odia Itihaas and Sanskruti'.

BJD MPs submitted that the Centre's decision of rejecting the demand for recognising Paika Rebellion as the First War of Independence has been seen as an insult to the rich history and culture of Odisha by Odias living across the world.

"This is a massive damage to the 'Odia Asmita, Odia Itihaas, Odia Sanskruti, Odia Sabhyata, Odia Ayitiha and Odia Parampara'. The 4.5 crore people of Odisha as well as proud Odias across the world are aggrieved by this grievous injury to their Odia identity and history," the BJD said.

Significantly the state cabinet led by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik



(PC: TWITTER/PINAKI MISRA, PURI MP)

had passed a resolution July 18, 2017 to declare Paika Rebellion as the First War of Independence. On July 19, 2017, the Chief Minister had written a letter to then Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh requesting for the declaration.

The BJD MPs also reminded the Union Culture Minister that former HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar had in October 2017 announced during a press briefing in Bhubaneswar that "the Paika Bidroha will find its place as the

First War of Independence against the British Rule in the history books. The students shall learn factual history of 1817."

"This brought great happiness to the people of Odisha that after years of struggle and with the leadership Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, finally the Centre had agreed to the proposal of declaring Paika Rebellion as the First War of Independence," the BJD MPs contended.

However, the people of Odisha

## ROW OVER PAIKA REBELLION

BJD MPs submitted that the Centre's decision of rejecting the demand for recognising Paika Rebellion as the First War of Independence is being perceived as an insult to the rich history and culture of Odisha by Odias living across the world

The Union government had December 2 declined the request of the state government to declare Paika Rebellion, which had occurred in 1817 against British Company rule, as the First War of Independence

were shocked, anguished and pained when they recently came to know that the Centre had refused to declare so, BJD contended.

Earlier, the Union government had December 2 declined the request of the state government to declare Paika Rebellion, which had occurred in 1817 against British Company rule, as the First War of Independence.

## Cops clueless in jewellery loot case

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 6: The police are groping in the dark even though 36 hours have elapsed to the huge burglary at a jewellery shop in Delta Square area here.

Sources claimed that the cops are yet to identify the burglars as the latter have decamped with the hard disk of the CCTV system installed at the shop.

Intermittent rain has obstructed the process of capturing clear footage of the miscreants on the CCTVs installed at the nearby shops, said sources.

Lack of clear images on the CCTVs has made it a daunting task for the cops to identify the miscreants and hence getting any clue to the case.

Meanwhile, three persons have been detained at Khandagiri police station on the suspicion of their involvement in the incident, sources revealed. However, the police officials are tightlipped over the development.

Notably, unknown miscreants had decamped with jewellery and cash worth more than ₹60 lakh from Laxmi Narayan Jewellers at Delta Square under Khandagiri police limits late Saturday night.

The miscreants allegedly broke into the shop and robbed gold ornaments weighing around 1 kg, worth over ₹45 lakh, silver ornaments of 10 kg, worth ₹6.16 lakh, and ₹1.5 lakh in cash.

Police registered a case and launched a probe.

## Min: Centre doesn't confer classical tag to music forms

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Dec 6: The classical status to Odissi Music seems to be a far cry as the Union government Monday said that it doesn't confer classical status to any music form.

Biju Janata Dal (MP) Achyuta Samanta Monday sought a reply from Union Culture Minister G Kishan Reddy asking him whether the Union government has received repeated requests from the Odia community and various representatives regarding the need to give classical status to Odissi music (vocal and instrumental) and whether the government is considering to grant classical status to Odissi music.

The Union Culture Minister's response came while responding to Biju Janata Dal MP Achyuta Samanta

The Kandhamal MP has asked whether the Centre has received repeated requests from the Odia community regarding the need to give classical status to Odissi music (vocal and instrumental) and whether the government is considering to grant classical status to Odissi music

The Union Culture minister, however, replied that the government doesn't confer classical tag to any music form.

"Sangeet Natak Akademi, an autonomous organisation working under the Ministry of Culture, has received proposals from Guru Gopal Chandra Panda, Founder President/ Chairman, Guru Gopal

## Panda raises KV infra woes in Parl

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP from Kalahandi Basanta Panda Monday raised in the Lok Sabha the issue of lack of proper infrastructure for the Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs) in his constituency.

Speaking during Zero Hour in the Lower House, the BJP MP said there are three Kendriya Vidyalayas (Nuapada, Khariaar and Dharmagarh) in his constituency but none of them have a dedicated building.

"These schools are running from others buildings and students are facing a lot of difficulties because of that," Panda said. He requested the Union Education minister to allocate funds for construction of buildings for these three central schools.

"I request Union Education minister to kindly allocate funds for these schools so that students upto Class XII would get the benefit and these schools would be able to function properly," Panda said.

Panda Odissi Academy, Bhubaneswar, Prof PK Mishra, Chairman, Institute of Indian Music and Rajya Sabha MP Amar Patnaik in this regard," the minister said.

"The government does not confer classical status to any musical form," the minister added.

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₹3 lakh NHRC ex gratia for electrocuted farmer

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 6: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Monday directed state Chief Secretary to pay ₹3 lakh to the relatives of a farmer who had died due to electrocution at Ersama in Jagatsinghpur September 14, 2019.

The commission instructed the state government to pay the compensation and submit the compliance report within four weeks of receiving the order.

The man, Nilamani Swain, 40, came in contact with a loose live wire while on his way to paddy field. He was rushed to a local hospital where doctor declared him brought dead.

The state Energy department informed the commission about giving ₹1.5 lakh to the deceased's next of kin.

However, the commission held the authorities negligent for poor maintenance and instructed to pay ₹3 lakh to the farmer's family.

2 more years for BSCL to finish smart city projects

Even though the BSCL, which came into existence in 2016, was set to complete its projects by 2021, only 50% of its projects have been completed till now

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 6: With the Union government extending deadlines of all smart city projects, the Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited (BSCL) has now got two more years to complete its projects whose deadlines have long expired.

As per reports, the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry has recently extended the timeline for the implementation of Smart Cities Mission to June 2023 due to Covid-19 pandemic and other reasons. According to an earlier deadline, the cities were expected to complete their projects within five years of being selected under the Smart Cities Mission.

As per sources, 100 smart cities were selected through four rounds of competitions from January 2016 to June 2018. Out of these, two cities from Odisha- Bhubaneswar and Rourkela - were finalised. The BSCL which came into existence in 2016 was set to have completed all its projects by 2021. However, only half of the projects have been finished till now.

"These cities, Bhubaneswar and Rourkela, have together tendered out 69 projects worth ₹4,918.54 crore. Work orders worth ₹3,588.39 crore have been issued for 56 projects. However, only 23 projects worth ₹1,114.29 crore have been completed. Out of this, the Bhubaneswar Smart

Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry has extended the timeline for the implementation of Smart Cities Mission to June 2023 due to the Covid pandemic

The BSCL has completed only 16 out of its 29 projects

Some of the major projects like Smart Janpath, Multi-Level Car Parking, ICOMC Building, have missed several deadlines

City has completed only 16 out of its 29 projects," stated Union Minister of State (MoS) for Housing and Urban Affairs Kaushal Kishore earlier in Lok Sabha.

He also mentioned that out of work orders to the tune of ₹3,588.39 crore that have been issued, the BSCL has issued orders worth ₹2,330.62 crore for 25 of its projects. Among some of the major projects that have missed the deadlines, amidst several revised deadlines, are: Smart Janpath, Multi-Level Car Parking at Rajmahal and Saheed Nagar and ICOMC Building among others.

"Much of the projects have been delayed due to the unprecedented and prolonged pandemic that has stalled our planning. The lockdowns and shutdowns had affected timely movement of man and material. However, we are re-planning our strategy and are aiming to finish all our projects within two years," said a BSCL official.

It can be mentioned here that the state government has released ₹645 crore for the two smart cities. Out of this, the state capital has received ₹392 crore of which only about ₹200 crore have been utilised.

Once rated as top smart city, Bhubaneswar's rankings have taken a hit owing to its poor performance along with inadequate spending.

IN MEMORIAM



Dignitaries inaugurate an event to mark the birth anniversary of Padmabhushan Dr Radhanath Rath at Sri Ram Chandra Bhawan in Cuttack, Monday

Unknown vehicle runs over man on Trisulia bridge

POST NEWS NETWORK

Barang, Dec 6: A 55-year-old man was run over by an unidentified vehicle on Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Setu over Kathajodi River here Monday, an official said.

The deceased, Ashok Kumar Choudhury, a resident of Mundamuhana village under Barang police limits here, had been working as a contractual staffer with the Cuttack Municipal Corporation, sources said.

The incident took place early in the morning when Ashok was pedalling to work. "The 55-year-old was about to cross the bridge when a speeding vehicle, whose details could not be ascertained, knocked him down from the rear. Ashok died on the spot," said one of the morning walkers of Trisulia area who witnessed the episode and informed the Barang as well as Markatnagar police stations.

7-member team meets Guv over renaming Puri

Puri: A seven-member representative team met Governor Ganesh Lal Monday, the second day of the latter's 3-day visit to Puri, and submitted a memorandum demanding renaming of the Holy City to Shreejagannathpuri. The meeting lasted for over 20 minutes and the team apprised the Governor about the importance of the move for people of Puri. The team also told the Governor that the city was referred to as Purushottama Kshetra in Skandha Purana, and Jagannath Puri during Mughal and British rule. The state of Odisha was divided into three provinces namely Baleswar, Cuttack and Jagannath Puri. Later, the word Jagannath was removed from the name by the British, the team told the Governor. After listening to the team's concerns, Lal assured them he would apprise both the Union and the state governments about the proposal.

WASSUP TODAY

BHUBANESWAR

■ Annual festival of Satyanagar Ladies' Forum, Geetagovinda Sadan, 11am

CUTTACK

■ Unveiling of Sarat Kar's painting by Utkal Sahitya Samaj, Srirama Chandra Bhawa, 11am

■ Dr. Kalyani Mishra Memorial Fest, Kala Vikas Kendra, 6pm

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

246 samples sent for genome sequencing

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 6: Amid Omicron threat, 246 samples from various districts have been sent to Institute of Life Sciences (ILS), Bhubaneswar for genome sequencing.

"We have received 246 samples from different districts including those of a few foreign returnees for genome sequencing to ascertain the presence of Omicron variant. All these persons have been found Covid positive during the RT-PCR test. The results will be known by Friday," said director, ILS, Ajay Parida here Monday.

Earlier, genome sequencing of 141 samples were conducted but not a single case was found posi-

OMICRON SCARE

About 320 returnees, nearly 40 per cent of the total arrivals, are untraceable, said the Health department

Health Minister Naba Kishore Das said there is no need to panic and the state government is closely monitoring the situation.

It is not yet clear whether infection with Omicron causes more severity as compared to infections with other variants, including Delta.

Though preliminary data suggests that there are increasing rates of hospitalization in South Africa, this could also be due to an increasing number of people becoming infected, rather than a result of a specific infection with Omicron.

According to sources, over 800 persons from the 'at-risk' countries have returned to the state since the detection of the Omicron variant.

Meanwhile, Health department officials said that about 320 returnees, nearly 40 per cent of the total arrivals, are untraceable.

As these returnees have submitted wrong addresses and contact information in Air Suvidha portal, the government is unable to trace them, the officials said.

State public health director Niranjan Mishra said, "The information we are getting from the Centre on foreign returnees, sharing with the district administrations and accordingly testing and tracing are being conducted."

He appealed to the people who have returned from at-risk countries to undergo RTPCT test for the safety of their families and well beings.

A DAY FOR FARM WOMEN



Guests, staffers and felicitated farm women at the event organised by KVK-Khurda and ICAR-CIFA in Bhubaneswar, Monday

Role of women farmers in agri-entrepreneurship lauded

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 6: ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture, Bhubaneswar in collaboration with Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Khurda celebrated 'Women in Agriculture Day' at the Kausalyaganga campus Monday.

Addressing the gathering as the chief guest, Sasmata Samanta, Pro Vice Chancellor, KIIT said farm women are now changing their role from traditional farming to entrepreneurship.

She emphasised that four skills are required for a successful entrepreneur - patience, perseverance, humility and empathy. She also encouraged all the farm women to double their production and income through their skills.

She praised the women entrepreneurs and ICAR-CIFA scien-

tists for their untiring efforts in disseminating CIFA technologies among farm women.

Guest of honour PK Roul, Managing Director, Agricultural Promotion and Investment Corporation of Odisha Limited (APICOL) stated that it is the age of entrepreneurship and women are becoming agri-entrepreneurs.

He narrated about the different schemes of the state government and the simplified schemes of the government for women agri-entrepreneurs and women SHGs.

Earlier, Saroj Kumar Swain, Director, ICAR-CIFA elaborated that this institute has been playing a pivotal role in attracting more and more women into freshwater fish farming. During the past three decades CIFA has operated several outreach projects that benefitted exclusively women.

Study predicts optimal use of immunosuppressant drug

In a path-breaking genetic study that could significantly reduce the risk of organ rejection and other medical complications, scientists of the Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology (RGCB) here have formulated a method to predict the optimal dose of an immunosuppressant drug given to kidney transplant patients.

The dose prediction study was focused on the immunosuppressant drug tacrolimus, which is given to a kidney, heart or liver transplant patient to lower the body's immunity and thereby considerably reducing the chances of organ rejection.

For maximum effectiveness, the drug level has to be maintained at an optimum concentration in the blood, especially during the initial period after transplantation.

Radhakrishnan Nair and ALekshmy Srinivas of the Division of Laboratory Medicine and Molecular Diagnostics, RGCB, con-

ducted the pharmacogenetic study involving patients who have undergone kidney transplantation at the Government Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram, and those who received tacrolimus as their immunosuppressant.

They studied the effect of the genes and their variants which are involved in determining the drug concentrations in patients' blood.

"We developed an equation/technique that can be used by nephrologists to predict the starting dose of tacrolimus, which has to be administered to patients to attain optimal drug level in the initial period after the surgery, based on their genetic profiles," said Nair.

This variation, along with their body weight, can be used to calculate the optimal starting drug dose for the patient. It will help the patients achieve optimal Tacrolimus levels post-transplantation and thus prevent the adverse effects due to overdose and rejection.

KIDNEY AILMENT



At present, the dose is calculated based on the patient's body weight. This approach can lead to a lot of variations in the drug levels. "This equation is specific to patients from Kerala who undergo kidney transplantation. The molecular-

based method uses testing the DNA of patients for a specific variation, before transplantation surgery," said Lekshmy Srinivas.

To attain this, blood levels have to be closely monitored and drug doses adjusted, as lower levels can

lead to rejection of the transplanted kidney, while higher levels can lead to undesired medical complications. Not only is this trial-and-error method of dose adjustment time-consuming and costly, but it also causes a lot of complications

among the patients

"Though there have been similar studies in other populations before, the predictive value of pharmacogenetic factors identified were insufficient and not much of clinical use. The new development would help prevent the adverse effects of overdose and thereby help a lot of patients," said Chandrabhas Narayana, director, RGCB.

The pioneering study was conducted in collaboration with Noble Gracious of the Department of Nephrology, Government Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram.

The group also discovered the genetic variants which increase the chances of rejection and adverse effects associated with the drug.

The research, which has the potential to significantly save lives of kidney transplant patients, was jointly funded by the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), and RGCB. IANS

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**SHORT TAKES**

**Fake sauce bottles seized, 1 held**

**Sundargarh:** Acting on a tip-off, a team from Bonai police seized fake sauce and ketchup bottles from a pick-up van and arrested a youth in this connection, Monday. The accused was identified as Rahul Prasad Sahu. A team from Bonai police intercepted a pick-up van loaded with fake sauce bottles and bearing, and seized 678 bottles of fake sauce along with the van. The pick-up van, carrying the fake sauce was on its way to Bonai from Rourkela. A case was registered in this connection and the accused was produced in court after interrogation. Locals alleged that traders were making huge profits by supplying fake sauces due to the heavy demand for tomato and chili sauce. Preliminary



investigations have revealed that the sauce was being transported to Bonai for sale at local fast food shops in the area. Moreover, the sauce was not only fake but few of the bottles had their manufacturing date printed as January 2022.

