HERE.NOW

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BHUBANESWAR | MONDAY, DECEMBER 20 | 2021

under DCP Law & Order had been

constituted and it would present its

report within the next two days.

dent at Sri Darbar Sahib "most

unfortunate" and promised that

the police would get to the bottom

of the matter. He added that the

"The accused slept outside the

Akal Takht Sahib during his stay

inside the Golden Temple prem-

ises, before committing the sacri-

lege. There must be something behind this incident. His death has

made it difficult to attain infor-

mation regarding the conspiracy but

we will still investigate the matter.

So far, he has remained unidenti-

Randhawa added, "It seems he

had come with a target to pick up

the sword. But the SGPC staff im-

mediately caught him. But there is

a sequence.

fied," said the Home Minister.

youth is yet to be identified.

He called the 'sacrilege' inci-

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



OMANJU What a splurge! You have spent 100% money on this govt scheme with not a single penny for my image-building ads!!

UK Brexit Minister guits

LONDON: Brexit Minister, Lord David Frost, has resigned as the man in charge of overseeing matters related to Britain's exit from the European Union amid opposition to "coercive" lockdown restrictions due to a surge of the Omicron variant of COVID-19. 'The Mail on Sunday' said in an exclusive that "Frost has resigned from Boris Johnson's government," due to his 'disillusionment" with Johnson's government, including the imposition of tax rises and additional Covid-19 restrictions.

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DSPL-337

Second lynching in Punjab for alleged sacrilege bid

Another person was killed after being accused of disrespecting 'Nishan Sahib' at a gurdwara Sunday morning

AGENCIES

Kapurthala (Pb), Dec 19: A day after a man was beaten to death for an alleged sacrilege bid at the Golden Temple in Amritsar, another person was killed after being accused of disrespecting 'Nishan Sahib' (Sikh religious flag) at a gurdwara here Sunday morning.

Some residents of Nizampur village claimed that the man disrespected the 'Nishan Sahib' and tried to run away, but was caught after a chase.

Cellphone videos from the spot showed the man being beaten up with sticks. The police later took him to the hospital where he was declared dead.

beaten to death. On Wednesday last

week, there was another incident

In Saturday's incident in Amritsar, closed circuit television footage showed the man in his early 20s, who had a yellow cloth tied on his head, jumping over golden railing into the enclosure where the Granth Sahib is kept. He is then seen picking up a golden sword kept there as the priests sitting at the spot rushed to overpower him. He was

Residents of Nijampur village in Kapurthala district had

allegedly caught the man from a gurdwara early Sunday morning

Aspecial investigation team has been set up to probe an alleged desecration attempt at the Golden Temple in Amritsar even as police are trying to ascertain the identity of the man

in which a man had thrown a holy book 'gutka sahib' into the lake at the Golden temple.

Saturday's incident at the Golden temple created tension in a state where sacrilege is a highly emotive issue. Ahead of next year's elections, it has adopted political overtones, with the alleged failure of the state's Congress government

to address the series of 'sacrileges' Meanwhile, Punjab Deputy Chief Minister Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa Sunday said that a Special Investigation Team (SIT)

3 more samples sent for genome sequencing

So far, seven foreign returnees have tested Covid-19 positive, of whom four have been found negative for Omicron variant

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 19: The state government has sent samples of three more foreign returnees, who have tested Covid-19 positive, for genome sequencing, an official said here Sunday.

So far, seven foreign returnees have tested Covid-19 positive, of which four have been found negative for Omicron variant following genome sequencing, said state director of Health Services, Bijay Mohapatra.

Samples of another three persons have been sent to Institute of Life Sciences (ILS), Bhubaneswar, for genome sequencing, he said, adding, "Once the test completes, the ILS will inform us about

the result.'

Omicron

Stating that surveillance is the only way to trace out such cases, Mohapatra said, "The same protocol that of Covid-19 is being followed for this new variant of the virus also. All symptomatic persons should go for Covid test. Those who are found Covid positive and if he/she migrated from the Omicron affected area, the sample will be sent for genome sequencing.'

Though the state administration has surveillance units all across the state, the community has a major role to play, he said.

The director appealed to the community to come forward and inform the local healthcare authority, if they came to know about any person suspected to be infected with the new variant of the coronavirus.



Back-to-back political murders rock Kerala

Following the killing of an SDPI state secretary, a BJP leader was hacked to *death subsequently*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Alappuzha/Thiruvananth apuram, Dec 19: Kerala's coastal Alappuzha district was rocked by back-to-back killings of two party leaders, the first belonging to the SDPI and the second to the BJP, leading to clamping of prohibitory orders by police Sunday.

Following the killing of an SDPI state secretary, a BJP leader was hacked to death subsequently in 12 hours and prohibitory order under CrPC Section 144 was imposed in the entire Alappuzha district Sunday.

in 12 hours

Subsequently, police took into custody around 50 people, including anti-social elements, general public as well as workers of BJP, RSS and SDPI, IG Harshita Attaluri told reporters.

12 PAGES | ₹5.00

The officer said that not all the persons in custody are culprits and that the police were "examining and investigating" the two cases.

She said there has been no lapse or intelligence on the part of the police which had swung into action right after the assault on the SDPI leader and added that "we cannot give protection to every house"

The police will take action against those behind the crimes irrespective of whether they are political bigwigs, anti-social elements or members of the public. A big force of police

personnel and senior officers has been deployed in the district.



The Longest Bridge of **ODISHA**

3.4 Kilometers long High Level Bridge



over Mahanadi River connecting Gopinathpur-Singhnath Pitha-Baideswar of **CUTTACK District** Constructed at a cost of 111 crores benefit 5 lakh people reduce distance by 45 Kilometers

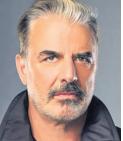
inauguration by Shri Naveen Patnaik Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha on 20th December 2021

OIPR-34003/13/0036/2122

Works Department



eisure



NOTH FACES ONE MORE CASE OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

American actor and director Zoe Lister-Jones has accused Sex and the City actor Chris Noth of being consistently sexually inappropriate and a sexual predator, after two other women came forward to accuse him of sexual assault.

SCARLETT GOT STARSTRUCK WHEN SHE MET SHEINDLIN

Actress Scarlett Johansson would leave many people lost for words if they met her, but she has admitted even she got starstruck when she met some of her own Hollywood heroes including Judge Judith Sheindlin, the woman behind the hit Judge Judy television series.



FORTUNE FORECAST



ARIES

You will be in a tight fix as the day starts. However. that's exactly the kind of situation in which your skills are tested. In the evening you will draw a lot of praise for your excellent performance. If nesha chooses to shower his blessings on you, you will sign new deals.

TAURUS

Be careful, says Ganesha. All your calculations and conclusions, plans and

moves are likely to go haywire. Time and again, you could fail and, ultimately, get frustrated. Even simple and obvious things are likely to get you worked up. Knowing that you are basically gentle benign and large hearted, your friends and elders will rally round and provide you the help and advise you need.

GEMINI

You are likely to be in a romantic mood today. You may just end up falling in love today. A difficult situation will bring out the competitive streak in you and spur you on to physical and mental excellence. Your capacity and intelligence will be testified to by your work, savs Ganesha.

You know how to make money, and you are even better in putting it to good use. Today, you will have your one eye on the developments in the stock market. and the other on brochures of tourism companies. Yes, you may plan to spend some money on leisure, entertainment and getting closer to your family.

LEO You will be unable to

express the feelings that rise up inside you in spite of wanting to. However, keep them close to your heart. You will be very serious about your work today. There is a possibility of some delay in your schedule today due to unforeseen problems, says Ganesha

A la Sisvphus, you may realise the futility of your ŐI. efforts and constant failure in achieving success. But do not despair. says Ganesha. Recharge your imagination, inquisitiveness and intelligence and focus on your long-term goals, says Ganesha.



HALF LIO

PRAKASH JHA TO HELM NARASIMHA RAO BIOPIC

Mumbai: Veteran Telugu film proout on the national platform. We ducer Allu Aravind has collaborated with National Award-winning filmmaker Prakash Jha for the biopic series of former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao.

"The biographical web series of our former PM PV Narasimha Rao the importance of making a biopic is one such story. He was the only on India's first Prime Minister south Indian who became the prime from the south and why Jha is the minister in our independent India. He reformed the economy in a manbest choice to bring the story alive on screen. Aravind, also the father ner that we are still enjoying the reof Telugu star Allu Arjun, under sults of it. But the audience does not his Aha Studio has collaborated know about his contribution to the with Applause Entertainment and economic transformation, because with Samir Nair and Prakash Jha he did not take much credit for it," made the official announcement of said Aravind. The story of the web series will be based on the book

Telugu.

"There are many stories from the south that we feel deserve to come

the web series.

have identified around four to five such big stories that should be made and released on national platforms. In an interview, Aravind shares

Half Lion written by historian Vinay Sitapati.

Ajay's face oozes honesty: Rajamouli

Chennai: Director SS Rajamouli, whose pan-India epic RRR is all set to hit screens January 7, says that actor Ajay Devgn's face oozes honesty.

Talking about his film RRR, which features actors Ram Charan, Junior NTR, Alia Bhatt and Ajay Devgan among others, Rajamouli disclosed that the soul of RRR lies in not the portions of the two heroes but the flashback episode of Ajay Devgn.

When asked for details of Ajay Devgn's character in the film, Rajamouli replied, "I cannot throw any more light than I already have. But what I would like to say about Ajay sir is that when we finished writing his character and were looking for someone to play it, there were about 12-13 people from my writing and direction team.

'We all knew that the actor who would play that character had to have a very honest face. Not just on screen but even off screen. That is what I asked my team. I told them, 'Tell me one person who you feel is not capable

of lying.' And everyone said, 'Ajay Devgn'.' All of them without exception, disclosed the Baahubali director. IANS



Spidey beats *Sooryavanshi*, nets ₹79 cr in 3 days

Internationally, 'Spider-Man: No *Way Home'* earned a record \$121.5 million Friday from 4,336 locations and it was projected to net \$242 million in its opening weekend worldwide

New Delhi: Tom Holland-starrer Spider-Man: No Way Home has had a glorious first weekend (Thursday to Saturday) in India, grossing Rs 100.84 crore.

With the Sunday collection figures yet to come in, Spidey seems to be sitting pretty on top of the box-office, having beaten the Akshav Kumar-starrer Soorvavanshi, which



PEANUTS

netted Rs 77.08 crore in its first three days. Tweeting about this, senior trade analyst Taran Adarsh asked his followers to "expect another big day" on Sunday. The film, which is swinging past box-office records globally, has been released theatrically in English, Hindi, Tamil and Internationally, the film earned

NEVER MISSES IT

YOU CAN TRY TO

LEAVE A MESSAGE

BUT MY SPIRIT

SCREENS ITS

CALLS

record\$121.5 million Friday from 4,336 locations and it was projected to net \$242 million in its opening weekend worldwide. For the cinema exhibition busi-

ness, this calls for celebrations, because for the first time since Star Wars: Episode IX - The Rise of Skywalker in December 2019, a movie will cross \$100 million in its opening weekend in the US.

