



NEW BEGINNING

Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal tied the knot Thursday afternoon at Fort Barwara in Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan

LEISURE P2



PLAN TO BAN SMOKING

New Zealand's government will come up with a unique plan very soon to end tobacco smoking in the country

INTERNATIONAL P10



HEAD PROPS AUSSIES

Travis Head's unbeaten ton puts Australia in command against England on the second day of the 1st Test

SPORTS P12



BHARADWAJ GETS BAIL AFTER 3 YEARS

Mumbai: Activist Sudha Bharadwaj, an accused in the Elgar Parishad-Maoist links case, was Thursday released on bail, after spending over three years in a prison. An NIA court had Wednesday directed the release of Bharadwaj on a bail of ₹50,000. Earlier the Bombay High Court had granted default bail to the activist December 1. Following the completion of formalities, Bharadwaj walked out of the Byculla prison here Thursday afternoon. Bharadwaj was arrested in August 2018 under provisions of the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

P9



BORIS, CARRIE WELCOME BABY GIRL

London: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and wife Carrie Johnson announced Thursday the birth of a healthy baby girl, their second child born while they have been residing at 10 Downing Street here. "The Prime Minister and Mrs Johnson are delighted to announce the birth of a healthy baby girl at a hospital today (Thursday)," a spokesperson for the couple said in a statement. "Both mother and daughter are doing very well," it added. The baby is the 57-year-old Prime Minister's second child with Carrie, after Wilfred Johnson was born to the couple in April last year.

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IRREGULAR by MANJUL



One never knows what kind of cap or clothes will be declared dangerous, therefore I opted for this

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	CHANGE	PERCENTAGE
SENSEX	58807.13	↑ 157.45	0.27%
NIFTY	17516.80	↑ 47.00	0.27%
DOLLAR	75.94	↑ ₹0.09	0.12%
EURO	85.96	↑ ₹0.10	0.12%
GOLD	₹47,971	↓ ₹84	-0.17%
SILVER	₹60,774	↓ ₹849	-1.40%

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	23.6°C	23.0°C
TEMP MIN	21.0°C	20.0°C
Humidity	93%	91%
Rainfall	0.6mm	1.8mm
Forecast	Generally cloudy sky	

Farmers suspend stir

The farmers' unions however, have warned the Centre that they will again resort to protests if their demands are not met and they will review the situation January 15, 2022

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 9: The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) announced Thursday the suspension of its over a year-long agitation and said farmers will head home December 11 from protests sites on Delhi's borders. The announcement came after the SKM received an official letter from the Central government, accepting the pending demands of farmers, including unconditional withdrawal of police cases against protesters.

Farmer leaders in a press conference said they would meet January 15 to see if the demands have been met by the Centre. They asserted they will again resort to protests if their demands are not met. The government also assured farmers that a committee on minimum support price (MSP) will be formed. It will also have members from the SKM.

"This is not the end as the movement is just suspended. We have decided to meet again January 15," SKM core committee member Balbir Singh Rajewal said. Farmers, mainly from Punjab,



Farmers celebrate at the Ghazipur border close to Delhi after suspension of their protests Thursday

Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, started protesting at Delhi's border points - Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur - November 26 last year against the three contentious farm laws. The laws were repealed by Parliament November 29, but farmers continued their protests over their pending demands.

Another SKM member Gurnam Singh Chaduni said that a review meeting will be convened January 15 to see if the government has met all the demands. If it does not, we can take a call on resuming the protest". The SKM had said Wednesday that it has reached a consensus on a revised draft proposal of the Centre on its pending demands but

had demanded a formal communication on a government letterhead, which was received by Thursday morning. Union leaders also said that farmers will take out victory marches December 11 to their respective places. They would have done so Friday, but have decided to postpone it as a mark of respect to CDS Gen Bipin Rawat and 12 others who were killed in a helicopter crash Wednesday. The funerals of the deceased will take place Friday. "Farmers will start vacating Delhi border points from December 11, and this may take some time," farmer leader Rakesh Tikait said. He added that the SKM will remain intact. Union Minister Sanjeev Balyan welcomed the farmers' unions to suspend the protest. Shiromani Akali Dal leader Harsimrat Singh Badal, who had resigned from the Modi Cabinet opposing the three farm laws also welcomed the announcement of the suspension of the agitation. **MORE P9**

THE LONG HAUL

- **JUNE 5, 2020:** Centre issues contentious farm bills.
- **SEPTEMBER 27:** The farm bills are given presidential assent and notified in the Gazette of India and become farm laws.
- **NOVEMBER 28:** Home Minister Amit Shah offers to hold talks with farmers as soon as they vacate Delhi's borders. However, farmers reject his offer.
- **DECEMBER 3:** The government holds first round of talks with representatives of farmers but the meeting remains inconclusive. A total of 11 such rounds failed to break the deadlock
- **DECEMBER 8:** Farmers give a call for Bharat Bandh. Farmers from other states also lend their support to the call.
- **JANUARY 7, 2021:** The SC agrees to hear petitions challenging the new laws and those against the protests on January 11.
- **JANUARY 26:** Thousands of protestors clash with police during the tractor parade called by farmer unions. At Red Fort, property is damaged. A protester dies in the chaos.
- **JANUARY 29:** The government proposes to suspend the farm laws and sets up a joint committee to discuss legislation. Farmers reject the proposal.
- **NOVEMBER 19:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi announces repeal of the farm laws.
- **NOVEMBER 29:** Parliament repeals the farm laws
- **DECEMBER 9:** Centre sends fresh proposal, farmers' unions meet and decide to call off protest.

Police, BJYM clash leaves over 20 hurt



FREE FOR ALL: A BJYM member attacks a security personnel with a stick who tries to thwart him

The situation turned violent when the protesters tried to break down barricades and rush towards the Assembly

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 9: The stretch from Master Canteen to PMG square turned into a battleground Thursday after a clash broke out between the members of Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) protesting over Mamita Meher murder case and security officials deployed at the site. The violence left 15 police personnel injured while the BJP alleged that a large number of its members suffered injuries. Some mediapersons covering the incident also were injured. Hundreds of BJYM members took out a procession towards the Odisha Legislative Assembly demanding the resignation of Minister of State (Home) Dibya Shankar Mishra. They were stopped by police personnel close to the second barricade set up by the police at Lower PMG. The BJYM members staged a sit-in protest after brief scuffle at the spot. However, the situation turned

ugly as the police tried to forcibly remove some BJYM leaders from the spot. Soon it was a free for all with the BJYM members throwing brickbats and other missiles and the police going on a lathi-charge to disperse them. "Police personnel deployed displayed considerable patience. But, when the protestors went berserk, we were forced to use batons to disperse them. They pelted stones, brickbats and other missiles at the police and ransacked eight police vans. Fifteen cops, including ACP Manas Ranjan Garnayak sustained injuries. Three of them are still undergoing treatment at the Capital Hospital here," twin city Police Commissioner Saumendra Priyadarshi informed. "We are collecting visuals and CCTV footage installed at the site. After going through those, we will take stringent action against the perpetrators of the violence," added Priyadarshi. The saffron party leaders meanwhile accused police of using brutal force against the protestors. They said eight BJYM members have sustained injuries. Among them three have suffered fractures on their hands, a BJP leader informed.

Talcher mourns its fallen IAF hero

POST NEWS NETWORK

Talcher, Dec 9: Odia officer Rana Pratap Das was among the 13 persons including Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Bipin Rawat, who lost their lives Wednesday in the Indian Air Force (IAF) chopper crash near Coonoor in Tamil Nadu.



Das was from Krushnachandrapur village under Kundala panchayat of Talcher locality in Angul district. He was working in IAF as a Junior Warrant Officer (JWO) for last the 12 years, a source informed. Rana's brother-in-law Sankalp Das confirmed the officer's death on his Twitter handle. "My brother-in-law Rana Pratap Das from Talcher in Angul district in Odisha lost his life in the IAF helicopter crash. I had talked with Rana just two days ago. He said that he would soon fly down to meet us all. I cannot believe that he is no more with us," wrote Das. According to a family source, the deceased IAF officer is survived by his wife, a one-year-old son and elderly parents. Mortal remains of the JWO will be brought Thursday night to his ancestral village in Talcher and his last rites will be conducted, the source added. Both the father and mother of Rana have not been informed about his demise since they are cardiac patients, said Bitu Das, an acquaintance of the deceased.

BLACK BOX FOUND, PROBE BEGINS

The government will probe all angles including sabotage to ascertain the cause behind the chopper crash that led to the death of CDS Gen Rawat and 12 others in the Nilgiri Hills

AGENCIES

Coonoor/New Delhi, Dec 9: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh told the Parliament Thursday that a tri-services inquiry led by Air Marshal Manavendra Singh has started investigation into the Mi-17V5 helicopter crash that killed Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat and 12 others. "A tri-services inquiry headed by Air Marshal Manavendra Singh has been ordered by the Indian Air Force (IAF). A team of investigators had reached Wellington yesterday (Wednesday) itself and started their work," Singh said in his statement. The minister also informed that

defence officials Thursday retrieved the flight data recorder, more popularly known as 'Black Box', of the ill-fated IAF helicopter. Sources said the 'Black Box' was retrieved in the wake of authorities expanding the search area from 300 metres to one kilometre from the accident spot. Two boxes including the flight data recorder were recovered from the site, sources said. These will be taken to Delhi or Bangalore to ascertain the cause of the crash. The defence minister also wished, IAF's Group Captain Varun Singh, the only survivor in the crash, a speedy recovery. IAF officials are hoping Singh recovers, as he can provide vital clues that led to the crash. The IAF instructor is currently on life support in a hospital in Bangalore. "All efforts are being made to save Group Captain Singh," said Singh. The mortal remains of the 13 victims, in caskets wrapped in Indian Tricolour have arrived in Delhi.



CDS Bipin Rawat's daughter pays her last respects in New Delhi, Thursday



Artists perform the traditional Tibetan dance Thursday with much fanfare to celebrate the 66th commemoration year of Sangye Dolpopa and the 25th foundation day of Jonang Monastery, in Shimla

Covid-19 hits Bhubaneswar schools

After cases from schools in Angul, Mayurbhanj, Sundargarh districts, educational institutions in the state capital also reported new cases of Covid-19 infections

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 9: Amidst the threat of the Omicron variant of Covid-19, more than 10 staff members of Kendriya Vidyalaya-1 here and two boys students of Capital High School have tested positive. Earlier school

students in Angul, Mayurbhanj, Sundargarh and some other districts had tested positive for the virus. Sources said that the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has increased the rate of testing in schools and colleges with the resumption of physical classes. They said the BMC has targeted 1,500 tests at the institutions on a daily basis. Jitendra Nayak, Headmaster of Capital HS said that swab samples of 372 students were collected Wednesday by the BMC. Reports that arrived Thursday morning

showed two positive results. In a separate development more than 10 staff members of KV-1 also tested positive. Principal Bhupendra Singh said that some of them underwent RT-PCR tests few days back after feeling unwell. Physical classes have temporarily been suspended as the staff is in quarantine. Meanwhile despite the Covid-19 scare the school is conducting the CBSE Class X and XII board exams for the academic session 2021-22 in two phases. The first term exams will be held in November-December

and the second in March-April, next year. Singh informed that they do not have the authority to cancel the exams despite the Covid-19 outbreak. He added that the exams will be conducted following all protocols. "Teachers who have tested negative are only allowed and the students will sit for the exams after proper sanitisation and with masks," Singh said. Some parents on condition of anonymity however, said that they have stopped sending their children to school.

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You will experience a profound connection with the cosmos today. And you will be very grateful to the almighty for showering his grace on you. Your love for your kith and kin deepens today, says Ganesha, and you will spend extravagantly on them.

TAURUS
This day, you need to watch out against your selfish and possessive tendencies. Ganesha advises you not to be too determined or demanding. Try to not to be self centred. Do not impose your need and wishes on anyone. You should act generously towards one and all; particularly towards your spouse.

GEMINI
You will be more inclined towards religious teachings and rituals today. You will probably visit a place of worship and spend some time there and this will bring you mental peace and calm. However, you still need to do justice to your duties, says Ganesha.

CANCER
Today, you will put your heart and soul into whatever task you take up. But the results may not be too forthcoming. However, that should not be a reason for you to get dejected or anxious. You will get your due sooner or later. Also, spending some time with your loved ones will be quite gratifying emotionally.

LEO
You will leave no stone unturned to satisfy and please your partner today. So your chances of slipping up are very slight. You will be able to impress your partner today. You need to be careful in all your financial dealings today, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
Give attention to your deepest feelings. A small excursion may be on the cards. Ganesha says today you will easily get along with other people. You will shower your sincere love and affection on your near and dear ones. Use your magical skills to improve your relationships.

LIBRA
Ganesha says you will try to attain prestige in society today. This prestige will come to you via the field of communication or by your own thought processes. In your free time you will be able to learn about various topics of interest to you. Ganesha wishes you all the very best in life.

SCORPIO
You are quite vocal about your ambitious plans, says Ganesha. But, being too harsh on yourself or others for that matter may spoil your relationships with many people. Stay away from lengthy discussions to avoid any conflicts.

SAGITTARIUS
A cheerful you, your energy level is on an all time high. Ganesha foresees that you will enrol you name for a correspondence or a part-time course. This will boost your confidence and brush up your memory as well. People who are in legal profession will have a rocking day ahead.

CAPRICORN
Lack of proper planning is probably the reason for you not being able to get your work done in time. You'll realise this mistake and today, you will spend majority of time drawing a plan on paper, says Ganesha. You may hit a jackpot, but think twice before spending the money on anything unnecessary.

AQUARIUS
Today, you will want to expand your horizon of knowledge. You will give a tough fight to your opponents and come out triumphant, feels Ganesha. Troubles will not be able trouble you as you will be able to turn them into your advantage. You are clever, talented and have all that it takes to fly high.

PISCES
Financial bearings will be at the fore front of your attention today, feels Ganesha. Bank accounts, stocks, loans and other such things will dominate your thoughts and words. Earning money will be your primary goal and you will focus on those methods that will be most profitable to you, today.



COOLIDGE LIKENS LOCKDOWN TO TAKING SOME WEIRD DRUG

Actress Jennifer Coolidge found lockdown to be a surreal experience, likening it to taking some really weird drug, and she said that she feared for her life amid the pandemic.

BRITNEY CAN NOW SIGN HER FINANCIAL PAPERS

Pop singer Britney Spears can now sign her own financial paperwork, has been declared by the Los Angeles Superior Court judge, who formally ended the conservatorship.



It's official for 'KatVic'

Jaipur: Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal Thursday began a "new journey together" as they tied the knot at a luxury hotel in Sawai Madhopur in the presence of family and close friends.

Hours after the wedding, the couple posted a series of pictures from their special day on Instagram, where they are seen holding hands while taking pheras and exchanging wedding garlands.

"Only love and gratitude in our hearts for everything that brought us

to this moment. Seeking all your love and blessings as we begin this new journey together," the duo captioned the pictures on their respective Instagram accounts.

The wedding was largely a lavish and private affair with heavily guarded wedding venue making it difficult for the media to report much to the fans.

The only clue from the high-end Six Senses Fort Barwara, a fort converted into a hotel from which the media and curious lookers-on were

kept at a safe distance, were three grainy pictures of the couple and a short video.

As journalists tasked with covering the celeb wedding and fans alike scoured social media platforms, the pictures leaked online showed the bride in a red lehnga and a groom in an ivory sherwani wearing garlands.

The other pictures that leaked from the wedding showed guests hanging out in the balcony of the heritage property, about 120kms from Jaipur. PTI



SOURCE: INSTAGRAM



Pooja Bhatt bags PETA's Hero to Animals Award

Previous recipients of the award include Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, for allocating funds for feeding community animals during the lockdown

Mumbai: Filmmaker-actress Pooja Bhatt has been feted with a Hero to Animals Award from PETA India on International Animal Rights Day.

Pooja, daughter of filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt and Lorraine Bright, who is also known as Kiran Bhatt, said: "I'm truly grateful to PETA for giving me this award. I thank my mother for inculcating in me the need to look at another creature with the same degree of empathy and love and compassion as I'd like others to treat me with. If only I

could be that person that my dog really thinks I am. I try hard to be that person. I shall continue to speak up."

The filmmaker-actress has supported PETA India's campaign to ban horse-drawn carriages in Mumbai, supported a call for the release of a captive elephant named Malti who was mercilessly beaten near Jaipur and informed people on social media how easily 'manja' can injure and kill birds.

She also practises what she preaches by keeping meat off her plate, adopting animal companions from the street and even helping to sterilise cats in her neighbourhood.

"Animals have an unflinching defender in Pooja Bhatt," said Sachin Bangera, PETA India Director of Celebrity and Public Relations.

Previous recipients of the award include Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, for allocating funds for feeding community animals during the lockdown, and Delhi Environment Minister Imran Hussain, for protecting the lives of humans and animals by banning all forms of 'manja'.

IANS

Suniel wants son Ahan in remake of Gopi Kishan

New Delhi: Suniel Shetty is a proud father as Ahan is getting rave reviews for his work in *Tadap*. The star says he would want to see his son starring in a remake of his own film *Gopi Kishan*, if it's made.

Gopi Kishan, an action comedy film, was released in 1994. It saw Suniel in a double role and also featured actresses Shilpa Shirodkar and Karisma Kapoor.

Talking about the remake culture and a film of his he would want Ahan to star in, Suniel in a conversation said: "*Gopi Kishan*." Revealing why, the 60-year-old star said: "Because it has two sides to it. It has the angry young man and the nerdy crazy character, which is a very sweet character." However, Suniel feels it's a little too early for Ahan to try his hands in other genres.

"I still feel Ahan still needs three or four films before he dabbles in any other genre... Other than romance and action because setting yourself up, showing your intensity and your performance is very very important now," he said. IANS



Not going to play safe anymore: Parineeti

Mumbai: Parineeti Chopra made her debut 10 years ago with the film *Ladies vs Ricky Bahl*. She followed it up with brilliant acting performances in films like *Ishaqzaade*, *Shuddh Desi Romance* and *Hasee Toh Phasee*, *The Girl On The Train* and *Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar*. On her 10th year in cinema, the actress says that she will never play safe in her career anymore.

Parineeti says: "I have been fortunate to work in some of the landmark films in the history of Indian cinema and collaborate with some of the best directors, actors, technicians of our illustrious film industry."

"As I complete 10 years in cinema, I feel I have just started my journey. I'm raring to go actually for my next decade in cinema."

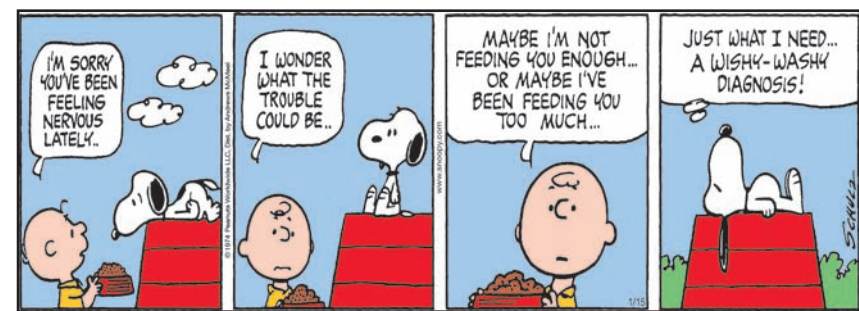
Parineeti added:

"I'm not going to play safe anymore."