**Court rejects BeMC ex-Mayor's bail plea**

**Berhampur:** A local court here rejected the bail applications of former Mayor of Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC) in four cases of land grabbing and hurling casteist remarks registered in Golantahara police station, Monday. The former Mayor was identified as Shiba Shankar Das alias Pintu. Additional District Judge Sanghamitra Sharma heard the matter and rejected the bail applications moved by his lawyer Shiba Narayan Sahu. Earlier, the court had rejected one of his bail applications. The former Mayor's lawyer said that he will now move the Orissa High Court for grant of the bail pleas. APP Bikram Kumar Kundu pleaded on behalf of the state government.

**4 held for extortion at Balasore toll plaza**

**Jaleswar:** Police arrested four youths on charges of extortion from trucks and buses at the toll plaza on National Highway No 60 at Lakshmanath under this block in Balasore district bordering West Bengal, late Sunday night and Monday. The accused were identified as Narayan Jena of Kalyanpur village, Harekrushna Pal and Naba Jena of Gobarghata village and were arrested late Sunday night during a raid at the toll plaza. Later, Monday police arrested another youth Sanjay Rana of Amrada village on same charges. The accused had opened illegal offices near the toll plaza and used to collect money from the trucks, buses and other vehicles to help them pass the toll plaza. The accused used to beat up the vehicle drivers if they refused to concede to their demands.

**SPORTS INFRA**



A worker clearing the rain water from the synthetic handball court in Keonjhar following rain triggered by cyclonic storm Jawad. The synthetic handball court laid at an expense of ₹3.5 crore is the first of its kind in the state

**Demand for revival of sugar mill gains traction**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bolangir, Dec 6:** Demand for revival of Bijayananda Cooperative Sugar Mill at Deogaon in this district has gained momentum with former office bearers of the sugar mill and people from various walks of life pitching in for its revival, a report said.



At a seminar held at Jadav Bhawan for the revival of the sugar mill Saturday, various speakers alleged that the Bijayananda sugar mill at Deogaon was the only agriculture-based industry in the state and it was closed down deliberately.

The closure of the mill has deprived hundreds of farmers from earning their livelihood in five districts of the state. They demanded that the government should immediately make the sugar mill functional for the benefit of the local farmers.

Speaking on the occasion, Jagneswar Babu, former chairman of Odisha State Cooperative Bank and former president of the sugar mill union, presented various details on the sugar mill. He said that the sugar mill is still in a functional state even after its closure. He alleged that the sugar mill was closed down when it was in running condition and func-

tioning properly.

The sugar mill is lying closed since 2014. It had an outstanding amount of ₹97 crore as loan, out of which ₹70 crore had been paid. The rest of the loan amount could have been paid in the subsequent years. However, the sugar mill was closed down abruptly.

The matter is now sub-judice in the court for which the state government and lending bank should sit together and find a solution on revival of the sugar mill. Bipin Kushulia, chairman of Odisha Krushi Bhitika Silpa Andolan, informed the audience.

Vice-chairman Dwija Dalapati spoke on the present status of the sugar mill, secretary Rajesh Bagarti, state secretaries Kapil Kumbhar and Kumari Bhoi, treasurer Jagannath Moharana and other guests also spoke on the occasion. Several farmer leaders also attended the seminar.

**Development takes a backseat in Rourkela**

**FUNDS WORTH CRORES OF RUPEES HAVE BEEN SANCTIONED FOR SCORES OF PROJECTS IN THE CITY BUT NO GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL HAS ANY ANSWER ABOUT WHEN THE PROJECTS WILL BE COMPLETE**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, Dec 6:** It has been four years since Rourkela was declared a Smart City. However, the residents here are yet to witness any development activities in the city.

Funds worth crores of rupees have been sanctioned for scores of projects in the city but no government official has any answer as to when the projects will be complete.

There is no trace of many projects that are reportedly being implemented in the city, while some are being implemented without proper monitoring. Locals alleged severe irregularities in these developmental works. They alleged that this is primarily due to the neglect and apathetic attitude of the public representatives and officials here.

Reports said funds worth ₹20 crore



is being spent on road beautification work in the Smart City. The project is being implemented by the Forest Development Corporation in Rourkela. According to government rules an e-tender has to be floated if the work order is over ₹5 lakh. However, the FDC is implementing the project without scant regards for the norm.

The FDC has spent over ₹13.90 crore in beautification works of the

Ring Road from Hanuman Vatika to the main gate of Rourkela Steel Plant, while ₹7 crore has been spent on beautification work from Vedavyas Square to Vedavyas temple. With the available funds, planting of trees, construction of footpaths and installation of chairs on the footpaths have been undertaken.

However, a close look at the work revealed that the claims do not match with the funds said to be spent on these works. Various types of valuable flower plants were planted on Vedavyas Road for beautification. However, these plants wilted after some time due to lack of water and proper treatment.

Locals have also raised questions on the quality of tiles being used to cover the pavements on the footpaths and allege that funds for these works have been embezzled.

They alleged that while crores of

rupees are being spent on the beautification of the Smart City, standard works have made these projects redundant after some time.

Moreover, the locals raised doubts on the efficacy of the works as the officials in charge of the projects are allegedly involved in various irregularities.

When contacted, Dibyajyoti Parida, Commissioner of Rourkela Municipal Corporation (RMC), refused to speak on the issue stating that the Smart City Officer is the competent authority to speak on the issue.

Sanjay Kumar Nanda, Smart City Officer, said that if the charges are true then action will be taken against the guilty officials after conducting a probe.

Biswajit Rout, divisional manager of FDC, said that it is better to ask the department sanctioning the funds for the project.

**Woman suffers miscarriage after miscreant attack**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nayagarh, Dec 6:** A six-month pregnant woman suffered miscarriage after miscreants allegedly assaulted her and her husband at Badilo village under Fategarh police limits in Nayagarh district, Sunday.

The victims were identified as Narmada Behera and her husband Ayodhya Behera of the same village.

The incident occurred when the miscreants led by one Pathani Jena attacked Ayodhya over past enmity when he was returning home.

Seeing the miscreants assaulting her husband, Narmada rushed to the spot and tried to save Ayodhya from merciless thrashing. However, the attackers were relentless and did not spare even Narmada.

According to reports, the attackers pushed Narmada to the ground and kicked her in the abdomen multiple times while thrashing and abusing her in slangs.

The attackers pushed Narmada to the ground and kicked her in the abdomen multiple times

Narmada allegedly suffered serious injuries and had a miscarriage.

She was initially taken to the primary health centre for treatment and later shifted to the local community health centre.

The couple later lodged a complaint with the Fategarh police station against Jena. The police have launched a manhunt to nab the accused and detained a person for questioning, IIC Girija Nandan Pattnaik said.

A separate complaint has been filed by Sulochana Jena, wife of Pathani Jena, alleging that her husband suffered injuries in his spinal cord due to the attack. Further investigations are on, the IIC said.

**FISH IN NUTRITION PROGRAMME**

**Pilot project caught in red-tape**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Baripada, Dec 6:** The state government's plan to introduce indigenous small fishes in the supplementary nutrition programme for children, pregnant and nursing women and adolescent girls as part of a pilot project in Mayurbhanj district is caught in red-tape and yet to take off despite the passage of a year.

The state government selected Mayurbhanj district to launch the pilot programme, which was scheduled to start across 50 Anganwadi centres in the district. However, instead of getting implemented, the novel scheme is now caught in red-tapism.

Fish is rich in iron, zinc, calcium, vitamins (A, B, D and E) and omega-3 fatty acid content, which would benefit children between three to six years, pregnant and nursing women, and adolescent girls, officials said. Fishes would be procured from the women self-help groups, creating business opportunities for them too, they said.

Reports said that the state Women and Child Development Department, Mission Shakti and Fisheries Department signed an



REPRESENTATIVE PICTURE

memorandum of understanding with international non-profit organisation WorldFish to implement the project in 50 Anganwadi centres in Mayurbhanj district from November 10, 2020.

After implementation of the project, the state government had planned to train the self-help group women involved in fish cultivation in panchayat ponds on nutritional value of fish and fish processing and launch social and behavioural awareness pro-

grammes on fish consumption under the nutrition programme.

In the MoU, there were plans to train the self-help group women of coastal districts, where fish production is high, in drying of fish through solar powered equipment and in preparation of fish powder on the guidelines of Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI).

The programme when implemented would have provided livelihood opportunities to over 84,000 women of 42,058 self-help groups

working in the district. At the time of signing of memorandum, Sujata Kartikeyan, director, Mission Shakti, had said that this programme will prove highly beneficial in ensuring sufficient nutrition to the beneficiaries and in creating livelihood opportunities for the women of self-help groups.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Garreth Jhonstone, director general of WorldFish, had said that technical experts would provide training on drying of fish with solar powered equipment in clean and hygienic environment to the self-help group women. However, since then a year has passed but the project is yet to be implemented.

Bishnupriya Das, president of Mission Shakti in Mayurbhanj district, said that no woman from any self-help group has been provided with training yet. The project would have been implemented in other districts if it had reaped success in Mayurbhanj district.

Some women members of self-help groups alleged that the state government has launched various schemes for the women but their implementation is getting delayed due to apathetic attitude of the concerned department officials.

**Youth gets 10-yr jail for raping minor**

**Berhampur:** A special fast track and POC SO court here sentenced a youth to 10 years of imprisonment after convicting him for rape of a minor girl, Monday. Judge Guru Prasad Sahoo also slapped a fine of ₹13,000 on the convict Arun Nayak. In default, Nayak has to undergo an additional 15 months of imprisonment, the court ordered while adjudicating the case. The judge passed the order after examining the statements recorded by 11 witnesses in the case. According to the case diary, Nayak, a resident of Bhanjanagar area in Ganjam district, lured the minor girl and raped her, July 2, 2014. Bhanjanagar police registered a case and arrested Nayak after a complaint was lodged accusing him of the crime. Nayak was produced in court which remanded him to judicial custody, but later granted him bail. Naresh Prasad Patra, APP pleaded the matter on behalf of the state government.

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, ELECTRICAL CIRCLE (R&B) NIRMAN SOUDHA, BHUBANESWAR**

E-mail: seec.bbsr2010@gmail.com  
Bid Identification No.S.E.E.C (R&B) 11/2021-22

No. 2519 Date: 02.12.2021  
No. B-739: The Superintending Engineer, Electrical Circle (R&B), Odisha, Bhubaneswar on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids for E.I. works which are to be received through online bidding, double cover system as detailed in: <https://tendersorissa.gov.in>. The details of bid documents will be available in the above website from 5.00 P.M. of 09.12.2021 to 5.00 P.M. of 24.12.2021. The bidders must possess compatible Digital Signature Certificate of Class II or III. Bids received online shall be opened at 11.30 A.M. of 27.12.2021 in the Office of the Superintending Engineer, Electrical Circle (R&B), Odisha, Bhubaneswar. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in). Addendum / Corrigendum, if required, will be available only in the website.

Sd./ Superintending Engineer  
Electrical Circle (R&B), Odisha, BBSR  
OIPR-34006/11/0012/2122

**Government of Odisha Office of the Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division-II, Dhenkanal, Kamakhyanagar**

E-Mail: rw.kamakhyanagar@yahoo.co.in

e-procurement Notice No.09/Road Works/2021-22

No.O-1215-

1. Name of the work	: Road Works
2. Total No. of Works	: 17 Nos.
3. Tender Cost	: Rs.4.42 to 39.82 Lakhs (Approx.)
4. Class of Contractor	: 'D', 'C' & 'B' Class
5. Period of Completion	: 2 Calendar months.
6. Availability of Tender online for bidding	: 07.12.2021 at 11.00 A.M. to 13.12.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.
7. Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification	: 11.12.2021 upto 4.00 PM
8. Date & Time of opening of Bid	: 14.12.2021 at 11.00 A.M.

Other details can be seen from the website <http://tendersorissa.gov.in>  
Sd./ Executive Engineer,  
R.W. Division-II, Dhenkanal, Kamakhyanagar  
OIPR-25094/11/0008/2122

**Locals demand tourism circuit at Dargadishila**

**DARGADISHILA NEAR SINGHANALI UNDER ANANDAPUR BLOCK IS NO LESS THAN A NATURE'S PARADISE, LOCATED IN A PICTURE POSTCARD SETTING**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, Dec 6:** Keonjhar district is endowed with a number of scenic tourist spots, but many places having tourism potential have remained far from the tourists for lack of development and connectivity.

One such place is Dargadishila near Singhanali under Anandapur block. The place, no less than a



ture's paradise, is located in a picture postcard setting. It offers enchanting sight-seeing scope for people visiting a hydro power project near it.

This hydro power project is the first of its kind in the district. Water of Baitarani river has been dammed and diverted through to

a turbine to generate electricity. Many people visit the barrage to enjoy in the lap of nature.

Locals have long been demanding a tourism tag for the place in view of the visitors coming to the place throughout the year.

"If Dargadishila is accorded

tourism status, it can bring about socio-economic development of the people, mainly the tribals living in villages in the area," locals observed.

The scenic place is located amid lush green forests and in a calm and tranquil environ. If one travels on NH-20 from Anandapur toward Ghatgaon, he/she has to take a turn from Kolimati and travel through a hilly road for about 15 km. On the way to the place, people come across a hanging bridge and verdant forests all around. The place is inhabited by tribals. All along the route, one will be delighted watching the huts of tribals and their lush green farmland. What makes the place more attractive and enchanting is wide riverbed of Baitarani.

People come to see the barrage, hydro power project and some even take a dip in the river. Many come for picnicking in

winter and even on other days.

This place has another advantage - tourist spot Bhimkund is just 10 km from Dargadishila. Locals and experts have suggested that if boating and rafting facilities are made available here, locals will get a scope to earn more money.

Other facilities like ropeway and a hanging bridge connecting two hills over the river will be an added advantage and will boost ecotourism, they pointed out.

They also said that the tourists visiting Ghatagaon, Gundichaghagi waterfall and Sitabinj may come to Dargadishila. If it is planned properly, these places can be converted into a tourist circuit in the district, said Pradip Rout, local resident.

When contacted, district tourism officer Ramesh Chandra Nayak said that steps are being taken to accord tourist tag to Dargadishila in view of its natural settings.



None can reach heaven who has not passed through hell.

**SRI AUROBINDO**



## Supply-Chain Mess

Global supply chains used to be the last thing policymakers worried about. The topic was largely the concern of academics, who studied the possible efficiency gains and potential risks associated with this aspect of globalisation. Although Japan's Fukushima nuclear disaster in 2011 had demonstrated how supply-chain disruptions could impact the global economy, few anticipated how central the problem could become.

Not anymore. Today's supply-chain bottlenecks are creating shortages, propping up inflation, and preoccupying policymakers around the world.

US President Joe Biden's administration deserves credit for recognising that supply chains are key to future economic security. In February 2021, Biden issued an executive order directing several federal agencies to secure and strengthen the American supply chain; and in June, the White House published a 100-day review on "Building Resilient Supply Chains, Revitalizing American Manufacturing, and Fostering Broad-Based Growth."

This 250-page report contains many important proposals. Some are already part of the broader discussion on improving the US workforce's skills and the economy's capacity for innovation. Other ideas have been circulating for a while in international relations and security studies; for example, the document considers the national-security implications of defence and other critical industries' reliance on imported inputs.

But the review's most important contribution is its observation that global supply chains have imposed various social costs: "Our private sector and public policy approach to domestic production, which for years prioritized efficiency and low costs over security, sustainability and resilience, has resulted in supply chain risks." The review then asks whether hyper-globalized supply chains are so great for economic efficiency after all.

The default position among economists is "yes, they are." When two firms enter into a transaction in which each will gain something, that is good for both firms and also probably for the rest of the economy, owing to the resulting efficiency improvements and cost reductions. Whether this involves a US manufacturer offshoring the production of some inputs to a Chinese firm is beside the point.

Yet supply chains can pose a danger to an economy in two important ways (beyond the defence-related concerns mentioned above). The more complex a supply chain becomes, the greater the economic risks. A break in any link can affect the whole chain and send prices surging if it creates sudden shortages of a necessary input.

The worst-case scenario is when a failure in one part of the chain triggers domino effects, bringing down other firms and bringing the entire sector to a standstill. Logically, this scenario is similar to what one finds in financial networks, where the failure of one bank can push others into insolvency or even bankruptcy, as happened in 2008 following the collapse of Lehman Brothers.