(2019), which has netted Rs 446 crore

The big question now is whether Spidey will be able to cross the

total collection figures

of Avengers: Endgame

thus far, to become the most successful Hollywood film in India. Avengers: Endgame is at No. 6 on the list of 50 top grossing films in India, which is topped by the multi-language Baahubali 2: The Conclusion (Rs 1,429 crore), followed by Rajinikanth's 2.0, Aamir Khan-starrer Dangal, Baahubali: The Beginning and PK, which also

had Aamir playing the lead role. Three other Hollywood films figure in the Top 50 -- Avengers: Infinity War (No. 21), The Jungle Book (No. 28) and Lion

FUN

47).

IANS



Parineeti shares her work ethics

New Delhi: Actress Parineeti Chopra says she doesn't want to do a project for the wrong reasons and that she would want to be a part of work she believes in.

In 2021, Parineeti had three back-to-back releases such as The Girl On The Train, Saina and Sandeep aur Pinky Faraar.

Talking about the kind of work she is looking forward to doing now, the actress in an interview said: "Just want to do the kind of work I believe in. I don't want to do a project for the wrong reasons.'

She added: "There are films that you do only for the hero that is attached, sometimes you do it for the song that you get or sometimes you do it because your days are free. There are so many wrong reasons... and I never want to do a film for the wrong reason."

The 33-year-old actress says she always wants to "believe in a film, character and go with my gut."

'People have shown faith in me... Whether I am high or low... filmmakers have shown faith in me and they are the ones who have not given up on me and they are the ones who always gave me confidence. I have to make choices that live up to such expectations. And I never want to do a film for any other substandard reasons, she said

Looking forward, Parineeti has several films lined up such as Animal and Uunchai.



issues or matters. To avoid tension and to gain mental peace it is advised you perform yoga or meditation There will be pressure put on you regarding certain matters at the workfront. You should take decisions regard ing critical matters only after carefully weighing the pros and cons.

SCORPIO

A series of events at work front may keep you busy throughout the day. You may be unable to manage the clutter and confusion created by too many things at the same time. However, you emerge a fighter because of your power of resilience. Ganesha advises to go slow, yet steady; take one problem at a time and sort it out.

SAGITTARIUS

You rule your hear today, predicts Ganesha. You are likely to become an expert in reading people's mind. Everything is fair in love and war, is what you believe Win over your sweetheart and set out on a journey toward destination unknown, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN

Like you weren't already overworked, new responsibilities will keep you occupied throughout the day, says Ganesha The excitement with which you work every day will weaken, and eventually die down by the end of the day.

AOUARIUS

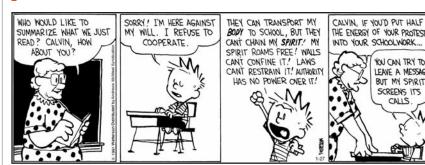
You have your head on your shoulders and feet on the ground. Congratulations! You've covered the first step to success. Step two, says Ganesha, involves an inquis itive mind and a questioning attitude.

PISCES

Your fount of creativity spouts everyday like there is no tomorrow. However, you need to be organised and in position to implement all those revolutionary ideas that occur to you in a jiffy, that lesser mortals take aeons to dream up. Your oratory will win you many admirers today, so let go of your inhibitions, says Ganesha

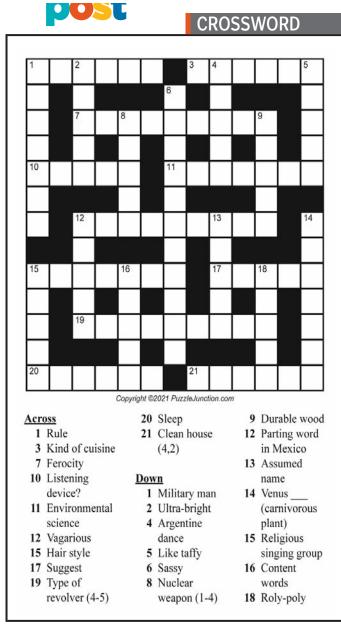
EVERY MORNING MOM PEDALS HER BIKE THIS SAME WAY, AND IT'S HERE'S THIS ONE BIG HOLE AMAZING HOW SHE IN THE ROAD, SEE.

CALVIN AND HOBBES



BREVITY





CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

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.

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PURSUING ITS ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY TOWARDS CORRUPTION, THE VIGILANCE WING OF THE STATE POLICE GOT CRACKING AND ACHIEVED REMARKABLE SUCCESS THIS YEAR. ITS SLEUTHS UNEARTHED SOME MAJOR CORRUPTION AND DA CASES. IN 2021, ANTI-CORRUPTION OFFICIALS HAVE CAUGHT BIG FISHES AND SEIZED PROPERTIES WORTH OVER CRORES OF RUPEES INCLUDING THE HIGHEST EVER CASH AND DA SEIZURES. THAT APART, MORE THAN A DOZEN OFFICIALS WERE SENT ON COMPULSORY RETIREMENT

B Highest ever DA seizure

ED lens on Pradeep, daughter, Pathaks

Gerahavite Construction of the father-son due arlier, the ED learnt that money was deposited in Shruti's bank ac-

count on more than one occasion. Gopalpur MLA was arrested on charges of forgery, criminal conspiracy and job fraud in December last year.



when it unearthed the highest ever disproportionate assets from a deputy man-

BABU WI

Orissa POS

MONDAY | DECEMBER 20 | 2021 | BHUBANESWAR

ager of the Odisha State Police Housing and Welfare Corporation. Deputy manager Pratap Samal's properties were valued at over ₹14.87 crore which is 1021% more than his known sources of income. This was an highest ever DA seized from a government servant for the Vigilance. Earlier, detection of DA worth around ₹9.35 crore from former IFS officer Abhaykant Pathak was the highest.

The Vigilance also registered a case against Samal's wife Sasmita for allegedly abetting her husband for corrupt practices. Samal has purchased almost all his properties in Sasmita's name. The seized DA was valued at ₹14,87,41,194.

At least 25 plots owned by the couple were worth ₹3.41 crore. His 5-storied building at Gothapatna on Bhubaneswar's outskirts was valued at over ₹3.89 crore. The couple also owns buildings in Bhadrak. ₹1.61 crore bank deposits and insurance premiums of ₹57.72 lakh were seized. Samal had attempted to throw ₹20 lakh cash onto the terrace of his neighbour during the raid on his house.

RECORD CASH RECOVERY

igilance crossed a major milestone November 26



Das, an assistant engineer of integrated tribal development agency (ITDA), Baripada. Vigilance officials had raided the houses of Das and his relatives at 11 locations in Balasore, Mayurbhanj and Bhubaneswar on charges of possessing assets disproportionate to his known sources of income. 659 gram of cold jources and



Vigilance raided his residences and revealed that he amassed assets disproportionate to his known sources of income when he was an MLA from May 24, 2009 to November 30, 2020. He was found in possession of DA to the tune of ₹5,05,04,656. He was involved in Tata Motors

job fraud. A case had been

registered against him at Golanthara police station.

Abhay and his son Akash were arrested by the Vigilance last year for allegedly possessing assets worth ₹9.3 crore disproportionate to their known sources of income. The Vigilance had written to the ED about the ill-gotten money and benami properties of the father-son

duo. The Enforcement Directorate grilled Akash on charge of cheating job seekers to the tune of crores of rupees on the pretext of getting them jobs at Tata Motors last year. Pradeep Panigrahi was a co-accused in the job fraud case. Notably, Akash Pathak was to marry the daughter of the Gopalpur legislator.

3 CLASS-I OFFICERS CAUGHT

W igilance got a major breakthrough October 10 when its officials arrested three Class-I officers of the state government on graft charges. ₹22.61 lakh was also seized from the possession of the three officials. The three officials are Bidhan Chandra Sahu, Superintending Engineer, Irrigation Baitarini Division, Salapada, Keonjhar, Prakash Kumar Mohapatra, Regional Officer, State Pollution Control Board, Panposh, Rourkela and Narottam Behera, Regional Officer, State Pollution Control Board, Balasore.

The vigilance sleuths had intercepted Bidhan Chandra Sahu at NC College Road while he was on his way to Cuttack from Salapada. During interception, a sum of ₹10,07,620 was recovered from him which he could not account for. Additional ₹64,000 was recovered during the house search, taking the total seized amount from him to ₹10,71,620. Vigilance recovered ₹1,75,810 from Prakash Kumar Mohapatra at Sundarpada, Bhubaneswar. Narottam Behera was intercepted by the Vigilance sleuths at Tangi check gate, Cuttack, while he was en route Bhubaneswar from Balasore. ₹89,000 was recovered from Behera. During searches at his house and residential government quarters, additional ₹9,25,000 was recovered taking the total seized amount from him to ₹10,14,000.



5 PAN CARDS

igilance officials caught Ramachandra Jena, the tehsildar and sub-registrar incharge of Nimapara in November this year. He was found to have possessed five PAN cards in his name with different numbers and different dates of birth. He had given three different father's names for the cards. Three cards carried his father's name as Khageswar Jena while two others had Baishnab Jena and Naravan Jena as father respectively. All the five PAN cards of the accused have different dates of birth between 1970 and 1972. Jena was arrested by Vigilance officials with unaccounted cash of ₹4.65 lakh. His brother Laxman, a former driver with Mo Bus service, was also arrested for being an alleged accomplice in Jena's corruption.

Searches were carried out at his residence in CDA Sector-11, Cuttack, his native Dhanmandal and Garadpur in Kendrapara district. The sleuths also found ₹50,000 from his official residence. Jena's younger

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₹10 lakh from his brother. He had deposited the money in his ICICI bank account in installments. A case has been registered against the tehsildar and his brother. Even after being entangled in two cases related to illegal land settlement and conversion of agricultural land, the Revenue and Disaster Management department allowed him to continue as Nimapara tehsildar with

additional charge of sub-registrar. As per the Vigilance, Jena already has a case pending trial since 2016 in connection with illegal settlement of valuable land and issuing pattas in 2011. Another case was registered against him in 2018 over illegal conversion of agricultural land to nonagricultural land.



TAINT DIDN'T SPARE OSSO

n July, Vigilance arrested Biranchi Narayan Sahoo, private secretary to a member of Odisha Staff Selection Commission (OSSC) on charge of amassing assets disproportionate to his known sources of income following raids at different locations. The government has given him compulsory retirement August 31. ₹25 lakh and properties worth over ₹3.79crore had been detected during simultaneous searches at multiple locations in Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and four other places. Besides, they recovered gold ornaments from his house worth around ₹60 lakh.

These apart, documents of four buildings including two double-storied apartments were unearthed. The state anti-corruption agency found documents related to Sahoo's foreign visits and 14 plots registered in his name and his family members. The officials also seized insurance papers worth ₹56lakh and other imported goods. Many

CONSTABLE WITH ₹6.97CR ASSETS

n November this year, Vigilance unearthed properties worth ₹6.97 crore in possession of former constable Prasanna Behera and his kin in Bhubaneswar. Behera was arrested for running an unlicenced bar during pandemic time. He and his family members were found in possession of moveable and immoveable properties worth crores.