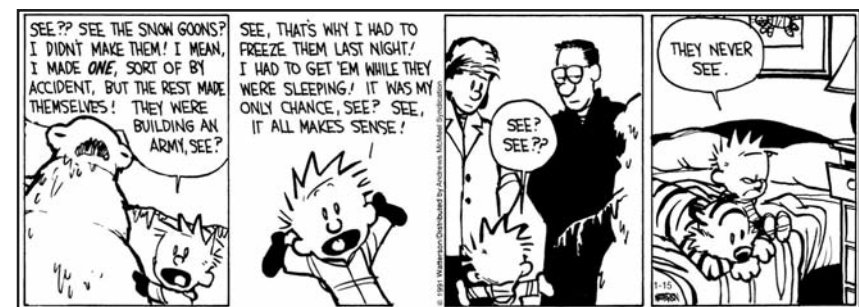
Parineeti will be seen next in *Uunchai* with Amitabh Bachchan and *Animal* opposite Ranbir Kapoor. IANS



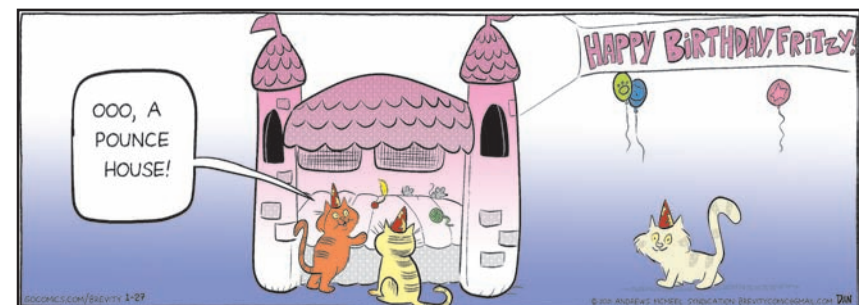
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

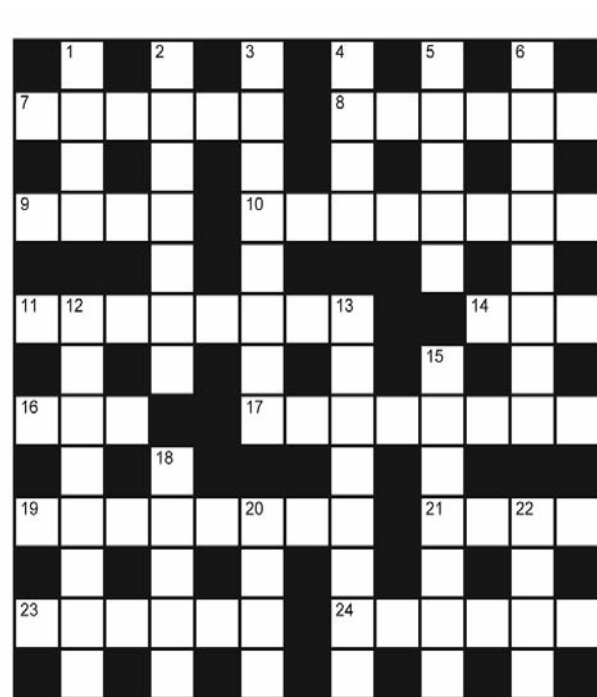


BREVITY



FUN post

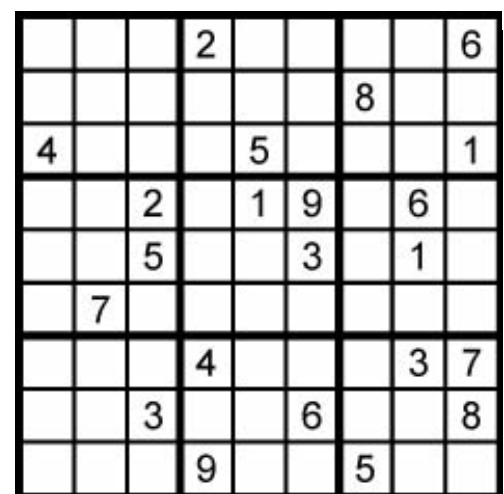
CROSSWORD



- Across
- 7 Heavenly
 - 8 Latin dance (3-3)
 - 9 Datum
 - 10 Anthill scrounger
 - 11 Liver infection symptom
 - 14 Frigid
 - 16 Query
 - 17 Single great stone
 - 19 Table linen (5,3)
 - 21 Wheelbarrow
 - 23 Coral reefs
 - 24 Spain and Portugal
 - 4 Stigma
 - 5 Purple shade
 - 6 Map find
 - 12 Complete
 - 13 Father of modern physics
 - 15 Trite remarks
 - 18 Reprimand
 - 20 Perfume additive
 - 22 Surprise attack
- Down
- 1 Slave girl of opera
 - 2 Cold weather wear
 - 3 Showy flower

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

MUTTON FALCON
O O I A D A E
N O O D L E S A R R O W
K T H Y P P E
E T H O S O P T I O N S
Y I U O T
E M E R A L D I S L E
P A M I C A
H A M M O C K Y A C H T
O M D E H T
B R O K E I D O L I S E
I T H O T A R A P N
A T H E N S E R A S E D

SUDOKU

1 7 9 3 8 6 5 4 2
5 8 6 7 4 2 1 3 9
3 4 2 5 1 9 8 6 7
7 9 8 1 2 4 6 5 3
2 3 5 6 7 8 9 1 4
4 6 1 9 5 3 2 7 8
8 2 3 4 6 5 7 9 1
6 1 4 8 9 7 3 2 5
9 5 7 2 3 1 4 8 6

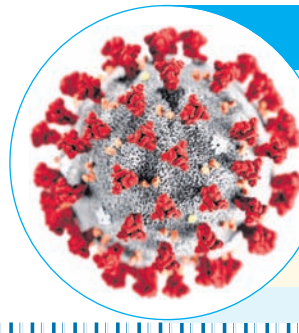
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



HOT & HEALTHY

A vendor sells boiled corns at Belview Square in Cuttack amid chilly weather, Thursday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	26,83,26,045	24,15,01,470	52,98,933
India	3,46,66,241	3,40,97,388	4,74,111
Odisha	10,50,955	10,40,403	8,428

Naveen lays stone for Technical Ammonium Nitrate Complex

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 9: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Thursday laid the foundation for a global scale Technical Ammonium Nitrate (TAN) Manufacturing Complex at Gopalpur in Ganjam district through virtual mode.

One of the leading manufacturers of fertilizers in India, Smartchem Technologies Ltd, is setting up this unit at an investment of Rs 2,200 crore, which will create employment opportunities for over 1,700 local people.

Speaking on the occasion, Naveen said that the project is another example of state's continuing dominance as a premier investment destination for multiple sectors of industry. "Despite the pandemic situation and consequent slowdown in the economy, Odisha continues to receive new investments. This proves the faith and confidence of industry in the state government and on our ability to deliver value for industries," he stated.

3,708 road fatalities during Jan to Sept

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 9: About 3,708 people have died in road mishaps out of 8,028 accidents reported in the state during January to September, Commerce and Transport Minister Padmanabha Behera informed the Assembly Thursday.

In a written reply to Gopalpur MLA Pradeep Kumar Panigrahy, the minister said that over-speeding, drunk driving, driving on wrong side, jumping red signal and use of mobile phone while driving constituted the primary causes of road accidents in Odisha.

On district-wise accidents and deaths, Behera said Khurda, Cuttack, Ganjam and Sundargarh reported the highest number of cases this year. While Khurda having state capital under its jurisdiction reported the highest 590 mishaps, this was followed by Cuttack (566), Sundargarh (550) and Ganjam (524).

However, in terms of deaths, Sundargarh topped the list with 284 deaths this year. This was followed by Ganjam with 270 fatalities in road accidents. Meanwhile, Keonjhar with 500 cases reported 254 deaths followed by Cuttack with 223 deaths. Furthermore, the data indicated a high accident to fatality rate in Mayurbhanj with 237 deaths recorded as against to 394 cases. The minister also stated that during last year 3,602 accidents happened on National Highways, 2,365 accidents happened on State Highways and 71 on expressways. He also added that 3,770 accidents occurred on other roads. Similarly, 1,750 casualties were reported on NHs, 1,179 on SHs, 31 on expressways and 1,778 on other roads.

Jaga Mission bags global award

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 9: The state Housing & Urban Development (H&UD) department Thursday won the Asia Pacific Housing Forum Innovation Awards 2021, a global recognition, for its flagship initiative - The Jaga Mission.

The award was given for Innovation in Public Policy in recognition of Jaga Mission's Slum Upgradation programme. The award was administered by an international jury which selected Jaga Mission as a winner through a competitive process from amongst 50 programmes from several countries in Asia Pacific region.

Jaga Mission has successfully demonstrated that governments globally need to have a paradigm shift in their approach to recognise the informal settlements and



THE AWARD WAS GIVEN FOR INNOVATION IN PUBLIC POLICY IN RECOGNITION OF JAGA MISSION'S SLUM UPGRADATION PROGRAMME

AS MANY AS 1,75,000 SLUM FAMILIES HAVE ALREADY BEEN PROVIDED WITH LAND TENURE SECURITY AND 550 SLUMS IN 28 URBAN AREAS HAVE BEEN TRANSFORMED INTO LIVABLE HABITATS UNDER THE MISSION

slum dwellers as an indispensable part of the city fabric. These slum dwellers must be empowered with land tenure security and better living habitat; instead of being treated as encroachers and evicted.

As many as 1,75,000 slum families have already been provided with land tenure security and 550 slums in 28 urban areas have already been transformed into livable

habitats under the mission. Earlier in 2019, Jaga Mission had received the World Habitat Award for its success in providing land tenure security. Jaga Mission serves as a torchbearer for the developing world. It acts as a model public policy to bring about long-lasting happiness in the lives of the poor and marginalised lives in informal settlements.

Ch'garh built 516 check dams over Mahanadi

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 9: The Chhattisgarh government has constructed as many as 516 check dams to check the flow of River Mahanadi, affecting the non-monsoon water flow at Hirakud, Water Resources Minister Raghunandan Das informed the Odisha Assembly Thursday.

In a written reply to Congress legislator Tara Prasad Bahinipati, the minister said, "While non-monsoon water flow into Hirakud reservoir is estimated at 2 million acre-feet, there has been 4 per cent (average) drop from 1991-92 to 2004-05 and 37 per cent drop between 2005-06 and 2015-16."

Similarly, the average drop in non-monsoon water inflow at Hirakud in 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 stood at 65 per cent, 61 per cent, 57 per cent and 3 per cent respectively, the minister added.

Elaborating on various legal steps taken by the government for resolving the Mahanadi water dispute, Das stated that while (a) the Odisha government in 2016 had lodged a statutory complaint with

MINISTER'S TAKE

While non-monsoon water flow into Hirakud reservoir is estimated at 2 million acre-feet, there has been 4 per cent drop from 1991-92 to 2004-05 and 37 per cent drop between 2005-06 & 2015-16

The average drop in non-monsoon water inflow at Hirakud dam in 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 stood at 65%, 61%, 57% and 3% respectively



IN THE MAHANADI WATER DISPUTES TRIBUNAL, ODISHA, CHHATTISGARH, MADHYA PRADESH, MAHARASHTRA AND JHARKHAND ARE PARTIES BUT THE UNION GOVERNMENT IS NOT A PARTY

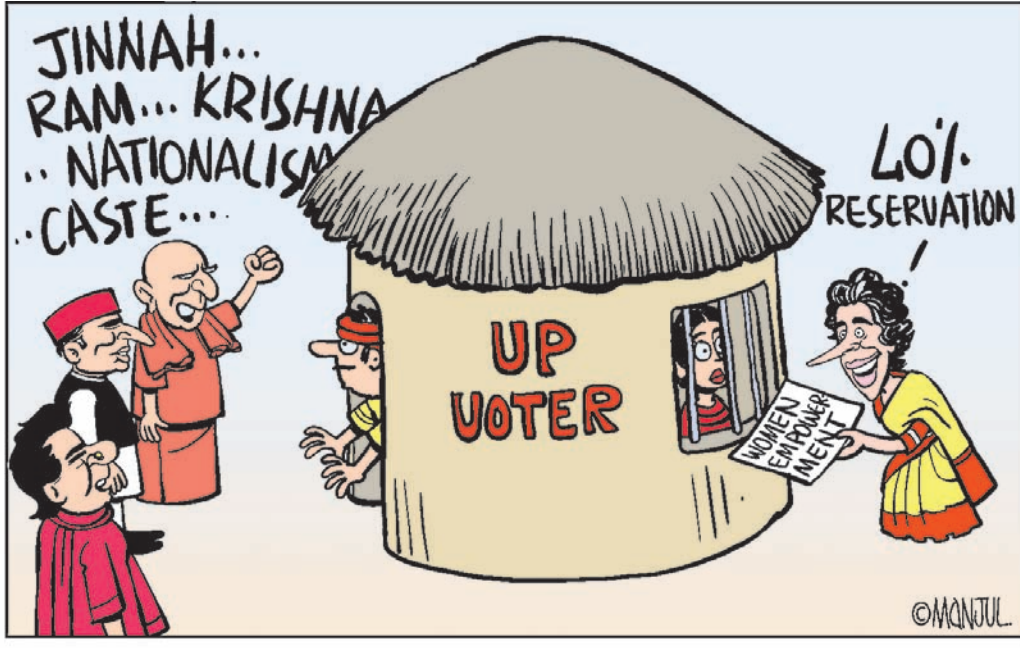
the Union government as per provisions of the Inter-State Water Disputes Act of 1956; (b) the state government has filed an original suit in the Supreme Court and (c) the Odisha government has been putting forth its demands before the Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal after its constitution following Central government's notification of March 12, 2018.

"In the Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Jharkhand are parties but the

Union government is not a party," Raghunandan clarified.

It can be mentioned here that a check dam is a small, occasionally temporary, structure constructed across a swale, drainage ditch or waterway to counteract erosion by reducing the velocity of the water flow. A check dam may be built from stone, sandbags filled with pea gravel, or logs.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



House pays homage to Gen Rawat, adjourned

The Odisha Assembly was adjourned till the post-lunch session Thursday after members of the House paid tributes to India's first Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat, his wife and 11 other armed forces personnel who died in a helicopter crash Wednesday.

Legislators observed a two-minute silence in the House to pay homage to those who lost their lives in the chopper crash in Nilgiri district of Tamil Nadu Wednesday afternoon.

As soon as the House assembled for the day, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik moved the obituary resolution.

"With profound grief, I rise to inform the august House of the sudden and untimely demise of General Bipin Rawat, his wife Madhulika ji, and 11 other armed forces personnel in a tragic helicopter crash 8th of December, 2021 in Coonoor, Tamil Nadu," the Chief Minister said.

Patnaik said General Rawat had an extremely distinguished career of over four decades of selfless service marked by exceptional gallantry. "He was conferred with the Param Vishisht Seva Medal, Ati Vishisht Seva Medal, Vishisht Seva Medal, and many prestigious awards," the Chief Minister said.

Patnaik also described the demise of General Rawat and other army personnel as an "irreparable loss to the nation". He said their out-

standing service to the nation will always be remembered.

BJP's chief whip Mohan Charan Majhi, Congress legislature party leader Narasingha Mishra and CPI (M) member Laxman Munda supported the motion moved by the CM.

"Demise of Defence Chief General Bipin Rawat is a great loss to the country. His untimely death by crashing of an IAF chopper indicates the serious failure somewhere or a part of conspiracy. If this could happen to the Chief of the Defence Force, naturally the question arises how safe we are," said Mishra in the House.

The Assembly observed a minute's silence as a mark of respect to the departed souls and then Speaker S N Patro adjourned the House till the post-lunch session.

Meanwhile, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan expressed grief at the death of Junior Warrant Officer (JWO) Rana Pratap Das, who was from Odisha, in the helicopter crash.

"While the country is yet to come to terms with the unfortunate chopper crash yesterday, I also mourn the demise of JWO Rana Pratap Das who lost his life along with CDS General Rawat, his wife and other defence personnel. Shri Das was from my hometown in Talcher, Odisha," Pradhan said in a tweet.

"As an exceptional gentleman, Das served the nation with courage, commitment and diligence. With his passing away, the country has lost a fine IAF Officer and Odisha, a brave son," he said.

55% IIT-Bhubaneswar undergraduates get placement in 3 days

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Dec 9: More than half of the final-year undergraduates of 2021-22 academic year in IIT-Bhubaneswar have got placements during the first three days of the ongoing hiring season.

Over 55 per cent B'Tech students were placed, the first time when such a large number of undergraduates got offers in such a short duration of the placement season, the institute claimed in a release Thursday.



Some of the blue-chip companies that came for placements include Google, Microsoft, Flipkart, Amazon, Goldman Sachs, Paytm, Oracle and Tata Steel. Majority of the recruiters are IT firms and startups, indicating a growing trend in niche sectors also, the IIT said.

There is a 50 per cent increase in median salary to Rs 24 lakh per annum from Rs 16 lakh last year, according to the release.

IIT Bhubaneswar Director RV Rajakumar said better placements over the last year indicated an "optimistic placement scenario" despite fears about the new coronavirus variant's possible effect on the world economy.

More than 80 per cent of the students are on the campus and the institute is also running its classes in virtual mode for those who are away and expected to arrive in the campus soon, it added.

Supple grants of various depts passed

Continuing their protest over Mamita Meher murder case, Opposition BJP and Congress Thursday created ruckus in Assembly.

When the House reassembled for the post-lunch session at 4pm, the opposition members continued their protest in the Assembly. Carrying placards, the BJP and the Congress members stormed into the well of the House and created a ruckus over the murder case.

Congress member Tara Prasad Bahinipati was seen beating gongs in front of the Panchayati Raj Minister, who was presenting the supplementary demand of grants for his department. Rohit Pujari, Bikram Panda and Pranab Balabantary of the treasury bench surrounded the minister and threw a security ring around him to protect him from the opposition.

As the protest grew, the Speaker adjourned the House at 4:10pm till 4:20pm. After the House assem-

bled, the demand for grant for Panchayati Raj department and other departments was passed by a voice vote.

Amid uproar by opposition BJP and Congress, the supplementary budget demand for grants for several departments scheduled for discussion were passed through guillotine before the passage of the Appropriation Bill, scheduled to be tabled Friday. The Speaker then adjourned the House till Friday morning.

IN THE HOUSE



BJD slams Centre over price rise

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 9: The ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) in state Thursday targeted the Centre for the frequent rise in prices of fuel and essential commodities in the country.

66
The Union government has betrayed the people by making several false promises. The prices of fuel, including the cooking gas, and other essential commodities are rising continuously. High unemployment among the youth has also added to the woes of the common people

SNEHANGINI CHHURIA | BJD MLA



BJD leaders at the rally in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

betrayed the people by making several false promises. The prices of fuel, including the cooking gas, and other essential commodities are rising continuously. High unemployment among the youth has also added to the woes of the common people," said BJD MLA Snehangini Chhuria.

The Centre should bring down the prices of fuel and essential commodities immediately.

Otherwise, the BJD will intensify its protests in the coming days, she warned.

Political observers are of the opinion that the BJD is raising the price hike issue to counter the BJP which has been agitating over the murder of teacher Mamita Meher in Kalahandi.

Upping their ante against the BJD, BJP youth wing activists led by their state unit president Irais

Acharya tried to gherao the Assembly seeking a CBI probe into the murder case and removal of Minister of State for Home Dibya Shankar Mishra for his alleged close link with the prime accused in the case, Gobinda Sahu.

The agitators later clashed with the police and ransacked several police vehicles.

They also pelted stones at the security personnel.

Nip in the air: Srimandir deities dressed with warm clothes

AGENCIES

Puri, Dec 9: The servants of Srimandir Thursday dressed Lord Jagannath His elder brother Balabhadra and sister Devi Subhadra with warm clothes on the occasion of "Ghodalagi" or "Odhanaathi".

The ritual is observed to mark the beginning of the winter. Three set of dressers adorn the deities with headgears made of wool and cotton, velvet blankets to cover the deities to protect them from cold.

As per tradition, the colour of the warm dresses keeps changing every day of the week as per the ruling star of the day.

Moreover, each star, as per the temple almanac, was identified with a specific colour.

On Monday colour of the dress is gray, Tuesday a typical dress blended with five different colours called Barapatia, Wednesday blue, Thursday yellow, Friday white, Saturday black and red clothes are used on Sunday.

Every afternoon, after offering of bhog, the servants dress Lord Jagannath His elder brother Balabhadra and sister Devi Subhadra in warm clothes.

This practice is repeated every day from 'Odhana Sasthi to Basanta



Patitapaban, the image of Lord Jagannath at the Lions' Gate of Srimandir, adorned with winter clothes, Thursday

Panchami' (Saraswati Puja), said the dressers.

The colours were prescribed according to the ruling stars and planets of the particular day.

During the daytime, the lords use their routine dresses but in the evening they were covered with

warm dresses. Taking cue from this practice in the 12th century shrine, many devotees also imitate deities in using warm clothes.

Every year hundreds of devotees witness this colourful winter Beshha of the presiding deities of Srimandir

REVISIT HUNGER, NUTRITION SCHEMES: BJD TO CENTRE

ABOUT 44% OF INDIA'S ADOLESCENT GIRLS ARE UNDERWEIGHT, SAYS BJD MP PRASANNA ACHARYA IN RAJYA SABHA

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Dec 9: Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MP Prasanna Acharya Thursday urged the Union government to revisit its schemes with regard to hunger and nutrition, especially among the tribal people, citing low rank of India in Global Hunger Index.