In principle, because uncertainty is costly, businesses will take these risks into account when deciding to build supply chains. In practice, however, there are good economic reasons why firms may overextend their supply chains. For one thing, firms will account for their own risk, but not for the systemic effects they are creating, nor for the risks they are imposing on other firms or the entire economy.

Moreover, when global competition creates powerful incentives to reduce costs, even small price differences offered by foreign suppliers can become attractive, especially in the short term. In this age of stock-market options and hefty bonuses, financial interests also factor into managers' considerations. CEOs enjoy immediate compensation when they can achieve cost reductions and increase profits, whereas the significant costs of future uncertainty — or even bankruptcy — will likely be someone else's problem.

A second way that companies may overextend their supply chain is subtler but no less important. The problem, the White House review notes, is that "the United States has taken certain features of global markets — especially the fear that companies and capital will flee to wherever wages, taxes and regulation are lowest — as inevitable." This statement echoes economist Dani Rodrik's prescient observation that globalisation is not just about trade in goods and services; it is also about the sharing of rents. As such, the globalisation of supply chains is an integral part of the shifting balance between capital and labour.

The most straightforward mechanism for this process is the offshoring of inputs, the mere threat of which can be used by managers to keep wages low. This happens on both ends of the offshoring transaction: US companies can pay less to their employees by expanding their supply chain to countries (such as China or Vietnam) where wages are already lower as a result of lax labour regulations.

A fragmented supply chain may also make it more difficult for workers to organise for collective bargaining, creating yet another benefit for businesses. Companies may even reap tax advantages from globalising their supply chain, if doing so allows them to book profits in lower-tax jurisdictions.

This second reason is problematic for the US economy as well. It suggests that managers will tend to globalise their companies' supply chains even when doing so is not more efficient, simply because doing so allows them to shift rents away from workers and toward shareholders. Not only does this create an excessively overextended supply chain; it also distorts the income distribution by suppressing wages, especially for low- and middle-skill workers.

The White House report proposes keeping more of the supply chain in the US, especially in manufacturing. But how can this be achieved? A two-pronged approach would be the most effective. First, the need for meaningful inducements for businesses to invest in their domestic supply chains implies that the tax advantages of offshoring inputs should be eliminated, and the opportunities for labour-regulation arbitrage should be curtailed.

But other, more fundamental changes are also needed. The global supply-chain mess is an opportunity for the US to have a broader conversation about the economy and what it is for. As long as CEOs remain obsessed with short-term stock-market performance, bolstered by the ideology of "shareholder value," they will seek ways to shift rents away from their workers, whatever the risks.

The writer is Professor of Economics at MIT.

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Ajit Ranade

**PEOPLE GO FOR GOLD, AS A HEDGE AGAINST UNEXPECTED INFLATION. THIS IS THEIR WAY OF EXPRESSING DISTRUST IN AN INFLATIONARY CURRENCY**

A recent visit to a restaurant after a long break was greatly satisfying. Friends catching up, much merriment and a full course, sumptuous meal. The bill that came at the end, raised eyebrows, but never mind. Along with the bill the waiter inserted two vouchers for five hundred rupees each. What's this, we asked. These can be used on your next visit here, he said. No expiry date. And also, transferable. It is quite an innovative way of ensuring a repeat visit, and customer loyalty. What if I just give it to a friend? Or what if I 'sold' it for a discount (say at half the face value) to a stranger? Or what if I put it up for sale on social media, and got the best bid? Is such a transaction illegal? Does selling a voucher for real cash, upset the country's monetary policy? Does it harm the RBI's currency sovereignty? These questions are not facile.

In the 1970's there was a loyalty programme called Ramon Bonus Stamps. You earned these on every purchase, and then they could be exchanged for gifts, or could be given to friends. Some collectors may even have exchanged it for real money. It was a huge success, but soon led to some enterprising businesses printing just the 'bonus stamps' which threatened to become parallel currency. Hence the Ramon Bonus Stamps scheme had to be stopped. Of course, this was before the era of the hologram or QR-code authentication, which would have eliminated counterfeiter. Not surprisingly loyalty programmes have survived, as the most recent restaurant vouchers demonstrate. The points you earn on loyalty can be used to buy merchandise, or make donations for charity. Some like Amazon have become wallets which can then be used to pay for many other goods and services, not necessarily linked to the source company which created the wallet. The prepaid wallets have led to a lot of regulation but did not have to be banned.

Now think about the new world of cryptocurrencies. The terminology is unfortunate since they are

**FOCUS CRYPTOCURRENCIES**

# REGULATE, DON'T BAN



Indeed, the presence of an active crypto market is a challenge for authorities to maintain a stable sovereign currency, with low inflation and a high level of people's trust

not (yet) meant to be a parallel currency, out to replace the sovereign currency. But because their origin is from the blockchain technology-based Bitcoin whose founders wanted to rebel against the monopoly of sovereign fiat money, the 'currency' moniker has stuck. Unlike the Ramon Bonus Stamps of yore, or Amazon Pay type wallets, why are authorities so riled up against cryptocurrencies? There is a bill soon to be tabled in India's Parliament which aims to ban all private cryptocurrencies (there are dozens, if not hundreds of these). Countries like China, Vietnam, Morocco and Bolivia have banned private cryptocurrencies. But in most other countries these crypto-assets are heavily traded. The authentication of the trade and ownership of cryptocurrencies is based on the distributed electronic immutable ledgers stored and replicated worldwide, also known as decentralised blockchain technology. Much like our Aadhaar number gets authenticated instantly from a remote server, maintained with high security by the government, the crypto authentication works similarly. But this authentication does not depend on any central authority, or any government. It is based on the sophisticated

mathematics of cryptography and on algorithms. Not even the most determined cyber expert or hacker can crack the security of crypto asset ownership. That is why it has become a darling of investors for more than a decade now.

Crypto coins have to be 'mined' by algorithms and there can only be a finite number of them. No human being can exceed this limit. The earliest one is Bitcoin whose quoted 'price' reached a high of \$65,000. As per JP Morgan analysts, the target price can reach \$120,000. That's why it attracts many speculative investors and is also the reason for great volatility. The crypto asset mania has affected Indian investors too. An estimated 20 million Indians have invested in crypto assets with a collective estimated value of about ₹40,000 crore. During the recent T20 Cricket World Cup the total spending on television ads from crypto exchanges was about ₹50 crore. Ads were splashed across front pages of newspapers too, touting cryptos as "doubling the value of your investments." That is why even the Prime Minister had to issue a cautionary note. But he was referring to misleading advertisements, not crypto assets per se. Not surprisingly the ads

toned down considerably. But then came the possibility that India's Cabinet was about to ban cryptocurrencies totally. This spooked investors and the value dropped by more than half.

Given that this is based on blockchain technology which will play a crucial role in enhancing the security of contracts, help in cross-border transactions, and will also be the basis of RBI's soon to be introduced digital currency, it seems silly and knee-jerk to simply ban crypto asset trading and ownership. If people choose to park some of their savings in crypto, like they do in gold, it does not threaten the stability of sovereign currency. Nor does it make monetary policy defunct. People go for gold, as a hedge against unexpected inflation. This is their way of expressing distrust in an inflationary currency. So also, if people turn to cryptocurrencies, it is like them expressing partial distrust, or skepticism in the stability of the fiat currency.

It is better to regulate the trading of cryptocurrencies, to keep track of the digital trail and perhaps garner some tax revenue too (like the security transaction tax on stock markets). No doubt with increasing acceptance, it might be used to buy real goods and services, but that too can be regulated. Surely enough vigilance tech can be used to prevent its use to fund terrorism or drugs. If crypto transactions cross country borders, and effectively mean flight of capital, it is already happening through the annual import of gold. So long as the proportion is small compared to the size of the national economy, it is premature and foolish to become alarmed. Indeed, the presence of an active crypto market is a challenge for authorities to maintain a stable sovereign currency, with low inflation and a high level of people's trust. That's the most effective antidote to keeping the crypto mania from flaring up.

The writer is an economist and Senior Fellow, Takshashila Institution.

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**SPECTRUM CONSERVATION**

# A digital identity for endangered wildlife

It will soon be possible to give a digital identity to individual wild animals whose species are at risk of extinction. Currently, these animals' only economic value is that of their processed body parts. Giving them a digital wallet linked to their identity and the ability to spend money on their own protection could improve their lives and increase their chances of survival.

The Great Apes, including gorillas, chimpanzees, and bonobos, are ideal early candidates for an 'Interspecies Money' approach. Only 700,000 of our closest evolutionary cousins survive and their numbers are in steep decline: picture a population equivalent to Washington, DC, scattered in forests along dirt roads or at the edge of thousands of isolated, poor, and fast-growing villages. Humans and Great Apes have not lived well together in the industrial era, but we can do better in the post-industrial age.

We propose starting with orangutans. Only 120,000 of these intelligent red apes remain alive in their forest habitats of Sumatra and Borneo. Although \$1 billion has been spent protecting them since 2000, more than 100,000 have been lost to deforestation, harassment, and killing over the same period. The situation could have been worse — some 135,000 orangutans would have died without the conserva-

tion efforts — but the investments can hardly be claimed as successful.

The conservation logic for orangutans is simple enough. The apes share the forest with people who make their living from the cultivation of crops and forest products. Both like the same products. Conflicts arise. Asking forest people to put up with their orangutan neighbours isn't enough. They need to know that it is profitable for them to do so. But little conservation money reaches the frontline where it can have the greatest effect.

This is where technology offers new possibilities for truer stewardship of nonhuman life on Earth. On hardware side, a Cambrian explosion of computation, data storage, smartphones, cameras, sensors, drones, ground robots, satellites, and genomics is allowing us to track nature in higher definition at lower cost. On software side, advances in AI, metaverse-building gaming platforms, and distributed crypto and blockchain governance solutions will enable us to represent other species online.

There is plenty of money in cryptocurrencies available to prove a new 'tokenomics' for nature; crypto innovators are astonishingly successful at creating digital scarcity that accrues in value. It is inevitable that the living scarcity of endangered species will become an asset

class for those holding cryptocurrencies. The question is how to approach this in a way that is useful for the species and for the people looking after them.

We plan to endow the first digital wallets for orangutans with the proceeds of the sale of related non-fungible tokens (NFTs). Every wallet will have scientists and other signatories charged with making decisions in the interests of the orangutan. Over time, the process will become 'Schrödingerian': a wallet will be created when an ape is reliably observed for the first time. Interspecies Money will be paid to people from funds in the wallets for adhering to simple and verifiable rules. These rules will be set by the orangutans (or more exactly the human and computational proxies representing their needs). These could include such tasks as "observe me over time," "leave my tree alone," and "don't kill me."

Current conservation spending amounts to \$1.30 a day per wild orangutan. We think \$1 a day into an orangutan wallet would be transformative in most situations. Four hundred dollars a year is more than a child in the surrounding communities can expect in development assistance, but the orangutans' survival is so precarious that this imbalance may be justified. Moreover, because Interspecies

Money explicitly links nonhuman animals to human stewards, much of the money in the orangutan wallets will be passed along to farmers and their children as payment for gathering data or compensation for crop damage.

If Interspecies Money can be made to work for orangutans, it can work for other Great Apes, not least the western lowland gorilla, which is consumed as bushmeat in the Congo forest. And other early species to receive Interspecies Money could include dugongs, giraffes, and orcas. From charismatic mammals, Interspecies Money has the potential to advance to trees, birds, and even insect and microbial populations. A digital currency for other species, operated like a central bank for biodiversity, may emerge. The threats to the Great Apes remind us of our lack of ambition when it comes to protecting other species more broadly. With growing human populations, apes can survive only if people agree to live peacefully alongside them. Paying the poorest people living next to the richest biodiversity in a clear and constant way is one step toward achieving that.

Jonathan Ledgard is Founder of the first Interspecies Money service. Erik Meijaard is Founder of the Borneo Futures initiative.

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**WISDOM CORNER**

- "The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting." **SUN TZU**
- "It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop." **CONFUCIUS**
- "You can't know your real mind as long as you deceive yourself." **BODHDHARMA**

**LOL**

### Stuck under a bridge

A truck driver was driving along on the freeway. A sign comes up that reads 'low bridge ahead.' Before he knows it the bridge is right ahead of him and he gets stuck under the bridge. Cars are backed up for miles.



Finally, a police car comes up. The cop gets out of his car and walks around to the truck driver, puts his hands on his hips and says, "Got stuck, huh?" The truck driver says, "No, I was delivering this bridge and ran out of gas."

## 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](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

**OrissaPOST**  
B-15, Rasulpur Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

### Advantage BJP

Sir, This is in reference to the editorial 'Weakening Opposition' Orissa POST, December 6. After its stellar performance in West Bengal, the TMC decided to position itself as a national force capable of taking on the BJP. To have ambition in politics is welcome. In fact, ambition often helps people to remain rooted in politics in the hope that something better will happen in the future. But over-ambition is not good at all. It can force the person concerned to overlook what is common sense, so as to whistle in the dark. Going forward, the BJP wants a Congress-free polity because the latter is the only party which has a pan-India following and can challenge the saffron party. BJP knows that the TMC is, at best, a regional party. It does not have any roots in any other state. It tried its luck in the recent municipal elections in Tripura, where the Bengalis are a decisive force, but it could not make much headway. In this context, TMC's moves to expand its political base beyond West Bengal — mainly at the cost of Congress ought to weaken the grand old party which in turn is an advantage to the BJP. What Mamata should realise is that if she is serious about dislodging the BJP from power in 2024, she should do everything possible to strengthen Opposition unity so that the anti-BJP votes are not split. Add to this, Mamata may be the Bengal tigress, but she cannot command the support of people outside of West Bengal. The earlier she realises this, the better it is for her.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

### Stop mudslinging

Sir, Odisha is plagued by many issues like obstruction of Mahanadi by Chhattisgarh, encroachment of Kotia by Andhra Pradesh, illegal construction by West Bengal in our land and the step-motherly attitude toward Odia language by Jharkhand. And, there are the issues of sky-rocketing of prices of essential commodities and LPG. In a period of extraordinary crisis arising out of the pandemic, the mudslinging of political parties of the state has increased the worries of the common man, who is the hardest hit. The Opposition should play a constructive role in managing the affairs of the government. Similarly, the ruling party should be magnanimous and liberal. Such an unhealthy political atmosphere, as prevailing now, helps no one. The interests of Odisha should remain uppermost in the minds of our political leaders. Stop mudslinging and start Odisha building.

Prabhudutt Dash, BHUBANESWAR

## of the day quote

Three persons died due to poisonous liquor consumption Sunday in Vaishali and several others have fallen ill. A JD(U) MLA said that the party MP is selling liquor, a BJP leader said that Nitish Kumar is saving liquor mafia leaders of his own party, BJP state president Sanjay Jaiswal claimed that state police is involved in liquor smuggling, JD(U) minister said that the officers do not listen to legislators and BJP MLA Gyanendra Singh Gyana said that all BJP ministers are corrupt

TEJASHWI YADAV | RUD LEADER

I was lodged in prison for not supporting you (BJP). I was jailed because people were upset that I didn't join the BJP

DK SHIVAKUMAR | KARNATAKA CONGRESS PRESIDENT

The Armed Forces (Special Power) Act, 1958 should be repealed. We must go all out to demand immediate repeal of this draconian oppression on our people

CONRAD K SANGMA | MEHALAYA CHIEF MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### Flood alert in TN district

**Chennai:** A flood alert has been issued for people living on the banks of the Korayar and Ariyar rivers in Tamil Nadu by Tiruchirappalli district collector, S Sivarasu, Monday as heavy rains lashed Manapparai and other catchment areas of the rivers. Sivarasu also directed the people to safeguard their livestock, especially in the rural areas. Weather department officials said that Manapparai town and suburbs have recorded 274 mm rainfall Monday till 9 a.m. The heavy rain that has been lashing Tiruchirappalli and surrounding areas for the past few days has resulted in water-logging in the city and flooding of many residential areas.

### Cop booked for sexual assault

**Chennai:** The All-Woman Police, Marthandam in Tamil Nadu have booked a case of sexual assault against a serving police inspector. The police officer is attached to the Theni police station. The woman is a divorcee and was living away from her family and her 9-year-old daughter was admitted to a school hostel.