A DA case was registered against Behera. He had joined Odisha police as a constable in 1995. He was dismissed from service



admit cards were also recovered from his home. The recovery of huge cash and properties worth crores of rupees from Sahoo's residence has pointed to his involvement in alleged irregularities in the recruitment process of the Odisha Staff Selection Commission.

October 24 this year for his involvement in several criminal cases. Behera has invested his ill-gotten wealth in two furniture showrooms in Bhubaneswar. He has encroached on government land. He had taken a bar on lease in Patrapada in the name of his brother. Behera's name came up during the probe of the murder of Manish Anurag Das, son of senior journalist Navin Das. Manish and his friends had attended a party in Behera's



ill December 2 since 2019. a total of 140 corrupt officials were given compulsory retirement in the state on charge of graft and inefficiency. Continuing its drive against the corrupt and inept officials, the state government January 30 ordered compulsory retirement of nine officers of the mines, forest, health and labour departments. While seven officials have been terminated for corruption, the remaining two have been dismissed for their inefficient functioning. Eight officials including three Odisha Administrative Service officers were sent on compulsory retirement November 13. Among the government officers sent on compulsory retirement on grounds of ethics, inefficiency and lack of integrity included Biranchi Narayan Sahoo, private secretary to a member of Odisha Staff Selection Commission (OSSC), former tehsildar of Nimapara, Ramachandra Jena, former deputy collector of Jagatsinghpur, Gouranga Charan Mohanty, and OAS officer and former tehsildar of Lathikata, Alphonce Bilung.







bar on the night of October 9.



downtown

apart from felicitating the students

Bhubaneswar, Dec 19: The City

administration Sunday began an

innovative approach of putting up

thank you notes and colour stick-

ers at doorsteps of households to

promote waste segregation at source

The drive which began Sunday

saw officials of the Bhubaneswar

Municipal Corporation (BMC) ap-

proach citizens to separate wet

household waste from dry ones to

give it to Safei Gadis (garbage ve-

On the first day of the event,

one ward from each administrative

zone was approached where team

members put up thank you notes

at the doorsteps of households that

hicles) of the BMC.

POST NEWS NETWORK

level

'31 lakh houses built in 6 years; allotment soon'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Dec 19: Over 31 lakh houses have been completed under rural housing schemes in Odisha in a span of six years, a top official said.

OrissaPOST

MONDAY | DECEMBER 20 | 2021 | BHUBANESWAR

As many as 31,08,471 houses allotted to beneficiaries under different schemes were completed. and 1,75,960 houses were in different stages of construction, the official said.

Chief Secretary SC Mohapatra, while presiding over the oversight committee meeting on rural housing schemes Saturday, directed the authorities to allot pucca houses to all 8,575 eligible families under the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) category in a timebound manner

Among hundreds of tribal communities, PVTGs are relatively more isolated, vulnerable, deprived, and backward. These tribal groups live in small, scattered habitats in remote and inaccessible areas.

Their livelihoods are vulnerable because, over the years, more dominant tribal and non-tribal groups have encroached upon the resources they originally controlled and accessed for their survival. Earlier designated as Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs), the government has recently re-designated them as PVTGs for giving them special attention for their all-around development.

Thirteen different tribes come under the PVTG category in Odisha, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute (SCSTRTI), Bhubaneswar, said on its official website.

The houses were being allotted to people under rural housing

schemes such as Biju Pucca Ghar Cash-strapped SU seeks alumni aid for college

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sambalpur, Dec 19: Sambalpur University, which is facing a shortage of funds to upgrade the infrastructure of one of its premier constituent colleges in Odisha, has now sought support from the alumni for the development of their alma mater.

The state university has planned to construct a three-storey administrative-cum-academic build ing on the premises of the Lajpat Rai Law College in Sambalpur. The varsity decided to provide R



In a nutshell

Chief Secretary SC Mohapatra directed the authorities to allot pucca houses to all 8,575 eligible families under the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group category in a time-bound manner

Mohapatra asked the Principal Secretary of Revenue and Disaster Management BP Sethi for the allocation of homestead land to landless families by simplifying and leveraging provisions under different schemes

Discussions in the meeting showed that around 12.25L families who were otherwise found eligible through field inquiry should be included under the PAMY for which Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had

ferent schemes

requested the Central government to open the PMAY portal for a month Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Grameen), Pucca Ghar Yojana (mining), Nirman Shramik (construction workers). Pucca Ghar

Yojana, and Mastya Jeebi (Fishermen) Basagruha Yojana. Mohapatra asked the Principal Secretary of Revenue and Disaster Management B P Sethi for the allocation of homestead land to landless families by simplifying and leveraging provisions under dif-

The district Collectors were asked to allot them the land where they were staying to the possible extent. The Chief Secretary also emphasised that the landless people were really poor and they should be brought under rural housing schemes, an official statement said. Around 39,198 beneficiaries found eligible for rural housing schemes were landless. Of them, 2,326 families were allotted land, and the rest were under consideration as many of them were staying on 'objectionable land', the statement said.

The meeting resolved to expedite the process and allot available government land to them, it said.

Further, considering the case of mining workers in mine areas, the Chief Secretary directed the Panchavati Rai and Drinking Water department (PR&DW) to survey the housing requirement of the mine staying in hamlets.

The departments of Steel and Mines and PR&DW were asked to work out the modalities for building pucca houses for them in the shape of mining colonies, the statement said. The case of people displaced for irrigation, infrastructural projects, and families taken out of the reserve forest was also discussed in the meeting and the Chief Secretary directed the official to include such types of families too under rural housing schemes on a priority basis.

Discussions in the meeting showed that around 12.25 lakh families who were otherwise found eligible through field inquiry should be included under the PAMY for which Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had requested the Central government to open the PMAY portal for a month.



gave segregated waste.

The team also visited the households who are not giving segregated waste or those not giving waste at all upon the arrival of the vehicles. These two types of households were urged to give segregated waste to BMC. Three types of stickers in different colors with contextual messages have been brought out to address and appeal

the households.

While families giving segregated waste following waste segregation rule are thanked with a green sticker at door steps; families giving mixed waste but not in segregation are requested through an orange color sticker to give segregated waste, and families who are not at all giving waste and throwing it out have been appealed with red color stickers at their door steps to give waste in a

segregated manner. 'We have planned this citizen connect initiative to involve every household as an active contributor of city sanitation drive. The team will cover all identified wards and place the appeal of waste segregation at source," said BMC

Commissioner Sanjay Kumar Singh.

The places where the drive started today are - Badagada Brit colony (ward no 57 under South East zone), Soubhagya Nagar Bank colony (Ward 51 under South West zone) and Gajapati Nagar (ward no 12 under North Zone).

About 200 households from each ward have been covered in first day of the drive. This citizen connect drive will cover the wards attached to Micro Composting Centers (MCC). As of today, SE zone has total number of 13 MCCs serving 18 wards, north zone has 5 MCCs serving 9 wards, and SW zone has 5 MCCs serving 9 wards. Out of 41 MCCs planned, 23 are functional serving 36 wards of the city.

TRAINING ON LIFE SUPPORT

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE TO FOUR DISTRICTS FROM TODAY

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 19: After smart health cards under Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana, the state government, in order to ensure last mile connectivity in health sector in far-fetched locations, will launch air ambulance service to four districts from December 20, an official said. Health Minister Naba Kishore

Das said the air ambulance service will be launched Monday from Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) here.

The new facility is aimed at catering to the requirement of



HEALTH MINISTER NABA KISHORE DAS SAID THE AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE WILL BE LAUNCHED MONDAY FROM BIJU PATNAIK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT HERE

PROUD MOMENT



Orissa High Court Chief Justice S Muralidhar, along with other dignitaries, poses for a photo op with 12 students, whose paintings have been selected for the

judicial calendar, at an event organised at Odisha Judicial Academy in Cuttack, Sunday. The Chief Justice also released the judicial calendar of Odisha-2022

BMC puts stickers at doorsteps to promote waste segregation

1 crore and the law college will contribute Rs 60 lakh for the building. which is still short of the estimated cost of Rs 2.6 crore. It planned to generate the remaining Rs 1 crore with the support of the alumni.

Vice-Chancellor Sanjiv Mittal said hundreds of students who had studied in the LR Law College would agree that the institution made a significant difference in their lives."It's time for the alumni to think of their alma mater and be a part of its ongoing journey. I appeal to the alumni of the prestigious institution to donate for its development," Mittal said.

The law college was established in 1965, two years before the formation of the Sambalpur University A university official said if the alumni donated Rs 50 lakh, the proposal to construct the building could be materialised easily as it would get a matching grant from the government under the Mo College scheme.

WASSUP TODAY

BHUBANESWAR

Protest by Nikhila Odisha Asha Karmi Sangha, Master Canteen Square, 11am

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



A training session on Basic Life Support (BLS) in progress on DCP office premises in Cuttack, Sunday. Cuttack DCP Prateek Singh (L) is seen

faster ambulance service in inaccessible regions where quality healthcare is not available. In such areas, air connectivity to ferry patients will go a long way helping people.

"As all of you know when the urgency of expensive ECMO treatment was felt in Odisha. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik took steps and launched the facility. Now, ECMO treatment is available freeof-cost at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack. So, the government has decided to provide air ambulance service to people," the Health Minister said.

THE NEW FACILITY IS AIMED AT CATERING TO THE REQUIREMENT OF FASTER AMBULANCE SERVICE IN INACCESSIBLE REGIONS WHERE QUALITY HEALTHCARE IS NOT AVAILABLE

bulance service will be rolled out in Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Nuapada and Kalahandi districts. "The service will immensely benefit people. All the procedures

required to start air ambulance service will be followed." the minister said, adding that requests for the air ambulance service will come from the districts and then they will be managed carefully.

In the first phase, the air am-

Researchers for targeted therapy to treat inflammatory bowel disease

team of researchers has proposed a way for drugs to be more effective against inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) in which the intestine undergoes inflammation.

IBD, a chronic inflammatory disease of the intestine, includes Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. It is commonly treated with one of several available biological drugs that block an inflammatory molecule called Tumor Necrosis Factor Alpha, or TNFalpha, from binding to two receptors, TNFR1 and TNFR2.

Only about 50 per cent of patients are helped long-term by this PEOPLE HAVE TWO DIFFERENT RECEPTORS, TNFR1 AND TNFR2, IN EACH OF THEIR CELLS THAT BIND TNF-ALPHA AND THE TNF-ALPHA-TARGETED UGS BLOCK BOTH TNFR1 AND

TNF-alpha, produced by the body's cells, also induces specialised immune and other cells, which both promote inflammation and suppress it

Thus, TNF-alpha plays a role in the destruction and the healing of tissues, a double-edged sword.

treatment "TNF-alpha does drive much of the inflammation and tissue de-

Evidence suggests that TNFR1 may be driving most of the destructive effects of IBD, whereas TNFR2 may drive the healing and restorative effects

> struction in IBD," said researcher David D. Lo from the University of California - Riverside

"It is why it is targeted by drugs. Our interest in this study was to look for a more targeted therapy that might have a better impact than the existing approach, which is to block all TNF-alpha," Lo added.