The senior BJD MP informed the Rajya Sabha that the recently released Global Hunger Index of 2021 presents a very alarming picture of our country. India has ranked 101 among 116 countries analysed for the index, he said.

"Of the 116 countries analysed, only 15 fared worse than India. These countries include Papua New Guinea, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Congo and Mozambique. India is also behind most of our neigh-

boring countries. Pakistan has ranked 92 while Nepal secured 76th rank. So, our condition is very alarming," Acharya said.

Speaking during the Zero Hour, the BJD Parliamentary Party leader in the Upper House said the immediate impact of hunger and malnutrition is child mortality. "Globally, malnutrition is the cause of at least 45 per cent of child mortality while, in India, it stands at 69 per cent. This is from a report of the Unicef. Many tribal people are suffering from acute malnutrition," he said.

Lack of accountability among many government officials in remote and inaccessible areas is responsible for the failure of several schemes, including POSHAN. The Midday Meal programme in government schools, which aims at checking malnutrition of adoles-

cent boys and girls, often fails to meet the standard of nutritional value, he said.

"Under-nutrition among adolescent girls is more alarming. About 44 per cent of India's adolescent girls are underweight," Acharya claimed.

He asked the government to revisit hunger and nutrition related schemes. Otherwise, we are digging the foundation for a weaker generation and there upon a weaker nation, Acharya added.



ODISHA IN PARLIAMENT

QUICK TAKES

GLOBALLY, MALNUTRITION IS THE CAUSE OF AT LEAST 45% OF CHILD MORTALITY WHILE, IN INDIA, IT STANDS AT 69%. MANY TRIBAL PEOPLE ARE SUFFERING FROM ACUTE MALNUTRITION

LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY AMONG MANY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IN REMOTE AND INACCESSIBLE AREAS IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FAILURE OF SEVERAL SCHEMES, INCLUDING POSHAN, SAID ACHARYA

PRASHAD progress a dismal 10%

New Delhi: The infrastructure development project at Shree Jagannath Dham-Ramachandi-Prachi Riverfront at Deuli in Kakatpur being implemented under Pilgrimage Rejuvenation And Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD) scheme of the Centre has been moving at snail's pace as the progress so far has been below 10 per cent.

Union Tourism Minister G Kishan Reddy informed the Rajya Sabha that as of now the progress of the project is less than 10 per cent and the state government has also not submitted the utilisation certificate (UC).

The Union minister's response came on a question posed by Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MP Subhash

The Union Ministry of Tourism had sanctioned the Rs 50-crore project in March 2015 by releasing Rs 10 crore

The project was sanctioned after receiving a proposal from the Odisha government for Infrastructure Development at Puri, Shree Jagannath Dham - Ramachandi - Prachi Riverfront at Deuli under Mega Circuit

Chandra Singh. The BJD parliamentarian sought to know whether the government of Odisha has submitted any proposal under PRASHAD scheme during the last three years.

He also sought details regarding the current status of the project.

The Union Ministry of Tourism had sanctioned the Rs 50-crore project in March 2015 by releasing Rs 10 crore.

The project was sanctioned after receiving a proposal from the Odisha government for Infrastructure Development at Puri, Shree Jagannath Dham - Ramachandi - Prachi Riverfront at Deuli under Mega Circuit.

The projects included development of Tourist Facilitation Centre at Puri, development of Shree Jagannath Vishramsthal and Amphitheatre and the Development works at Shree Jagannathdham Puri Beach, Gundicha Temple, Ramchandi Temple, works at Prachi Riverfront and Maa Mangla Temple.

Build disaster-resilient power infra in coastal areas: Nanda

New Delhi: BJD MP Prashanta Nanda Thursday urged the Centre to develop disaster-resilient power infrastructure in coastal districts of Odisha. Speaking during the Zero Hour in Rajya Sabha, the BJD MP apprised the House that India is located in the North Indian Ocean which is most vulnerable to tropical cyclones. Cyclones disrupt power supply by damaging the infrastructure, he said. "On an average, two-three tropical cyclones hit the country every year with one being a severe cyclone. In India, cyclone disrupts power supply and damages power infrastructure, particularly low tension (LT) networks as electric poles get uprooted due to the gusty winds. Due to disruption in power supply, the cities plunge into darkness and residents face drinking water crunch," the BJD MP said. He further said offices and banks become inoperative in affected areas. As restoration of power infrastructure takes around one or two months, citizens of affected areas continue to live without water and electricity, he added. "I urge upon the government to build disaster-resilient power infrastructure and calamity-proof power network in the coastal districts of the country, including those of Odisha, which are prone to cyclones," Nanda said.

State records 195 new Covid cases, 2 deaths

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 9: Odisha logged 195 new coronavirus cases, taking the tally to 10,50,955 Thursday, a Health department bulletin said.

The Covid-19 toll in state rose to 8,428 as a person each from Khurda and Kendrapara districts succumbed to the highly infectious disease. Fifty-three other Covid patients have died due to comorbidities so far, according to official data. Twenty-four children were among the 195 new patients and Khurda district reported the highest number of 99 new infections, the bulletin stated.

The state now has 2,071 active Covid-19 cases, while 10,40,403 people have recuperated from the contagion so far, including 264 in the past 24 hours, it said.

At least 61,899 samples were tested during the period and the state's daily test positivity rate (TPR) was 0.32 per cent, the Health department bulletin said.

On Wednesday, the coastal state had recorded 255 new Covid-19 cases and two fatalities.

More than 2.82 crore beneficiaries in Odisha have received the first dose of the vaccine and over 1.7 crore people have been administered the second jab.

Meanwhile, the state has achieved "yet another significant milestone in the fight against Covid by administering 4.5 crore vaccine doses," Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik tweeted Wednesday.

MAMMAL IN MISERY



A giant whale was found stuck in the shallow waters of Fatehpur beach of Krushnaprasad block in Puri, Thursday

OP PHOTO

OSCPCR thrust on 100 pc testing at schools, colleges

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 9: Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (OSCPCR) Thursday wrote to the District Collectors to ensure that all the school and college students undergo Covid-19 testing and Covid-19 protocols are strictly being followed.

Chairperson of OSCPCR Sandhyabati Pradhan said, "You are aware that the novel coronavirus is transmitted through direct contact with respiratory droplets of an infected person (generated through coughing and sneezing) and one also contract the virus by touching surfaces contaminated with the virus and touching their face (eg. eyes, nose and mouth). We appreciate all your actions to prevent further transmission, reduce the impacts of the outbreak and support control measures to save the lives in the first wave and second waves."

Speaking about the spread of Omicron variant of Covid-19, she said children are more vulnera-

The commission wrote the letter after more than 10 staffers of Kendriya Vidyalaya -1 in Capital city and two male students of Capital High School here tested positive for the highly infectious virus

ble now as informed by Director Health Services.

"Since many children are attending schools now, we request the Collectors to arrange Covid-19 testing kits for all school & college goers and compliance of Covid-19 safety protocols in all the school & college premises," she added.

The commission wrote the letter after more than 10 staffers of Kendriya Vidyalaya -1 in Capital city and two male students of Capital High School here tested positive for the virus.

Time of day affects immune response to Covid vax: Study

Antibody levels are higher when people receive the Covid-19 vaccine in the afternoon as compared to the morning, according to an observational study.

The research, published in the Journal of Biological Rhythms, demonstrates that our internal 24-hour circadian clock regulates many aspects of physiology, including the response to infectious disease and vaccination.

"Our observational study provides proof of concept that time of day affects immune response to SARS-CoV-2 vaccination, findings that may be relevant for optimising the vaccine's efficacy," said study co-senior author Elizabeth Klerman from Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), US.

The researchers noted that symptoms of some diseases and the action of numerous medications vary by time of day.

For example, people with lung diseases frequently have greater symp-

tom severity and altered respiratory function at certain times of the day, they said.

A study of elderly men who received influenza vaccination showed that they had higher antibody titers when they received the vaccine in the morning as compared to the afternoon, according to the researchers.

"Trials have shown that administering some chemotherapy agents at a specific time of day will effectively target cancer cells but limit toxicity to other cells," said Klerman. The study authors and other researchers have proposed a role for circadian signalling in regulating SARS-CoV-2 immune responses and Covid-19 severity.

The latest study evaluated antibody levels after SARS-CoV-2 vaccination among 2,190 healthcare workers in the UK. Blood samples were collected from asymptomatic hospital workers at the time of vaccination.

The researchers created a model

Our observational study provides proof of concept that time of day affects immune response to SARS-CoV-2 vaccination, findings that may be relevant for optimising the vaccine's efficacy

ELIZABETH KLERMAN | STUDY CO-SENIOR AUTHOR, MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL (MGH), US



to investigate the effect on antibody levels based on time of day of vaccination, vaccine type, age, sex, and the number of days post-vaccination. They found that antibody

responses were higher in general for everyone who was vaccinated later in the day.

The antibody responses were also higher in those who received

the Pfizer mRNA vaccine, in women and in younger people, in addition to the effect of time of day of vaccination, the researchers said.

The study contrasts with earlier studies in elderly men that reported higher anti-influenza titers in the morning.

"The SARS-CoV-2 vaccine and the influenza vaccine have different mechanisms of action from each other, and antibody response may vary greatly depending on whether the immune system recognises the pathogen from earlier infections, such as influenza, or whether it is confronted by a novel virus," said Klerman.

A limitation of the study was the lack of data on participants' medical and medication history, their sleep and shift-work patterns, which can also influence vaccine responses, the researchers said.

"We need to replicate our findings and develop a better understanding of the underlying physiology of SARS-CoV-2 and the body's

response to vaccination before we can recommend that people who want an extra boost from the vaccine schedule their vaccine for the afternoon," said Klerman.

"This research is the first step in demonstrating the importance of time-of-day response to SARS-CoV-2 vaccine," she said, adding that getting vaccinated, regardless of the time of day, is the most critical step in preventing Covid-19 infection.

The study also highlights the importance of recording the time of vaccination or any intervention in clinical and research studies.

"If preliminary data show a difference in efficacy and adverse effects from a drug or vaccine based on time of day, it would behave drug companies to administer the drug at the optimal time, which would reduce the number of participants needed to get a statistically significant difference between drug and placebo," Klerman added.

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SHORT TAKES

19 ill after taking toxic water

Bargarh: As many as 19 students of Kamagaon Higher Secondary College under Bhatli block in the district took ill after they drank toxic water on their hostel premises, Thursday. The authorities rushed the affected inmates to the district headquarters hospital in Bargarh. One of them was shifted to VSS Institute of Medical Sciences and Research at Burla after his condition deteriorated. All are Plus II students at Kamagaon College. They drank water from bottles in their hostel. Later, they fell ill. Some of the students alleged that someone might have deliberately added something toxic to the water.

Minor held for rape of disabled girl

Boinda: A 21-year old disabled girl was allegedly raped by a minor boy in Kishorenagar police limits of Angul district, police said Thursday. The girl's family lodged a complaint at Kishorenagar police station, Wednesday. Police registered a case and started an investigation into it. Later, the survivor identified the accused in the police presence. Police have detained the minor.

Scam alleged in Model village

Jharsuguda: Sukulpalli under Lakanpur block in Jharsuguda district has been listed as a model village of the government. A lot of development work has been undertaken, but villagers alleged large-scale irregularities have been committed in the projects. The administration was accused of not monitoring the work. The locals had appraised the Lakhandpur BDO about the irregularities. They alleged that some contractors in collusion with officials have botched up projects. They demanded a probe into it.

NIA team in Jeypore to quiz top Maoist Dubasi Shankar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jeypore, Dec 9: A two-member team from National Investigation Agency (NIA) reached Jeypore in Koraput district Thursday to interrogate arrested Maoist leader Dubasi Shankar Baburao.

A DSP and an inspector from NIA, Kolkata, approached the Jeypore SDJM court to take the Maoist leader into custody for interrogation.

The hardcore Maoist leader has been lodged in Boipariguda jail. It may be noted that in February, 2012, Maoists had triggered an explosion in Chitrakonda area, targeting BSF jawans. Four BSF jawans were killed in the explosion while two others were critically wounded.

The NIA has taken up this investigation. The agency came to know that the arrested Maoist leader Dubasi has links with this explosion.

Meanwhile, the NIA has



moved a petition at the Jeypore SDJM court to interrogate the Maoist leader. In the petition, the NIA has stated that it would inter-

Another BSF camp in Swabhiman Anchal

MALKANGIRI: Security forces continue to make inroads into Maoist-infested territories as Border Security Force (BSF) Thursday set up another camp at Swabhiman Anchal, once a hotbed of Maoist activities in Malkangiri district.

The camp has been set up

to combat the Left wing extremism and help the government to carry out various developmental activities, welfare schemes and other programmes to the people in the Swabhiman Anchal. The area has been accessible after the Gurupriya bridge was completed. Security

forces have rapidly gained ground in the Maoist hotbed while the citadel of the ultras has started crumbling one after another. Sanjay Kumar Singh, DIG, BSF, inaugurated the camp at Ghanabeda under Panaspur panchayat of Swabhiman Anchal by hoisting the tricolour.

Shaileja Pattnaik.

Notably, a team of BSF jawans was coming in an SUV to Chitrakonda in 2012 for a combing operation. While on their way, Left wing ultras triggered an IED and indiscriminately fired at the jawans. Four jawans were killed. Dubasi carrying a cash prize of ₹20 lakh on his head was arrested in Ramgiri in September this year. There are 32 cases against him in Andhra Pradesh; 24 cases in Telangana; 19 cases in Malkangiri and Koraput.

₹10CR NGT FINE ON HINDALCO, GMR

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Dec 9: A six-member bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has accused Hindalco and GMR- two of the previous coalminers of Talabira coalmine-1 of causing pollution, and slapped a combined ₹10 crore penalty on them, a report said Thursday.

The tribunal has penalised them for their failure to spend ₹10 per tonne of coal extracted on the peripheral development of the area and environment protection. The two firms have failed to implement this despite a standing rule. Moreover, the



tribunal has ordered formation of a six-member technical team by the state government to oversee the implementation of its order and submit a report in this regard.

According to the order, Hindalco has to deposit 75 per cent of the penalty money while GMR only 25 per cent. The tri-

bunal passed the order December 8 whose last hearing was held November 29.

The matter came up before the tribunal after an environmentalist Subhash Mohapatra, social activists Hemant Rout and Manbodh Biswal filed a case against the Talabira coalminers in the tribunal in 2016. The petitioners alleged that the two coalminers, while mining from Talabira coalmine-1, illegally used the land of Hirakud reservoir, polluted the environment, the reservoir and extracted excess coal. The residents also protested other violations by the two coalminers.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. O-1264
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION, BHUBANESWAR
Ph. No.: 0674-2301787, Fax No.: 0674-2300965, E-Mail ID: eerw_bbsr@yahoo.co.in
No.- Tender Online-BBSR Divn.-42 Date: 04.12.2021

e-Procurement Notice

1. Name of the work : Repair/Maintenance of road works
2. Total No. of Roads : 09 Nos. of Packages
3. Class of contractor : "A" & "B" Class (of Odisha PWD) or relevant Class of other licensing authorities.
A) Estimated Cost more than Rs.40.00 lakhs & not exceeding to Rs. 1.50 Crore
B) Estimated Cost more than Rs.20.00 lakhs & not exceeding to Rs. 40.00 lakhs.
C) Estimated Cost not exceeding to Rs. 20.00 lakhs
4. Estimated cost of individuals projects : Rs.08.00 lakh to 33.00 lakh
5. Time for Completion : 2 (Two) Calendar months
6. Other details :

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender Online for bidding	Date, time of opening of tender
1	2	3	4
Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Bhubaneswar	Tender Online - BBSR Divn. - 42	11.12.2021 at 11.00 A.M.	18.12.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.
			20.12.2021 at 11.00 A.M.

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

Sd./- Executive Engineer, Rural Works Divn., BBSR OIPR-25066/11/0031/2122

SANITATION DRIVE



CRPF jawans are carrying out a sanitation drive at Harishankar, famous tourist shrine in Bolangir district, Thursday

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. MM-283
FOREST, ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER, SUBARNAPUR FOREST DIVISION - 767001
Tel/Fax: 06654-295076, e-mail: dfosubarnapur@gmail.com
Bid Identification No. DFO, SNP 04/2021-22 Dated: 06.12.2021
Letter No. 5801/1F, Dated, Subarnapur the 06th December 2021

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sl. No.	Name of the Work	Building Works as per DTCN available in the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in
1	Estimated Cost	Rs.4,46,428/- to 14,42,636/- lakhs
2	No. of Works	One Forest Guard Quarters and One Forester Quarter, One Group-D Staff Quarter and Construction of Boundary Wall at different places of Subarnapur Forest Division.
3	Period & time of completion	03 (Three) Calendar months
4	Date & time of availability of the bid document in the portal	10.12.2021 to 20.12.2021
5	Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal	Upto 5.00 P.M. of 20.12.2021
6	Date & time of bid opening	11.30 hours on dated 21.12.2021
7	Name & address of the Officer inviting Bid	Divisional Forest Officer, Sonepur Forest Division, PIN - 767017

Others can be seen from detailed notice inviting tenders, available in website www.tendersodisha.gov.in. Corrigendum if any, shall only be published in the above website. Sd./- Divisional Forest Officer Subarnapur Forest Division OIPR-08014/11/0002/2122

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
ST & SC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE PROJECT ADMINISTRATOR, ITDA, NILGIRI

e-Procurement Notice
e-Procurement Notice Bid Identification No. ITDANGR-03/2021-22
Letter No. 1240/ITDA Dt.08.12.2021
No. CAD-2238: The Project Administrator, ITDA, Nilgiri on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids in online mode for construction of the work detailed below.

1. Nature of the work	: Const. of C.C. Road & Const. Community Centre etc.
2. Total No. of work	: 39 (Thirty nine) Nos. (Approximately)
3. Estimated Cost	: 2,00,000/- (Approximately)
4. Class of Contractor	: "D" & "C" Class
5. Period of Completion	: One Calendar Months
6. Availability of Bids	: 10.00 A.M. of 21.12.2021 to 5.00 P.M. of 26.12.2021
7. Date of opening & scrutiny to technical bid	: 11.00 A.M. of 27.12.2021

The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. The details will be available in the website www.tendersorissa.gov.in from 10.00 A.M. of 21.12.2021 to 5.00 P.M. of 26.12.2021.

Sd./- Project Administrator ITDA, Nilgiri OIPR-26055/11/0001/2122

NOTICE OF CLOSURE OF BRANCH
MAGMA HDI GENERAL INSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED
IRDAI Registration No. 149 dated 22nd May, 2012
Registered Office : Development House, 24 Park Street, Kolkata - 700016
CIN : U66000WB2009PLC136327 • Website : www.magmahdi.com

All our customers/policyholders and public at large are hereby informed that our following branch in Balasore (ORISSA) will be closed after 60 days of this notice.

Balasore (ORISSA)
1st Floor, Nuasahi Chhak, Plot No. 860, Unit - 2, P.O. - Ballia, Sahadev Khunta, Balasore, Baleswar, Orissa - 756001

After the above mentioned period, any person having any queries or unresolved business with this branch can contact us at Magma HDI General Insurance Co. Ltd., 1st Floor, Rupavati Complex, Opposite ICICI Bank, Dharma Nagar, Main Road, Berhampur, Ganjam, Orissa - 760001.

Reach us on 1800 266 3202 (Toll-Free) or email at customer@care@magma-hdi.co.in

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER SUNDARGARH (R&B) DIVISION, SUNDARGARH
E-mail ID: pwd_sng@yahoo.co.in, Tel./Fax: (06622) 272230
No. B-768-
"e" Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. EE-R&B-SNG-22 OF 2021-22
Letter No.5587/ WE Date:02.12.21

1. The Executive Engineer, Sundargarh (R&B) Division on behalf of Governor of Odisha inviting percentage rate bid in single cover system on ONLINE mode from eligible contractors with valid licence for execution of Building (including EI & PH) & Electrical works as detailed in DTCN.	
2. Nature of works	: Building works (Including EI & PH) & Electrical Work
3. No. of work	: 04 (Four) Nos.
4. Tender cost	: Rs.4000/- and Rs.6,000/-
5. Class of contractor	: "D" & "C" Class and HT Electrical Contractor
6. Availability of bid document in the website	: From 10.00 A.M. of date 10.12.2021 to 05.00 P.M. of date 20.12.2021
7. Date of opening of bid	: 11.00 A.M. on Dt.21.12.2021
8. The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website (tendersodisha.gov.in). Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the website said only.	