### Health services hit in Agra

**Agra:** Health care services have been hit in Agra, as junior doctors of the SN Medical College have been away from work since November 27. The striking doctors are demanding early start to NEET post graduate counselling for 2021. The exercise has been postponed several times, according to the doctors.



Omicron has entered the country and its cases have been found at many places including Delhi. I want to appeal the people not to panic and maintain social distancing and use face mask

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CHIEF MINISTER

### ED SUMMONS JACQUELINE AGAIN

The Enforcement Directorate has summoned Bollywood actress Jacqueline Fernandez in connection with a case of prevention of money laundering involving multi millionaire conman Sukesh Chandrashekar

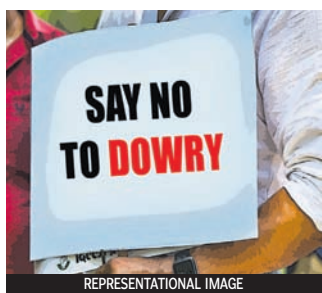


# DOWRY REQUIRES FRESH LOOK: APEX COURT

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Dec 6:** The Supreme Court Monday observed that persistence of the social evil like dowry requires a much larger consideration and asked the law commission to consider suggestions in a plea. Advocate VK Biju contended before a bench headed by Justice DY Chandrachud that a similar issue is pending before another bench of the top court, on which notice was issued November 8, and added that the court may consider issuing notice at least on one of the prayers

in the petition. The bench, also comprising AS Bopanna told Biju, representing the petitioners Sabu Steephen and others, the law commission can look at the suggestions on strengthening the dowry prohibition law - to make it more effective - instead of the court issuing notice in the matter. Biju pointed out that educated people give so much jewellery and gold to the children, and the children of daily wagers are suffering. The bench said it agrees that the issue raised in the plea is an important one, which requires sensitization



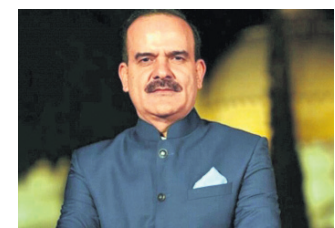
of everybody. Justice Chandrachud added that the plea has raised a very substantial grievance but these are matters imminently for

the legislature to decide -- to give more teeth to the law. He cited the SC/ST Act, which was amended repeatedly to give it more teeth.

The bench noted that petitioners have highlighted that on the one hand, Parliament has stepped in by enacting legislation in terms of penal provisions such as section 304B and 498A of the IPC and Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 and by the formation of the National Commission for Women, yet the persistence of the social evil requires a fresh look by the concerned authorities to bring more teeth to the legislation.

The bench said: "we are of the view that it may be appropriate if the law commission of India considers the issue in all its perspectives. The petitioner is at liberty to submit a note of research on all relevant aspects for the benefit of the law commission on which further steps to consider the scope for legislative reforms may be duly considered." The top court was hearing a plea by two social activists and a lawyer practising in the Supreme Court seeking certain concrete directions to curb the social evil of dowry.

# SC hints at CBI probe against Param Bir Singh



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Dec 6:** The Supreme Court Monday restrained the Maharashtra Police from filing charge sheet in all the FIRs registered against former Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh, but allowed the investigation to proceed. The top court observed that prima facie it is of the view that the probe against Singh should be done by another agency and not by the state police.

A bench headed by Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul and comprising Justice MM Sundresh sought CBI's view in connection with taking up the investigation in the FIRs registered by the Maharashtra Police against Singh over allegations of misconduct and corruption.

Senior advocate Puneet Bali, representing Singh, contended that the Maharashtra government and the DGP have filed responses, but the CBI is yet to file a response. The bench queried Solicitor General Tushar Mehta that could the CBI take up this matter as it is already looking into the other aspects?

Mehta orally submitted "there is no issue at all". In a written response, the Maharashtra government has told the top court that there is no need for a CBI probe into the cases as these are service matters and Singh is also not a whistleblower. Senior advocate Darius Kambatta, representing the Maharashtra government, submitted that Singh's petition is not maintainable as it was a service dispute against departmental enquiries, which should be contested before the Central Administrative Tribunal. Justice Kaul observed "Prima facie we find this difficult to accept...but since the matter has been assigned already to the CBI, why can't this be also entrusted with them?"

The bench further orally observed that it is only concerned with the likelihood of bias. Bali submitted to the bench that the Maharashtra government was acting with "mala fides" against his client.

## OMICRON CONCERN

# Full vaccination in focus

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Dec 6:** Cases of the Omicron coronavirus variant have risen to 21 in India over the weekend and people must step up for vaccination, officials said Monday.

The western state of Rajasthan reported the most number of Omicron cases with nine, followed by eight in Maharashtra, two in Karnataka and one each in Gujarat and the capital New Delhi.

"The people of Delhi must get fully vaccinated, wear a mask and maintain social distancing," its health minister Satyendar Jain said on Twitter.

He said the city's first Omicron patient was being treated at a state-run hospital. Some 94% of its adults had received at least one dose, he added.

The country has fully vaccinated 51% of its 944 million adults and given at least one dose to 85%. Tens of millions of people, however, are overdue for their second dose despite ample vaccine supplies, government data shows.

India reported its first two Omicron cases in the southern state of Karnataka Thursday, in one person with no recent travel history. Most other cases have been in people who have recently come from abroad, but doctors said the mutated virus was already spreading in the local population as well.

"Omicron is here, community spread is underway," surgeon Arvinder Singh Soin, who has been



### India's Omicron tally 23 now

**New Delhi:** Two more cases of Omicron variant of coronavirus have been reported in Maharashtra's Mumbai Monday, taking the total tally of the new Covid-19 variant in Maharashtra to 10 and the total number of infections in the country to 23. A 37-year-old man who arrived in Mumbai from South Africa and his 36-year-old female friend who landed in the city from the United States have both tested positive for Omicron. On December 4, the state's first Omicron patient was confirmed in Thane when a 33-year-old man arrived from Capetown via Dubai and New Delhi to Mumbai, tested positive. He is undergoing treatment at a Covid Centre in Kalyan-Dombivali. Of the total 34,700 passengers who arrived including 6,263 from the risk nations, 6,898 have undergone RT-PCR tests, and reports of 11 who tested positive have been sent for genomic sequencing, said the Health Department.

treating Covid-19 patients, said on Twitter: "Mask up. Get FULLY vaccinated."

India reported 8,895 new Covid-19 cases for the past 24 hours, taking the total to 34.64 million.

Deaths rose by 211 to 473,537. Since a record surge in infections and deaths in April and May due to the Delta variant, new cases have hovered around 10,000 in the past few weeks.

# RS sees repeated adjournments

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Dec 6:** The proceedings of the Rajya Sabha Monday were adjourned for the day after the continuous protests from the opposition bench on Nagaland firing incident and suspension of 12 members.

Soon after the house re-assembled at 4 p.m., opposition members started shouting slogans to press their demands, while Deputy Chairman Harivansh kept on urging the opposition members to take their seats and listen to Union Home Minister Amit Shah's statement on Nagaland incident.

The Deputy Chairman's advice did not deter the opposition members from sloganeering and the Home Minister had to read out his statement amid din.

At the end of the Home Minister's statement in the house, Harivansh also called the names from the opposition bench for discussion but nobody responded to the Chair's call. Following that, the Chair adjourned the house till 11 a.m. December 7.

The proceedings of the house were adjourned thrice Monday due to protests by opposition which was demanding discussion on the Nagaland firing incident and revoking the suspension of 12 members from their side.

The first adjournment was made soon after the Zero Hour began and it was adjourned till 12 noon. Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu



### Opposition's protests continued during Question Hour and despite the sincere efforts by the Deputy Chairman, calm did not prevail

also said that the opposition was sacrificing Zero Hour despite the fact that the Union Home Minister was to give a statement in the house in the afternoon.

Harivansh repeatedly urged the members that the Question Hour was the property of the house and it cannot be disrupted like this. He also appealed to all agitating MPs to go back to their seats amid increasing protests.

When the Rajya Sabha met at 2 p.m., it was again adjourned within a few minutes to meet at 3 p.m., but again got adjourned as the opposition members were not ready to cooperate and kept on shouting and sloganeering for their demands.

The house sat at 4 p.m. and the Home Minister gave its statement on Nagaland, after which it was adjourned for the day.

# Shortage of officers in Armed Forces

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Dec 6:** The Central government Monday said that the Armed Forces face a shortage of 9,362 officers and 1,13,193 personnel.

In the Indian Army, 7,476 posts of officers and 97,177 posts of junior commissioned officers and other ranks are vacant. In the Indian Air Force, a total 621 officers and 4,850 junior commissioned officers and other ranks are vacant. In the Indian Navy, 1,265 officers and 11,166 junior commissioned officers and other ranks' posts are vacant. Minister of State (Defence) Ajay Bhatt in a written reply to BJP's Rakesh Sinha in Rajya Sabha said the government has taken a num-

ber of measures to reduce the shortages. These include sustained image projection, participation in career fairs and exhibitions and publicity campaigns to create awareness among the youth on the advantages

of taking up a challenging and satisfying career in the Armed Forces. To encourage the youth to join the Armed Forces, motivational lectures are regularly organised in schools, colleges, other educational institutes and National Cadet Corps (NCC) camps.

Further, the government has taken various steps to make the service in the Armed Forces more attractive including improvement in promotion prospects in the Armed Forces and to fill up vacancies.

As per the government policy on the subject, all citizens irrespective of their caste, creed, region or religion are eligible for enrolment in the Indian Army



Policewomen jubilate after their Passing Out Parade in Chikmagalur, Karnataka

PTI PHOTO

# China attempting to build military base in Atlantic Ocean

MEANWHILE, LAST MONTH NEW SATELLITE IMAGES SUGGEST CHINA HAS BUILT A SECOND VILLAGE IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH SECTOR AND MORE VILLAGES IN DISPUTED TERRITORY WITH BHUTAN AS PART OF ITS SALAMI TACTICS

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Dec 6:** China is attempting to woo Equatorial Guinea into allowing them to build a military base off their coast, according to a report - a move which would give Beijing a foothold in the Atlantic, and deeply worry Washington, Daily Mail reported.

US intelligence officials believe that China's President Xi Jinping is hoping to convince the president of the West African nation, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, to allow expansion of an existing port in the city of Bata, and conversion into a military base, the report said.

Were China to convert the Bata port into a military base, it would enable



Beijing to repair and rearm their warships and other naval equipment in the same waters in which the US Eastern Seaboard sits, the report added.

"As part of our diplomacy to address maritime-security issues, we have made clear to Equatorial Guinea that certain potential steps involving (Chinese) activity there would raise national-security concerns," a senior Biden administration official told *The Wall Street Journal* Sunday.

Officials have previously mooted a Chinese military base in Atlantic waters as a nightmare scenario for the US, amid tensions between the two nations over Taiwan and the origins of Covid, the report added.

China only has one overseas military base, in Djibouti, in East Africa, which it opened in 2017. That sits on the other side of the African continent, and looks out onto the waters of the Gulf of Aden. Meanwhile, last month new satellite images suggest China has built a second village in Arunachal Pradesh sector and more villages in disputed territory with Bhutan as part of its salami tactics. "This village (in Arunachal Pradesh) appears to be within the survey of India and McMahon line boundary... geogra-

phy however, restricts access allowing Beijing to move unchallenged, such land grabs alter maps and promote sinicization of local features hindering future challenges to Indian territorial claims," said satellite image expert whose Twitter handle identifies him as @detresfa.

The village lies 93 kilometers east of the first China-constructed village in Arunachal Pradesh, which was reported by the Pentagon last month. In a report to the US Congress, Pentagon said that in 2020 China had built a large 100-home civilian village inside disputed territory between China's Tibet Autonomous Region and India's Arunachal Pradesh state in the eastern sector of the LAC.

**FOREST DEPARTMENT** No. MM-274  
**OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER, BARIPADA FOREST DIVISION**  
e-mail: dfo.baripada@odisha.gov.in  
**Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice**  
**Bid Identification No. DFO-BPD-06/2021-22**

1. Number of Works	: 4 (Four) number of work
2. Approximate estimated cost	: 6.00 lakh to 64.87 lakh
3. Period of Completion	: 3 (three) calendar months
4. Date & time of availability of bid documents in the portal	: Dt.07.12.2021 to 21.12.2021
5. Last date/time of receipt of bid in the portal	: Dt.21.12.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.
6. Date of opening of bid	: Dt.22.12.2021 at 11.00 A.M.
7. Name & address of the Officer Inviting Bid	: O/o. the Divisional Forest Officer, Baripada Forest Division, Baripada, Mayurbhanj

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

**Sd/- Divisional Forest Officer**  
**Baripada Forest Division**  
OIPR-08065/11/0010/2122

'KASHMIR IS IN PAIN'

## Mehbooba stages dharna at Jantar Mantar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 6: Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti staged a dharna at Jantar Mantar here Monday to protest the alleged repression of people of the union territory and demanded that killing of innocents be stopped immediately.

The Jammu and Kashmir Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) president said she decided to stage a dharna in the national capital, as she was never allowed to register her protest in Kashmir. She said she was either detained at her house or whisked away by police every time she planned a protest.

Scores of PDP workers joined her in the protest at Jantar Mantar.

Kashmir has become a prison where people are not allowed to express their opinion. They are being repressed since August 2019 and what surprises me is how the government is busy portraying that everything was hunky-dory in the valley with the help of some of the paid media, she told reporters.

In August 2019, Jammu and Kashmir special status under Article 370 of the Constitution was abrogated and the state was bifurcated into union territories.



PDP President Mehbooba Mufti and her party leaders stage a protest at Jantar Mantar, in New Delhi, Monday. PTI PHOTO

The former chief minister denied the charge that she raised questions on every police action. Whenever there is an encounter and a militant gets killed, nobody questions but when a civilian gets killed, only then people come out and start asking questions, she said.

Carrying a placard that read 'Kashmir is in pain', Mehbooba said, "You have seen what happened in Nagaland where 13 civilians were gunned down. An FIR has been lodged immediately. Why does the same not happen in Kashmir as well? Though I do not have much

hope that anything is going to come out of these enquiries but still the government is seen acting."

She alleged that corruption was at its peak in Jammu and Kashmir, local residents were being deprived of jobs and blood of innocents was being spilled on roads. I have come



**You have seen what happened in Nagaland where 13 civilians were gunned down. An FIR has been lodged immediately. Why does the same not happen in Kashmir as well? Though I do not have much hope that anything is going to come out of these enquiries but still the government is seen acting**

**MEHBOOBA MUFTI**  
FORMER J&K CHIEF MINISTER

here to tell the people of this country that if they don't wake up even now, the day is not far when the nation of Gandhi and Ambedkar will get converted into (Nathuram) Godse's country and after that we all will be helpless, she said.

Several photo journalists requested Mehbooba to remove her mask for a better picture but she replied with a visible smile on her face, if I remove the mask, I can be booked under UAPA immediately.

## J&K board asks schools to withdraw book with 'blasphemous' content

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Dec 6: The Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) directed all the schools in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh Sunday to withdraw a textbook published by a Delhi-based publisher following reports that it carries blasphemous material against Islam.

The publishing house, JAY CEE Publications Private Limited, has regretted the mistake in the 2020 edition of its textbook titled History and Civics for Class 7.

concerned to take stern action against the publisher as well as the distributor of the textbook.

In a letter to the Srinagar senior superintendent of police (SSP), Additional District Magistrate, Srinagar, Syed Haneef Balkhi has said the content in the book is sensitive in nature and stern action should be taken.

JAY CEE Publications (P) Ltd, AIMO House, Jhandewalan Extension, New Delhi has published a social studies book for Class 7 wherein content of sensitive nature has reportedly been



The Jammu and Kashmir State Board of School Education



The publisher was condemned over the depiction of the last messenger of Islam in the textbook.

In an order, the director, academics, JKBOSE said all the schools of the Union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, affiliated with the CBSE, the JKBOSE or any other board, are directed not to use the 2020 edition of the textbook.

If the textbook is being used in any school, it must be withdrawn immediately, otherwise strict action as warranted under the provisions of law shall be initiated, the order said. Condemning the publication of material that has hurt the sentiments of people, the JKBOSE directed the publisher to withdraw the textbook immediately from all the schools where it has been distributed.