The researcher explained that people have two different receptors. TNFR1 and TNFR2. in each of their cells that bind TNF-alpha. Currently, TNF-alpha-targeted drugs block both TNFR1 and TNFR2.

Lo's experiments were done in mice, which have the same two receptors. The pattern of inflammation in mice is similar to that seen in humans.

TNF-alpha, produced by the

body's cells, also induces specialised immune and other cells, which both promote inflammation and suppress it. Thus, TNF-alpha plays a role in the destruction and the healing of tissues, a double-edged sword. Lo said evidence exists that TNFR1 may be driving most of the destructive effects of IBD, whereas TNFR2 may drive the healing and restorative effects.

"If you block both the receptors, you block the destructive effects and the recovery," he said. "To circumvent this, in our work we opted to do selective targeting of TNFR1." Lo's group was encouraged by two pieces of evidence suggesting from a biotechnology company that was selective for blocking TNFR1. Mice treated with this reagent were found to benefit from it. The researchers also did genetic targeting of TNFR1 to reduce its signalling. The impact, they found,

that targeting TNFR1 may be a

The researchers used a reagent

more beneficial strategy.

was dramatic. "When we reduced TNFR1 signalling, the mice showed a significant benefit relative to mice that had the full level of TNFR1 signalling," Lo said. "This approach may offer more opportunity to TNFR2 to contribute to the healing," he added. IANS

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state

SHORT TAKES

Fish trader stabbed to death in Balasore

Balasore: A fish trader was

stabbed to death by miscreants over past enmity at Galapola area under Sahadevkhunta police limits here, late Saturday night. The deceased was identified as Rabi Singh, a fish trader of the area. Sahadevkhunta police rushed to the spot and launched an investigation. A case was registered and the body sent for post-mortem. Meanwhile, police detained two youths and seized the vehicle of the victim. Preliminary investigations revealed that the murder, which occurred at around 11 pm, might have taken place over past enmity related to drug trade and money sharing among the accused, police said. Raids are being conducted at various places and very soon the accused will be behind the bars, police said. The incident occurred when some miscreants including the victim had assembled near Galapola and planning on some issues. late Saturday night. Their discussion took a violent turn when someone among the group ran back to his house and came back with a sharp-edged weapon. Enraged, he repeatedly stabbed Rabi on his stomach, chest and back. Rabi screamed and collapsed on the ground in a pool of blood. Police have raided various places to nab the culprits.

Arrest of five scribes opposed

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Malkangiri: Mediapersons affiliated to Malkangiri Journalists' Association, Utkal Journalists' Association and State Journalists' Association started a dharna in front of local police station Sunday, over the arrest of five scribes. They accused police of attempting to muzzle the fourth estate. Five journalists of electronic media visited Korukonda CHC December 16 night to take stock of the healthcare services. On seeing the reporters at odd hours, three doctors on duty had allegedly misbehaved with them. However, next day, the three doctors filed a complaint against the media people at the police station, alleging that the journalists had misbehaved with them. Mediapersons alleged that the names of only two reporters were mentioned in the FIR. Surprisingly, police picked up all the five journalists on December 17 night, detained them for the whole night at police station and even

Eight countrymade guns seized in Angul

STF NABS YOUTH; GUNRUNNING RACKET SUSPECTED

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, Dec 19: Acting on a tip-off, a special task force (STF) of police raided Kerjeng village under Chhendipada police limits in Angul district and arrested a youth on charge of gunrunning, late Saturday night.



The accused was identified as Ratnakar Kalta, 28, an arms smuggler and a native of Sarapali village under Naktideula police limits in neighbouring Sambalpur district bordering Chhendipada. Eight countrymade guns, seven live bullets and a mobile phone were seized from his possession during the raid. The STF raided the place after re-

ceivig intelligence inputs about rampant arms smuggling taking place near Budhapal village under



They noticed a youth loitering aimlessly in suspicious condition and tried to nab him. The accused tried to escape by brandishing a pistol when the police team overpowered him. The team members seized the firearms and mobile phone from his possession.

The STF officials handed over the accused to the Chhendipada police for further action. Chhendipada police registered a case and launched further probe into the arms smuggling by Kalta. He was subjected to grilling about his network, Chhendipada IIC Dhiren Kumar Behera said. The exact details about the arms dealing by Kalta and involvement of any racket can be ascertained after completion of the probe, the IIC said.

Notably, the STF has seized 64 firearms and 98 rounds of live ammunition since 2020, he added.



Eco-tourism boost for Koili Ghughar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jharsuguda, Dec 19: The government has started working on an eco-tourism project at Koili Ghughar, a tourist spot under Lakhanpur block in Jharsuguda district. A foundation stone for the project was laid by MP Suresh Puiari.

In the first phase, ₹3 crore will be made available for the eco-

₹3CR DMF FUND TO BE SPENT ON INFRA

tourism development from the **District Mineral Foundation** (DMF) fund. Local tribals have long been demanding tourist tag for Koili Ghughar.

Speaking on the occasion, MP Suresh Pujari and Brajrajnagar MLA Kishore Mohanty said that

considering the demand of the local people, the tourism minister had visited the spot and felt the need for development of the scenic place. The state government later accorded status of tourist spot to the place. For eco-tourism project of Koili Ghughar, the forest department has prepared an outlay for the project. The outlay has been sent to the Collector for approval.

Jumbo injured in Khuntuni range; treatment efforts on

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khuntuni, Dec 19: Forest officials have initiated efforts to tranquilise an injured female elephant to provide it treatment at Baradei Thakurani Pata near Brahmanbanbasta under Khuntuni range in Cuttack. The animal has a deep wound on its right leg and it has been limping.

Meanwhile, a team of wildlife experts from the Satkosia sanctuary has been pressed into service.

Forest officials including Athagarh DFO Gopinath Sudarshan Yadav, range officer Gajendra Singh Pal Mathur, ACF Ghanshyam Muduli, foresters Rakesh Dalei, Saroj Panda and Dibyasingh Parida traced the iniured elephant.

The ranger said that the elephant, aged nearly 15, is part of a 22-member herd. On being informed by the DFO, a four-member expert team from the Satkosia sanctuary reached the Khuntuni range.

The elephant was found limping amid the herd. This has made the effort of the officials to tranquilise the animal even more difficult.

Oficials said that the injury of the animal might have been caused due to attack by a tusker or by a blunt piece of wood in the forest.

Prosthetic restoration hub comes up in Sambalpur

Ganjam: Woman sarpanch

in Badapalli begs for a living

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Dec 19: In a first, an artificial limb restoration centre has been established at Sambalpur, a report said.

The centre, which is the first of its kind in the state, has been established at regional rehabilitation centre at Balibandha in Sambalpur. District Collector Subham Saxena inaugurated the centre, Saturday.

The centre has been named as Silicon Cosmetic Restoration Workshop. The centre will help implant the fingers, nails, eyes, ears, lips and other body parts in individuals according to their complexion.

Inaugurating the centre, Collector Saxena gave away prosthetic thumb to a 24-year-old widow Tapaswini Meher of Khetrajpur, two left palms to a 13-year-old boy Aman Barik and 12-year-old Hrushikesh Patel of Bada Bazaar, a cosmetic left ear to 11-year-old girl Baby Kandulona of Tileimal in Redhakhole, Saturday. People from Sambalpur as well as other districts will be benefited by this centre, the Collector said.



The centre has been established with support of the district administration and funds available from the department of social security and empowerment of persons with disabilities. Two experts from Delhi trained the centre's employee Sachidananda Khuntia. Other staff will undergo training in phases. Santosh Kumar Nayak, officer of social security and empowerment of persons with disabilities, Rabindra Nath Satapathy, district welfare officer for the disabled and the staff of the regional rehabilitation centre among others were present at the function



scribes said. Five journalists also filed an FIR against the doctors, but the police have not taken any action against the doctors, it was alleged.

abused them, the agitating

₹40L sanctioned for mini-stadium

Remuna: The state government has sanctioned Rs40 lakh for upgradation of Rupabali playground into a mini-stadium in Balasore. Minister of State for Sports and Youth Services, Tusharkanti Behera, laid the foundation stone for the project in Barunsingh panchayat under Remuna block. "I am happy that youngsters in Balasore district and Remuna block in particular keep interest in sports activities. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has dreamt a lot for the betterment of the younger generation," he observed.



POST NEWS NETWORK

Khallikote. Dec 19: The sarpanch of Badapalli panchayat under Khallikote block in Ganjam district has resorted to begging in nearby villages to make ends meet.

Hema Naik, a septuagenarian woman, won the panchayat election without contest nearly five years ago. She now leads a miserable life, despite being the sarpanch, locals said. Hema belonging to Scheduled Caste was

elected sarpanch as there was no rival against her. She is seen moving door to door every day seeking alms. Her plight surfaced after a video of her begging went viral.

Interestingly, Hema was seen sharing the dais a few days ago with MLA Suryamani

Baidva at an event where 'smart health cards' were distributed among beneficiaries under Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana.

Hema attends the panchayat office on special occasions alone. Otherwise, she keeps on begging most of the days. When asked about her day-to-day official works, she remained silent and smiled.

On the other hand, villagers alleged that some people are taking advantage of Hema's ignorance about official works. "Despite being the sarpanch, she knows nothing about her works. Many officials are misappropriating the funds meant for panchayat's development," a local said.

Various outfits demanded special audit on various developmental activities implemented in the panchayat in last five years.

However, Khallikote BDO Mitali Patra said, "Allegation of the sarpanch begging is baseless. As she is not educated to handle official works, her husband and sons do the works on her behalf." Sunday, tehsildar Rajkishore Patnaik and BDO Mitali Patra provided Rs 10,000 from Red Cross Fund, blankets and 30 kg of rice to the sarpanch.

42 families relocated from Debrigarh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sambalpur, Dec 19: Around 80 people of 42 families of a village that is nestled in the Debrigarh wildlife sanctuary have been relocated to reduce human-animal conflict and provide basic amenities to them. officials said.

The villagers have been shifted to a place outside the reserve forest area, they said. The residents of Lambipali village in Bargarh district were living in a pathetic condition without proper road connectivity, drinking water and health facilities as they stayed far from other human settlements, Hirakud Wildlife **Divisional Forest Officer** Anshu Das said.



They were unable to undertake cultivation due to a high density of wildlife population in Debrigarh, forcing the villagers to migrate in search of livelihood. The rural hamlet was established in the

reserve forest area in 1908.

The wildlife division conducted a series of community mobilisation programmes in August to make them aware of the government policy for relocation and compensation,

Das said

The villagers expressed their willingness at a recent gram sabha and subsequently, a survey was conducted in September: Around 80 people of 42 families were found eligible for the relocation and getting benefits of a Rs15-lakh package, the official said.

The villagers, under supervision of the forest department and the district administration, were involved in setting up a relocation colonv and were shifted there December 17, the official said.

They will construct their pucca houses on the land already allotted to them, and with the help of the administration, all facilities will be provided to them within a year.