Sd./- Superintending Engineer, Sundargarh (R&B) Division OIPR-34043/11/0012/2122

OFFICE OF THE ANGUL MUNICIPALITY, ANGUL
e-mail ID: angulmunicipality@gmail.com
Tender ref. No. - EO/RFP/AGLM - 17/2021-22
No.6244 Date 07.12.2021
3rd CORRIGENDUM

No.C-1544:- The last date of availability of tender and receipt online extended to 5.00 P.M. of Dt. 14.12.2021 and date of opening shifted to 15.12.2021 at 11.00 A.M. due to unavoidable circumstances. All other terms and conditions remain unchanged.

Sd./- G. S. Mallick
Executive Officer, Angul Municipality OIPR-13085/11/0052/2122

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER PHULBANI (R&B) DIVISION, PHULBANI
e-mail-eeplbrb@gmail.com
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)
No. B-764:-
'e' Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. EE-R&B-PLB-31-2021-22

1) (a) Name of the work	: Building work-1 (One) No.
(b) Estimated cost	: Rs.43,907 lakhs
2) Period of completion	: As notified in Tender Call Notice
3) Date & time of availability of bid documents in the portal	: From 10.12.2021, 10.00 A.M. to 20.12.2021, 5.00 P.M.
4) Last date / time for receipt of bids in the portal	: Upto 5.00 P.M. of dated 20.12.2021
5) Name and address of the Superintending Engineer, O.I.T. Phulbani (R&B) Division	

Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in. Corrigendum if any shall be published only in the above website. Sd./- Superintending Engineer, Phulbani (R&B) Division OIPR-34066/11/0017/2122

Bank of India
Zonal Office : Star House, 1/1D, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015

POSSESSION NOTICE
(Rule-8(1)) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules-2002

Whereas, the undersigned being the **Authorised Officer of the Bank of India, Bhubaneswar Zone** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice calling upon the Borrower/Guarantor in the loan account given below to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice plus interest & expenses thereon within **60 days** from the date of receipt of the said Notice. The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Guarantor and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **possession** of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules. The Borrower/Guarantor in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the **Bank of India, Sahid Nagar Branch** for an amount mentioned below with interest & expenses thereon. **The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.**

SAHID NAGAR BRANCH / Name & Address of Borrower/Guarantor	Liabilities due as per Notice	Date of Demand Notice/ Date of Possession	Description of the Immovable Property
Borrower: M/s. Anuradha Hatchery, Prop.: Mrs. Mamata Pattnaik, Address-1: Shed No.: 07, Mukunda Prasad Industrial Estate, Khordha-752057. Address-2: At: Mukunda Prasad, Baula Sahi, P.O.: PN College, Khordha-752057 / Guarantor: Mr. Pitesh Kumar Routray, At: Mukunda Prasad, P.O.: PN College, Khordha-752057	₹55,41,997/- + interest & expenses thereon	24.08.2021 / 03.12.2021	All that part and parcel of the land and building situated over Khata No.: 526/2224, Plot No.: 1886, Area: Ac.0.118dcm (5140 Sqft), KISSAM: Gharabari at Mouza: Mukunda Prasad, SRO/Tahasil: Khordha, Thana: Khordha, Thana No.: 118, Dist.: Khordha, Odisha, standing in the name of Mrs. Mamata Pattnaik , Bounded by North: Durga Charan Mohanty, South: Road, East: Ramesh Chandra Pattnaik, West: Ramchandra Routray

Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 10.12.2021 **Authorised Officer, Bank of India**

Funds crunch plagues school transformation programme



POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Dec 9: Funds crunch has plagued the government's initiative to renovate rural high schools to make them at par with private schools in urban areas.

The scheme, part of the ST high school transformation programme, equips schools with facilities like new furniture, audio-visual teaching aids, projectors, science labs and e-libraries, among others. Many of the existing schools have been renovated and given swanky looks. Old furniture like chairs, tables and desks have been replaced with new ones. Classrooms have been revamped with better lighting systems.

However, observers pointed out that this scheme was

launched in haste with limited fund allocation. As a result, renovation of high schools in Sambalpur district has failed to take off.

As many as 25 high schools in Sambalpur district were renovated in the first phase and declared as smart schools, November 16 while renovation of 53 schools is underway in the second phase.

It has come to notice that contractors turn away from undertaking renovation of schools due to funds crunch. Observers point out that unless fund allocation is increased, the scheme may not yield the desired results.

Meanwhile, the state government has directed Collectors to expedite the school transformation pro-

gramme and finish them within deadline. The district administrations have directed respective BDOs to spend the government funds available under SFC, CSFC, Western Odisha Development Council (WODC), BRGF, MGNREGS, CRF and even the CSR funds of local industries for transformation of schools. The BDOs also work overtime and expedite the project works.

However, despite the instructions, the district and block administrations are yet to clear the outstanding bills of the consultancy agencies and raw materials suppliers. These agencies have made several efforts to get their bills cleared but in vain. As a result, these agen-

cies have refused to carry out further work. According to reports, the state government has sanctioned ₹45 lakh for the smart school projects out of which ₹10 lakh will be deposited in the savings bank accounts of the school managing committees. This fund will be spent on conducting training programme involving teachers, students and guardians while another ₹15 lakh will be spent on buying furniture, science equipment, computers, projectors and materials for science laboratories. The rest ₹35 lakh will be spent on renovation of schools. Most of the high schools in the state have two to three rooms while the rest of school functions from asbestos-roofed houses having mud walls plastered with cement. The repairing and renovation of these schools need more funds, one of the contractors requesting anonymity said.

When contacted, Dillip Kumar Bal, PD, DRDA, said attempts are being made to tide over the fund shortage and expedite the renovation work. He assured that the outstanding bills of the concerned contractors and raw material suppliers will be cleared soon.

Tata Group woos local youths with jobs

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baliapal, Dec 9: Keeping in view strong opposition to the proposed Subarnarekha riverine project at Baliapal in Balasore, the Tata Group, the port developer, has initiated efforts to woo local youths to its side by offering jobs to them.

As part of its efforts, the company conducted a written test and viva voce for youths aged below 30 of the land losing families here Thursday. The process will be held for two more days. At least 100 local youths will be al-

SUBARNAREKHA PORT PROJECT

lowed to undergo tests every day.

Scores of people in Baliapal are going to lose acres of land for the project and a railway line. The port project has been facing resistance from locals who have been alleging that they will lose their lands and livelihood for the project. However, the company has assured that it is committed to development of the area by way of employment, education, health

care and communication.

In November, the company had held the first phase of examination to recruit local youths. It stated that all development works as promised by it would be carried out in a phased manner. For over a decade, the proposed riverine project at Choumukh Kankadapal has failed to take off due to some hurdles and opposition from locals united under the Bhitamati Surakhya Samiti. The project has already received environmental clearance. In December 2006, the Chief Minister had announced the project.

FOCUS EDUCATION

HUMANITIES FOR MILLENNIALS



With policymakers intent on privileging technical 'job-ready' majors, it is becoming more difficult for liberal arts departments to attract students. But these fields of study are as important as ever, and with a few modest reforms, they should be an easy sell for today's 'purpose-driven' young people

some useful advice about the kinds of commentaries he sought for his section. In response to the question "Does it help to be famous?" He replied, "Not really. In fact, the bar of acceptance gets nudged a little higher for people who have the means to get their message out in other ways."

A young writer's commentary will have done its job if it communicates the experience of its author truthfully and effectively. Shipley encourages op-ed writers to focus on voice. According to a primer from the Harvard Kennedy School, "the range of voice used in columns can be wide: contemplative, conversational, descriptive, experienced, informative, informed, introspective, observant, plaintive, reportorial, self-effacing, sophisticated, humorous, among many other possibilities."

This variety taps into the expressive versatility characteristic of post-millennials. And we need to hear from them, because their outlook is fundamentally different from that of the Baby Boomers and Gen-Xers who currently occupy leadership positions in politics and business. Who benefits when the only audible voices on climate change belong to those who will be long gone before its worst potentialities become manifest?

In a 2013 cover story, Time Magazine described millennials rather ungenerously as the "Me Me Me Generation," channeling the common assumption that young people growing up in the age of social media spend far too much time focusing on themselves and refining their personal brands. But these young people are the only ones who can relay what it is truly like to be a digital native. As we explore ways to regulate the new digital economy, that is the kind of testimony we should be seeking. And we need a well-honed, purpose-driven humanities curriculum to produce it.

The writer is Professor of Ethics at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

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China's 'Lawfare'

As the world's largest, strongest, and longest-surviving dictatorship, contemporary China lacks the rule of law. Yet it is increasingly using its rubber-stamp parliament to enact domestic legislation asserting territorial claims and rights in international law. In fact, China has become quite adept at waging 'lawfare' – the misuse and abuse of law for political and strategic ends.

Under 'commander-in-chief' Xi Jinping's bullying leadership, lawfare has developed into a critical component of China's broader approach to asymmetrical or hybrid warfare. The blurring of the line between war and peace is enshrined in the regime's official strategy as the 'Three Warfares' (san zhong zhanfa) doctrine. Just as the pen can be mightier than the sword, so, too, can lawfare, psychological warfare, and public-opinion warfare.

Through these methods, Xi is advancing expansionism without firing a shot. Already, China's bulletless aggression is proving to be a game changer in Asia. Waging the Three Warfares in conjunction with military operations has yielded China significant territorial gains.

With this larger strategy, lawfare is aimed at rewriting rules to animate historical fantasies and legitimise unlawful actions retroactively. For example, China recently enacted a Land Borders Law to support its territorial revisionism in the Himalayas. And to advance its expansionism in the South and East China Seas, it enacted the Coast Guard Law and the Maritime Traffic Safety Law earlier this year.

The new laws, authorising the use of force in disputed areas, were established amid rising tensions with neighbouring countries. The Land Borders Law comes amid a military stalemate in the Himalayas, where more than 100,000 Chinese and Indian troops have been locked in standoffs for nearly 20 months following repeated Chinese incursions into Indian territory.

The Coast Guard Law, by treating disputed waters as China's, not only violates the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea; it also could trigger armed conflict with Japan or the United States. The Land Borders Law likewise threatens to spark war with India by signaling China's intent to determine borders unilaterally. It even extends to the Tibet-originating transboundary rivers, where China proclaims a right to divert as much of the shared waters as it wishes.

These recent laws follow the success of the Three Warfares strategy in redrawing the map of the South China Sea – despite an international arbitral tribunal's ruling rejecting Chinese territorial claims there – and then swallowing Hong Kong, which had long flourished under democratic institutions as a major global financial center.

In the South China Sea, through which around one-third of global maritime trade passes, Xi's regime has stepped up lawfare to consolidate Chinese control, turning its contrived historical claims into reality. Last year, while other claimant countries were battling the COVID-19 pandemic, Xi's government created two new administrative districts to strengthen its claims over the Spratly and Paracel Islands and other land features. And in further defiance of international law, China gave Mandarin-language names to 80 islands, reefs, seamounts, shoals, and ridges, 55 of which are fully submerged.

The Hong Kong National Security Law, enacted in mid-2020, is a similarly aggressive act of lawfare. Xi has used the law to crush Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement and rescind the guarantees enshrined in China's UN-registered treaty with the United Kingdom. The treaty committed China to preserving Hong Kong citizens' basic rights, freedoms, and political self-determination for at least 50 years after regaining sovereignty over the territory.

The strategy's success in unraveling Hong Kong's autonomy raises the question of whether China will now enact similar legislation aimed at Taiwan or even invoke its 2005 Anti-Secession Law, which underscored its resolve to bring the island democracy under mainland rule. With China escalating its psychological and information warfare, there is a real danger that it could move against Taiwan after the Beijing Winter Olympics in February.

Xi's expansionism has not spared even tiny Bhutan, with a population of just 784,000. Riding roughshod over a 1998 bilateral treaty that obligated China "not to resort to unilateral action to alter the status quo of the border," the regime has built militarised villages in Bhutan's northern and western borderlands. As these examples show, domestic legislation is increasingly providing China with a pretext to flout binding international law, including bilateral and multilateral treaties to which it is a party. With more than one million detainees, Xi's Muslim gulag in Xinjiang has made a mockery of the 1948 Genocide Convention, to which China acceded in 1983 (with the rider that it does not consider itself bound by Article IX, the clause allowing any party in a dispute to lodge a complaint with the International Court of Justice). And because effective control is the shibboleth of a strong territorial claim in international law, Xi is using new legislation to undergird China's administration of disputed areas, including with newly implanted residents.

Establishing such facts on the ground is integral to Xi's territorial aggrandisement. That is why China has taken pains to create artificial islands and administrative districts in the South China Sea, and to pursue a militarised village-building spree in Himalayan borderlands that India, Bhutan, and Nepal consider to be within their own national boundaries.

Despite these encroachments, very little international attention has been given to Xi's lawfare or broader hybrid warfare. The focus on China's military buildup obscures the fact that the country is quietly expanding its maritime and land boundaries without firing a shot. Given Xi's overarching goal – to achieve global primacy for China under his leadership – the world's democracies need to devise a concerted strategy to counter his Three Warfares.

The writer is Professor of Strategic Studies at the New Delhi-based Center for Policy Research and Fellow at the Robert Bosch Academy in Berlin.

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What you are not able to do today, you will achieve tomorrow. Persevere and you shall conquer.

THE MOTHER



Nicholas Agar

THE HUMANITIES, WITH THEIR FOCUS ON THE INFINITE VARIETY OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE, OFFER THE BEST INSURANCE AGAINST OVERCONFIDENT FORECASTERS

These are tough times for the humanities. Too many liberal arts subjects have come to be seen as fusty and irrelevant. Who can afford to invest in a four-year education focusing on the wisdom of the Mayan civilization or the nuances of Japanese poetry? To adapt Churchill's famous 1939 aphorism about understanding Russia, students today confront a pandemic, wrapped in a technological revolution, inside a climate crisis.

As a proud humanities scholar, I believe that the knowledge my colleagues and I impart is essential to prepare students for future uncertainties. As the past five years have shown, predictions from even our most informed technical experts can easily go awry. The humanities, with their focus on the infinite variety of human experience, offer the best insurance against overconfident forecasters.

But in making the practical case for the humanities – especially when seeking political support – it is not enough to repeat what we know to be true. In Australia, an unsympathetic government has taken aim at the humanities, significantly increasing the cost students pay to study them. The explicit goal is to send a market signal that students' time is better spent mastering 'job-ready' STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) subjects. According to then-Minister of Education Dan Tehan – a not-so-proud humanities graduate – the policy would save students from the kind of education that "nearly cost me the opportunity of getting a job."

You know there's a problem when the minister of education starts talking about your courses the way public-health officials talk about smoking; the idea is to increase the cost of studying history to break students of their unhealthy humanities habit. How might the humanities be repackaged to appear fresher and more 'job-ready'? One idea is to abolish the traditional term paper in favour of more effective modes of persuasion and communication.

Since the 1990s, I have noticed a change in students' attitudes toward the traditional assessment tasks required by humanities courses and majors. Perhaps this reflects the common observation about post-millennials being more 'purpose driven' than previous generations, as demonstrated by the students who have demonstrated for stronger gun-control laws in the United States and for stronger climate policies around the world.

Post-millennials are not waiting for their elders' permission to speak. As Ronald Brownstein of CNN puts it, this is a generation that has "marinated in a world of ubiquitous communication and pervasive social media." Its members neither absorb information nor express their views in the same ways as earlier generations did. And these differences extend far beyond mere stylistic details or matters of grammar.

The implication for the humanities disciplines is that they need to embrace new ways to impart their benefits to post-millennials. In an information age, a

purpose-driven generation will be hungry for the tools of persuasion, assets that the humanities are well equipped to provide.

Hence, the alternative model of assessment I have chosen for a course I am teaching at Carnegie Mellon University is the standard 700-1,000-word opinion commentary – like the one you are reading now. This model is ideal for student writing in the digital age. Someone who is seeking to persuade a large general readership cannot open with ponderous formulations such as, "In this essay, I will argue that..." Nor can one get away with prolix, jargon-laden prose. The message must be intellectually serious, but also attuned to what actually attracts readers. To succeed, one must think carefully about one's argument. By mastering this mode of communication, post-millennial students would have much to offer the world. They may not be world-class experts or recipients of the Nobel Prize (at least not yet), but they can be taught to leverage other advantages. Back in 2004, David Shipley, then the Op-Ed editor of The New York Times, offered

SPECTRUM HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

The gender power play

If politics is about decision making, then affirmative action in politics is about equitable representation of the diverse population. The foundations of a democratic society dictate that the voices of the oppressed must be taken into account so as to prevent majoritarian rule. Thus, it becomes an imminent necessity that the female gender, which has been subject to the pitiable predicament of oppression, violence, historical erasure, bounded restrictions and cultural subjugation within and outside the family as well as society, gets its much-coveted voice in the sanctum of politics. In the micro-political level, in the parental household, the politics of precedence of male child over female is a malice in society aiding further in the minimal representation of women in political arenas.

Historically, gender has always been at the forefront of power politics and dynamics. The female body has served as a battleground for multiple political discourses. May it be regarding abortion laws, voting rights, sexual and reproductive rights, anti-sexual harassment policies and other such policies for the overall cultural, social and economic development of women but at the core of all these discourses, representation is of key importance. For a significantly large du-

ration of time, men have been responsible for legislating, drafting and debating policies directed towards the female populace, with negligible or null contributions taken from women policymakers. The constitutional ideals of this nation by virtue of its fundamental rights and by virtue of India's obligation owed to multiple international conventions like United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, The Beijing Declaration, the Platform for Action and many more, make it a mandate for the nation's policymakers, to ensure affirmative action in all socio-economic and cultural arenas directed towards women. At the core of this affirmative action lies politics and political participation of women. These policies will only be drafted and implemented effectively and meticulously when women voices are heard and taken into consideration, while they have a significant involvement at all levels of administration.

When we talk about ensuring political participation of women, we must take into account that this representation has to be sought from the political grassroots to the upper corners of parliamentary bodies so as to ensure that the representation is equitably distrib-

uted in all societal strata of decision-making forums. At the outset, we must also note that the discourse of participation of women in politics cannot be complete without addressing the fact that when we talk about women, we must not forget to formulate significant policies for participation of transwomen in these political decision-making processes. They have been robbed of the opportunity of being represented for much longer than cisgender women have been. Up until the NALSA v. Union of India judgement, their recognition as a gender group was also missing.

According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2020, India ranks 18th in terms of political empowerment, significantly ahead of its other rankings. The political empowerment ranking is higher than that of the UK, which is ranked 20th, and substantially higher than that of the US, which is ranked 68th. Even if it looks like an achievement on the surface, if we dig deeper, we find out that the ranking takes into account the number of female heads of state in the past 50 years, which gives India an advantage due to Indira Gandhi's tenure as PM for two terms. Even though her leadership paved multiple frontiers for inclusion of women in politics, this statistic messes up the index's interpretation

of political participation of women in India. It fails to take into consideration representation of women at multiple levels of politics and most importantly as state political heads. The Rajya Sabha enacted the Women's Reservation Bill in 2010, which aims to modify the Constitution to reserve a third of all seats in Lok Sabha and all state legislative assemblies for women. However, the Bill has yet to be placed to a vote in Lok Sabha, preventing it from becoming law. The measure has resurfaced in recent public debate, highlighting the need for more women representation in government at all branches of administration. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has been an ardent proponent of feminist ideals and puts strong worded contentions in favour of political participation of women. He in 2019 announced 33% reservation for women in ticket allocations for general elections. His party gave 7 out of 21 MP tickets to women in 2019 general elections.

Even though the path of complete realisation of this political goal throughout the nation is long and tedious, one can take active measures in voicing the cause of women and ensuring affirmative action in fields of education, healthcare, family welfare and economics.

The writer is an advocate in the Orissa High Court.



Madhumati Agrawal

THE FOUNDATIONS OF A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY DICTATE THAT THE VOICES OF THE OPPRESSED MUST BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT SO AS TO PREVENT MAJORITARIAN RULE

WISDOM CORNER

- There is nothing new in the world except the history you do not know. **HARRY S TRUMAN**
- The most worth-while thing is to try to put happiness into the lives of others. **ROBERT BADEN-POWELL**
- The progress of rivers to the ocean is not so rapid as that of man to error. **VOLTAIRE**

WORDSWORTH

Prognosticate

Predict, prophesy or foretell are more pithy and serviceable choices in these plainer-speaking days when long words have rather fallen out of fashion. On the infrequent occasions that journalists today select it as the right word in the right place, they often imply by it pretentiousness or gentle humour: As British financial commentators assume expressions of pious concern to prognosticate on the euro crisis, wickedly self-serving thoughts run through their minds (Financial Times, 21 May 2010). It derives from medieval Latin prognosticare, to make a prediction and can be traced back to the classical Greek gnosis, knowledge, plus the prefix pro-, earlier in time. The related medical term prognosis existed in classic Greek and survived passage via Latin to reach English unchanged.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Hail Nanda Sir!