The Srinagar district administration has asked the authorities

published and is in circulation. The said book is being stocked and distributed by Paradise Book Shop, Parraypora, Srinagar, the letter read.

Meanwhile, National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah condemned the pictorial depictions in the textbook relating to Islam, asserting that such irresponsible publication has hurt the sentiments of Muslims and also runs counter to the efforts of forging tolerance.

Such irresponsible publications are hurtful and least helpful in preserving the values of dialogue and coexistence, he said while condemning the caricatures with regards to Islam.

The NC chief said it seems that the government has thrown caution to the wind while dealing with such a sensitive subject.

## Communal agenda of Sangh failed due to strong Left movement, says Vijayan



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, Dec 6: The communal agenda of the Sangh Parivar failed to gain traction in Kerala due to the strong presence of the Left movement in the state, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said Sunday.

Vijayan, while inaugurating a study centre in the memory of communist revolutionary P Krishna Pillai, said the RSS was attempting to pollute the public discourse by spreading their communal propaganda and creating doubts in the minds of people.

Vijayan also lashed out at the RSS over the recent procession at Thalassery with communally-laced slogans and the controversy over Halal certification of food.

"They have attempted various communal agenda to weaken the Left front but failed. Now they have been focused on polluting the public discourse. As part of it, they are

creating confusion in society and spreading communal propaganda. They are bringing in their communal angle in every possible sphere of public life," Vijayan said. He said the recent controversy over Halal food and Halal certification for prasadam served at Sabarimala was part of the Sangh Parivar agenda to spread hate in society.

"You all may have noticed the recent controversy over Halal food. Is that something new to our society? It's been said that even in Parliament, there is Halal certified food. The prasadam with Halal marking at Sabarimala turned out to be the one supplied by a Siva Sena leader."

"Halal certification is part of the business strategy in various countries. And this is not done by someone from any one particular religion. The sangh parivar is spreading hate," he said.

Vijayan said the communal agenda of Sangh Parivar was ef-

### Vijayan a 'friend of Islamic terrorist': BJP

Launching a scathing attack on Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, the Kerala BJP unit Monday described him as a "friend of the Islamic terrorist" who is implementing the agenda of the Popular Front of India (PFI). State BJP general secretary P Sudhir Monday said it has come to the fore that at a school in Pathanamthitta district, the PFI activists are forcefully pinning "Me Babur" badge on the shirts of students studying at a local school at Kottangal. "The village council in which the school is located is ruled jointly by the CPI-M and the SDPI and hence, the Vijayan government has turned a blind eye to this heinous crime. This is not at all acceptable," said Sudhir.

fective in many other states and they were making use of the Congress Party.

"In Kerala, the Sangh Parivar failed to gain traction due to the strong presence of Left movement in the state," the CM said.

Vijayan said Congress leaders have decided not to oppose communalism and as a result their leaders are raising the same arguments put forth by the BJP leadership.

The Left leader also said that the Communist movement in Kerala was successful in Kerala because the farmers and other working class fought side by side for their rights without any basis of any religion.

## Gulmarg coldest place in Valley

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Dec 6: The minimum temperature across Kashmir, except at the famous ski-resort of Gulmarg, settled above the freezing point Monday even as the weather office predicted possibility of a wet spell mid-week.

Most places in the valley received rains and snowfall Sunday.

Gulmarg resort in north Kashmir's Baramulla district recorded a minimum temperature of minus 7 degrees Celsius, down over five degrees from minus 1.4 degrees Celsius the previous night,

the officials said. They said the resort was the only place in the valley where the minimum temperature stayed below the freezing point Sunday night and it was the coldest recorded place in the valley.

Sunday night was also the coldest night of the season so far at the resort. The temperature at other places in the valley settled above the freezing point. Srinagar recorded a low of 2.6 degrees Celsius Sunday night, two degrees up from the previous night, the officials said. There would be a gradual fall in the night temperature across the union territory, the MeT Office said.



Tourists at play at a snow covered field after a light snowfall at Sonamarg in Ganderbal district of central Kashmir, Monday. PTI PHOTO

## It's girl power at the cradle of Kathakali

**IN A REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE, THE KERALA KALAMANDALAM HAS DECIDED TO ADMIT GIRL STUDENTS IN ITS 'VESHAM' COURSE**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, Dec 6: Kerala Kalamandalam Deemed University is synonymous with the art form of Kathakali -- the Kerala art form, the glory of which is spread far and wide.

In a revolutionary change, the Kerala Kalamandalam founded by Kerala's noted poet Vallathol Narayana Menon, 91 years ago, had decided to admit girl students in its "vesham" course in both northern and southern kalari forms.

The girl students have outnumbered boys in the southern style with three girls joining the course while only one boy has opted for it.

In the northern style also, five girls and a boy is admitted to the course and here also, girls have outnumbered boys. The head of the Vadakkan style or northern style of Kalari, Kalamandalam Suryanarayanan told IANS: "Five girls and a boy were admitted to the course and classes have started



since Wednesday. Girls are participating with much enthusiasm and I find them performing exceedingly well."

Generally, in Kathakali, even the characters of women were enacted by men and with girls being admitted to Vesham course, a sea change is expected in the performance and style in Kathakali.

One of the doyens of Kathakali, who has unique style for himself and has fans across the globe,

Padmasri Kalamandalam Gopi who is also in the advisory board of Kerala Kalamandalam, told IANS: "I had given a suggestion to admit girls for Kathakali course in an experimental basis. This was accepted by the board and we have commenced classes for girl students. If other similar art forms of Kerala like Ottanthullal and Koodiyattam can have girl students, why not Kathakali?"

The students are admitted for ve-

Generally, in Kathakali, even the characters of women were enacted by men and with girls being admitted, a sea change is expected in the performance and style in Kathakali

sham courses -- both, northern and southern styles, at class 8, and they can continue up to post-graduation for ten years at a stretch.

Noted art critic and writer Rajani Varrier told IANS: "It is indeed a revolutionary decision by the Kalamandalam. If women can perform and excel in all fields, why not in this? Girls will prove in the days to come that they are masters in the art and the feminine characters if played by women will have more natural flair than men enacting it."

## Son in UAE jail for spying for India; mother to wait till 2025 to see him

*The woman has alleged that her son was not even provided proper legal aid to defend himself in the courts there*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, Dec 6: Shahubanath Beevi, mother of Shihani Meera Sahib Jamal Mohammed, may have to wait till 2025 to see her son -- presently serving a 10-year jail term in a prison there since 2015 for allegedly spying for the Indian government -- after the Centre told the Kerala High Court that its Embassy there has done all it can.

Her son was awarded a 10-year jail term in August 2015 and the sentence was upheld by the Abu Dhabi Federal Court of Appeal and therefore, he would be released in September 2025 and then deported back to India, the Centre has told the high court.

The Centre has said that the



Indian Embassy in UAE had requested the local authorities to consider the case sympathetically and pardon the sentence of Mohammed, but being a case related to that country's national security they declined to grant any such relief.

As there was nothing more the Embassy could do, it had updated the same on the MADAD portal and recommended that it be closed, the Centre has said.

The central government has also told the court that the emails sent to the Embassy for filing a mercy petition on behalf of Mohammed have been forwarded to the concerned local authorities for their sympathetic consideration.

The submissions by the Centre

were made in a statement filed in the court in response to Shahubanath Beevi's plea, filed through advocate Jose Abraham, seeking legal support for her son.

Refuting the allegation, the Centre has said that when the Embassy came to know of her son's arrest in 2015, it had sent an official communication in September 2015 to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of UAE for investigation into the matter and seeking the reasons for the arrest and consular access to Mohammed.

As no response was received, the Embassy had in January 2016 sent a reminder; the Centre has claimed and added that in March 2017 consular access to Mohammed was obtained and an official had visited him in the prison.

In view of the above facts, the Centre has urged the court to close the petition.

The matter was taken up Monday, but as the UAE Embassy here has not been impleaded, the court listed it for hearing December 9.



## of the day quote

Tomorrow (Tuesday), I will hold a press conference in Bengaluru where I will speak on all issues. I want to bring one thing to your notice, I have nowhere said that I will have an alliance with another party till now. Our national president (H D Deve Gowda) has only said that Kumaraswamy will decide on what to do, where we have not put our candidate

**H D KUMARASWAMY** | JD(S) LEADER

The first thing that is now before the government is legislative council polls, then assembly (legislature session), after that on the advice of the leadership, will take further decisions

**BASAVARAJ BOMMAI** | KARNATAKA CHIEF MINISTER

The Delhi government is closely monitoring the COVID-19 situation arisen out of the Omicron variant

**SATYENDAR JAIN** | DELHI HEALTH MINISTER

### SHORT TAKES

#### Wasim Rizvi converts to Hinduism

**Ghaziabad:** Former Shia Waqf Board chief Wasim Rizvi has converted to Hinduism after renouncing Islam. The conversion ceremony was conducted by Mahant Narasimha Ananda Saraswati of Dasna temple in Ghaziabad and Rizvi will now be known as Harbir Narayan Singh Tyagi. Rizvi drew his entire community's wrath after he moved the Supreme Court appealing to it to remove 26 verses of the Quran, claiming that they encourage terrorism.

#### Terrorist, associate arrested in J&K

**Srinagar:** Jammu and Kashmir Police along with security forces have arrested an active terrorist along with an associate at Sopore in North Kashmir's Baramulla district, officials said Monday. Police said acting on specific input regarding presence of terrorist in Ningli area of Sopore, a cordon and search operation was launched by Police, army's 52 RR and 177 Bn of the CRPF.

#### Kashi gets ready to welcome PM

**Varanasi:** The newly constructed 'Kashi Vishwanath Corridor' of the famous and ancient Kashi Vishwanath temple will be inaugurated in Varanasi by Prime Minister Narendra Modi December 13. On this occasion 'Deepsav' will be celebrated all over the city of Varanasi. All the ghats of Varanasi as well as every house in the city will be lit up.

#### Sarada Menon passes away at 98

**Chennai:** Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin Monday condoled the death of Sarada Menon, India's first woman psychiatrist. Menon, 98, was also the Founder of the Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF India). She passed away Sunday evening. Stalin said the death of Menon is a loss for the medical fraternity.

#### Bodies of missing trekkers found

**Dharamsala:** Bodies of two trekkers, who had gone missing while trekking in the Dhauladhar mountain range, were recovered from under a hill Monday, officials said. Harsimranpreet Singh of Gurdwara Road, and Naveen Kumar of Dari, Dharamsala had gone for trekking on Monday last, Dharamsala SDM Shilpi Beakta said.



The killing of citizens in Nagaland is very painful. Security forces should have identified the citizens. After a thorough inquiry, action will have to be taken against those involved in it

**RAJKUMAR RANJAN SINGH** | UNION MINISTER

### BIG LOSS

As many as 144 central infrastructure projects have reported delays in its completion in the current financial year and the total cost overrun of these is ₹14,960.02 crore, Parliament was informed Monday



## NAGALAND KILLINGS

# Mourners put wreaths on coffins

AGENCIES

**Guwahati Dec 6:** Indians outraged by the security forces' mistaken killing of 14 civilians in Nagaland state held funeral rites for the dead Monday amid intense security and sporadic internet outages aimed at damping unrest in the remote northeastern region.

Security and government officials have said 13 members of the region's predominant Konyak tribe and one security trooper were killed Saturday after the forces in the border state mistook a group of labourers for militants and opened fire.

Another member of the tribe was killed during protests on Sunday over the killings, which has prompted the government to launch an inquiry, while police and officials ramped up patrols ahead of the last rites.

Hundreds of mourners laid wreaths on the coffins of the dead, lined up on a playground, as the state's chief minister, Neiphiu Rio, led a mass funeral service in the district of Mon, the site of the incident.

"The killing of innocent civilians is terrorism, we are Indians, not terrorists," read a placard nearby.

Home Minister Amit Shah, speaking in parliament, appealed for peace in Nagaland. He said the government "expresses remorse" as civilians lives were lost when security forces were trying to ambush insurgents.



Coffins of the 14 civilians during their funeral in Mon district

PTI PHOTO

Shah said an investigation had been ordered to identify loopholes in the security strategy at a time when hundreds of members of the security forces are patrolling Mon district.

"Such misfortunate incidents are being investigated by the army at the highest level," he said.

The army expressed "deep regret" over the intelligence lapse but residents have demanded a shutdown of its operations, with army camps moved out of civilian areas.

Police registered a complaint against a unit of the Special Forces in the Indian Army over the incident, saying there had been no police guide nor a request for one from security forces.

"It is obvious that the intention of security forces is to murder and injure civilians," they said in the complaint, reviewed by Reuters.

### SWEEPING POWERS

Feelings are running high in Nagaland, where people have often accused the security forces of wrongly attacking villagers in counterinsurgency operations against rebel groups under a law known as the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA).

Besides sweeping powers of search and arrest, the law, enforced in parts of four of the seven northeastern states, allows security forces to open fire to maintain public order in areas designated "disturbed areas".

Nagaland is covered by the law as India says rebel groups operate in forests that spans the neighbouring states of Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh. All three states border Myanmar. However, Neiphiu Rio called the law draconian and urged its removal.

"Today, the whole world is crit-

### TMC demands Shah's resignation

**KOLKATA:** The TMC Monday said the killing of 14 civilians by the Army in Nagaland has put a question mark over AFSPA and Union Home Minister Amit Shah should step down as it has proved that he has "completely failed" in his duty to provide security to the people of the country. The Centre should set up a high-powered committee to see if the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act is serving its purpose in the country or not, senior TMC leader Sushmita Dev demanded at a press conference here. She, however, declined to give a direct reply when asked whether TMC was for repeal of AFSPA in the north eastern states.

icising AFSPA and now the Nagaland government wants AFSPA to be withdrawn," the chief minister said. Members of the tribal groups who attended the funeral said the incident exposed flaws in the army's intelligence gathering techniques and they should be punished.

"The army looks at every civilian as an insurgent and they enjoy the power to shoot anyone down but now must be kicked out of our homeland," said a senior tribal leader of the Konyak tribe on condition of anonymity.

# 85% of adult population got 1st jab: Mandaviya

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Dec 6:** More than 85 per cent of India's eligible adult population has received the first shot of Covid-19 vaccine as the cumulative doses administered so far crossed 128.66 crore Monday, the Union Health Ministry said. Over 71 lakh vaccine doses have been administered Monday till 7 pm.

The daily vaccination tally is expected to increase with the compilation of the final reports for the day by late in the night, it stated.

Earlier in the day, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya congratulated the country on inoculating more than 85 per cent of the eligible population with the first dose. "Another day, another milestone. Eighty-five per cent of the eligible population inoculated with the first dose of Covid-19 vaccine. With PM Narendra Modi ji's

mantra of 'Sabka Prayas', India is marching ahead strongly in the fight against Covid-19," he tweeted. The minister Sunday said over 50 per cent of India's eligible adult population was fully vaccinated against Covid-19. The countrywide vaccination drive was rolled out January 16 with healthcare workers getting inoculated in the first phase. Vaccination of frontline workers started from February 2.

The next phase of Covid-19 vaccination commenced from March 1 for people over 60 years of age and those aged 45 and above with specified comorbid conditions. The country launched vaccination for all people aged more than 45 years from April 1.

The government then decided to expand its vaccination drive by allowing everyone above 18 to be vaccinated from May 1.

## IMA WANTS BOOSTER DOSE FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS, OTHERS

The Indian Medical Association has demanded a booster dose for healthcare, frontline workers and immuno-compromised individuals to augment their immunity amid the Omicron threat. "At this juncture, IMA appeals to the government on the eve of the impending third wave to officially announce the healthcare, frontline workers and immuno-compromised individuals to be given an additional dose to augment the immunity", said Dr J A Jayalal, National President of the IMA. Omicron has proved to be less virulent in producing severe infections but definitely 5 to 10 times more potent in transmissibility than the Delta virus.

## COVID VICTIMS' EX-GRATIA

# SC lashes out at states



AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Dec 6:** The Supreme Court Monday lashed out at state governments for delays in compensation payments for deaths due to Covid. The court rapped the governments of Maharashtra, West Bengal, and Rajasthan. The SC had in October approved the payment of 50,000 to families of people who died of Covid-19, to be paid over and above the amounts paid by centre and state under various benevolent schemes.