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Property No.3: Immovable Property i.e Land and Building belonging to Gopal Bal, Bidyadhar Bal, Santana Bal, Swarna Prava Bal, Snehalata Bal situated at Plot No.: 346, Khata No.: 65, Area: Ac.0.09 Dec., Mouza: Tarapada, SRO-Dolipur, P.S.: Korai, Dist.: Jajpur, Bounded by North: Road & Nilakantheswar, South: Gouranga Bal, East: Gobinda Bal, West: Own Land Plot No.: 345 Type of Possession: Symbolic / Beserve Price: ₹20,91,000/- / Farnest Money to be denosited: ₹2,09,100/-

Name & Address of Borrower/Co-Appliant & Guarantor:	Amount Due
Borrower: M/s. Sumangal Textiles, Prop.: Mr. Ajay Kumar Mehta/ Co-Applicant/ Guarantor: Mrs. Padmagouri Mehta, Both are At: Kuansh, P.O./Dist.: Bhadrak	₹ 6,05,451.21 as on 30.09.2008 with further interest, Cost and expenses
Property No.4: Housing Plot & Building in Mouza: Kuansh, Khata No.: 93, Plot No.: 1 Bhupat Rai Mehta, F/o.: Mr. Aiay Kumar Mehta (Prop.), Bounded by North: Boad, South:	

West: Property of Suresh Kumar Mohanty

Type of Possession: Symbolic / Reserve Price: ₹4,66,000/- / Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹46,600/-

KEONJHAR BRANCH-1, Dist: KEONJHAR, Ph No.: 7004530186, Email: keonjhar@unionbankofindia.c	om		
Name & Address of Borrower & Guarantor:	Amount Due		
Borrower: M/s. GMR Auto, Prop.: Mr. Jyoti Kanta Rout, S/o.: Mr. Goura Mohan Rout, At/PO.: Baniapat, Khuntapada, DD College Road, Keonjhar/ Guarantor : Mr. Goura Mohan Rout, At/PO.: Baniapat, DD College Road, Keonjhar			
Property No.5: EM of Land and Building for Area: Ac.0.130 Dec., Khata No.: 136/104, Plot No.: Khuntapada, Dist.: Keonjhar, in the name of Mr. Goura Mohan Rout. Bounded by East: Gali R South: Main Road. Type of Possession: Symbolic / Reserve Price: ₹92,00,000/- / Earnest Money to be de	oad, West: Tanguru Munda,		

Name & Address of Borrower & Guarantor:	Amount Due
Borrower: M/s. S. M. Fashion, Prop.: Hafizur Rehman, S/o.: Fazlur Rehman, At: Magurgadia, PO.: Keonjhargarh, PS.: Town, Dist.: Keonjhar - 758001/ Guarantor : Bushra Tabasum, At: Magurgadia, PO.: Keonjhargarh, PS.: Town, Dist.: Keonjhar - 758001	₹ 30,17,369.53 as on 31.07.2021 with further interest, Cost and expenses
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Property No.6: EM of Land and Building for Area: Ac.0.025 Dec., Khata No.: 176/402, Plot No.: 291/1807, Mouza: Magurgadia, Dist. Keonjhar, in the name of Hafizur Rehman, Bounded by North: Gitanjali Patra, South: Road, East: Harihar Das, West: Govt. Land Type of Possession: Symbolic / Reserve Price: ₹43,97,000/- / Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹4,39,700/-

KARANJIA BRANCH-3, Dist: MAYURBHANJ, Ph No.: 9078837143, Email: cb3101@unionbankofindia.com

Name & Address of Borrowers & Guarantors:

Amount Due ₹ 90,23,267.59 as Borrower: (All Legal Heirs of Borrower Late Anil Kumar Agarwalla, Prop. of M/s. Krishna Body Builders), 1) Smt. Sarita Agarwalla, W/o.: Late Anil Kumar Agarwalla, 2) Sri Ashu Agarwalla, S/o.: Late Anil Kumar Agarwalla, 3) Sri Alok Agarwalla, S/o.: Late Anil Kumar Agarwalla, All are At.: Ward No.: 1, NH-49, Karanjia NAC, on 10.08.2020 with further interest Cost and expenses Dist.: Mayurbhanj, Odisha-757037 / Legal Heirs of Deceased Guarantor Prahallad Ray Agarwalla are 1) Suresh Kumar Agarwalla, S/o.: Prahaliad Ray Agarwalla, 2) Manoj Kumar Agarwalla, S/o.: Prahaliad Ray Agarwalla, 3) Rajesh Kumar Agarwalla, S/o.: Prahallad Ray Agarwalla, All are at Ward No.: 11, Karanjia NAC, Dist: Mayurbhanj-757037, Odisha, 4) Babita Kayal, W/o.: Manoj Kumar Kayal, Khalasilane, Buxi Bazar, Cuttack-753001, 5) Sarita Agarwalla, 6) Ashu Agarwalla, 7) Alok Agarwalla

Property No.7: EMG of Factory Land and Building at Plot No.: 853/1311, Khata No.: 105/323, Kissam: Gharabari, Area: Ac 0.46 dec at Mouza: Sarubali, SRO: Karanjia, Tahasil. Karanjia, PS No.: 49, District: Mayurbhanj in the name of Late Anil Kumar Agarwalla, Bounded by North: Jaykrushna Mohanta, South: Kshetra Mohanta, East: NH Road, West: Road

Type of Possession: Symbolic / Reserve Price: ₹1,86,00,000/-/ Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹18,60,000/-Property No.8: EMG of Land at Plot No.:1621, Khata No.:150/56, Area: Ac. 1.34 dec, Kissam: Gharabari, Bounded by East: Plot No.:1622, West: Plot No.: 1620, North: Govt Land, South: Radha shyam Mohanta (Plot No.: 1623) & EMG of Land at Plot No.: 1517, Khata No.: 150/56, Area: Ac. 1.00 dec., Kissam: Gharabari, Bounded by East: Kalia Nayak & Others West: Agnu Mohanta North Surendra Parial and South: Govt Land Aggregate of Ac. 2.34 dec, Both Mouza: Kenjhara, Tahasil: Jashipur, PS: Jashipur, Thana No.: 32, SRO: Karanjia, Dist: Mayurbhanj in the name of Late Anil Kumar Agarwalla,

Type of Possession: Symbolic / Reserve Price: ₹46,80,000/-/ Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹4,68,000/-/ BID INCREMENT AMOUNT FOR EACH PROPERTY : ₹10,000/-DATE & TIME OF E-AUCTION : 20.01.2022 between 01:00 P.M. to 05:00 P.M. (with 10 minutes unlimited auto extention), e-Auction Website : www.mstcecommerce.com LAST DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF EMD : On or before the commencement of E-Auction For Registration and Login and Bidding Rules visit: https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in/english/tendelViewAllAuction.aspx

Place : Balasore, Date: 18.12.2021

Sd/- Authorized Officer, Union Bank of India









power post

FOCUS INFLATION

In sincerity is the certitude of victory. Sincerity! Sincerity! How sweet is the purity of thy presence? THE MOTHER



Wilted EC

onstitutional propriety demands distinction between different pillars of a democratic society. It is essential that each arm of governance respects the others and does not transgress into their authority or tarnish their image. Just as the judiciary is expected to remain independent of the executive, bodies like the Reserve Bank of India and Election Commission of India (EC) are considered constitutional entities that deserve to be dealt with as such. Any kind of infringement definitely damages the spirit of democracy. It is not only a protocol breach but certainly a grave misdemeanor on the part of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) to summon the Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra and the two Election Commissioners Rajiv Kumar and Anup Chandra Pandey who, despite expressing reservations, participated in an online 'interaction' with officials of the PMO. To label this as an issue of propriety may be making the issue less damaging. It is a clear cut act that undermines the very foundation of democracy in India.

Of late the people's trust in the independence of the judiciary has been somewhat shaken when several judgements of monumental importance to national life appeared to have been pronounced to blatantly oblige the executive. The faith in the EC has also taken a beating for a number of its decisions that clearly helped the party in power at the Centre, defying rules of level playing field. A recent glaring example of this would be the multi-phased polling held in West Bengal for the State Assembly. Mamata Banerjee had consistently protested against the partisan attitude of the EC. But, what happened last week is not only an egregious assault on the authority and autonomy of the EC, but unprecedented in post-Independent India. And that too when Assembly elections in crucial states such as UP and Punjab are going to be held in the next few months.

When the PMO summoned the Chief Election Commissioner to a meeting chaired by an official in the PMO, the initial reaction of the CEC was predictable and appropriate as he made known his 'displeasure' at the tone and tenor of the letter to him and did not oblige the PMO by attending the meeting. But in an inexplicable turn of events, all the three election commissioners joined an 'informal interaction' with the PMO official later. The country has the right to know what transpired at the meeting. Did the government discuss or suggest to the EC dates of the elections to be held soon or anything else that may give advantage to the ruling party at the Centre? The suspicion is only natural which is why the borderline between the government and the EC is so sacrosanct. The question is why the government breached it and why the Election Commissioners seemed to have lost the nerve after initial reluctance. Was the pressure so very unbearable that the EC wilted?

In India, the EC not only conducts elections but also supervises an electoral system in a manner that both the winner and the loser respect its decisions. Such trust and veneration have been built over the years. For this reason alone, the EC must be given due respect by the executive and it must be seen to be doing so not by mere words, but by deeds as well. The importance of the EC has grown over the years for the repeated attempts by political parties to subvert democracy through muscle and money power. It was TN Seshan who as the CEC in the 1990s stood up to the challenges posed by the political class to the autonomy and independence of the EC. He not only held his nerves when top politicians of the day, including Jyoti Basu, the Leftist stalwart and Bengal Chief Minister of record tenures till then, tried to undermine his authority. To Basu's intemperate language calling him 'a mad dog,' Seshan retained his cool. Seshan went about doing his job without compromising the authority invested in him by the EC.

The country has since seen a few CECs who have made a mark on the electoral process. The other name that comes to mind is of JM Lingdoh. The account given by former CEC SY Quraishi in response to the PMO's preposterous letter to the EC is of instructive value. He stated when he had been contacted by the Principal Secretary to the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh for his appointment as CEC, he was told if he accepted the post, he would have to resign as an IAS cadre officer. This was, as he explains, because of the constitutional principle of distancing the EC from the executive/government. Not for once, he said, the government tried to summon him or issue any instruction. On the contrary, the then PM sent law ministers to him on a couple of occasions for discussion on the EC's plan for electoral reforms.

The CEC and the two other Election Commissioners have done great disservice to the nation and the Constitution by subsequently surrendering to the government by attending an informal session with the official. When a constitutional authority so meekly succumbs to the ex-

MORE TAXES TO BE LEVIED?

The highest wholesale price inflation in decades at 14.23 per cent may result in high deficit leading to levying of more taxes. Government expenses are certain to rise even if it wants to keep the deficit low at least on paper around 6 per cent. It is a difficult task but necessary as per international norms. The Budget would be interesting to watch as the consultations with agriculture, industry, farmers and financial institutions begin.

An interesting aspect is that all these groups want a check on inflation but all the same struggle for having better prices that contribute to an inflationary trend. The government has also started the process of domestic production of semiconductors, and batteries for the car industry. This is the contrived solution to counter international rise in prices. But it is not sure that steps taken to acquire lithium mines or increase semiconductor manufacturing or edible oil production would be a solution.