Sir, Centenarian Nanda Kishore Prusty, fondly called Nanda Sir, who was conferred with the Padma Shri for imparting free non-formal education in his native village with missionary zeal has succumbed to COVID-19. In Kantira village of Sukinda block, Prusty, a Class VII pass out, was a household name with locals holding him in esteem and respect for teaching their wards the basics and laying the foundation of their educational career. Locals used to send their kids to Prusty's 'chatashali' (non-formal school) before enrolling them in regular schools for classroom teaching. He drew respect in the village for his skillful art in making his pupils learn the alphabets and basic arithmetic like addition, subtraction, division and multiplication. Unlettered adults also used to drop in at his chatashali to learn reading and writing. The much respected Nanda Sir will be remembered for generations due to his efforts to spread the joy of education in Odisha. He drew the nation's attention and affection a few weeks ago at the Padma Awards ceremony. The loss of Padma Shri Nanda Kishore Prusty is an irreparable loss not only for Odisha but also for the entire education field of India.
Hitesh Kumar Parida, PANIKOILI (JAJPUR)

Don't ignore warning

Sir, In the wake of surging cases of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 in India, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) has warned of another wave of infections and urged the government to announce additional doses of the jab for those who urgently need it. The National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI) has not made any recommendations so far. The emergence of the Omicron variant reminds us that the pandemic is not over. Many countries have scaled up administration of booster shots. Many countries are using a different vaccine as the booster from the one they used for previous vaccination. However, India needs to analyse the data before taking a decision on this. If mixing of vaccines gives better results, the government will have to obtain additional vaccines. A decision on whether children should be included in the vaccination programme is yet to be taken. The Serum Institute of India that produces Oxford University AstraZeneca vaccine, Covishield, has not released the trial data of vaccine for children. In fact, several vaccines are going through different phases of trial. Cadila Healthcare's DNA-based ZycoV-D has raised high expectations. Bharat Biotech's Covaxin, Serum Institute's Novovax, the vaccine manufactured by Biological E and Johnson & Johnson vaccine are some other vaccines going through trials.
Venu GS, KOLLAM (KERALA)



It is not only matter of happiness for me but for everyone. The farmers who have been protesting for over an year at Delhi borders are returning home satisfied
SANJEEV BALYAN | UNION MINISTER

NEW RECOGNITION

The Haiderpur Wetland abutting the Madhya Ganga barrage, about 10 km from Bijnor in western Uttar Pradesh, has been recognised under the 1971 Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, bringing the total number of such designated areas in the country to 47. Ministry of Environment and Forests posted on Twitter Thursday



of the day quote

I can say with pride that Goa has the best infrastructure for government colleges. This is my challenge
PRAMOD SAWANT
GOA CHIEF MINISTER

My best wishes to the visionary, dynamic & determined national leader, messiah of downtrodden & votary of morality in politics, Smt.#SoniaGandhi Ji on her birthday
CHARANJIT SINGH CHANNI | PUNJAB CM

Regarding Covid, our Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) head Dr M K Sudarshan has informed about the current situation, he has shared details about the Omicron variant
BASAVARAJ BOMMALI | K TAKA CM

India extends ban on int'l commercial flights

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 9: India's civil aviation regulator, the DGCA, Thursday extended the ban on scheduled international commercial flights till January 31. Earlier, India had announced plans to allow resumption of scheduled commercial international passenger services from December 15 with certain conditions. However, December 1, the Directorate General of Central Aviation (DGCA) said it is "closely monitoring" the situation emerging out of the Covid-19's Omicron variant and the final decision on the resumption of near normal international flight operations will be taken after consultation with stakeholders. In the notification on Thursday, the DGCA extended the ban on scheduled international commercial flights till January 31, 2022. "This restriction shall not apply to international all-cargo operations and flights specifically approved by the DGCA."

It also said that scheduled international flights might be allowed on selected routes on a case to case basis. India had banned the opera-

tion of international flights on March 23 last year to contain and control the spread of Covid-19. Flight restrictions, however, were later eased under air bubble arrangement with certain countries. At present, India has formed air bubble pacts with over 30 countries. The country had been operating Vande Bharat flights to many countries over the last one year to evacuate stranded Indians abroad. Currently, several nations have either closed their air spaces or placed strict restrictions on incoming passengers. As per a Ministry of Civil Aviation statement, all international passengers arriving in India are mandated to declare their current health status prior to boarding on the Air Suvidha portal along with the required documents. "For immigration, the copy received in e-mail is essential on arrival in India and has to be verified at the 'APHO' counter," the statement said. According to the ministry, all applications from 'at risk' countries are marked with 'H' and 'red band', while others are marked 'green'.

OMICRON SCARE 'Maintain adequate stock of critical drugs'

Raising the issue of many ventilators supplied by the Centre lying unpacked and unused at some field hospitals, the Centre has asked the states to review immediately and ensure that all PSA oxygen plants, oxygen concentrators and ventilators are installed and functioning

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 9: The Centre Thursday asked the states and Union Territories to maintain adequate buffer stock of the eight critical drugs identified for treatment of new Covid-19 variant Omicron.

The states have been asked to ensure that funds released by Centre under ECRP-II are being utilised for creating and strengthening health infrastructure, and 100 per cent matching funds are promptly released by states to the state health societies. "As the progress of the funds utilisation at the field level is being reviewed by the Health Ministry, information on progress of funds utilisation needs to be filled in the portal created for the purpose. It needs to be ensured that all health facilities at the field level have functional ventilators, PSA plants, oxygen concentrators etc", said health ministry in a review meeting with states. Raising the issue of many ventilators supplied by the Centre



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

lying unpacked and unused at some field hospitals, the Centre has asked the states to review immediately and ensure that all PSA oxygen plants, oxygen concentrators and ventilators are installed and functioning. It has asked the five-fold strategy of Test-Track-Treat-Vaccinate-adherence to Covid Appropriate Behaviour (CAB) to maintain as the mainstay of public health response strategy for effective and timely control and management of Covid and its variants. The states have also been advised to closely monitor the prevalence of influenza-like illness (ILI)/severe acute respiratory infection (SARI) and respiratory distress symptoms in view of winter season. Health Secretary Rajesh

Bhushan in the review meeting on Omicron urged the states and UTs to enhance testing and focus on surveillance to ensure early identification of the suspected cases for their prompt isolation and further clinical management. The districts reporting higher case positivity were alerted to monitor the case trajectory on a regular basis, and to promptly dispatch positive samples to the mapped INSACOG labs for whole genome sequencing. Underscoring the critical importance of vaccination drive, states were also advised to continue increasing the pace and coverage of Covid-19 nationwide vaccination drive with focus on the ongoing 'Har Ghar Dastak' campaign for ensuring full vaccination of all eligible population.

DRIVER SAVES 30 LIVES BEFORE DYING IN TN

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Dec 9: A Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation (TNSTC) bus driver saved 30 lives Thursday morning before dying of heart attack at Madurai. Arumugam, 44 was driving a TNSTC bus from Arappalayam to Kodaikanal with 30 passengers on board. As the bus departed from Arappalayam at 6.20 a.m., the driver complained of intense chest pain to conductor Bhagiyaraj and somehow parked the vehicle on the roadside before collapsing. The conductor immediately called an ambulance but by the time it arrived, Arumugam had died. TNSTC Deputy Commercial manager, Madurai, Yuvaraj told IANS: "Arumugam had 12 years of experience as a driver with TNSTC and his exemplary action of parking the bus on roadside thus saving 30 lives will always be remembered. He has left behind two daughters." The body was transferred to Government Rajaji Hospital for post-mortem and Karimedu police registered a case and an investigation has commenced. Police said that Arumugam's family was informed before the body was shifted to GRH hospital.



SHORT TAKES

Jacqueline appears before ED

New Delhi: Actor Jacqueline Fernandez appeared before the Enforcement Directorate here Thursday for the second consecutive day in connection with a money laundering investigation involving alleged conman Sukesh Chandrashekar and others. The 36-year-old actor had spent about eight hours at the agency's office Wednesday as she was questioned and her statement was recorded in multiple sessions under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

Bird flu detected in Alappuzha

Thiruvananthapuram: Samples of ducks sent from Purakkad in Alappuzha district of Kerala have tested positive for bird flu, laboratory reports show. Authorities confirmed that the reports have come from the Bhopal based lab of National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases where the samples have tested positive for H5N1 influenza virus.

24-yr-old booked for marrying minor

Chennai: Police have booked a 24-year-old youth for marrying a 13-year-old girl in Tamil Nadu under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006. Accused Arun and his mother Pandiyammal, hailing from Koolandipatti in Mangulam area, and the parents of the girl, have also been booked.

Coal production hit

Hyderabad: Coal production in Telangana-owned Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCLL) came to a halt Thursday as the employees began a three-day strike to oppose the Centre's move to auction four coal blocks. With an overwhelming majority of 42,000 workers participating in the strike, coal extraction was paralysed in all 23 underground and 19 open cast mines.

Rescind travel bans: IATA to govts

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) called for governments to follow World Health Organisation's (WHO) advice and immediately rescind travel bans that were introduced in response to the Omicron variant of coronavirus. Public health organisations, including the WHO, have advised against travel curbs to contain the spread of Omicron. "After nearly two years with Covid-19 we know a lot about the virus and the inability of travel restrictions to control its spread," IATA Director General Willie Walsh said. According to Walsh, the goal is to move away from the uncoordinated, evidence-absent, risk-unassessed mess that travellers face.



People wait to a board a bus during heavy rainfall in Kanyakumari

PTI PHOTO

Explosion in Rohini court injures one

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 9: One person was injured in a low-intensity explosion that took place inside courtroom 102 in Rohini district court Thursday morning, fire officials said. According to the Delhi Police PRO, a laptop bag is likely to be the source of the explosion which occurred around 10.30 am. "The spot has been cordoned off. Forensic and NSG teams are inspecting and examining it," the PRO said. Proceedings in the court have been suspended. The fire officials said they received information about the explosion at 10.40 am, following which seven fire tenders were rushed to the spot. The incident comes months after jailed gangster Jitendra Gogi was shot dead by two men, who were dressed as lawyers, inside a Rohini courtroom September 24, with police in retaliatory fire killing the assailants, who were from the slain gangster's rival Tillu gang.

LS PASSES BILL TO FIX TENURES OF CBI, ED CHIEFS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

He added that the changes have been made to ensure that investigation of the cases remain "stable" under their leadership. "There will be continuity, stability. Certain information which is confidential with the head of an investigation agency will remain with him till the conclusion of the cases. This is going to address this (pendency of cases) issue," Singh said. The minister said the Federal Criminal Police Office of Germany had an average tenure of 6-10 years but no fixed term, the Australian Federal Police has a tenure of seven years with a clause for extension, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police has no fixed term but average is 4-10 years. Responding to questions on bringing ordinances, Singh said there were uncertainties about the functioning of Parliament as the last session was a washout. "We had to move on. We could not wait for the protest to settle down because this the provision which is going to reflect India's image at the international forum. So that is the urgency for the country," he said. He said the change in the two laws were necessary as India needed to meet global standards. The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has suggested that some of the countries should look into upgrading their capabilities, and law enforcement authorities maintain high professional standards, Singh said.

New Delhi, Dec 9: Lok Sabha Thursday passed two bills to fix the tenures of directors of the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Enforcement Directorate to a maximum of five years, with the government rejecting the opposition charge that the move will rob the investigative agencies of their "autonomy". The fixed tenure granted to the head of investigative agencies would help in speedy disposal of cases and bring down pendency, Minister of Personnel Jitendra Singh said in his reply to a debate on the Central Vigilance Commission (Amendment) Bill, 2021, and the Delhi Special Police Establishment (Amendment) Bill, 2021. The two bills, which seek to replace the ordinances issued last month, were later passed separately by voice vote in Lok Sabha. The amendments moved by opposition members were rejected. During the course of the debate, opposition members demanded that the bills be withdrawn, contending that the move would make the two agencies "sub-ordinate" to the government. Singh said the term of the CBI and the ED directors has not been extended but fixed for a maximum five years and minimum two years to ensure that the position is not misused, he said.

Govt issues SoP for use of drone in crop protection

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 9: The government has released standard operating procedure (SoP) for use of drones for the purpose of spraying pesticides on agriculture crops, a move welcomed by industry body CropLife India Thursday. "Application of pesticides using drones has great potential as we move towards commercialisation and achieving precision in agricultural crops," it said. According to the ministry, the SoP for drone regulation for pesticide application covers important as-

pects like statutory provisions, flying permissions, area distance restrictions, weight classification, overcrowded areas restriction, drone registration, safety insurance, piloting certification, operation plan, air flight zones, weather conditions. It also covers SOPs for pre, post and during operation period, emergency handling plan, etc. The

aerial application of pesticides through drones will be allowed subject to certain provisions. For instance, operators should use only approved pesticides and their formulations at approved concentration and height. Operators have to ensure washing decontamination and first-aid facilities and notify the public about aerial application of pesticide not less than 24 hours in advance through

competent authorities. Further, the pilots should undergo specialized training including clinical effects of insecticides, the ministry added. In conventional agricultural practices, pesticides are sprayed either manually or with the help of tractor-mounted sprayers where high quantity of pesticides and water are used and where a sizable portion of spray goes waste in the environment. However, drone-based spray requires less amount of water, as well as pesticides, due to better application and bioefficiency.

In recent years, use of drones in agriculture has gained prominence and some states are actively engaged in checking the suitability of this new technology in Indian agriculture, the agriculture ministry said

'India sustained reduction in malaria cases burden'

THE WHO REPORT STATED THE RATE OF DECLINE OF MALARIA IN INDIA WAS SLOWER THAN BEFORE THE PANDEMIC WITH INDIA STILL SHARING OVER 80% OF MALARIA BURDEN OF SOUTH-EAST ASIA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 9: Around 14 million more cases of malaria and 69,000 more deaths due to it were reported worldwide in 2020 than in 2019 and India was the only high-burden country to have sustained a reduction in the disease burden, according to a World Health Organisation (WHO) report. It, however, stated the rate of decline of the disease in India was slower than before the pandemic with the country still sharing over

80 per cent of the malaria burden of South-East Asia. The World Malaria Report 2021, brought out by WHO, highlighted the havoc malaria continues to wreck on the world's poorest and the most vulnerable. It also highlighted sizable gaps in malaria funding as the demand to sustain progress increased last year to \$6.8 billion with only a tiny increase in malaria funding. In the South-East Asia region, the malaria funding per person at risk in India has been lower than the



neighbouring countries, stated the report. "An estimated 14 million

more cases and 69,000 more deaths were caused by malaria during 2020 compared to 2019. India was the only high-burden country to record progress by sustaining a reduction in malaria burden between 2019 and 2020. However, the rate of decline was slower than before the pandemic," the WHO report stated. "Even before the Covid-19 pandemic struck, global gains against malaria had levelled off," said WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus in a state-

ment. Alongside plateauing investments, a sharp drop in malaria testing and gaps in mosquito-control measures contributed to the thwarted progress in the high-burden countries, the World Malaria Report 2021 stated. Ravaged by the pandemic, India only managed to fulfil 50 per cent of its planned distribution of long-lasting insecticidal nets and had also recorded a reduction in other measures like the indoor residual spraying during 2020, the report stated.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI, BANDHUGAON
BID IDENTIFICATION NO.1/2021-22

No.I-254:- The Block Development Officer, Bandhugaon, Koraput district on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid shall be opened on 16th Dec, 2021 at 11 AM in Panchayat Samiti.

- Name of the Work : **Construction of Day Care PHC Building At/ PHC (N) Kumbhariput under Bandhugaon Block of Koraput Dist. (Civil), EI, PH for the Year 2021-22**
- Class of Contractor : **"B" Class & "A" Class**
- Approximate Value : **Civil - Rs.57,42,677/-
EI - Rs.5,74,268/-
PH - Rs.5,74,268/-
Total Rs.68,91,213/-**
- Cost of Document : **10,000/-**

Other details can be seen in the bidding documents published in the website displayed in notice board & published in the website (koraput@nic.in) only.

Sd./- Block Development Officer, Bandhugaon
OIPR-19038/11/0003/2122



Naga students' unions demand repeal of AFSPA



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kohima, Dec 9: The Naga Students' Federation (NSF) and The Eastern Naga Students Federation (ENSF) Thursday demonstrated outside the Raj Bhavan here against the killing of 13 civilians by the Army in Mon district and demanded the repeal of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act.

They demanded that the 'draconian act' be repealed once and for all and that human rights be restored in the state.

The activists carried placards some of which read 'Repeal the draconian law - Armed Forces Special Powers Act', 'Nagas have every right to live in peace' and 'We stand in solidarity with our Naga brethren - The innocent civilians who were brutally killed at Oting village, Mon district'.

They also burnt effigies of security forces and shouted slogans 'Repeal AFSPA'.

The student unions demanded that the Centre set up a court monitored committee headed by a retired Supreme Court or High Court Judge for an impartial probe into the Mon firing.

They sought the identification of the army personnel involved in the incident and demanded that they be "booked for the highest level of punishment."

They also demanded that the action taken against the perpetrators be made public.

NSF president Kegwayhun Tep addressing the gathering said the killing took place at a time when the Naga people from across the region come together to celebrate their rich cultural heritage and identity through the Hornbill Festival and wait to celebrate Christmas.

He demanded that the Centre immediately stop its "policy of militarisation of the northeast region."

"We cannot allow this draconian law to cause further terror in our homeland," Tep said adding that as long as the 'draconian' AFSPA remains in force in the state, the land and its people will be tormented by fear and uncertainty.

The AFSPA, 1958 is one of the more draconian legislations that the Parliament has passed in its 75 years of being, said former NSF president Chuba Ozukum.

He recalled that as the then president of the student body, he had staged a sit-in demanding repeal of Act some 25 years ago at the same place.

The enforcement of AFSPA has resulted in innumerable incidents of arbitrary detention, torture, rape, and looting by security personnel in Nagaland and the north eastern region, he claimed and said the Centre keeps extending AFSPA in Nagaland every six months but fails to take into account the ground reality.

If the country is trying to become a permanent member of the United Nation's Security Council, it should "first do away with the outdated and draconian AFSPA ... This inhuman law has lost its relevance in a civilised society and its applicability has no place in the modern world. AFSPA must be repealed if the Government of India truly honours the Naga peace process and a peaceful solution to the vexed Indo-Naga political talks," Ozukum said.

Black flags in demand at Assam-Naga border

THE COMING CHRISTMAS JOY IS BLANKETED BY A SENSE OF UNCERTAINTY WITH THE NOISY CHATTER OF SHOPPERS REPLACED BY HUSHED WHISPERS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Namtola, Dec 9: It's almost business as usual, in this border town, except that the shops which dot its main street are flying black flags.

The coming Christmas joy is blanketed by a sense of uncertainty with the noisy chatter of shoppers replaced by hushed whispers. The tiny township of Namtola in Assam's Charaideo district, the last point before entering Nagaland, wears a sombre mood, a clear sign of how a tragedy that unfolded nearly 50 kms away from it and across the inter-state border has cut across geographical and linguistic lines.

"Business has been down since the beginning of the pandemic. But after the firing incident, it has simply nosedived," said Ranu Dey who runs a grocery store here. Some 13 coal miners were killed Saturday, in a botched counter-insurgency operation in Oting village of Nagaland's Mon district and another died in rioting which followed the next day at the district headquarters. Follow-up violence by the army in Oting in Nagaland's Mon district December 4 and 5. An army personnel was also killed Saturday. While shoppers



for Christmas were may be few and far between, makeshift shops selling black flags hoisted on small wooden poles are drawing sizeable number of customers.