A two-judge bench of Justices MR Shah and BV Nagarathna was hearing the matter.

"We are not at all happy with the affidavit filed by the Maharashtra government. Over 1 lakh deaths have been recorded in Maharashtra but only 37,000 applications were received. Not a single person has been paid compensation yet," Justice Shah told the lawyer for the Maharashtra Government. It was "ridiculous" and cannot be accepted, he added.

When Sachin Patil, the lawyer for the Maharashtra government

sought more time to start disbursing the compensation and said, "We will file an affidavit on compliance soon", Justice Shah warned him that the court would pass strictures against the state government. "You keep it (the affidavit) in your pocket and give it to your CM," he said.

The Supreme Court then ordered the Maharashtra government to start making compensation payments immediately.

In the case of West Bengal, the court noted that there have been over 19,000 Covid deaths but only 467 applications have been received. Further, only 110 out of them have been paid compensation so far.

The court added that most state governments set up the online portals after December 3, only after being issued a notice by the Supreme Court. "State governments woke up and set up online portals only after courts compelled them to work," Justice Shah remarked.

Turning to Rajasthan, the court noted that nearly 9,000 Covid deaths were recorded in the state, out of which only 595 applications have been received so far and compensation has not been paid to anyone yet. Justice Shah hit out at the lawyer for the state government and said, "Tell your government to be human."

The court also directed these state governments to ensure wider publicity through newspapers, television, and radio about the compensation scheme so that more people can come forward. The next hearing of the case will take place on December 10.

## BRAVING THE ODDS



A man transports passengers on a rickshaw during heavy rain in Agartala

PTI PHOTO

## Ruckus in MP school over 'religious conversion'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Vidisha (MP), Dec 6:** Activists of right-wing organisations allegedly created a ruckus and indulged in vandalism at a missionary school in a town in Madhya Pradesh's Vidisha district Monday claiming religious conversion of eight students, a charge denied by the educational institute, police said.

Police have registered a case of rioting against unidentified persons after the incident in the premises of Saint Joseph School in Ganjbasoda, some 48 kms from the district headquarters, under relevant sections of Indian Penal Code (IPC), Sub-Divisional Officer of Police (SDOP) Bharat Bhushan Sharma said.

Eyewitnesses said stones were also pelted at the school building during the ruckus. It was also alleged students are forced to say prayers of Christianity in a letter to the district collector Sunday, the Saint Joseph Church, however, de-

nied all allegations of religious conversion and claimed rituals which were performed on eight Christian children were like 'Janeu Sanskar' in Hinduism (related to wearing a white, sacred thread) October 30.

The church also called for an investigation to find out the truth. In the letter, the church accused some local YouTube channels of spreading false news of religious conversion and creating communal tension.

Heritage steam loco removed from Rail Bhawan

**New Delhi, Dec 6:** A heritage steam engine, which was installed on the premises of the Rail Bhawan in the national capital, was Monday shifted to a museum here, and a replica of semi-high speed train Vande Bharat Express will take its place, officials said.

The B-class rail engine named Loco No. 799 was manufactured in 1925 in Glasgow, the UK, and belonged to the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR), a UNESCO world heritage. It was brought to Delhi, some years after Independence, according to railway experts.

The vintage locomotive was removed from the Rail Bhawan premises in the early hours. During day time, many passers-by were caught by surprise, to see the old steam beauty gone from the site.

A spokesperson of the Indian Railways said the heritage locomotive in Rail Bhawan premises was removed in the early hour and shifted to the National Rail Museum in Chanakyapuri, in order to "make it more accessible" to the general public. The replica model will symbolically showcase Vande Bharat, India's first indigenously-made train.

## 'India's plastic waste generation more than doubled in 5 yrs'

THE CENTRE SAID THAT MORE THAN 34 LAKH TONS OF PLASTIC WASTE WAS GENERATED IN 2019-20 AND 30.59 LAKH TONS IN 2018-19

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Dec 6:** India's plastic waste generation has more than doubled in the last five years with an average annual increase of 21.8 per cent, the Centre said Monday.

Responding to a query raised in the Lower House of Parliament, Minister of State for Environment Ashwini Choubey said that more than 34 lakh tons of plastic waste was generated in 2019-20 and 30.59 lakh tons in 2018-19.

According to data shared by the minister, in the last five years, the quantity of plastic waste in the country has more than doubled, as the country produced 15.89 lakh tons of plastic waste in 2015-16.

The ministry said that annual data on the generation of solid



waste, plastic waste, e-waste, construction and demolition (C&D) waste, bio-medical waste (BMW) and hazardous waste (HW) in the country is compiled by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

"Based on the studies undertaken by CPCB on hazardous waste

and data compiled in respect of other wastes, the average annual increase observed in generation of hazardous waste is two per cent, in bio-medical waste (BMW) is 5.8 per cent, solid waste 0.1 per cent and plastic waste 21.8 per cent," the minister said in his written reply.

In the last five years, the quantity of plastic waste in the country has more than doubled, as the country produced 15.89 lakh tons of plastic waste in 2015-16

He said the data is collected from the respective State Pollution Control Board/Pollution Control Committees (SPCBs/PCCs) in line with the provisions contained in various rules notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

Responding to another query on biomedical waste, the minis-

ter said India produced 677 tons of biomedical waste per day in 2020 while in 2019 it produced 619 tons BMW per day. In 2015, the BMW produced in India was 502 tons per day, the data showed.

In response to another question on the number of complaints received on non-scientific or illegal disposal of biomedical waste across the country, the minister said that the CPCB had received a total of 23 public complaints between 2016 and 2021.

Of these, five complaints were from Rajasthan, four from Delhi, three from Tamil Nadu, two from Jharkhand and one complaint each from Bihar, Punjab, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Puducherry, West Bengal and Chhattisgarh.



**Washington should take the first step in revival of the 2015 nuclear deal since it was the one which left the deal**  
ALI BAGHERI KANI | IRAN'S TOP NUCLEAR NEGOTIATOR

### CHEWING GUM TO THE RESCUE!

Scientists are developing a chewing gum laced with a plant-grown protein that serves as a "trap" for the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which causes COVID, reducing viral load in saliva and potentially lowering transmission



### of the day quote

I call on every country negotiating with Iran in Vienna to take a strong line and make it clear to Iran that it is impossible to negotiate and enrich uranium at the same time  
NAFTALI BENNETT | ISRAELI PM

At this critical juncture in the world, I urge people to use their resources to achieve universal sustainable development without spending resources on the arms races. Let's take action and commit to universal peace  
SHEIKH HASINA | BANGLADESH PM

South Korea's trade is expected to amount to an all-time high of more than \$1.2 trillion this year on the back of strong exports in a sign that the nation's economic recovery is faster than anticipated  
MOON JAE-IN | SOUTH KOREA PRESIDENT

### SHORT TAKES

#### 3 children killed

**Cairo:** An apartment building collapsed in a southern Egyptian province on Monday, killing at least three children, according to a media report. Rescue teams retrieved at least nine injured from the rubble of the two-story building in the district of Ihnasyia in Beni Suef province, around 111 km (69 miles) south of Cairo, according to the daily Al-Ahram.

#### 2 pilots die in Pak

**Islamabad:** Two Pakistani Army aviation pilots were killed when their military helicopter crashed in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, close to the Siachen region, the Army said Monday. Both pilots were killed in the crash, the Army said, adding that search and rescue helicopters and army troops reached the incident site. The cause of the mishap was not immediately known.

#### Tombs uncovered

**Cairo:** A Spanish archaeological mission discovered two adjacent tombs in Egypt's Minya Governorate dating back to the Saite Dynasty (664 BC-525 BC), the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in Cairo announced. The mission from the University of Barcelona found the remains of two unknown persons with gold tongues in one of the tombs, Xinhua news agency quoted Mostafa Waziri, secretary-general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, as saying in a statement Sunday.

#### Nehammer sworn in

**Berlin:** Karl Nehammer was sworn in Monday as Austria's third chancellor in two months, capping a round of upheaval triggered by the decision last week of Sebastian Kurz, the country's dominant political figure of recent years, to bow out of politics. Nehammer, 49, has been Austria's interior minister since early 2020.

#### Talks held

**Taipei:** Senior officials from the Slovak Republic are in Taiwan for talks on deepening ties with the island in the highest-level visit by the EU-member country since it opened a representative office in Taiwan in 2003. The visit by the delegation, which began Sunday, follows a mission last month by members of the European Parliament to the self-ruled island, which is also claimed by China. It comes amid growing support for the island democracy, which China says is territory to be annexed by force if necessary.

## Vaccine discrimination risks leaving Africa behind

REUTERS

**Sekenani, Kenya, Dec 6:** When a group arrived at the Sekenani health clinic in rural Kenya for their COVID-19 vaccines recently, staff told them there were no doses left and that they should come back soon. For some, it meant a long wasted journey on foot and a day away from their cattle herds.

Yet Narok county, where the clinic is located, was not short of vaccines; nearly 14,000 doses were sitting in a fridge in the nearest town, 115 km away. A mix-up with county officials meant Sekenani did not get enough, two health workers said.

"We had to say sorry. It's not a good feeling, when somebody comes and they want the vaccine, and we don't have it," clinician Mike Nalakit, 27, said.

The small failure in a village 270 km southwest of the capital Nairobi is an illustration of the challenges African nations now face as they battle COVID-19: even though vaccine supplies are finally



ramping up, getting needles into arms is proving the hard part.

Successful vaccination campaigns in Africa are vital to ending the pandemic globally, health experts say. The continent's low inoculation rates encourage viral mutations like the new Omicron variant spreading across South

Africa, which has prompted another spate of international travel bans.

Only 102 million people, or 7.5% of the continent's population, are fully vaccinated, according to the World Health Organization, which warned vaccine inequity will prolong the pandemic.

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African governments have been crying out for higher vaccine deliveries this year, but production constraints and hoarding by richer countries severely limited supplies until recently

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Shortages of funds, medical staff and equipment, as well as vaccine hesitancy, were already hobbling inoculation campaigns in some parts of Africa. The anticipated surge, comprising millions of jabs in the coming weeks, could expose those weaknesses further, experts warn. About 40% of vaccines that have arrived so far

on the continent have not been used, according to data from the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, a policy think-tank.

The rate of vaccine use will have to rise four-fold to keep up with expected supply in coming months, the institute says. "We are all, like you, very concerned that countries are not picking up the vaccines. The uptake is not as we would have loved to see," head of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention John Nkengasong said.

Vaccination rates vary widely across Africa, a continent of well over a billion people, and some health systems in relatively small nations and in North Africa are having more success.

Cape Verde, an archipelago nation off West Africa with a population of about 600,000, has vaccinated nearly 65% of adults, rivalling some European countries. In Democratic Republic of Congo, a restive country in Central Africa with a population of nearly 90 million, the number is 0.1%.

## Body of Lankan national arrives

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Colombo, Dec 6:** The remains of a Sri Lankan national, who was lynched by a mob in Pakistan over allegations of blasphemy, were brought to Colombo Monday, even as authorities in the Pakistani province of Punjab arrested more suspects involved in the grisly incident.

The wooden coffin carrying the remains was brought to Sri Lanka from Lahore's Allama Iqbal International Airport on a Sri Lankan Airlines flight. "Human remains of late Don Nandasri P Kumara Diyawadanage. From Lahore to Colombo" was transcribed on the coffin.

The remains of Diyawadanage were brought to Colombo from Lahore.

A mob of over 800 men, attacked a garment factory and lynched its general manager Priyantha Kumara Diyawadanage and set him on fire over allegations of blasphemy Friday last in Sialkot district, some 100 km from Lahore.

## Indonesia volcanic eruption: 27 missing



A man inspects a truck buried in the ash following the eruption of Mount Semeru in Lumajang district, East Java province, Indonesia

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Sumberwuluh (Indonesia), Dec 6:** Rescuers dug out the body of 13-year-old boy with their bare hands on Monday, as improved weather conditions allowed them to resume their search after the highest volcano on Indonesia's Java island erupted with fury, killing at least 15 people with searing gas and ash and leaving 27 others missing.

Mount Semeru in Lumajang district in East Java province spewed thick columns of ash as high as 12,000 metres (40,000 feet) into the sky in a sudden eruption Saturday triggered by heavy rain. Villages and nearby towns were blanketed by tons of volcanic debris.

Searing gas raced down the sides of the mountain, smothering entire villages and killing or seriously burning those caught in its path. National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesperson Abdul Muhari said 56 people had been hospitalised, mostly with burns. He said rescuers were still searching for 27 villagers reported missing. Nearly 3,000 houses and 38 schools were damaged, Muhari said. The body of the 13-year-old boy was recovered in the worst-hit village of Sumberwuluh, where houses were buried to their rooftops and cars were submerged. Crumpled roofs,

charred carcasses of cattle and broken chairs covered in gray ash and soot dotted the smoldering landscape.

Search and rescue efforts were temporarily suspended Sunday afternoon because of fears that heavy rain would cause more hot ash and debris to fall from the crater. The eruption of the 3,676-metre-high (12,060-foot) mountain eased pressure that had been building under a lava dome in the crater. But experts warned that the dome could further collapse, causing an avalanche of blistering gas and debris trapped beneath it.

More than 1,700 villagers escaped to makeshift emergency shelters after Saturday's powerful eruption, but many others defied official warnings and chose to remain in their homes to tend their livestock and protect their property. Semeru, also known as Mahameru, has erupted many times in the last 200 years. Still, as on many of the 129 volcanoes monitored in Indonesia, tens of thousands of people live on its fertile slopes. It last erupted in January, with no casualties. Indonesia, an archipelago of more than 270 million people, is prone to earthquakes and volcanic activity because it sits along the Pacific "Ring of Fire", a horseshoe-shaped series of fault lines.

## Xi calls for tighter control over religious affairs

*In his address, Xi said China will further promote "sinicization of religion", with a focus on strengthening control of online religious affairs, pointing out that it is imperative to uphold the principle of developing religions in the Chinese context, state-run Xinhua news agency reported*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

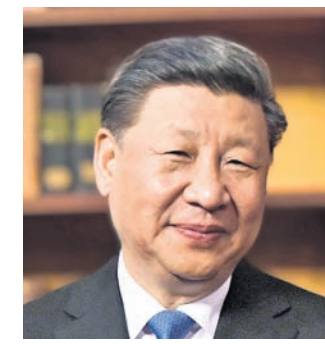
**Beijing, Dec 6:** Chinese President Xi Jinping has called for further measures to tighten the state's control over religious affairs in the country, including the "sinicization" of faiths which broadly means bringing them in line with the policies of the ruling Communist Party. An official white paper released

in 2019 said China has about 200 million believers - majority were Buddhists in Tibet. Others included 20 million Muslims, 38 million Protestant Christians and 6 million Catholic Christians; besides 140,000 places of worship.

Xi, 68, head of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the powerful military and the Presidency and widely expected to remain in power for life, has been calling for "sinicization" of religions, re-orienting them to function under the guidance of the CPC which ideologically remains atheistic.

"It is necessary to improve the democratic supervision of religious leaders, and push for the rule of law in religious work, and carry out in-depth publicity and education about the rule of law," Xi told a national conference on work related to religious affairs held during the weekend here.

The conference, attended by the country's top leadership, was the first since 2016 and sets the parameters on China's religious affairs and their regulation over the next few years, according to experts.



In his address, Xi said China will further promote "sinicization of religion", with a focus on strengthening control of online religious affairs, pointing out that it is imperative to uphold the principle of developing religions in the Chinese context, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

The party's policy on freedom of religious belief should be fully and faithfully implemented and religious groups should stand as a bridge and a bond connecting the party and the government with people from religious circles and the vast religious believers, he said.

The meeting took place in the backdrop of widespread accusations of repressive control on Muslims and Christians in China, as well as the country's increasing tight supervision over religions, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported.

Last month, China was among several nations designated by the US as "countries of particular concern" for violations of religious freedom. Also, China is accused of following repressive religious policies amounting to genocide against Uyghur Muslims in the restive Xinjiang province.

The CPC apprehends foreign religions, especially Christianity, fearing subversion of its rule, like in Poland where the Church movement was instrumental in overthrowing Communist rule in 1989.