The price rise is heightened by muted factory output at 3.2 per cent. This has led the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to scale down India's growth estimate to 9.7 per cent, almost close to the rates of the RBI at 9.5 per cent. Inflation is the highest since 2005 and surpasses the recent October figures of 12.54 per cent. This is spiked by high petroleum products, gas prices at 39.81 per cent, mostly due to high component of excise and other taxes. The manufacturing prices are also high at 11.92 per cent causing a severe crisis like situation in the textile sector. Domestic edible oils have spurred at a very fast rate at over 50 per cent in the last one year. Even commonly used mustard oil shot up to Rs 214 a litre from approximately Rs 85 to 90 a litre.

The RBI is concerned over the impact of high toll, fee, excise and other charges for the rise in commodity prices. The rising prices are making most commodities unaffordable as there has also been loss of jobs or cut in wages. One interesting aspect is that high prices show GDP look brighter. Inflation-engineered high expenses show the growth in 'positive' light



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though in reality it depresses purchasing power and adds to many other woes including contraction of wages, a normal for many industries. Inflation naturally adds to the problem. It becomes difficult to afford high prices at low wages.

Food inflation especially in staples like pulses and edible oil is the last thing any political party wants in the run up to a crucial election. With just weeks left for the elections in five states, including the allimportant Uttar Pradesh, it is no wonder the Union government has started taking measures to control prices through various measures. The uncertainty of kharif produce due to a not so well distributed monsoon has made the government jittery about uncontrolled inflation in the days to come. Sustaining the free dole for long is not practically possible but withdrawal also has political implications.

The high fuel prices are being tried to be countered with more battery-powered cars and being selfsufficient in producing lithium batteries. It aims at saving about

Rs 2.5 lakh crore in import of crude! But the new effort is capital intensive, expensive and has high prospecting cost. It plans to buy 12 lithium and cobalt mines abroad. The National Aluminium Co Ltd will hold a 40 per cent stake in the joint venture called Khanij Bidesh India Ltd, with Hindustan Copper Ltd and Mineral Exploration Corp Ltd controlling 30 per cent each. Apparently, a wise move but lithium is not widely available. Its mining and processing costs are very high. The Khanij Bidesh is two-year-old and so far it could not achieve the kind of success it was expected to.

Chinese companies control most such mines in Australia, Chile and Argentina. Australian Prime Minister Scot Morrison had discussed about Indian participation in critical metallic sectors. The progress is slow. Besides, lithium production cost is high and with rising shipping costs overall cost becomes oppressive. It would not be easy to produce lithium and lithium-batteries at affordable cost or save on foreign exchange. This

apart, lithium reserves are not high and the prospective mines may not necessarily produce as much lithium as the world demands. A caution is needed before rushing for such a venture.

Though the new battery industry is trying hard for a fillip, it seems that battery powered cars may not be an economic solution. Overall so far despite all its complexities petroleum remains the versatile fuel and for long the world may not get rid of it howsoever it may like.

Most efforts often are crisis-led solutions and ignore the problems as the implementers are competing for kudos and high profits. India should better move slowly on battery production and electric cars. So far 20 companies have shown interest in producing lithium batteries.

Lessons must be drawn from the semiconductor crisis. There is also the problem in getting the chip essential for manufacturing semiconductor. It has hit the passenger vehicle industry hard. Automobile production has reduced by 19 per cent to 12.88 lakh units from 18.88 lakh units. Scooter, motorbikes, three-wheeler productions have all been affected because of the chip scarcity. Federation of Automobile Dealers Association President V Gulati says that automobile sales remain in the negative zone. The government's Rs 76000 crore manufacturing programme may give it a boost but again the basic issue of how to have the chip would remain. Globally, chips are in shortage.

Similarly there is 20-30 per cent year-on-year rise in prices of edible oil. A public distribution department note says despite cut in import duty, a sudden spurt in prices edible oils/oilseeds has been observed which may be due to alleged hoarding of it by the stock holders

So there can be programmes but solving the crisis in critical areas may not be easy. The impending shortages and cartelisation may result in overall price hikes. If the fuel crisis is not solved it is likely that inflation in the Indian situation would continue to be a bane.

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SPECTRUM EMPLOYMENT TRENDS



Shivaji Sarkar

FOOD INFLATION ESPECIALLY IN STAPLES LIKE PULSES AND EDIBLE OIL IS THE LAST THING ANY POLITICAL PARTY WANTS IN THE RUN UP **TO A CRUCIAL**

ELECTION

ecutive, it can well be imagined how the common man or civil society activists can be bulldozed by a coercive regime

WISDOM CORNER

Do the right thing. It will gratify some people and astonish the rest. MARK TWAIN

- The price of anything is the amount of life you exchange for it. HENRY DAVID THOREAU

Time changes everything except something within us which is always surprised by change.

THOMAS HARDY

WORDS**WORTH**

Pusillanimous

f you are pusillanimous, you have a small soul or weak spirit, one with few reserves of strength with which to resist the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. The implications are of utter spinelessness and a contemptible lack of courage. Its origin lies in the old ecclesiastical Latin pusillanimis (translating a Greek term), which was formed from pusillus, very small, and animus, the soul or mind. It first appeared in the sixteenth century and is still very much with us, though it's a writer's word, hardly one you're likely to hear in your local bar unless the patrons are literary types Back in the 1970s US Vice President Spiro Agnew famously accused his opponents of "pusillanimous pussyfooting." In 1936, the humorist A P Herbert wrote in What a Word that "Modern dictionaries are pusillanimous works, preferring feebly to record what has been done than to say what ought to be done." (He wrote in the same book, "American slang is one part natural growth and nine parts a nervous disorder." But then he wasn't much in favour of American English of any kind.) Pusillanimous is a fine word to disparage your enemies with, one that rolls extravagantly off the tongue. Its unusualness makes it all the more effective.

Puri

Durl is from an obsolete Scots word pirl, which means a "twist". It was applied in the sixteenth century to a thread or cord made of twisted gold or silver wire that was used for embroidery. It may be that it was then transferred by analogy to the ribbed look of purl knitting, though the Oxford English Dictionary has a note saying that the derivation is far from obvious. It is sometimes spelled pearl, which may be a mistake, but may equally imply a different origin.



Choose a punishment

man was caught for speeding and went before the judge. The judge said, "What will you





PACE WITH THE CHANGING TIMES, MANY COMPANIES **ARE INCREASING THEIR TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES**

etters

are most welcome to contribute letters

postal address/email ID. They may also

and suggestions, preferably by email,

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send in their valuable comments, opinior

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TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST

(200 words), articles and

requested to send their contact numbers and full

to: edit@orissapost.com

columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are

n the last 22 months, there has been a shortage of jobs in India. L During the pandemic, sales of every business decreased, losses increased and activities came to a standstill. As a result, the unemployment rate also increased. According to the monthly index of naukri.com. there was a decline of 15 per cent in job placements in April 2021. Now when the economy has started getting back on track, things have started improving a bit. According to the Center for Monitoring Indian Economy, the unemployment rate declined to 9.2 per cent in June, 2021, from 11.9 per cent in May, 2021.

According to Michael Page India, the beginning of the current year witnessed an improvement in the job market. The second wave of COVID-19 brought the hiring activities to a temporary halt, but it seems to be improving for some time now. Especially in tech oriented professions. In such a situation, for the youth who have done computer, software, information technology, webhosting, artificial intelligence and other such courses, there will be plenty of employment opportunities in the coming year.

Looking from the perspective of the year 2022, new age businesses present hope, especially technical jobs. Keeping pace with the changing times, many companies are increasing their technical capabilities. This shows that the way companies work is changing and the use of technology is increasing. In the coming times, the demand for youth with technical education and understanding will increase. Salary is increasing by 50 per cent in technology related jobs. This is a great opportunity to be a techie in India, and Bangalore is its stronghold. Jobs have increased in IT, software, healthcare and manufacturing sectors. On the other hand, the employment situation in the travel, tourism and retail sectors is still not good

According to a report by the Ministry of Statistics, there has been a decrease in organised sector jobs this year. If compared with the financial year 2019-20, there has been a decrease of 25 lakh jobs i.e. 22.6 per cent in employment in the current financial year. In this report titled

Employment Status 2021, it has been said that the people whose employment was affected the most during the COVID-19 pandemic were below 35 years of age. Due to unforeseen circumstances, 22 lakh people had to lose their employment. Data from September 2017 to September 2021 have been included in the report. During the second wave of the pandemic, there was a shortage of jobs in the month of May this year. however the situation improved in July 2021.

As per the Business Outlook Survey (BOS) report of British company IHS, the business optimism of the service and manufacturing sectors in India between June and October 2021 ranged from 12 per cent to 14 per cent. Japan. Brazil and Russia were also enthusiastic about the manufacturing sector, but not as much as India. 14 per cent of private sector companies in India have shown good prospects for the next year. This survey report also says that in 2022, service sector companies wish to increase their workforce. This is the only sector that has opened the most lately after the COVID-19 pandemic. Let us hope the year 2022

brings more opportunities and better prospects for everyone.

Due to the increasing use of digital technology, the demand for IT professionals is increasing in the Indian markets. Employment opportunities are being created in technology, healthcare, e-commerce and manufacturing sectors. The job opportunities in the field of IT are much more than one can imagine. Compared to the demand for experienced and qualified professionals in the IT sector, candidates are not much in supply.

Since the desired candidates are not available in sufficient numbers, IT companies intend to increase the salaries of the existing staff to retain their best employees. Companies do not want to lose their existing employees. For example, HCL Technologies has made a plan to give stake to 3,000 senior workers in the company as part of a strategy to retain the talent. In the last few months, the recruitment in IT firms has registered a spurt and over one lakh candidates have got IT jobs.

The writer is a senior journalist and columnist. Views expressed are personal.

Violence against children

Sir, Children across the world face heinous forms of violence, exploitation and abuse. It is estimated that around one billion children globally experience some form of violence every year. India recorded over 350 crimes against children each day in 2020 as per the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data. The top five states reporting cybercrimes against children are Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Kerala, and Odisha. Today, with so many children online, the internet gives cyberspace to predators to target children for criminal acts. Sexual abuse of children is one of the major concerns for law enforcement agencies in India. According to reports, an estimated 2.4 million instances of online child sexual abuse were reported in the country from 2017 to 2020. Eighty per cent of the children were girls under the age of 14. As internet access expands, violence against children is taking on new dimensions such as cyber-bullying and online sexual exploitation, with damaging and life-changing consequences. Online abuse can have long-lasting effects on children. It can lead to anxiety, self-harm, eating disorders and suicidal thoughts. Violence against children can be prevented. WHO launched INSPIRE, a set of seven evidence-based strategies for countries and communities working to eliminate violence against children. Experts agreed that better education and awareness are essential to protect children from online crimes. Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD

A day to remember

Sir, Goa Liberation Day is celebrated December 19 every year to mark the success of 'Operation Vijay' undertaken by the Indian Armed Forces that liberated Goa from Portuguese rule. This year marks the 60th anniversary of Goa's liberation from the immoral and illegal 450-year Portuguese rule. Then PM of Portugal Antonio Salazar foolishly asserted that Goa was metropolitan Portugal. Unlike the rest of India, Goa did not achieve independence August 15, 1947, and was ruled by the Portuguese for nearly a decade more. Apart from Goa, the Portuguese also ruled Daman, Diu, Dadra, Nagar Haveli and Anjediva Island. Krishna Menon was Defence Minister of India in 1961. He played a major role in international forums by lambasting the West. Under his command the Indian Army overran Goa in two days. The Soviet Union stood by India in Goa's case as in many other cases. On Goa Liberation Day, the nation pays homage to the martyrs and the freedom fighters who liberated Goa from colonial rule.