All private vehicles in Nagaland have been flying black flags since Tuesday as part of a week-long mourning for the Oting victims and the traders at Namtola are making a quick buck selling these. Dey hailing from Luming in Hojai district, said, "I sold quite a few of these flags Wednesday. It's not a happy business for me, but it is

bringing in the much-needed cash and besides people want it." Several stores like Dey's displayed the black flags prominently outside their stores as vehicles entering Nagaland bought them off quickly. "Yesterday (Wednesday), these were priced Rs 10, but today its Rs 20," complained a biker who bought one from Dey before crossing the inter-state border. The food stalls were also ringing up brisk sales as footfalls from outsiders have multiplied by the dozen since the incident. "Though the site of incident at Oting is in

a different direction, most people, be it government personnel or media persons, have to visit the district headquarter Mon and pass through Namtola. As there are not many food stalls here once you cross the border, people prefer to grab a quick bite here," said Sanjay Sharma, who runs a small hotel with his wife here.

"The Christmas rush is missing. But some extra bucks are coming in because of this unfortunate incident," Sharma, who had left his home in Bihar three decades ago, added. Bipin Baruah, who sells tea and breakfast to the morning crowd in nearby Sonari town, echoed Sharma and said, "Since lockdown, business had been really down. These few days we have been getting a few extra customers." A local youth activist, sipping a cup of tea at Baruah's stall, added, "There are about seven-ten hotels with accommodation facilities. And all have are full these last couple of days." "We have lost our brothers across the border. Nothing can take away that pain. But it's true anywhere in the world that such tragedies also bring attention and business for the local community," he added.

'Rules violated' in land acquisition by firm co-founded by Assam CM's wife

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Dec 9: The Opposition in Assam has demanded a high-level inquiry into the alleged acquisition of government land by a real estate company co-founded by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's wife, Rimiki Bhuyan Sarma and the vice-president of BJP Kisan Morcha Ranjit Bhattacharya in violation of rules governing its possession, sale and use.

The Congress, Assam Jatiya Parishad and Rajgor Dal have demanded the high level inquiry into the purported violations, which was reported by a national and an Assamese portal.

The portals, which worked jointly on the issue, claimed that a company called RBS Realtors Private Limited co-founded by the chief minister's wife and in which their son also held a significant share, had as per official record acquired around 18 acres of government land the city's Jalukbari area, which is Sarma's assembly constituency.

The leader of the opposition in the state legislative assembly, Debabrata Saikia said that the report has pointed out that the company has violated the Assam Land Rules, 1989 and Assam Fixation of Ceiling on Land Holdings Act, 1956 as beneficiaries granted ceiling surplus land by the state government are prohibited from selling that land for a period of ten years. The sale and registration of these plots in the name of the company, however, took place in less than three months after the allotment to the beneficiaries violating the provision of the mandatory 10-year lock-in period.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 9: After spending over a year agitating against the three farm laws at three Delhi border points, many farmers became nostalgic as Samyukta Kisan Morcha announced that thousands of protestors would start vacating the protest sites from December 11.

Amrik Singh, aged around 65, from Patiala said he felt at home in his tent at Singhu border and thought of the possibility of leaving it with a heavy heart.

"I don't feel like leaving it all behind and all those memories of struggle, moments of joy and friendships we have formed," he said. "It often occurs to me that I should rent a house here if the protest ends," Singh added in a lighter vein. Riding hundreds of tractors and other vehicles, farmers from Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh in the last week of November 2020 moved towards Delhi demanding repeal of three farm laws of the Narendra Modi government. Since November 26 last year, the farmers have laid siege at highways at Delhi's border points at Singhi, Ghazipur and Tikri setting up makeshift accommodation and arrangements of daily life.

Saudagar Singh, a middle-aged farmer from Ludhiana, reminisced his struggles during the yearlong protests, narrating the bonds he forged and how many new friends he found at the protest site.

"We thought the government will not listen to us and we will have to stay here. But finally we won and farm laws are gone. Now it's time to go home and we are feeling awkward now," he said.

Preparing to go home, many farmer protesters said that they will dispose of items of daily use and back carrying their personal belongings and vehicles.

"There is not much to take back home. Most of it will be given to local people many of whom are

Protest sites were like home, will be lifelong memory, say farmers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



Farmers play a game as they celebrate after a decision to withdraw farmers' movement in the wake of the government accepting all demands put forward by the agitating farmers, at Ghazipur border in New Delhi, Thursday.

We gave them (Centre) an example of our resolve and hope they will listen to us more seriously now and meet our other demands including legal guarantee of MSP of crops

BALPREET SINGH | FARMER

regular visitors for us," Saudagar Singh said. With the Centre repealing the three farm laws and accepting most of their demands, many protesters felt it was time to end the stir and go back home.

Most felt their experience of protest at Singhu Border will be a lifelong memory and they will miss the place. "We have demanded a memorial for our farmer brothers who died during the protest. Once the memorial comes up here, we will visit this place again and again," said another protester Harkeerat at Singhu border.

The farmer unions claim over 700

farmers died at different places during the year long agitation against farm laws.

The leaders of Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) were holding a meeting at Singhi border to consider the Centre's written assurance to their other demands including withdrawal of police cases and compensation to kin of farmers died during the protests, before taking a call to end their stir.

There were many protesters who were ready to stay at protest venue for many more days to come if their leaders wished so.

"We have all the arrangements here. Also, we take turns to visit our home and come back again to join the protest. If needed, we can stay year for months and years," said Kamalapati Baghi from Ayodhya. A young protester Balpreet Singh from Pathegarh Sahib said the protest might end but the struggles over pending issues of farmers will continue.

"We gave them (Centre) an example of our resolve and hope they will listen to us more seriously now and meet our other demands including legal guarantee of MSP of crops," he said.

Delhi's winter PM 2.5 level to be dangerous in 2030 too: TERI

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 9: The pollutant PM2.5 in Delhi's air during the winter season will drop by 28 per cent in 2030, but will still be significantly above the national standards of 60 microgrammes per cubic metre, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) revealed in a study.

"PM2.5 concentrations in winter are expected to fall by 9 per cent, 21 per cent, and 28 per cent in 2022, 2025, and 2030, respectively, when compared to 2019, the base year of the study. Though the PM2.5 concentrations may fall marginally over the years, the levels will continue to remain significantly above the national standards of 60 microgrammes per cubic metre," the study titled 'Cost effectiveness of interventions for control of air pollution in Delhi' and supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies issued Thursday, said.

Particulate matter of 2.5 micron size is the major pollutant in Delhi's deteriorating air pollution, and contributed by transport sector, biomass burning, and industry.

In 2019, the PM2.5 concentrations in Delhi violated the annual average standards by about three times. Transport (23 per cent), industries including power plants (23 per cent), and biomass burning (14 per cent) were the major contributors to prevailing winter time PM2.5 concentrations in Delhi during



Alternative control
PARTICULATE MATTER OF 2.5 MICRON SIZE IS THE MAJOR POLLUTANT IN DELHI'S DETERIORATING AIR POLLUTION, AND CONTRIBUTED BY TRANSPORT SECTOR, BIOMASS BURNING, AND INDUSTRY
IMPLEMENTATION OF ALTERNATIVE CONTROL STRATEGIES ACROSS THE WHOLE AIRSHED OVER THE BUSINESS AS USUAL SCENARIO CAN AVOID OVER 14,000 MORTALITIES IN 2022, AND 12,000 IN 2030 IN DELHI-NCR
THESE AVOIDED MORTALITIES CAN RESULT IN ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF AROUND RS 480-430 BILLION (\$6.9-\$6.2 BN) IN THE YEARS 2022-2030

ing 2019, the study stated. It calls for more stringent controls to curb emissions in the NCR and the rest of the airshed - a geographical area within which air is confined - if winter season PM2.5

levels are to be brought down considerably. Airshed level controls can reduce winter season PM2.5 concentrations by 35 per cent by the year 2030 when compared to the business as usual scenario.

Director General of TERI Vibha Dhawan, said: "Air pollution should be focused as a problem throughout the year not only during the winter season. Stringent actions are needed in the whole airshed to improve air quality in the NCR. Instead of completely banning the essential activities, it is important to switch to the cleaner options."

The study examines emission and PM2.5 concentration reduction potentials of different policy interventions across sectors such as transport, biomass and industries. It also assesses the health and economic co-benefits of an airshed approach to address air pollution, and calculates direct and associated benefits like an additional economic benefit of Rs 430 billion (\$6.2 billion), if regional PM2.5 control strategies are implemented between 2022-2030, the study estimated.

According to the study, implementation of alternative control strategies across the whole airshed over the business as usual scenario can avoid over 14,000 mortalities in 2022, and 12,000 in 2030 in Delhi-NCR. These avoided mortalities can result in economic benefits of around Rs 480-430 billion (\$6.9-\$6.2 bn) in the years 2022-2030.

Over 2k construction sites fined for violating anti-dust guidelines

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 9: As many as 2,146 construction and demolition sites in the national capital have been penalised for violating Delhi government's anti-dust guidelines.

A fine of Rs 382.06 lakh has been imposed on them for the same. Inspections of the 22,764 construction and demolition (C&D) sites were carried out in 19 days by 585 teams deployed by Delhi government to keep a check at such sites to curb the dust pollution.

The data was shared in a compiled Action Taken Report (ATR) prepared by the Department of Environment & Forest, showing the figure from November 17 till December 6. Earlier November 14, the Commission of Air Quality Management (CAQM) had advised



the states of Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh to shut down schools and halt construction and demolition activities this week for the districts falling in the National Capital Region (NCR) with an aim to minimise the impact of severe air pollution on the citizens.

Since then, a ban was imposed and lifted quite a few times depending on the severity of the air pollution. However, November 29, all the construction and demolition activities in the NCR.

Agartala-Akhaura rail link will be game changer

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Agartala, Dec 9: The Agartala-Akhaura railway link would remove Tripura's geographical isolation to a large extent, Union Commerce and Industries Minister Piyush Goyal said Thursday.

The 15.6-km-long railway link will connect Gangasagar under Akhaura sub-division of Brahmanbaria district of Bangladesh with Nischintapur in India, and from there to Agartala station.

Tripura has been witnessing a massive change in infrastructure development like air connectivity, waterway, railway and national highway, he said while addressing the first edition of 'Destination Tripura', an Investment Summit from Delhi, on virtual platform.

"Tripura had remained neglected of holistic development for 35 years but the things have started



changing over the past few years. Now, the state is all set to have a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in South Tripura's Sabroom," the Union Commerce and Industries minister said. Goyal said Tripura would soon become a gateway to the entire Northeast with a number of critical projects in the pipeline. "The Rs 972 crore Agartala-

tion in the state. "With 30 per cent subsidy on capital investment, 50 per cent subsidy on electricity and GST free for five years, the state has become an ideal place for trade and business," he said.

The Union Minister also highlighted the Narendra Modi government's Act East policy for holistic development in the Northeast, as the region was largely ignored by the erstwhile regimes.

"Whenever Modi ji launches any new scheme, he always ensures Northeastern states get their due share. He wants to develop the Northeast as Ashta Laxmi," Goel added.

Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb, who inaugurated the two-day Investment Summit at Prajna Bhavan here, called upon the business community to invest in Tripura where investment possibilities are

immense. "Tripura's industrial possibilities have not been explored yet. Sectors like tea, rubber, agarbatti, bamboo, IT and horticulture crops - jackfruits, pineapple and lime could be game changer for the investors. The state has tremendous potential in the packaging sector also," he said.

Deb further said the state government has been making all out efforts for introducing international flight services in three or four routes - Agartala-Dhaka, Agartala-Chittagong, Agartala-Singapore when the new terminal building of MBB Airport here is inaugurated, next year.

Around 80 business players from Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Jaipur and Dhaka joined the business summit. In the two-day summit, there will be sectorial sessions to woo the potential investors.

national

of the day quote

The Supreme Court would be filled up with judges from one or two high courts if elevation is done purely based on all India seniority of such judges

RANJAN GOGI | FORMER CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

The death of Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat in a helicopter crash has raised doubts in the minds of people

SANJAY RAUT | SHIV SENA LEADER

I have said in several meetings that the defection law is a defective law. This law has several loopholes which people are using. If a Congress government is formed in 2024, certainly those loopholes would be removed

P CHIDAMBARAM | FORMER UNION MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

28 pupils fall ill after consuming chikki

Durg: As many as 28 students of a government primary school in Chhattisgarh's Durg district fell ill after eating 'chikki' (a sweet snack) distributed there and were briefly hospitalised, officials said Thursday. The incident took place Wednesday and all affected children were discharged from a hospital here after being kept under observation for sometime. Soya-made chikki were given to students (as part of a government scheme) at the primary school located in Koliyapuri village, District Education Officer (DEO) said.

Court grants bail to Sharjeel Imam

New Delhi: A Delhi court Thursday granted bail to JNU scholar and activist Sharjeel Imam in a 2019 violence case registered at Jamia Nagar Police Station. Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Dinesh Kumar of Saket court, in the order, said that "considering the nature of offence, and the fact that he was not arrested during the investigation, the application is allowed."

BJP MLA jailed for five years

Lucknow: BJP MLA from Ayodhya's Gosaiganj seat, Indra Pratap alias Khabbu Tiwari, has been disqualified from the membership of the UP Assembly following his conviction in a 28-year-old case, Vidhan Sabha secretariat said here Thursday. Tiwari was sentenced to five years in jail by a Special Court for using a fake mark sheet to get admission in college.

Three die in road accident

Hyderabad: Three persons, including two women, died and three others were injured when the autorickshaw they were travelling in was involved in a collision with a car in Mahabubnagar district Thursday, police said. The incident happened at around 6.30 pm, they said adding six persons were travelling in the three-wheeler.

NIA raids at four places in Punjab

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Thursday said it has conducted searches at multiple locations in Punjab in connection with a case of smuggling of narcotic substances, and arm and ammunition from Pakistan. An NIA official said that the searches were conducted at four places. "We raided four locations related to the accused persons and suspects in Ferozpur district, Punjab. This case was lodged in August 2021," said the official.



You must emerge as leaders. A responsive youth is vital for strengthening democracy
NV RAMANA | CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

TEJASHWI GETS MARRIED

Celebrations were back at the RJD state headquarters here Thursday when news broke that the party's de facto leader Tejashwi Yadav has tied the knot with a childhood friend



Govt to appoint next CDS soon

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 9: The government is set to begin the process soon to appoint the next Chief of Defence Staff with Army Chief Gen MM Naravane emerging as the front-runner for the top post that fell vacant following the demise of Gen Bipin Rawat in a tragic helicopter crash.

The move by the government comes even as a number of retired military commanders said it will

"It is highly likely that Gen Naravane is made the next Chief of Defence Staff and it will be a wise decision," said a former high-ranking military commander

If Gen Naravane is appointed the CDS, then the government will also simultaneously have to look for his replacement

be prudent to appoint Gen Naravane to the top military post as he is re-

tiring as the Chief of Army Staff in five months.

People familiar with the development Thursday said the government will draw up a small panel comprising senior commanders from the Army, the Navy and the Air Force.

The panel will be finalised based on recommendations from the three services in the next two to three days and then it will be sent to Defence Minister Rajnath Singh for approval.

Following the approval by the defence minister, the names will be sent for consideration by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet that will take the final decision on India's next Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), those familiar with the development said.

They said the Chief Of Integrated Defence Staff to the Chairman Chiefs Of Staff Committee (CISC) is likely to coordinate the process of drawing up the panel of prospective candidates for the post of the Chief of Defence Staff.

Explaining the process, they

said the government will follow the same protocol for the appointment of the CDS that is laid down for appointing the service chiefs.

The CDS is the chairman of the powerful Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) that also comprises the three service chiefs.

It is learnt that the possibility of appointing Gen Naravane to the top post is high considering his overall performance as well as the handling of the eastern Ladakh standoff.

The Army Chief is due to retire in April. Gen Naravane is the senior-most among the three service chiefs.

IAF chief Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari and Navy Chief Admiral R Hari Kumar had taken over their respective positions September 30 and November 30.

On January 1 last year, Gen Rawat took charge as India's first CDS with a mandate to bring in convergence in the functioning of the Army, the Navy and the Indian Air Force and bolster the country's overall military prowess.

Farmers prepare to head home

The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) earlier announced the suspension of the agitation and said farmers will head home from December 11 from protests sites on Delhi's borders



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 9: With farmers ending their over a year-long agitation, the protesters Thursday started dismantling tents and collecting their items from Singhu border, which had become their home away from home, even as some of them started leaving Ghazipur border despite the Samyukta Kisan Union giving a call for their departure from December 11.

The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) earlier announced the suspension of the agitation and said farmers will head home from December 11 from protests sites on Delhi's borders.

The announcement came after the SKM received an official letter from the central government, accepting the pending demands of farmers, including unconditional withdrawal of police cases against the protesters. Farmer leaders said they would meet January 15 to see if the demands have been met by the government, asserting that this is not the end of the movement. At the protest sites, farmers were seen dismantling their tents, packing their bags and loading daily use items into trucks to prepare for their journey back

home after the victory march December 11.

A farmer from Punjab's Moga who had been stationed at Singhu border for the last one year said, "We used to come here in groups of 15. Today, we are loading our things like fans, coolers and air conditioners. We will leave December 11 after the victory march." "We made Prime Minister Narendra Modi agree to our demands. Had he agreed earlier, almost 700 farmers would not have died during the movement. But we are happy that our struggle has bore fruit," he said.

Nirvair Singh, a 60-year-old protester from Punjab, said, "It took 10 people around two hours to dismantle everything. There were 19 of us who had come here and six of us are left now, while others have gone back. We used to come here for 10 days and then go back and then return. We are going to be celebrating our victory and then go back to our homes." At Ghazipur, machines like bread makers and milk boilers will be removed from Thursday night with many protesters starting the journey back home Thursday itself. They said it will take a few more days to remove the temporary structures and accommodations at the Ghazipur site.

Air Marshal inspects copter crash site

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Coonoor (TN), Dec 9: Air Marshal Manavendra Singh inspected the site of chopper crash Thursday, starting investigation into the mishap that killed Chief of Defence Staff, Bipin Rawat and 12 others while the police registered a case and Tamil Nadu DGP, C Sylendra Babu held a review meeting here on the matter.

Police were using drone camera near the crash site as part of the investigation

Air Marshal Singh, inspected the site of crash near here along with officials and began a probe. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh apprised Parliament that a tri-services inquiry team led by Air Marshal Manavendra Singh has started investigation.

The Nilgiris district police registered the FIR under Section 174 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and ADSP Muthumanikam was appointed as the investigation officer, official sources said adding a probe is underway.

Explaining, state police sources in Chennai said the inquiry under CrPC (Section 174 of the Code of Criminal Procedure) by police and revenue authorities in the Nilgiris district is in compliance of legalities for preparation of a summary report on the accident, casualties and damage if any. Section 174 of CrPC relates to inquiry by police and revenue authorities on suicide, accident and so on.

Director General of Police, C Sylendra Babu presided over a meeting here on the mishap and probe related to it. Senior police and forensic officials participated in the high level meeting and so far 26 witnesses have been enquired, a police release said. An IAF helicopter crashed at Katterinanjappanchathram near here on Wednesday, killing India's first CDS, General Rawat, his wife and 11 other military personnel, with only one of the 14 passengers in the copter surviving the crash.



National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel during a mock exercise on landslide and earthquake at Kali Mata temple inside Bahu Fort in Jammu

622 Indian fishermen lodged in foreign jails

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 9: A total of 622 Indian fishermen are lodged in foreign jails, including 574 in Pakistan, the government informed Rajya Sabha Thursday.

In a written reply to a question in the Upper House, Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan said the length of time Indian fishermen spend as undertrials in foreign jails and their terms of imprisonment differ from country to country and depend on several factors, including local laws and charges imposed on them by the local courts.

The minister said the total number of Indian fishermen lodged in foreign jails is 622 - 574 in Pakistan, 26 in Bangladesh, four in Bahrain and 18 in Saudi Arabia.

He said the government attaches high priority to the safety, security and welfare of the fishermen. To another question on the Vande Bharat Mission, Muraleedharan said 1,89,71,258 people had travelled under the mission till October 30, 2021.



"The operations under the Vande Bharat Mission were both commercial and non-commercial operations. The government through Indian Missions and Posts abroad assisted the distressed and stranded Indians from the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF)," he said. The total expenditure incurred for assisting more than 1,66,000 Indian nationals abroad, including for repatriation and evacuation, was ₹40.82 crore, he added. In a written reply to another question, Muraleedharan said according to the information available, 6,08,162 Indian citizens have relinquished their citizenship and acquired foreign citizenship since 2017. He said the individuals relinquished Indian citizenship for personal reasons.

Sudha Bharadwaj walks out of jail

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, Dec 9: After spending over three years in jail, lawyer-activist Sudha Bharadwaj finally walked out of the Byculla Women's Prison Thursday, 9 days after she was granted a default bail by the Bombay High Court.