President Xi also underlined that efforts should be made to keep enhancing the recognition of the motherland, the Chinese nation, the Chinese culture, the CPC and socialism with Chinese characteristics among religious personalities and believers.

## UK HC rules in favour of Boris in Priti Patel case

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**London, Dec 6:** A UK High Court Monday ruled that British Prime Minister Boris Johnson had not misdirected himself over the provisions of the country's Ministerial Code when he chose not to sack Home Secretary Priti Patel over bullying allegations against her.

The First Division Association (FDA), the union for senior civil servants in Britain, had challenged Johnson's decision from last year in court, arguing he had incorrectly interpreted the definition of bullying.

In their ruling, Lord Justice Clive Lewis and Justice Karen Steyn dismissed the FDA's claim. "The question for this court

is whether the prime minister proceeded on the basis that conduct would not fall within the description of bullying within paragraph 1.2 of the Ministerial Code if the person concerned was unaware of, or did not intend, the harm or offence caused," Lord Justice Lewis said.

"Reading the statement (made by Johnson) as a whole, and in context, we do not consider that the Prime Minister misdirected himself in that way," he said.

In an investigation into Patel's behaviour following the allegations, Sir Alex Allan, then adviser on ministerial standards, found in November 2020 that the Indian-origin senior Cabinet minister had not always treated civil servants with "consideration and respect".



A man dressed as Santa Claus interacts with children at Steveston Village Fishermans Wharf in Richmond, British Columbia, Canada

## Japan's military, among world's strongest, looks to build

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Eniwa (Japan), Dec 6:** Dozens of tanks and soldiers fired explosives and machine guns in drills Monday on Japan's northern island of Hokkaido, a main stronghold for a nation that is perhaps the world's least-known military powerhouse.

Just across the sea from rival Russia, Japan opened up its humbly named Self Defense Force's firing exercises to the media in a display of public firepower that coincides with a recent escalation of Chinese and Russian military moves around Japanese territory.

The drills, which foreign journalists rarely have a chance to witness, will continue for nine days and include about 1,300 Ground Self Defense Force troops. On Monday, as hundreds of soldiers cheered from the sidelines and waved unit



Japanese Ground-Self Defense Force (JGDF) Type 90 tanks fire their guns at a target during the annual drill with live ammunition exercise at Minami Eniwa Camp Monday

flags, lines of tanks shot at targets meant to represent enemy missiles or armored vehicles.

The exercises illuminate a fascinating, easy-to-miss point. Japan, despite an officially pacifist constitution written when memories

of its World War II rampage were still fresh — and painful — boasts a military that puts all but a few nations to shame. And, with a host of threats lurking in Northeast Asia, its hawkish leaders are eager for more. It's not an easy sell. In a na-

tion still reviled by many of its neighbours for its past military actions, and where domestic pacifism runs high, any military buildup is controversial.

Japan has focused on its defensive capabilities and carefully avoids using the word "military" for its troops. But as it looks to defend its territorial and military interests against an assertive China, North Korea and Russia, officials in Tokyo are pushing citizens to put aside widespread unease over a more robust role for the military and support increased defence spending.

As it is, tens of billions of dollars each year have built an arsenal of nearly 1,000 warplanes and dozens of destroyers and submarines. Japan's forces rival those of Britain and France, and show no sign of slowing down in a pursuit of the best equipment and weapons

money can buy.

Not everyone agrees with this buildup. Critics, both Japan's neighbors and at home, urge Tokyo to learn from its past and pull back from military expansion. There's also domestic wariness over nuclear weapons. Japan, the only nation to have atomic bombs dropped on it in war, possesses no nuclear deterrent, unlike other top global militaries, and relies on the so-called US nuclear umbrella.

Proponents of the new military muscle flexing, however, say the expansion is well-timed and crucial to the Japanese alliance with Washington. China and Russia have stepped up military cooperation in recent years in an attempt to counter growing US-led regional partnerships.

In October, a fleet of five warships each from China and Russia circled

Japan as they travelled through the Pacific to the East China Sea. Last month, their warplanes flew together near Japan's airspace, causing Japanese fighter jets to scramble. In fiscal year 2020 through March, Japanese fighters scrambled more than 700 times — two-thirds against Chinese warplanes, with the remainder mostly against Russians — the Defence Ministry said.

Russia's military also recently deployed coastal defense missile systems, the Bastion, near disputed islands off the northern coast of Hokkaido. Japan was disarmed after its WW II defeat. But a month after the Korean War began in 1950, US occupation forces in Japan created a 75,000-member lightly armed de facto army called the National Police Reserve. The Self Defence Force, the country's current military, was founded in 1954.

of the day quote

India is poised for growth to become a USD 5 trillion economy by 2024-25 as envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Digital assets are expected to have tremendous potential in the next 11 years across countries, due to their rapid adoption. They are expected to help India achieve the GDP of USD 5 trillion economy

The government is taking all steps to strengthen the NCLT, in order to reduce the delays in disposal of cases

With the right policies and regulatory framework, India's regulators can bring safety, combined with hope and prosperity to India

SHORT TAKES

Ashok Leyland inks pact with BoB

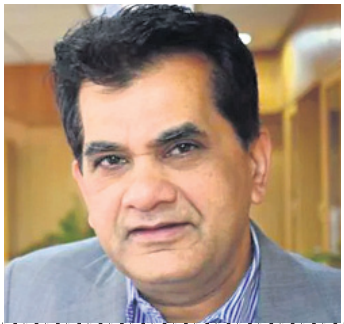
**New Delhi:** Commercial vehicles major Ashok Leyland Monday said it has tied up with public sector lender Bank of Baroda for vehicle finance. The company said it has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bank of Baroda to enter into a strategic financing partnership for a period of three years. Under this partnership, Bank of Baroda will be able to provide end to end financial solutions to the customers of Ashok Leyland, it added. "Ashok Leyland is delighted to partner with Bank of Baroda that has over 45,000 touchpoints across 19 countries spread over 5 continents, and hence comes with good banking infrastructure that would help Ashok Leyland service its customers by offering customised solutions that cater to their needs," Ashok Leyland Whole Time Director and CFO Gopal Mahadevan stated. Ashok Leyland currently offers a comprehensive range of trucks and buses catering to an entire gamut of day-to-day commercial vehicle needs.

Anand Rathi IPO closes

**New Delhi:** The initial public offer of Anand Rathi Wealth Limited, part of Mumbai-based financial services group Anand Rathi, received 9.78 times subscription by the closing day Monday. The ₹660-crore IPO received bids for 8,29,21,509 shares against 84,75,000 shares on offer, according to data available with the NSE. The category for non-institutional investors was subscribed 25.42 times, Retail Individual Investors (RIIs) 7.76 times and Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs) 2.50 times. The initial public offer of up to 12,00,000 equity shares had a price range of ₹530-550 per share. The company had Wednesday raised ₹194 crore from anchor investors.

Amazon's Super Value Days

**New Delhi:** Amazon.in is now live with Super Value Days, bringing up to 45% off on grocery and household essentials, packaged foods, personal, baby and pet care and much more. Super Value Days will be live till December 7, 2021, with grocery deals starting at Re 1 and free delivery for prime members. Consumers can avail great prices and offers from participating sellers. Customers can avail an additional discount of 10% on ICICI Debit & Credit Cards till December 7. Prime members can enjoy free deliveries on the purchase of groceries.



We have created 44 unicorns in 10 months. Inclusiveness is the key for today's startup generation  
AMITABH KANT | NITI AAYOG CEO

ECB PLANS TO REDESIGN EURO BILLS

The European Central Bank said Monday that it plans to redesign its euro banknotes, with a final decision on the new look expected in 2024. "After 20 years, it's time to review the look of our banknotes to make them more relatable to Europeans of all ages and backgrounds," ECB President Christine Lagarde said in a statement.



Sensex tanks 949 pts as Omicron spreads

EQUITY INVESTORS LOSE ₹4.29 LAKH CRORE IN MONDAY'S SESSION; PLUNGING RUPEE AND CONTINUED SELLING BY FIIs ADD TO TRADERS' WOES

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, Dec 6:** Equity indices spiralled lower Monday as the spread of the Omicron variant in the country spooked investors and triggered an across-the-board sell-off.

A plunging rupee and continued selling by foreign institutional investors added to the woes, traders said.

Extending its losing streak for the second straight session, the 30-share BSE Sensex crashed 949.32 points or 1.65 per cent to close at 56,747.14, an over three-month low.

On similar lines, the broader NSE Nifty slumped 284.45 points or 1.65 per cent to 16,912.25.

All Sensex components ended in the red. IndusInd Bank was the biggest laggard, shedding 3.75 per cent, followed by Bajaj Finserv, Bharti Airtel, HCL Tech, TCS, Tech Mahindra and Infosys.

Equity investors lost ₹4.29 lakh crore in Monday's session, with the market capitalisation of all BSE-listed companies standing at ₹2,56,72,771.67 crore.

India reported 17 more cases of the Omicron variant of the coronavirus Sunday - nine persons in Rajasthan capital Jaipur, seven in Maharashtra's Pune district and a fully vaccinated man who arrived in Delhi from Tanzania - taking the



tally to 21 in the country.

With this, four states and the national capital have now reported cases of the potentially more contagious variant which has sparked a fresh alert across the world.

"Ambiguity surrounding Omicron continued to dent the morale of domestic investors ahead of the important RBI policy announcement Wednesday. The domestic market is expected to be volatile as the near-term will be dominated by developments on

new variant and, RBI and Fed policy decisions. Market expects RBI to hold on to the accommodative policy considering short-term uncertainties. However, a change is expected during HI 2022, which Indian market is factoring while global equities are trading mixed," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

The Reserve Bank's rate-setting panel began its three-day deliberations Monday to decide the next monetary policy amid expecta-

IndusInd Bank was the biggest laggard, shedding 3.75 per cent, followed by Bajaj Finserv, Bharti Airtel, HCL Tech, TCS, Tech Mahindra and Infosys

tions that the central bank will maintain status quo on the benchmark interest rate in the backdrop of the Omicron threat.

All sectoral indices ended in the red, with BSE IT, telecom, energy, healthcare and auto tumbling up to 2.49 per cent. Broader BSE mid-cap and smallcap indices fell 1.35 per cent each.

Global markets were mixed as investors tracked the spread of Omicron in multiple countries. In China, the central bank cut banks' reserve requirements to shore up liquidity, even as embattled property major Evergrande said it may run out of money to 'perform its financial obligations'.

In Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Tokyo ended with losses, while Seoul was positive.

Equities in Europe were trading on a positive note in mid-session deals.

Crippling shortage of coal sparks concern

PNN/AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar/New Delhi, Dec 6:** The Indian Captive Power Producers Association (ICPPA) in a recent representation to the Ministry of Coal, Railways and Power, Government of India, has sought urgent support for normalising the coal supplies to Captive Power Plant (CPP) based industries.

ICPPA has highlighted the issue of insufficient coal-rake supplies to CPP-based industries at levels of 40% to 50%. "If this is not restored immediately, it would lead to an irrevocable collateral damage of these national assets," ICPPA said.

According to the association, on an average, CPP-based industries are getting less than 50% of the coal against secured linkages and CIL auctions. Importantly, curtailment to CPP is continuing despite the power sector having come out of the coal crisis.

With the coordinated efforts of all ministries, the situation for the Odisha power sector has improved to current levels of 10 days. However, the CPP industry consumers are still getting overall coal supplies at just 40% to 50% levels leaving them struggling to get uninterrupted coal supplies for continued operations. Also, the coal-rake despatch is at much lower levels than their requirement booked through linkage and auctions.



The ministry's data revealed that Vedanta TPP and Kamalanga TPS in Odisha are also in a critical category - means the coal stocks are left for a few days only. The data showed that coal stocks at Vedanta TPP are available for four days only while normative stock is supposed to be for 15 days. On the other hand, coal stock in Kamalanga TPS is left for only six days but its normal coal stock should be 15 days.

The aluminium industry operations are one of the most severely impacted with the price being on a rise recently due to the global shortage. With the coal crisis impacting the industry, the scarcity will lead to further increase in rates. Being a metal of strategic importance, the country cannot afford the shock of aluminium shortage.

Keeping the above in mind, the ICPPA has requested the ministry's immediate intervention for normalising 100 per cent coal-rake supplies to the CPP-based plants and help them to partner the economic development of the nation.

NPS generated good returns for subscribers, says PFRDA Chairman

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 6:** PFRDA Chairman Supratim Bandyopadhyay Monday said pension product NPS has generated good returns for the subscribers over the last 12 years, and one must start early to reap the benefits of the product, which is very flexible in nature.

"Over a period of 12 years, the returns under equity schemes are more than 12 per cent, and in government securities, it was close to 9.9 per cent, and in corporate bonds, despite some credit events that we have seen, we have seen a CAGR of more than 9.59 per cent. Fortunately, our pension fund assets were, to a great extent, protected from post-credit events."

"Currently, we are sitting on a total corpus of about ₹6.85 trillion. The returns have been quite good," Bandyopadhyay said while speaking at CII Insurance & Pensions Summit on Indian Insurance Sector - Riding the Wave of Change'.

NPS gives a lot of flexibility, but the only thing is that a person has

to start early, said the chairman of the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA).

"There is flexibility in the sense that just for keeping an account running, you have to pay only ₹1,000. There is no fixed contribution, and you can contribute up to whatever level, obviously under the PMLA (Prevention of Money Laundering Act rules) and supported by all your known sources of income," he noted.

A lot more needs to be done to make India a pensioned society, and maybe the insurance sector regulator Irdai, PFRDA and industry body CII can come together to create a forum to raise awareness about pensions in the country, he added.

PFRDA provides two flagship pension schemes- NPS and APY.

Whereas National Pension System (NPS) mainly caters to the organised sector employees, including the government, the Atal Pension Yojana (APY) is mainly meant for those working in the unorganised sector in the economy.



Over 55 pc Jan Dhan account holders are women: FinMin



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 6:** Of the nearly 44 crore Jan Dhan bank account holders in the country, more than 55 per cent are women, the Finance Ministry informed the Parliament Monday.

There are as many as 43.90 crore beneficiaries of the PMJDY (Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana) account holders in the country as of November 17, 2021, Minister of State for Finance Bhagwat Karad said in a written reply in the Lok Sabha.

Of these, as many as 24.42 crore are female beneficiaries as informed by the banks, which comprises 55.60 per cent of the total PMJDY accounts, he added.

When asked about the number of people benefitted from this scheme in Gujarat, he said there are a total of 1.65 crore beneficiaries in Gujarat, of which 0.84 crore (51 per cent) are the women bank account holders.

The government had announced the PMJDY on August 15, 2014, under the National Mission on

Financial Inclusion with a view to increasing banking penetration, promote financial inclusion and provide at least one bank account per household across the country. The scheme was extended beyond 14 August 2018 with the focus on opening of accounts shifting from 'every household' to 'every unbanked adult' with certain modifications.

There is no requirement to maintain any minimum balance in PMJDY accounts. In a separate question on Sukanya Samridhi Account (SSA), Minister of State

for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said: "The number of new accounts opened under Sukanya Samridhi Account from April 1, 2018 to October 31, 2021 is 1,42,73,910."

Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh are the top five states in that order with the highest number of SSA accounts.

Lakshadweep, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Ladakh, Mizoram and Sikkim rank at the bottom five. "The reasons for varying number of accounts in different states could be the size of the population, ability and willingness of parents to save etc," Chaudhary said.

Whereas the public sector banks accounted for the bulk of such account opening at 96.24 per cent, private sector banks had a share of 3.76 per cent in opening such accounts since the launch of the scheme till October 31, 2021.

However, the minister said that accounts opened under SSA in various post offices have not been considered while calculating the distribution proportion of banks.

Parents can open an SSA with a minimum deposit of ₹250 and maximum of ₹1.5 lakh in a year in the name of a girl child till she attains the age of 10 years.

Only one account can be opened in the name of the girl child and the amount matures on completion of a period of 21 years from the date of opening of the account.

Since the inception of the scheme in December 2014, the interest rate on SSA had dropped from 9.1 per cent to 7.6 per cent (stipulated for April 1, 2020- December 30, 2021 period), as per data from National Savings Institute.