CK Subramaniam, NAVI MUMBAI



national



The BJP government has subjected people only to shortages and humiliation AKHILESH YADAV SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF

DELHI REPORTS 107 COVID CASES

The national capital Sunday recorded 107 fresh COVID-19 cases, the highest since June 27, and one death as the positivity rate stood at 0.17 per cent, according to data shared by the city health department



uote **77 Sporadic violence mars KMC polls** Omicron count rises

The assertions that the TMC would lead the opposition front for 2024 polls and defeat the BJP on its own is laughable and has no

relation with the ground realities of Indian politics

ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY WEST BENGAL CONGRESS PRESIDENT

Great news for West Bengal! We have secured the top rank among larger states on the 'Foundational Literacy & Numeracy Index'. I congratulate all teachers, guardians & members of our Education Department for this outstanding achievement! MAMATA BANERJEE | BENGAL CM

The Punjab model will launch an urban employment guarantee mission, right to employment for urban labour

NAVJOT SINGH SIDHU PUNJAB CONGRESS CHIE

SHORT TAKES

Woman held

New Delhi: A Kenvan national was held by custom officials at Jaipur International Airport with 2,150 gm heroin on Sunday. The woman was later handed over to the local police A senior custom official said that the woman came to India by Air Arabia flight. She was intercepted by the custom officials on the basis of a Look Out Notice (LOC) received from the Immigration Department. As per the LOC, the woman passenger had provided the same reference mobile number in visa application as provided by two other Uganda women passengers who were intercepted by Customs Officials at the Delhi Airport November 13 with 12.9 kg heroin worth Rs 90 crore.

Cop injured

Srinagar: Terrorists fired upon a policeman and injured him at Bandzoo area of South Kashmir's Pulwama district, officials said Sunday. Police

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Dec 19: Sporadic incidents of violence including hurling of bombs at two booths and skirmishes between political workers marred an otherwise humdrum polling to the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) as 63.63 per cent of the nearly 40.5 lakh voters exercised their franchise till 5 pm on Sunday, when voting ended.

While the State Election Commission and the police described the elections as "peaceful", the opposition BJP demanded cancellation of the "violence-marred polls". Two incidents of hurling of crude bombs were reported in Kolkata's Sealdah and Khanna areas. Police contingents were rushed to the spot to bring the situation under control.

'A total of 63.63 per cent of total votes were polled till 5 PM. Polling has by and large been peaceful barring a few incidents," State Election Commissioner Sourav Das said. The final voter turnout will be available on Monday as there were still people in queue to vote at 5 PM when the polls ended, SEC officials said

Although the SEC claimed that only one person was injured, po-



West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar with his wife after casting their vote during Kolkata Municipal Corporation elections, in Kolkata PTI PHOTO

lice said three people were injured in the bomb attacks, one of them losing a leg. Police said that 72 people had been arrested for disturbing the peace during the polling period. Trinamool Congress national

general secretary Abhishek Banerjee said if any ruling party leader was found involved in violence during the polls, strict action would be taken "within 24 hours"."We don't support any form of violence, and strict action will be taken within

24 hours if any TMC leader is found to be stopping the process of free and fair polls. I would request the media to come out with related footage and evidence (if available)," he told reporters after casting his vote.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee expressed her happiness over people taking part in the "festival of democracy." "People are voting as if a festival is going on. In a democracy, an election is a mass festival. So people are voting, we

Although the SEC claimed that only one person was injured, police said three people were injured in the bomb attacks, one of them losing a leg

Police said that 72 people had been arrested for disturbing peace during the polling period

are happy about it," she said.

Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar said that his security personnel stayed outside the booth when he went to cast his vote during the polls in adherence to an order of the state election commissioner. He said peaceful polling with no fear in voters' minds and the absence of interference of the state apparatus is at the heart of any election process.

"My security personnel adhered to the order issued on Saturday night... State Election Commissioner Sourav Das allowed the facility to only two persons -- Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee," he said.

"I had called Sourav Das twice and tried to impress upon him that polling should be held peacefully and without fear, and the administration should not interfere in any manner in this," Dhankhar said.

Need to introduce more practical courses: CJI

Hyderabad, Dec 19: Noting that law graduates in this country are only accustomed to considering legal problems in a theoretical manner, Chief Justice of India NV Ramana Sunday stressed the need to introduce courses that are more practical.

Speaking at the 18th Annual Convocation of Nalsar law University near here he cautioned the graduating students that the courtrooms are nothing like ones that are portrayed in movies or a moot court hall, rather they "will be cramped, dingy and the judge may not even have a fan"



"I observe that graduating students are accustomed to only considering legal problems in a theoretical man-



A Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation health worker collects swab sample of an outstation passenger for COVID-19 test, at Dadar РТІ РНОТО

rose to 151 Sunday after Maharashtra reported six more cases while a 45-year-old NRI and a teenage boy, who recently arrived in Guiarat from the United Kingdom, also tested positive for the variant.

According to central and state officials, Omicron cases have been detected in 11 states and Union Territories --Maharashtra (54), Delhi (22), Rajasthan (17) and Karnataka (14), Telangana (20), Gujarat (9), Kerala (11), Andhra Pradesh (1), Chandigarh (1), Tamil Nadu (1) and West Bengal (1).

Six persons tested positive for the Omicron variant of coronavirus in Maharashtra on Sunday, raising the state's tally of such cases to 54, the health department said. While two of these patients had a history of travel to Tanzania, two others had returned from England and one from the Middle East. All five of them are fully vaccinated.

Another patient is a five-yearold boy from Junnar in Pune who is a close contact of Dubai travellers from Junnar, it said in a statement."Total six cases were diagnosed today - four of them found during the airport screening in Mumbai. One of these four patients is from Mumbai. two from Karnataka and one from Aurangabad," it said.

Out of 54 cases in the state, 22 have been found in Mumbai. In Gujarat, a non-resident

According to central and state officials, Omicron cases have been detected in 11 states and Union Territories

Indian tested positive for the coronavirus infection in the RT-PCR test carried out at the Ahmedabad international airport soon after he arrived from the UK on December 15, a health department official said Sunday.

"The man's sample was later found infected with the Omicron variant," Anand district health officer Dr M T Chhari said. He was scheduled to reach the state's Anand city from Ahmedabad. "But, after he tested positive for the coronavirus, he was taken to the Ahmedabad civil hospital from the airport. The patient is currently recovering at the Ahmedabad civil hospital," Dr Chhari said.

His co-passengers and other contacts have tested negative for the viral infection, the official said. A 15-year-old boy from Gandhinagar was also detected with the Omicron variant after returning from the UK, Gandhinagar Municipal Commissioner Dhaval Patel said.

On Saturday, Maharashtra had reported eight more cases, Telangana's tally jumped from eight to 20, while Karnataka and Kerala reported six and four cases respectively.

J&K admin seeks Army's assistance $^{\prec}$

Jammu: The army has been deployed to restore essential services hit by the ongoing strike of electricity department personnel here, officials said Sunday. They said the deployment was made following a request by the administration. In a communication addressed to the army, Jammu Divisional Commissioner Raghav Langer said that due to the strike by electricity department personnel, essential services have been severely affected in Jammu region. "We would like to hereby requisition the Indian army to assist in the restoration of the essential services by provisioning manpower to main critical electricity stations and water supply sources," Langer said. The army acted swiftly and deployed its troops at main critical electricity stations and water supply sources to restore supply, the officials said. Several areas of Jammu and Kashmir witnessed electricity outages as linemen to senior engineers began their indefinite strike Saturday against the government's privatisation move and failure of two-round talks.

Government of Odisa "e" Procurement Notice



A customer looks at decorative items at a shop ahead of Christmas, in Chennai

Oppn rejects 4-party meet to end impasse

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE New Delhi, Dec 19: The Opposition $resolve \ the \ stalemate \ over \ the \ suspensions.$ pension of MPs. The Opposition parties have de-

TMC leader Derek O'Brien

tweeted. "Monday morning STUNT

railway station in Mumbai PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi/Mumbai, Dec 19: India's Omicron COVID count

said preliminary investigation has revealed that terrorists fired upon one police personnel identified as Mushtaq Ahmad Wagay, resident of Bandzoo Pulwama near his house at Bandzoo area of Pulwama. "In this incident, he had received injuries and was immediately shifted to hospital for the treatment," police said

Sunday rejected the government's invitation to leaders of four parties to resolve the issue of suspension of 12 Rajya Sabha MPs, sources said.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Prahlad Joshi had invited leaders of four political parties for a meeting on Monday morning convened by Leader of the House in Rajya Sabha Piyush Goyal to discuss and

cided to meet on Monday morning to develop their joint strategy in Parliament during the last week of the Winter Session. Leader of Opposition in Rajya

Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge, in a letter to Joshi, said it is unfortunate that the government has invited only four parties and not all opposition leaders, who are unitedly seeking the revocation of from a government who do not want Parliament to function. Government calls leaders of the four Opposition parties whose 12 RS MPs have been arbitrarily suspended.

"Government leaves other 10 **Opposition parties out.** Failed stunt. All opposition clear: First revoke arbitrary suspension," he said on Twitter.

ner. There is an urgent need to introduce courses which are more practical and allow students to interact with people and their issues at the grassroots level. Justice Ramana said.

He expressed disappointment over very few students, who graduate from National Law Schools, being interested in joining litigation or taking up public causes, let alone practice at the district level.

Human traffickers have WB authorities on tenterhooks

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, Dec 19: On Friday, the Uttar Pradesh Anti-Terrorist Squad (UP-ATS) arrested one Ratan Mandal from West Bengal. He was carrying a Rs 25,000 reward on his head. Two mobile phones, Aadhaar card, health, PAN, e-shram and ATM cards, semifinished or completely made stamps of various banks and one computer were recovered from the accused.

The ATS said that Ratan Mandal was a key facilitator of the gang which illegally brings Bangladeshis, Rohingyas to India and then gets their Indian passports made using fake Hindu identities and thereafter sends them abroad

This is not an isolated case. In the last three months the UP-ATS along with the Kolkata-Special Task Force has made a series of arrests -- mostly facilitators who have smoothened the illegal entry of Bangladeshis and Rohingyas into the country particularly through the North Bengal border, giving a cause of worry for the police and the administration.

In the first week of December this year the UP-ATS and the Kolkata STF in a joint operation arrested two Rohingyas, Noor Alam and Mohammad Jameel from Kolkata, for forging documents and helping the illegal entry of Bangladeshis and Rohingyas into India and abroad.