Stepping out of the prison gates in the afternoon, a frail but relaxed Bharadwaj waves out to the waiting media persons, before she was driven to her local residence.

The development came after the Supreme Court rejected the National Investigation Agency's plea against the Bombay High Court's December 1 verdict granting default bail to Bharadwaj and the route was cleared for her release from the jail on Wednesday with completion of the bail formalities.

On Wednesday, Special NIA Court Special Judge D.E. Kothalikar allowed Bharadwaj - an accused in the Koregaon Bhima-Elgaar Parishad cases and allegedly having links with Maoist groups - to be released on a cash bail of ₹50,000.

As per the high court directions, he also set out the terms and conditions for Bharadwaj's bail including that she must reside in Mumbai, not to leave the city with-



out the court's permission, and deposit her passport with the NIA.

However, the Special Court rejected her plea to travel to Chhattisgarh, or Delhi for her legal practice and also barred her from talking to the media about the case. She has been asked to attend proceedings of the trial in the court and ensure it is not delayed due to her absence.

Bharadwaj becomes the first of the 16 accused in the case to be enlarged on a default bail, though another accused P. Varavara Rao has secured bail on medical grounds,

and one accused, Fr. Stan Lourduaswamy died in custody while waiting for bail last July. Hailing from Chhattisgarh, Bharadwaj was arrested by Pune Police on August 28, 2018 in connection with the Koregaon Bhima-Elgaar Parishad cases and slapped with charges under the stringent UAPA. Later, the NIA took over the case probe in January 2020. The investigators claimed in the charge sheet that documents found from some of the co-accused and other evidence established her links with Maoist activities and the banned CPI-Maoist.

GENDER PAY GAP DEEPENS DURING COVID: STUDY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

According to ADP's study 'People at Work 2021 A Global Workforce View', in India only 65 per cent of women received a pay rise or bonus for taking on extra responsibilities or a new role compared to 70 per cent of men

New Delhi, Dec 9: Gender pay gap has deepened during the Covid-19 pandemic, with women being left behind on pay raises and bonuses, says an ADP study.

This disparity exists despite the study finding that men and women were just as likely to take on additional responsibilities or a new role due to Covid-19-related impacts on their organisations. ADP Research Institute surveyed 32,471 workers in 17 countries around the world between November 17 and December 11, 2020.

The gender pay gap is an issue that goes much deeper than salaries. There are many factors to consider such as the social dynamics of society, what government support is



available and the culture of a workplace, Yvonne Teo, Vice President of HR in Asia Pacific of the payroll solutions provider, ADP, said.

Teo further said that bonus is just one of many factors that have contributed to an increased gender pay gap since the onset of the pandemic.

It doesn't happen overnight. To effectively and sustainably eradicate a pay gap, there needs to be a long-term strategy over three or five years with targets and frameworks in place that cover the employee life cycle, from talent acquisition and promotions to departure and internal education.

Without a dedicated and continued focus on diversity, equity and inclusion across the business, we will see a repeat of the backward steps taken during Covid-19 on gender disparity, Teo said. The ADP study also revealed that employees are still judged for taking

advantage of flexible working arrangements (71 per cent of females and 64 per cent of males feel judged). Rahul Goyal, Managing Director - ADP India, said there are implications on employee satisfaction if companies do not solve the issue, which is particularly challenging amidst the current demand for talent.

Employees' perceptions of fairness play a critical part in their sense of loyalty and dedication, which in turn impact productivity and talent retention, and more widely, reputation. If women start to feel that their efforts are being overlooked - especially in reference to their male colleagues - that's a situation employers will want to avoid at all costs, Goyal said.

international



The situation is going towards a new Cold War and blocs are forming. Pakistan should try its best to stop the formation of these blocs because we should not become a part of any bloc
IMRAN KHAN | PRIME MINISTER, PAKISTAN

'ROAM LIKE AT HOME'

The European Union reached a political agreement Thursday to extend cuts to costly mobile-phone roaming costs in the 27-nation bloc for another decade, affecting travel for tens of millions of EU citizens



of the day quote

General Rawat left an indelible mark on the course of the US-India defence partnership and was at the center of the Indian Armed Forces' transformation into a more jointly integrated warfighting organisation
LOYD AUSTIN | DEFENCE SECRETARY, US

Emerging data from South Africa suggests increased risk of reinfection with Omicron. There is also some evidence that Omicron causes milder disease than Delta
TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS | CHIEF, WHO

There are economic bases of China in Pakistan, where any country in the world can invest...the same were also offered to the United States, Russia and the Middle East. We are open to all countries,
MOEED YUSUF | NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER, PAKISTAN

SHORT TAKES

Russia warns Kyiv
MOSCOW: Russia's military warned the Ukrainian government Thursday against trying to settle a separatist conflict in eastern Ukraine with force, a statement that adds to the tensions sparked by a Russian troop buildup near the Ukrainian border. Officials in Ukraine and the West have said the amassing of troops may indicate plans by Moscow to invade its ex-Soviet neighbour, but Russian officials have repeatedly denied harbouring such plans.

Pak detects 1st case of Omicron
KARACHI: Pakistan has reported its first suspected case of the new COVID-19 variant Omicron in a woman in Karachi, Sindh province Health Minister Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho said Thursday. She said that a genomic study was being carried out for confirmation. "Although the genomic study of the coronavirus patient's sample has not been completed but the way the virus is behaving, it seems like it is Omicron," she told the media. She said the patient was 57 years old but local news channels have reported that the woman who had gone to a private hospital for treatment was around 65 with no history of travelling.

Danes arrest 4 over intel leak
COPENHAGEN: The Danish security service said Thursday that it has arrested four people with Denmark's two intelligence agencies on suspicion of "disclosing highly classified information from the intelligence services." In a brief statement, the domestic Danish Security and Intelligence Service, known by its Danish acronym PET, said the four are current and former employees of the two services. Denmark's other intelligence agency is the Danish Defense Intelligence Service, known by the acronym FE.

7 peacekeepers killed, 3 injured
UNITED NATIONS: Seven UN peacekeepers were killed and three critically injured when their vehicle was blasted by an improvised explosive device in central Mali Wednesday, bringing the death toll of UN soldiers in the troubled west African nation to 19 so far this year. UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said all the peacekeepers killed and injured were from Togo, and the UN peacekeeping department said the seven deaths were the highest number from a malicious act against peacekeepers in Mali this year.

Number of jailed journos reached global high in '21

AT LEAST 24 SCRIBES WERE KILLED FOR THEIR COVERAGE, SAYS CPJ REPORT

REUTERS

Washington, Dec 9: The number of journalists worldwide who are behind bars reached a global high in 2021, according to a new report from the nonprofit Committee to Protect Journalists, which says that 293 reporters were imprisoned as of December 1 this year. At least 24 journalists were killed because of their coverage, and 18 others died in circumstances that make it too difficult to determine whether they were targeted because of their

work, the CPJ said Thursday in its annual survey on press freedom and attacks on the media. While the reasons for jailing reporters vary between countries, the record number reflects political upheaval around the world and a growing intolerance of independent reporting, according to the US-based nonprofit.

This is the sixth year in a row that CPJ has documented record numbers of journalists imprisoned around the world, said CPJ Executive Director Joel Simon in



a statement. The number reflects two inextricable challenges — governments are determined to control and manage information, and

they are increasingly brazen in their efforts to do so. The journalists who were killed in 2021 include Danish Siddiqui, a

Reuters photographer who died in a Taliban attack in Afghanistan in July, and Gustavo Sanchez Cabrera, who was shot and killed in Mexico in June.

For the first time, the CPJ's list includes journalists incarcerated in Hong Kong — a byproduct of the 2020 national security law, which makes anything Beijing regards as subversion, secession, terrorism or colluding with foreign forces punishable by up to life in prison.

Mexico, where journalists are often targeted when their work upsets criminal gangs or corrupt officials, remains the Western hemisphere's deadliest country for reporters, according to the CPJ.

SUMMIT FOR DEMOCRACY

POTUS SOUNDS ALARM

The premise is a central tenet of Biden's foreign policy outlook — one that he vowed would be more outward looking than Trump's America First approach'

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, Dec 9: President Joe Biden Thursday opened the first White House Summit for Democracy by sounding an alarm about a global slide for democratic institutions and called for world leaders to "lock arms" and demonstrate democracies can deliver.

Biden called it a critical moment for fellow leaders to redouble efforts on bolstering democracies.

In making the case for action, he noted his own battle win passage of voting rights legislation at home and alluded to the United States' own challenges to its democratic institutions and traditions.

"This is an urgent matter," Biden said in remarks to open the two-day virtual summit. "The data we're seeing is largely pointing in the wrong direction."

The video gathering, something that Biden had called a priority for the first-year of his presidency, comes as he's repeatedly made a case that the US and like-minded allies need to show the world that democracies are a far better vehicle for societies than autocracies.

The premise is a central tenet of Biden's foreign policy outlook — one that he vowed would be more out-



ward looking than his predecessor Donald Trump's "America First approach".

The summit was billed by the White House as an opportunity for leaders and experts from some 110 countries to collaborate on defending

against authoritarianism, fighting corruption and promoting respect for human rights. But the gathering already has drawn backlash from the United States' chief adversaries and other nations that were not invited to participate.

Ahead of the summit, the ambassadors to the US from China and Russia wrote a joint essay in the National Interest policy journal describing the Biden administration as exhibiting a "Cold-War mentality that will "stoke up ideological confrontation and a rift in the world. The administration has also faced scrutiny over how it went about deciding which countries to invite.

US 'weaponising' democracy: China

Beijing: China Thursday accused the US of weaponising democracy and attacked the Biden administration's initiative of the Alliance for the Future of the Internet, saying it is aimed at maintaining America's cyber hegemony. US President Joe Biden is hosting the Summit for Democracy from Thursday, bringing together leaders of the governments and civil society and China, where the Communist Party of China has been ruling the country since the People's Republic was founded in 1949, is not among the list of invitees. China is furious that the US has instead invited Taiwan. The self-ruling island is among 110 invitees to the summit. China claims Taiwan as part of its mainland. Write-ups in Chinese official media say that the summit is part of a multi-faceted campaign by the US to put China in a negative light. Facts show that the so-called Summit for Democracy has nothing to do with global public good for democracy but rather it is about serving the selfish interests of the US and maintaining its US hegemony, Wang said.

Myanmar troops burn alive 11 in retaliation

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bangkok, Dec 9: Myanmar government troops raided a small northwestern village, rounding up civilians, binding their hands and then burning them alive in apparent retaliation for an attack on a military convoy, according to witnesses and other reports.

A video of the aftermath of Tuesday's attack showed the charred bodies of 11 victims, some believed to be teenagers, lying in a circle amid what appeared to be the remains of a hut in Done Taw village in Sagaing region.

Outrage spread as the graphic images were shared on social media over what appeared to be the latest of increasingly brutal military attacks in an attempt to put down stiffening anti-government resistance following the army takeover in February.

The government has denied that it had any troops in the area

Human Rights Watch called Thursday for the international community to ensure that commanders who gave the order are added to targeted sanctions lists, and more broadly, efforts are stepped up to cut off any source of funding to the military.

"Our contacts are saying these were just boys and young people who were villagers who were caught in the wrong place at the wrong time," a spokeswoman for the group, Manny Maung, said. She added that similar incidents have been occurring regularly, but that this one happened to be caught on camera. The government has denied that it had any troops in the area.

NASA's newest X-ray telescope launched

ASSOCIATED PRESS

New York, Dec 9: NASA's newest X-ray observatory rocketed into orbit Thursday to shed light on exploded stars, black holes and other violent high-energy events unfolding in the universe.

SpaceX launched the spacecraft on its \$188 million mission from Kennedy Space Center.

It's called IXPE, short for Imaging X-ray Polarisation Explorer.

Scientists said the observatory — actually three telescopes in one — will unveil the most dramatic and extreme parts of the universe as never before.

"IXPE is going to open a new window on the X-ray sky," Brian Ramsey, NASA's deputy principal scientist, said this week.

Operations should begin next month. NASA is partnering with the Italian Space Agency on the project.



Flowers decorate the Imagine mosaic on the anniversary of John Lennon's death in the Strawberry Fields section of Central Park in New York City

NZ's plan to end smoking: A lifetime ban for youth

THE PLAN SETS A GOAL OF HAVING FEWER THAN 5% OF NEW ZEALANDERS SMOKING BY 2025

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Wellington, Dec 9: New Zealand's government believes it has come up with a unique plan to end tobacco smoking — a lifetime ban for those aged 14 or younger.

Under a new law the government announced Thursday and plans to pass next year, the minimum age to buy cigarettes would keep rising year after year.

That means, in theory at least, 65 years after the law takes effect, shoppers could still buy cigarettes — but only if they could prove they were at least 80 years old.

In practice, officials hope smoking will fade away decades before

then. Indeed, the plan sets a goal of having fewer than 5% of New Zealanders smoking by 2025.

Other parts of the plan include allowing only the sale of tobacco products with very low nicotine levels and slashing the number of stores that can sell them. The changes would be brought in over time to help retailers adjust.

Because the current minimum age to buy cigarettes in New Zealand is 18, the lifetime smoking ban for youth wouldn't have an impact for a few years.

In an interview with The Associated Press, New Zealand's Associate Health Minister Dr Ayesha Verrall, who is spear-



heading the plan, said her work at a public hospital in Wellington involved telling several smokers they had developed cancer.

"You meet, every day, someone facing the misery caused by tobacco," Verrall said. "The most horrible ways people die. Being

short of breath, caused by tobacco."

Smoking rates have steadily fallen in New Zealand for years, with only about 11% of adults now smoking and 9% smoking every day. The daily rate among Indigenous Maori remains much

higher at 22%. Under the government's plan, a taskforce would be created to help reduce smoking among Maori.

Big tax increases have already been imposed on cigarettes in recent years and some question why they aren't hiked even higher.

"We don't think tax increases will have any further impact," Verrall said. "It's really hard to quit and we feel if we did that, we'd be punishing those people who are addicted to cigarettes even more."

And she said the tax measures tend to place a higher burden on lower-income people, who are more likely to smoke.

The new law wouldn't impact va-

ping. Verrall said that tobacco smoking is far more harmful and remains a leading cause of preventable deaths in New Zealand, killing up to 5,000 people each year.

"We think vaping's a really appropriate quit tool," she said.

The sale of vaping products is already restricted to those aged 18 and over in New Zealand and vaping is banned in schools. Verrall said there was some evidence of a rise in youth vaping, a trend she is following "really closely."

New Zealand's approach to ban the next generation from tobacco smoking hasn't been tried elsewhere, she said.

business

of the day quote

Bullion industry has developed over the last three decades in India with significant addition to organised refining capacity and an LBMA accredited refinery

SOMASUNDARAM PR | REGIONAL CEO, WGC

This (PLI scheme) is going to help us a lot in terms of improving our presence in the global market and increasing our share. We expect that this will definitely help us in terms of high double-digit growth in our exports

MAVANK SHAH | SENIOR CATEGORY HEAD, PARLE PRODUCTS

Today, we are the fastest growing fintech market in the world. Fintech in India has crossed China and has become the second largest fintech economy after the US with the highest adoption rate globally

HARSHIL MATHUR | CEO AND CO-FOUNDER, RAZORPAY

SHORT TAKES

Vi shares touch 52-week high

Mumbai: Shares of Vodafone Idea Ltd Thursday hit its 52-week high on the bourses after the stock spurted over 16 per cent, amidst reports that the firm has raised enough fund for the repayment of interest owed to bondholders within the December 13 deadline. On BSE, the stock surged 16.51 per cent to its 52-week high value of ₹16.65. It was later trading at ₹16.37, up 14.56 per cent over its previous close. On NSE, the share rose 16.43 per cent to its 52-week high value of ₹16.65.

Startup Innovation Challenge launched

Bhubaneswar: Bharti Airtel announced the launch of 'Airtel India Startup Innovation Challenge' in partnership with Invest India. As part of the 'Startup Innovation Challenge' early stage technology companies are invited to demonstrate differentiated solutions for 5G, IoT, cloud communications, digital advertising and digital entertainment. Applications will close January 24, 2022 and the results will be announced February 14, 2022. The top 10 winners will be awarded with cash prizes and access to Airtel's Innovation Lab.

Samsung busts fake TV racket

New Delhi: Markets across NCT of New Delhi were raided by Samsung in furtherance to court orders, which unearthed a shockingly large racket of the sale of fake, counterfeit and unauthorized 'SAMSUNG LED TVs' in the markets of the national capital. Infringing and counterfeit products estimated to be worth over ₹1.5 crore, fraudulently sold under the trademark 'SAMSUNG' were recovered. This massive recovery of over 600 fake LED TVs by Samsung has once again brought to light the issue plaguing the Indian markets, resulting in duping innocent consumers of their money.

DSP unveils ETFs

New Delhi: DSP Investment Managers announced the launch of the first passive product in the Indian mutual fund industry based on Nifty Midcap 150 Quality 50 Index - the DSP Nifty Midcap 150 Quality 50 ETF, along with the DSP Nifty 50 ETF. This new quality-focused mid cap ETF offers investors an option to invest in quality mid-cap companies with the potential of higher profitability, lower leverage & relatively stable earnings. The second new product, DSP Nifty 50 ETF will invest in all the 50 companies from the Nifty 50 Index in line with the index.



For a strong, sustainable and inclusive recovery of the global economy hit by the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, it is imperative to ensure collective progress of all countries

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

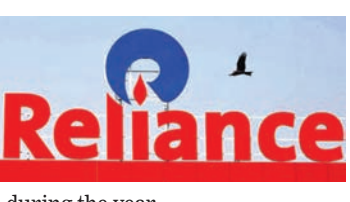
Valuation of top cos zooms 68% in pandemic-hit '21

Mumbai, Dec 9: Top Indian companies by valuation saw their net worth rise by 68 per cent this year despite the pandemic, which has otherwise had a disastrous impact on small businesses and normal life, a report said Thursday.

The Burgundy Private Hurun India 500 list's overall net worth stands at ₹228 lakh crore or \$3 trillion (higher than India's GDP), and it has 200 companies whose valuation doubled

BALENO TOUCHES SALES MILESTONE

The country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India Thursday said its premium hatchback Baleno has crossed the cumulative sales milestone of 10 lakh units. Launched in October 2015 and sold through the company's premium retail chain NEXA, the model had crossed the 5 lakh units cumulative sales in November 2018 and touched the 10 lakh units milestone in November this year, said Maruti Suzuki India Ltd



during the year.

The list is led by richest Indian Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries with a valuation of ₹16.7 lakh crore, followed by Tata Consultancy Services (₹13.1 lakh crore) and HDFC Bank (₹9.1 lakh crore). In the unlisted space, vaccine-maker

Serum Institute of India (SII) is valued the highest at ₹1.8 lakh crore. The pandemic year saw the Pune-based company's valuation surge by 127 per cent.

The companies come from 43 cities across the country, and the financial capital Mumbai leads with 167 entrants, followed by Bangalore at 52 and Chennai at 38.

From a sectoral perspective, financial services leads with 77 names in the list, followed by healthcare at 64. The total sales of these companies stood at ₹58 lakh crore, accounting for

26 per cent of the Indian GDP. The overall employment in this list, which excludes state-run enterprises, is 69 lakh people or 1.5 per cent of the overall workforce.

When it comes to startups, the list said 11 per cent of the featuring companies are less than 10 years old, led by Mensa Brands, Apna, CRED and BharatPe.

Companies in the list contributed ₹1.9 lakh crore or 62 per cent of the overall corporate income tax collection in FY21, as per a statement.

OVER THREE-FOLD JUMP

Solar capacity addition up 335% in Jan-Sept

AS PER THE REPORT, MODULE PRICES HAVE BEEN INCREASING FOR SIX CONSECUTIVE QUARTERS

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENTS AS OF SEPT INCREASED 16% AND AUCTION ACTIVITY SURGED 181% YOY

RAJASTHAN IS, NOW, THE TOP SOLAR STATE IN TERMS OF CUMULATIVE INSTALLED CAPACITY, OVERTAKING KARNATAKA



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 9: The solar energy generation capacity addition rose 335 per cent to 7.4 GW in the January-September period this year from 1.73 GW a year ago, said Mercom India Research.

In the first nine months of 2021 (9M 2021), India added over 7.4 gigawatts (GW) of solar, a 335 per cent increase YoY (year-on-year) compared to the 1.73 GW installed in the same period in 2020, according to Mercom India Research's newly released Q3 2021 India Solar Market Update.