Tata Motors to hike prices of commercial vehicles from Jan



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 6:** Homegrown auto major Tata Motors Monday said it will hike prices of its commercial vehicles in the range of 2.5 per cent from January 1 to offset the increase in commodity and raw materials costs.

The price hike will be across segments of medium and heavy commercial vehicles (M&HCV), intermediate and light commercial vehicles (I&LCV), small commercial vehicles (SCV) and buses, based on individual model and variant of the vehicle, Tata Motors said in a regulatory filing.

"The increase in the prices of commodities such as steel, aluminium and other precious metals, in addition to higher costs of other raw materials, has incited this price hike for commercial vehicles," it added.

While the company is absorbing a significant portion of the increased costs at various levels of manufacturing, Tata Motors said, "the steep rise in overall input costs makes it imperative to pass on some residual proportion via a minimal price hike."

Already, car market leader Maruti Suzuki India, luxury carmakers Mercedes-Benz and Audi have announced price hikes from next month, citing the rise in input and feature enhancement costs.

FMCG distributors seek level-playing field with B2B retailers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 6:** Distributors of fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) have sought a 'level-playing field' with the leading B2B retailers from the makers, failing to which they have threatened to drop products from their portfolio.

All India Consumer Products Distributors Federation (AICPDF) has written to FMCG companies against the price disparity between traditional distributors and other organised business-to-business (B2B) distribution firms, both online and offline, which have entered the sector in the last few years.

The federation had said it has decided to call for a "non-cooperation" movement against FMCG companies from next year if B2B retailers such as Jiomart, Walmart, Metro Cash & Carry, Booker,

ElasticRun, udaan etc.

"If the companies are not able to give us a level-playing field then we will drop the product sold by Jiomart/ B2B companies from our portfolio," said AICPDF.

Speaking to PTI, AICPDF President Dhairyashil Patil said rates and schemes given to the retailers are governed by the FMCG companies and the distributors have no say in the entire process.

"If the brands are the same, then how could the same products lands in the market in two prices," he said. According to him, sometimes discounts are even lesser than the landing price of distributors.

"We need a price parity in the market," he said.

B2B retailers are offering FMCG products to the retailers and local shops at lower products, what they offer and it is now "adversely



affecting" their reputation and goodwill.

"Hence our demand is that we also receive those products at prices at which we can also offer the same prices as Jio Mart /B2B companies," the association said in an

open letter to FMCG companies, a copy of which was also shared on their Twitter handle.

Moreover, they would also "not launch any new product of the company" unless they get an undertaking from the FMCG mak-

ers that the said product is not available with B2B retailers.

According to them, they would not be able to take primary targets from the company as B2B companies are selling the same products in the same area.

Moreover, they have also decided not to take back expiry and damaged product for replacement as they were not in a position to distinguish the product sold to the retailers by B2B or by their network.

"Considering that overall scenario, to address the issue of distributors, we urge the company to call for a joint meet with your company distributor and the representative of AICPDF to sort out the issue amicably," it said.

While in another letter, AICPDF said the distributors' fraternity is in danger as B2B companies are flaunting laws using unethical

and predatory tactic to establish a monopoly by destroying age old system.

In FMCG, the distributors have a margin of 3.5 to 5 per cent and retailer gets 12 to 15 per cent margins.

"While B2B channels are offering 15 to 20 per cent margins to retailers," Patil added.

Some FMCG companies as Nestle has confirmed receipt of such letters from the association.

"We are in receipt of the letter that has been issued to all FMCG companies. Our focus has always been to maximize our channel coverage to ensure our products are easily accessible to our consumers. All our relationships across the value chain are based on fairness and respect," said a Nestle India Spokesperson. Formed in 2019, AICPDF has approximately 4 lakh members pan India.

INDIA DEMOLISH NEW ZEALAND BY 372 RUNS IN THE SECOND TEST AS THE HOSTS CLAIM SERIES 1-0



JOB DONE IN STYLE

**Mumbai, Dec 6:** India carried out a decimation of New Zealand, winning the second Test by a record-breaking 372-run margin to clinch the two-Test series 1-0 with comeback man Jayant Yadav (4/49) cleaning up the visiting team's lower half on the fourth morning here Monday.

At exactly 10.13 am, 43 minutes to the start of the day Ravichandran Ashwin (4/34) benefitted from a reflex stumping by Wriddhiman Saha and also completed his 300th wicket on Indian soil to finish the proceedings in a jiffy as New Zealand were all out for 167 in 56.3 overs.

The margin of victory is India's highest ever on home soil. For a team that had fought tooth and nail in Kanpur, the extra bounce and turn did pose familiar problems for the Kiwis in a match they will try to remember for Ajaz Patel's 10-wicket heroics.

Funnily, Patel bowled 73.5 overs across two innings for New Zealand and his team, in total, batted 84.4 overs which would signify abject capitulation.

Apart from this, there was nothing much to write home about in

an insipid performance from a usually gutsy side.

Starting the day at 140/5, the victory target of 540 was simply out of reach for the Black Caps but Jayant, who had not looked in good rhythm on the third evening, suddenly found his mojo with a career-best spell having last played a Test match in 2017.

The win in which India ticked almost all the boxes save their middle-order woes will give skipper Virat Kohli lot of confidence going into the away series against South

Africa starting in three weeks' time.

While the series will definitely be a confidence booster but at the same time, everyone knows what awaits in South Africa and the most pressing issue will be the lack of form of three key batters in skipper Kohli, his vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane and No.3 Cheteshwar Pujara.

**BRIEF SCORES**  
**India 325 & 276/7d beat New Zealand 62 & 167** (Henry Nicholls 44; R Ashwin 4/34, Jayant Yadav 4/49) by 372 runs.



Jayant Yadav is congratulated by teammates after getting a wicket

**372** India's margin of win in Mumbai, their biggest win in terms of runs in Tests. The 337-run win against South Africa in Delhi in 2015 was their previous biggest win in this format. The 372-run loss is also New Zealand's biggest defeat by runs, leaving behind the 358-run trounce from South Africa in Johannesburg in 2007

**300** Wickets for R Ashwin in home Tests, the second India bowler with 300-plus Test wickets at home after Anil Kumble (350). Only five players before Ashwin had taken 300-plus Test wickets in their home country

**9** Man of the Series awards for Ashwin in Tests, joint 2nd most for any player in the format. Muttiah Muralitharan tops the list with 11 awards while Jacques Kallis also has 9

**14/225** Ajaz Patel's figures are the best match figures in a Test to end up on the losing side. Jagadeesh Prasad previously held the record with 13/132 against Pakistan in Kolkata in 1999. Ajaz also became the first player to end up on the losing side despite taking all ten in a Test innings. The previous best innings figures in a losing cause were 9/83 by Kapil Dev against West Indies in 1983

**66** Test wickets for Ashwin against NZ, the most by a bowler in Tests played between India and NZ. Ashwin eclipsed Richard Hadlee's 65 wickets

**8/42** Ashwin's match figures are the second best without a wicket in a men's Test. Shane Warne has the best figures, of 8/24 against Pakistan in Sharjah in 2002

**52** Test wickets for Ashwin in 2021, the first bowler to cross the tally of 50 this year. It is the fourth calendar year where Ashwin achieved the feat after 2015, 2016 and 2017. Only Warne (8), Muralitharan (6) and Glenn McGrath (5) had 50-plus Test wickets in more calendar years than Ashwin

**2003** The last instance of India winning a match against NZ in an ICC tournament before the Mumbai Test - in Centurion during the ODI World Cup. India lost 7 of the eight meetings against NZ between the two wins

INDIA RETURN TO TOP

**DUBAI:** India Monday reclaimed the top spot in the ICC rankings after winning the two-match series against New Zealand, the reigning World Test Champions. India had lost to New Zealand in the World Test Championship final in June. The Virat Kohli-led side now has 124 rating points and is followed by New Zealand (121), Australia (108), England (107), Pakistan (92), South Africa (88), Sri Lanka (83), West Indies (75), Bangladesh (49) and Zimbabwe (31). On the WTC table, India are third with 42 points and win percentage of 58.33. Sri Lanka lead the standings with two wins in as many games and Pakistan are second with win percentage of 66.66.

AJAZ 'FORTUNATE' TO GET 10-FER

**MUMBAI:** New Zealand left-arm spinner Ajaz Patel considers himself "fortunate" to be just the third Test cricketer ever with 10 wickets in an innings as all he tried doing in that magical performance against India was putting the ball in the right areas for a long period of time. The 33-year-old Mumbai-born Patel, who migrated to New Zealand as a seven-year old, said it has been a "dream come true" to be able to play at the city of his birth and come up with a historic feat. "It has been a special outing for me. It's dream to come here and play at Wankhede and be able to do something like that (historic feat) is very special. Not only for me but also for my family back home," Patel said in an interview by senior India off-spinner R Ashwin. "I will count myself as fortunate. I thank God to have (got) this opportunity but it was about putting the ball at good areas for a long period of time," he said in a video uploaded by the BCCI. Talking about his memories in India, he said, "Early on in India, it was just like playing cricket in Maidan just because you enjoy playing with the rubber ball or heavy tennis ball, way to go. But in New Zealand, probably it is more structured. In our family, Indians are cricket mad and we still play in the backyard every hour, crazy times, just cricket mad family really."



HAMILTON WINS SAUDI ARABIAN GP  
F1 all set for thrilling season-final face-off



Lewis Hamilton holds the trophy, while the other title contender Max Verstappen (blurred) looks on during the Saudi Arabian Grand Prix, Sunday

**Jeddah, Dec 6:** The increasingly tense Formula One (F1) title fight between defending champion Lewis Hamilton and his formidable challenger, Max Verstappen, will head to the last race of the season with the fierce rivals level on points.

Next weekend's Abu Dhabi showdown will see Hamilton crowned for a record eighth time — or Verstappen win his first title.

Hamilton's nail-biting win at the Saudi Arabian Grand Prix Sunday was his third straight to pull him level with Verstappen on 369.5 points. The British veteran is within touching distance of title No.8 to move one ahead of Michael Schumacher and stand alone among F1 greats. Verstappen still leads by a hair's breadth, only because he has more wins: 9-8.

Hamilton's win in the heat and humidity of Jeddah saw him pass Verstappen with six laps remaining of a chaotic race, as the pair tangled again this season following high-octane crashes at the British GP and the Italian GP.

Hamilton is in no mood to back down with the finish in sight, but Verstappen has drawn out the street fighter in him.

The race on the street circuit under the lights on the 30-kilome-

ter (18.6-mile) coastal resort area in Jeddah will go down as one of the more memorable events of the season — if not the last several years. It saw three standing starts, a pair of restarts, multiple safety cars, and an intense back-and-forth between the title contenders including a minor late collision.

Red Bull was allowed to negotiate a penalty for Verstappen, Mercedes head Toto Wolff slammed his headset in rage, and Hamilton drove into the back of his title rival before ultimately passing Verstappen for the win.

Verstappen was dejected and incredulous after finishing second. "What happened today is unbelievable," he said. "I'm just trying to race. This sport is more about penalties than racing. So for me this is not Formula One but at least the fans enjoyed it."

Verstappen is exasperated at some decisions that stewards have made this season. "Not just this race (but) in general, lately (it's) the trend in F1," said Verstappen, whose father Jos was Schumacher's teammate. "That's not how I grew up watching Formula One."

Hamilton needed a few moments to recover after one of the most draining of his record-extending 103 career wins in the heat and humidity of the Middle East.

Davis Cup: Russia end 15-year hiatus

**Madrid, Dec 6:** Russia's 15-year wait for a Davis Cup title ended after another clutch performance from Daniil Medvedev.

Medvedev capped his amazing year with a 7-6(9-7), 6-2 win over Marin Cilic in the second singles match to give Russia an insurmountable 2-0 lead over Croatia and its first Davis Cup title since 2006.

It was the fifth consecutive straight-set victory in the Davis Cup for the No.2 Medvedev, who three months ago defeated Novak Djokovic to win the US Open for his first Grand Slam title.

Andrey Rublev earlier had beaten Borna Gojo in straight sets to put the Russians ahead at the Madrid Arena.

Russia's other Davis Cup title was in 2002. Croatia also was seeking its third title after triumphs in 2005 and 2018.

Russia, which had four top-30 players on its team, completed a sweep of team events after the women's team won the Billie Jean King Cup Finals in Prague last



month. The last nation to do the double had been the Czech Republic in 2012.

The Russian team is officially being called RTF (Russian Tennis Federation) in the competition amid its ongoing doping suspension in international sport.

After a tight first set, Medvedev broke serve twice in the second

against the 30th-ranked Cilic to comfortably clinch the victory.

Rublev had converted on his first match point to clinch a 6-4, 7-6(7-5) win over Gojo, who arrived at the Davis Cup Finals as the 279th-ranked player but had won all his three matches.

It was the third consecutive victory for the fifth-ranked Rublev

after a loss against Spain's Feliciano López in the group stage.

**“ It feels amazing. But I'm more happy for the team than for myself. We have an amazing team, amazing atmosphere. I'm happy to be part of it and bring the points we need. Pretty amazing two weeks. It's never easy to come here at the end of the season but they were some of the best weeks of my career ”**

DANIIL MEDVEDEV

CSA announces updated fixture

**Johannesburg, Dec 6:** Cricket South Africa (CSA) Monday announced an updated schedule of India's curtailed tour of the country with Centurion hosting the first of the three Tests from December 26.

The CSA and the BCCI Saturday announced that the tour will go ahead but the Indian team's departure will be postponed by a week and T20Is will no longer be a part of the schedule in view of rising number of COVID-19 cases due to emergence of Omicron variant in South Africa. The Indians were originally set to leave December 9 but the travel plans have changed.

**THE SCHEDULE**  
1st Test (Dec 26-30): Centurion  
2nd Test (Jan 3-7): Johannesburg  
3rd Test (Jan 11-15): Cape Town  
1st ODI (Jan 19): Paarl  
2nd ODI (Jan 21): Paarl  
3rd ODI (Jan 23): Cape Town.

Jamshedpur FC stun ATKMB

**Goa, Dec 6:** Jamshedpur FC continued their unbeaten run in the season as they handed ATK Mohun Bagan their successive defeat, downing the Mariners 2-1 in their latest Indian Super League (ISL) encounter at the Athletic Stadium in Bambolim, Monday.

The win took Jamshedpur to the second spot in the points table as Bagan slump to fifth, a lesser known territory for them.

Seiminlen Doungel (37th minute) scored the opener for the Men of Steel with a sublime finish from the right flank. Alex Lima (84th) scored the second after coming on as a substitute late in the second half. Pritam Kotal (89th) pulled one back for the Mariners but it ended as too little too late to affect the final scoreline.

As the match started, Eli Sabia straightaway went into the referee's book by getting a yellow card in the fourth minute. At the stroke



SEIMINLEN DOUNGEL

of the 33rd minute, Amrinder Singh saved a powerful left-footed low curling shot from Greg Stewart from the right flank.

Moments later, Doungel found space on the edge of the box at the right flank and made no mistake in

hitting the ball past Amrinder's right side to give JFC the lead.

There was a huge controversy on the stroke of 73rd minute after Pronay Halder brought down Hugo Boumous who was marauding towards the goal unchallenged.

He got a yellow card for the offence and Boumous also received a yellow card for pushing Halder in retaliation for the tackle. Stewart and Rehenesh then received yellow cards for causing unnecessary delay in the proceedings.

Lima took his place on the pitch from the bench, replacing Stewart and the Brazilian scored within seconds after entering the field. A left-footed shot from the edge of the penalty box towards the left side of Amrinder gave the latter no chance of saving it.

Later, keeper TP Rehenesh made a good save of a cross from the left flank inside the box but his clearance hit Ashutosh Mehta. Kotal lunged ahead to put the ball inside the back of the net.

Shriyanka shoots gold at Nationals



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 6:** Shriyanka Sadangi became the first ever from Odisha to emerge as the national champion in any event of shooting. She bagged a gold medal in the women's 50m rifle 3 positions (3P), finishing the 45-shot eight-woman final with a score of 454.9 points at the 64th National Shooting Championship at Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

Madhya Pradesh's Mansi Kathait won the silver with 453.5, while West Bengal's Ayushi Podder bagged the bronze with 440.9.