According to the update, India added 2,835 megawatts (MW) of

solar in the third quarter (Q3 July-September) of the calendar year (CY) 2021, up 14 per cent compared to 2,488 MW installed in Q2 2021 (April-June). Year-over-year (YoY) installations in Q3 surged 547 per cent.

Installations grew despite market challenges, according to the report. Increased raw materials costs, severe volatility in module availability and price, curtailment of power in several states, and high freight charges have added to the difficulties for the developers, it stated.

"Despite supply challenges, the Indian solar market is headed towards one of best years on record. We expect a strong 2022 despite

the high price of components and uncertainties surrounding the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) related transmission issue in Rajasthan. An increase in GST, curtailment and payment issues are adding to the challenges facing developers and constraining growth," said Raj Prabhu, CEO of Mercom Capital Group in the statement.

There was a steep rise in the average selling prices of solar modules during the third quarter. Prices of mono PERC modules surged over 15 per cent q-o-q (quarter-on-quarter), with supply constraints after major manufacturers started cutting output in China. Freight charges peaked at around \$9,000 per container in the quarter, according to the statement.

Manufacturing capacity ramp-up continues at a brisk pace as domestic producers look to take advantage of the 40 per cent basic customs duty scheduled to be imposed from April 2022. "In the second quarter of next year, we can expect to see procurement strategies starting to change drastically, as imports become expensive, said Prabhu.

As of September, the top 10 states accounted for about 96 per cent of the country's cumulative large-scale solar installations.

According to the report, India added close to 11.6 GW of power capacity in the first nine months of the current year.

Retail inflation likely moved higher in Nov



AGENCIES

Bangalore, Dec 9: India's retail inflation likely accelerated last month towards the upper limit of the Reserve Bank of India's target range as fruit and vegetable prices climbed, a Reuters poll found.

The RBI left interest rates on hold Wednesday, as predicted by another Reuters poll, but the central bank said price pressures may persist in the near-term.

The December 6-8 poll of 39 economists forecast November consumer price inflation at 5.10%, higher than 4.48% in October. If realised, it would be within the RBI's target band of 2%-6% for a fifth consecutive month.

Forecasts ranged between 4.50% and 5.32%. The CPI (Consumer Price Index) data is due to be released on December 13 at 530 pm.

"Last month's reduction in fuel taxes and a slightly favourable statistical base were offset by strong momentum in the price of perishables," said Yuvika Singhal, economist at QuantEco Research.

That was pushed further because of untimely rains and the uptick in LPG (liquefied petroleum

RBI still expects CPI at 5.1% for Q3 and 5.7% for Q4 of this financial year

gas) and kerosene prices, she added.

Brent crude oil, India's biggest import, was down over 16% last month. It was trading around \$75 a barrel Wednesday.

"The upcoming impact from the hike in telecom tariffs, volatility in the price of perishable goods and any plausible supply-chain disruptions from Covid's latest variant could negate the recent respite we had in fuel and global commodity prices," said Madhavi Arora, lead economist at Emkay Global Financial Services.

A separate Reuters survey found that the rate at which the RBI borrows from banks - the reverse repo rate - was expected to climb to 4.10% by the end of next year, with the first hike of 25 basis points coming in Q1 2022. It was expected to raise its repo rate by 25bps in Q2.

Industrial output expanded 4.0% in October from a year ago, up from 3.1% in September, the latest poll also showed.

Navi Health logs 95% MoM growth in state

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 9: Navi Health has clocked 95% monthly growth in Odisha since June, 2021, said company's release.

The release said, "With wide coverage of 125 network hospitals spread across Odisha, the state has emerged among the important markets for Navi Insurance, contributing close to 5% of the total policies sold since May."

Customers in Odisha have responded enthusiastically to Navi's 100% digital, paperless app-based health insurance launched in December, 2020.

Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Raurkela are the fastest-growing markets in Odisha for Navi Insurance, as per the release. Nationally, Navi Insurance's business has grown by 110% every month since May 2021.

Navi offers health insurance cover ranging from ₹2 Lakh to ₹1 Crore for individuals and families.

According to a company's spokesperson, "The response from Odisha for Navi Health Insurance has been extremely heartening. Our objective is to radically simplify health insurance for individuals and families. We do this by actively leveraging technology and data as well as customer feedback to constantly implement new features and improve our offering to customers."

Bajaj Allianz launches campaign to empower hockey in country

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 9: Bajaj Allianz General Insurance, Thursday, announced the launch of its '#CareForHockey' campaign with a view to help elevate recognition of hockey in the country. As part of the initiative, the company has associated with Rani Rampal, Indian Women's Hockey Team Captain who is the face of this campaign.

#CareForHockey is a one of its kind campaign from the company with a goal to support the development of Hockey in India from the grass-root level, said a company official.

Tapan Singhel, MD & CEO, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance said, "The '#CareForHockey' campaign is an attempt to take these brand values forward to support hockey to not only make a mark in the world, but to also encourage more people to pursue their passion for this sport thereby keeping hockey alive in India. I'm sure that this campaign with the support from Rani Rampal and One Thousand Hockey Legs project will help take this message to the last mile and will encourage people to follow their ambition, break records and create history for our country."

NEW COLLABORATIONS

TVS Motor inks pact with Grupo Q

NEW DELHI: TVS Motor Company Thursday said it has tied up with Grupo Q for Nicaragua and Costa Rica markets, in a bid to further expand its business in Central America. Active Motors SA, a subsidiary of Grupo Q, will support the company with dedicated sales, service, spares and customer relationship management (CRM), TVS Motor Company said in a statement.

As a part of the association, Active SA Motors will facilitate the opening of three flagship outlets and about 50 dealerships for TVS Motor Company in a phase-wise manner across Nicaragua and Costa Rica, it added.



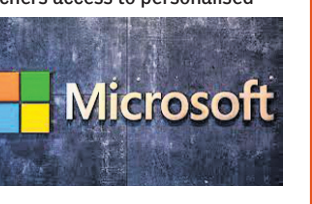
Dr Reddy's ties up with S'pore firm

HYDERABAD: Prestige BioPharma Ltd, a Singapore-based firm and Dr Reddy's Laboratories Ltd, Thursday announced that the two companies have entered into a binding agreement for an exclusive partnership for the supply and commercialisation of the former's proposed Trastuzumab biosimilar in select countries in Latin America and Southeast Asia. Under the partnership, Prestige BioPharma will be responsible for sustainable commercial supply of HD201 from its manufacturing facilities in Osong, South Korea, while Dr Reddy's will be responsible for local registrations, marketing and sales in the licensed territories. Lisa S Park, CEO of Prestige BioPharma, commented: "We are delighted to establish a partnership with Dr Reddy's for key Latin American and Southeast Asian markets."



Microsoft, WhiteHat Jr announce partnership

NEW DELHI: Microsoft India and WhiteHat Jr Thursday announced a collaboration to provide students and teachers access to personalised and immersive learning experiences with Minecraft. Under the partnership, Whitehat Jr will offer a Code with Minecraft course for students on its platform, a statement said. The Code with Minecraft programme will provide students an opportunity to master important coding concepts through a highly curated curriculum based on Minecraft, it added.



Paytm Payments Bank granted status upgrade

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 9: Paytm Payments Bank Thursday said it has been given the scheduled bank status by the Reserve Bank of India.

The bank has been included in the Second Schedule to the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 and the approval will help it to bring more financial services and products.

With the scheduled bank status, the bank can explore new business opportunities, including participation in government and other large corporations issued request for proposals, primary auctions, fixed-rate and variable rate repos, and reverse repos.

"Besides, it can participate in Marginal Standing Facility and will be eligible to partner in government-run financial inclusion schemes," according to a statement.

The bank supports 33.3 crore



Paytm Wallets and enables consumers to make payments at over 87,000 online merchants and 2.11 crore in-store merchants.

Over 15.5 crore Paytm UPI handles have been created and are used to make and receive payments with Paytm Payments Bank being the largest beneficiary bank and one of the top remitter banks for UPI transactions in the country.

In the last fiscal year, the bank has also become the largest issuer and acquirer of FASTags in the country, the statement said.

Italy fines Amazon \$1.3bln for abuse of mkt dominance

GLOBAL REGULATORY SCRUTINY OF TECH GIANTS HAS BEEN INCREASING AFTER A STRING OF SCANDALS OVER PRIVACY AND MISINFORMATION, AS WELL AS COMPLAINTS FROM SOME BUSINESSES THAT THEY ABUSE THEIR MARKET POWER

AGENCIES

Milan, Dec 9: Italy's antitrust watchdog said Thursday it had fined Amazon \$1.3 billion (1.1 billion euros) for alleged abuse of market dominance, in one of the biggest penalties imposed on a US tech giant in Europe.

Amazon said it strongly disagreed with the Italian regulator's decision and would appeal.

Italy's watchdog said in a statement that Amazon had leveraged its dominant position in the Italian market for intermediation services on marketplaces to favour the adoption of its own logistics serv-

ice - Fulfilment by Amazon (FBA) - by sellers active on Amazon.it.

The authority said Amazon tied to the use of FBA access to a set of exclusive benefits, including the Prime label, that help increase visibility and boost sales on Amazon.it.

Amazon prevents third-party sellers from associating the Prime label with offers not managed with FBA, it said.

The Prime label makes it easier to sell to the more than 7 million most loyal and high-spending consumers members of Amazon's loyalty program.

The antitrust authority also said it would impose corrective steps that



will be subject to review by a monitoring trustee.

Amazon said FBA is a completely optional service and that the ma-

majority of third-party sellers on Amazon do not use it.

"When sellers choose FBA, they do so because it is efficient, convenient and competitive in terms of price," the US group said in a statement.

The proposed fine and remedies are unjustified and disproportionate, it added.

The EU Commission said it had cooperated closely with the Italian competition authority on the case, within the framework of the European Competition Network, to ensure consistency with its two own ongoing investigations into Amazon's business practices.

The first was opened in July 2019 to assess whether Amazon's use of sensitive data from independent retailers who sell on its marketplace was in breach of EU competition rules.

The second, in late 2020, focussed on the possible preferential treatment of Amazon's own retail offers and those of marketplace sellers that use Amazon's logistics and delivery services.

This investigation complements today's decision of the Italian competition authority which addresses Amazon's conduct in the Italian logistics markets, the Commission said Thursday.

TRAVIS KEEPS OZ HEAD HIGH

Left-hander scores an attacking unbeaten century after Warner misses out on a ton to help the hosts take 196-run first innings lead at stumps on second day of the first Ashes Test against England at the Gabba

Stokes' overstepping exposes Ashes' issue



TRAVIS HEAD



DISCIPLINED BOWLING: Ollie Robinson celebrates with teammates after dismissing an Australian batter in Brisbane

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Brisbane, Dec 9: David Warner set up the innings with a chance-filled 94 (176b, 11x4, 2x6) and Travis Head (112 batting, 95b, 12x4, 2x6) took over with an unbeaten century after a mini-collapse in the middle order to guide Australia to 343/7 at stumps on Day 2, a 196-run lead in the Ashes series opener.

Warner had a big reprieve on 17 off a no-ball from Ben Stokes, one of the many times the England all-rounder overstepped but one of the few he was called for. Warner was also dropped in the slips on 48 and narrowly avoided being run out as he scrambled back to his crease on 60.

But he ran out of luck after sharing partnerships of 156 with Marnus Labuschagne (74, 117b, 6x4, 2x6) for the second wicket and 23 with Steve Smith (12) for the third, finally out just after the tea interval when Ollie Robinson (3/48) took two wickets with consecutive deliveries.

Robinson had Warner caught

in the covers by Stokes and then bowled Cameron Green, who didn't play a shot to a ball that hit his off stump, in a period when Australia slid from 189/2 to 195/5.

Debutant wicket-keeper Alex Carey successfully blocked the hat-trick ball, his first delivery in Test cricket, but was out for 12 as England clawed back to have the Australians at 236/6.

Head and captain Pat Cummins (12) combined in a 70-run stand that restored Australia's domination of the first two days at the Gabba, accelerating the scoring as England's fielding got ragged.

The partnership ended when England skipper Joe Root (1/29) picked up the wicket of his counterpart, having Cummins caught at leg slip.

Head reached his century from 85 deliveries with a driven boundary off Chris Woakes (1/56) in the first over with the new ball.

Head was felled by a full-toss from Mark Wood when he was on 105, hit on the glove and helmet before falling to the ground, but

recovered to finish unbeaten at stumps.

Warner's survival and Stokes' delivery stride were the two main talking points Thursday. Warner got his first reprieve from the TV umpire after being beaten by Stokes, bowling his first over in a Test match since March.

Robinson returned the best figures for the England bowlers, taking 3-48 from 18 overs on an extended second day, and also having a chance put down.

Left-arm spinner Jack Leach picked up the key wicket of Labuschagne, but was otherwise punished by the Australian batting lineup and returned 1/95 from 11 overs.

Stokes was restricted to just nine overs and conceded 50 runs, appearing to be struggling with his fitness when he bowled late with the old ball.

Brief scores: England 147; Australia 343/7 (Travis Head 112 batting, David Warner 94, Marnus Labuschagne 74; Ollie Robinson 3/48). Match to continue.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Brisbane, Dec 9: There was one glaring mis-step from Ben Stokes which cost England a wicket on the second morning of the Ashes, giving Australian opener David Warner a reprieve when he was on 17.

It soon emerged that Stokes, bowling his first over in a Test match since March, had also overstepped the crease on his previous three deliveries and not been called for a no-ball by the umpires.

Later still, Australia's Ashes broadcaster Channel 7 revealed Stokes had overstepped the front crease 14 times in Thursdays' opening session and had only been called twice for a no-ball.

The missed opportunity on Warner was a problem for Stokes and England. The amended decision: no ball. Warner got to play on. One run was added to the total — in the sundries column — and an extra delivery had to be bowled in the over.

But it exposed a bigger problem for the match officials. Cricket

Australia said a technology problem at the Gabba meant that the third umpire, Paul Wilson, couldn't review TV replays of every delivery to check if bowlers were overstepping the crease, leaving it to the on-field umpires to make the calls.

Ex-Australia test captain Ricky Ponting described it as "pathetic officiating" during the match commentary.

TECHNOLOGY WOES

The International Cricket Council (ICC) is responsible for the implementation of that system that allows the TV official to check for no-balls.

Before a change in the rules last year, it was standard practice for on-field umpires to inform bowlers when they were close to overstepping and to signal a no-ball.

England captain Joe Root, speaking to Fox Cricket during a break in play, said the missing chance against Warner was "frustrating".

"The fact we're creating a good number of chances is really pleasing," he said. "We've got to stay confident...keep trusting what we're doing and believing we'll get the rewards."



A DAY TO FORGET: Ben Stokes is frustrated after bowling continuous no-balls, Thursday

BCCI thanks 'leader' Kohli

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 9: A day after replacing him with Rohit Sharma as India's ODI skipper, the BCCI on Thursday thanked Virat Kohli for displaying "grit, passion and determination" during his tenure. Kohli was also named Kohli's deputy in the Test format. The Mumbaier is already India's T20 captain.

"A leader who led the side with grit, passion & determination. Thank you Captain @imVkohli," BCCI tweeted on the day after completely omitting any reference to him in the press note that announced Kohli's elevation to ODI captaincy.

In a captaincy that began in 2017, Kohli led India to 65 wins out of 95 matches with an admirable winning percentage of 70.43. He relinquished T20 captaincy at the end of the T20 World Cup in the UAE and Oman.

India's campaign at ACT ends due to Covid cases

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Donghae (South Korea), Dec 9: The Indian women's hockey team was Thursday forced out of the ongoing Asian Champions Trophy after one of their player tested positive for COVID-19, joining Malaysia which was also compelled to withdraw after being hit by the dreaded virus here.

A day after the cancellation of its matches against defending champions Korea and China respectively, an Asian Hockey Federation source told this agency that the Indian team is no longer competing in the event. The side is currently in quarantine and the identity of the player who has tested positive has not been revealed.

"Last edition's runner-up India are out of the tournament due to

a positive case in the squad. India will no longer participate any further in the tournament," the AHF source said.

While India were scheduled to take on hosts Korea Wednesday, they were slated to meet China Thursday. "With the health and safety of the players being paramount, the Indian Women's Hockey Team's match against China December 9 will not take place," Hockey India had tweeted Wednesday.

The pandemic had cast its shadow on the tournament Monday itself when India's second match against Malaysia was cancelled due to COVID-related issues. Malaysia was eventually forced out after one of its players, Nurul Faezah Shafiqah Khalim, tested positive for COVID-19 upon arrival.

No CL knockouts for Xavi's Barca

Catalan giants' struggle goes deeper as they bow out of Champions League after their 0-3 loss to Bayern Munich in their final group stage match



EXPRESSIONS SAY IT ALL: Barcelona players look dejected after conceding a goal vs Bayern, Wednesday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Munich, Dec 9: Barcelona's 17-year streak of advancing to the Champions League knockout rounds each season ended with an exit from the group stage that failed to finish on time because of snow in Italy.

Barcelona fell to a 0-3 loss Wednesday at Bayern Munich that dumped the five-time European champion into a dismal — and deserved — third place in Group E. "We start a new era, from zero, from here," Barcelona coach Xavi Hernandez, who rejoined a club in crisis last month, told broadcaster DAZN.

Bayern's perfect six straight wins started with a 3-0 win at Camp Nou in September, and a repeat result at home let Benfica rise above Barcelona — and into the round-of-16 draw Monday — by beating Dynamo Kyiv 2-0.

Only 15 of the 16-team lineup in the knockout stage were known Wednesday night. The Atlanta-

Villarreal game to decide who will finish runner-up in Group F was postponed by heavy snow in the northern Italian city of Bergamo. The group was already won by Manchester United before it drew 1-1 Wednesday with last-place Young Boys at Old Trafford.

A grim evening for Spanish sides saw Sevilla join Barcelona in being eliminated, failing to advance from the wide-open Group G where all four teams kicked off in contention.

Lille, the team lowest-ranked by UEFA in the group stage, seized top spot by beating Wolfsburg 3-1 in Germany. Canada forward Jonathan

David scored the second goal for Lille. Salzburg beat Sevilla 1-0 to advance to the round of 16 as runner-up. The consolation for third-place Sevilla is a switch across to the second-tier Europa League where it is the record six-time title-holder.

Defending champion Chelsea and Juventus had already sealed their round-of-16 places from Group H but first place in the group was in play Wednesday.

Chelsea were stunned by Zenit St. Petersburg's equaliser deep into stoppage time for a 3-3 draw in Russia that let Juventus secure top spot with a 1-0 win at home to Malmo.

BARCELONA SLUMP

Before Lionel Messi left for PSG, in all 17 years of his first-team career at Barcelona the club took its place among the elite in the round of 16 each February. They won four Champions League titles in that era.

In the club's first post-Messi season, the Europa League play-offs now beckon after a group-stage campaign that brought more 0-3 losses (three) than goals scored (two).

The decline also extends at home and to the club's finances. A current seventh place in La Liga is outside the European qualification spots and years of big spending on wages mean there is no quick fix for the prodigal son who returned last month to coach the club.

Bayern won its group with a 22-goal tally that was more than twice as many as the other three teams combined. Goals from Thomas Müller, Leroy Sané and Jamal Musiala against Barcelona ensured Bayern matched Ajax and Liverpool who completed their six straight wins Tuesday.

OFC look for win over NEUFC



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Vasco, Dec 9: Odisha FC will look to get back to winning ways and close the gap at the top of the table when they take on NorthEast United FC (NEUFC) in the ISL here Friday.

Odisha, who finished rock-bottom last season, got off to a flying start this time with two wins in two games. But their dream run came to an abrupt halt when they lost to Kerala Blasters 1-2 in their last outing.

Placed fifth in the points table with six points from three games, the Kiko Ramirez-coached side have all to play for on the morrow as a win will catapult them back among the top four teams.

Ramirez said it was a hard week for his team as few players have muscle injuries. Jonathas Cristian was not available in the last game.

Asked about his status, coach Kiko Ramirez said: "He is improving. He is coming to training.

But we need to wait till the last minute to take a call on him."

NEUFC, meanwhile, rode on goals from Rochharzela and Khassa Camara to log their first three points of the season. The Highlanders have four points from four matches and are placed eighth in the points table.

Camara scored in the dying minutes of the match to hand his side a win against FC Goa and the manner of the victory should boost the team's morale.