Sources in the STF said that both the accused Noor Alam and Mohammad Jameel made fake Indian passports with Hindu identities for



Rohingyas and Bangladeshis and sent them to different countries of the world. The arrests were made after interrogating four people -- Mithun Mandal, Shaon Ahmed, Mominur Islam and Mahendi Hasan -- who were arrested in October for trafficking Bangladeshi and Myanmar citizens

In November, the UP-ATS had arrested Sameer Mandal (45) of South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal, and Vikram Singh from Hoshiarpur in Punjab who were involved in an international human trafficking racket that spread across South Africa and London.

On October 26, Mithun Mandal, Shaon Ahmed, Mominur Islam and Mahendi Hasan were apprehended from Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Railway Station, Mughalsarai in the same

human trafficking case. More worrying is that a week before the UP-ATS and Kolkata STF in a joint operation arrested 21 Bangladeshi men who illegally entered West Bengal and were residing at Anandapur on the outskirts of Kolkata.

The arrests were made from a residential building in Gulshan Colony after a team of officers from the antiterrorist squad (ATS) of the Uttar Pradesh police came from Lucknow to trace Mufizul Rehman, an alleged human trafficker, a Kolkata police STF officer said on condition of anonymity.

Although such arrests of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh is not uncommon in Bengal, so many people have not been held in Kolkata during a single raid in recent years, the officer added.

"The youths were living in an apartment that was used to run a madrassa. None of them had valid passports or visas but some fake Indian identity cards were seized during the raid," an officer said.

Though the investigators are yet to connect the illegal immigration with any kind of terror design but what is keeping the investigators and the agencies on tenterhooks is the lockdown and the subsequent unemployment which is making the work of these terror groups easier. Taking advantage of the porous border with Bangladesh and unemployment, international terror groups like JMB Ansarullah Faction and even Islamic State are trying to spread their network in the state. The aim is to make West Bengal the headquarters of terror activities in entire eastern India.

Sometimes through direct interaction and at times online, they are targeting intelligent but unemployed voung boys and girls in the state. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) and the Special Task Force (STF) of Kolkata Police got this information from the three JMB terrorists who were arrested by the STF sleuths recently from a colony on the southern outskirts of Kolkata Officials are worried that because of systematic brainwashing by these terror groups many meritorious but unemployed youths are dropping out of mainstream society.

"The brainwashing of meritorious but unemployed youth is such a problem that cannot be tackled by

any police or anti-terror agency. Only police personnel at the grassroots level can tackle this problem to some extent. The state police authorities should give special training to the constable level personnel on these lines. But unfortunately, this system is not followed in West Bengal where the police are running short of personnel and hence they are mainly involved in tackling only law and order problems. Very few of them are trained or equipped to tackle the sleeper cells," a senior official of the Home Department said.

1.	No. of works	:	6 Nos. of Road & 2 Nos
0			Building works
2.	Estimated cost (Approx.) Period of completion		RS.4.24 Iakn to 21.13 Iakn
			calendar months
4.	Date & time of availability of the bid documents in the portal		21.12.2021 at 11.00 hrs.
5.	Last date & time for receip of bids in the portal	t :	29.12.2021 at 17.00 hrs.
6.	Date of opening of tender	:	30.12.2021 at 11.00 hrs.
7.	Name and address of the	e :	Executive Engineer
	officer inviting bid		Rural Works Division Jagatsinghpur
Fu	ther details can be seen fr	or	n the Government website
ww	w.tendersorissa.gov.in		
	- 72		Sd./- Executive Enginee
	Rural W	or	ks Division, Jagatsinghpu
			OIPR-25056/11/0016/212



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



Yogi getting my phones tapped: Akhilesh Why BJP in Madhya Pradesh

All our telephoni

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Dec 19: Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav Sunday accused Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath of getting his telephones tapped and listening to the conversations every evening.

Interacting with reporters a day after some SP leaders' offices and residences were raided by the Income Tax Department, Yadav claimed the BJP was wary of its impending defeat in the upcoming assembly polls.

The BJP government would be increasingly misusing various enforcement agencies to persecute his party's leaders in the coming days, he alleged.

"All our telephonic conversations have been heard. This 'anupyogi' chief minister himself listens to the recordings of some people every evening," the Samajwadi Party chief alleged.

He also asked reporters to "remain alert, if you are speaking to me." The Yogi Adityanath government is running a WhatsApp University in the state, Yadav said derisively.

"The BJP is following the Congress' way. Like the Congress, it is rearing to use the central agencies to instil fear (in rival political



them and stop atrocities. Instead,

this government is tapping phones

ment on the searches

On Akhilesh Yadav's 'unupyogi'

remark, BJP state president

parties)," Yadav said. Meanwhile, Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra,

of the opposition. when asked about the IT depart-According to SP sources, the IT ment raids against Samajwadi department searches were con-Party leaders, said, "I cannot comducted Saturday at the residences ment on this, but the government of party spokesperson Rajiv Rai in

misuses the agencies. Mau, Jainendra Yadav, who was "This is the government's way the OSD when Akhilesh Yadav was to harass the opposition leaders. the chief minister, in Vinay Khand They use agencies to do so. It's at Gomti Nagar in Lucknow, businothing new, we are seeing this nessman Rahul Bhasin in Lucknow and of contractor Manoj Yadav in for the past seven years." Mainpuri, IT officials did not com-

About the phone tapping allegation, she said, "What is the job of a government? To listen to the problems of the public, understand conversations have been heard. This 'anupyogi chief minister himself listens to the recordings of some people every evening AKHILESH YADAV I SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF

Swatantra Dev Singh asked how can lodging Azam Khan and Mukhtar Ansari in jail and running bulldozer on Atiq Ahmad's illegal prop erty be 'unupyogi'.

He asked people to vote in the name of (Narendra) Modi and Yogi (Adityanath) and advised them not to take caste, religion, region or money power into consideration while exercising their franchise.

About Yadav's assertion that the BJP is "wary of its impending defeat" in the upcoming polls, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan expressed confidence that the saffron party will win more than 300 assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh. "The BJP is going to win over 300 seats in assembly polls. The figure could reach even 400 (of the total 403 seats),' Chauhan said.

is keeping a tab on dissenters

The BJP's biggest concern is about a few leaders who are hand-in-glove with the Congress and are continuously trying to harm the saffron party

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhopal, Dec 19: The Bharatiya Janata Party's MP unit, on the basis of experiences in the bypolls, has started political introspection and the party is keeping a close tab on its leaders who can harm its prospects in the next elections.

The BJP is laying strong emphasis on ground preparations for panchayat and urban body polls in the state as they give more strength to the party's base.

BJP sources said after remaining out of power for one-and-a-half years, Damoh and Raigaon bypolls taught a big lesson to the party as other than these two by-elections, at many places it was harmed by its own leaders due to which it lost.

On the one hand, the party is keeping a close watch on people who can harm it in the polls, while on the other hand it is also focusing on leaders who are often found sharing the stage with Congress leaders.



At present, BJP's MLA from Maihar in Satna district, Narayan Tripathi, is speaking against the party's line.

When former Chief Minister Digvijaya Singh raised the issue of illegal sand and stone mining, immediately after that Tripathi also wrote to the Chief Minister, flagging the issue.

especially at weddings and par-

ties. Additional Director General

of Police (Uttar Pradesh 112) Ashok

Kumar Singh said the helpline

service has been campaigning to

raise awareness among the public

on noise pollution, among other

cases, too. "People getting dis-

The party is keeping a tab on insiders who can harm the party in the panchayat polls also.

For the panchayat elections, the party, in a meeting stressed on the fact that though the polls are being held on a non-party basis, two leaders should not enter the fray from the same place. It is the job of the divisional level office bearers of the organisation to take care of that.

The BJP's biggest concern is about a few leaders who are handin-glove with the Congress and are continuously trying to harm the saffron party. Their activities are directly impacting the organisation and the government.

Political strategists are advising the party to take strict action to control such people.

Expressing concern over the increasing number of dissenters in the party, senior leaders said that if it fails to take action it can prove to be a big hindrance in the 2023 Assembly and 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

TNE EUN

A tiger plays inside its enclosure during chilly weather at Lucknow zoo, Sunday.

РТІ РНОТО

Over 14k 'noise pollution' complaints in 2021

DJ MENACE IN UP

Most of the complaints were related to disc jockeys playing loud music at night beyond the permissible 10 pm time limit, especially at weddings and parties

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Noida, Dec 19: The 112 emergency service of the Uttar Pradesh Police responded to over 14,000 complaints of 'noise pollution' across the state this year, at an average of 40 calls per day, according to official data.

More than 36 per cent of such calls were made from just five of the 75 districts with state capital Lucknow leading the chart (1,509), followed by Gautam Buddh Nagar (1,095), Ghaziabad (997), Varanasi



(857) and Prayagraj (852), the data accessed by PTI, showed.

According to officials, most of the complaints tended to by police response vehicles (PRVs) of 112 were related to disc jockeys playing loud music at night beyond the permissible 10 pm time limit,

turbed due to loud music or noise during non-permissible hours can report the matter at 112," Singh told PTI. The Uttar Pradesh 112 is an integrated emergency service for police, fire tenders or ambulances which replaced separate 100, 101 and 102 helplines in 2019.

The data showed that 112 personnel responded to 14,494 events of noise pollution from January 1 till December 17, with 5,310 calls being reported only from the five districts.

Superintendent of Police (UP 112) Ajaypal Sharma said the emergency service has been tending to several complaints of noise pollution in residential vicinities at odd hours due to loud music or construction activities.

"Students preparing for exams also called up 112... The police have been taking appropriate legal action in such cases,' Sharma said.

Angry at low price, BJP, Cong spar over OBC quota in local polls after SC stay Western UP Khaps oppose raising marriage age for girls

garlic crop in MP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mandsaur, Dec 19: A farmer set his garlic crop on fire after he failed to get a good rate for it at an agricultural produce market in Mandsaur in Madhya Pradesh, officials said Sunday.

The incident occurred at Mandsaur Krishi Upaj Mandi Samiti Saturday and the farmer has been identified as Shankar Singh, a resident of Mahidpur in Ujjain, they added.



Mandi inspector Jagdish Babar said the garlic crop of the farmer was auctioned at around Rs 1400 per quintal since the quality was poor, adding that over 8,000 sacks of garlic had arrived at the market Saturday, which were sold between Rs 1.000 to Rs 12,000 per quintal depending on the quality. "Angry that his crop fetched a low rate, the farmer set some 50-60 kilograms of garlic on fire." Babar said, adding that average quality garlic was sold between Rs 2,500 and Rs 5,500 per quintal.

Singh, talking to reporters, claimed he had set on fire 150 kilograms of garlic as he had spent Rs 2.5 lakh cultivating it and was getting only Rs 1 lakh when selling it.

A video of the incident showed people standing around the burning heap of garlic and shouting patriotic slogans. A mandi official filed a complaint with police claiming Singh's crop burning act was pre-planned.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, Dec 19: A war of words broke out between the ruling BJP and opposition Congress in Madhya Pradesh after the Supreme Court directed the State Election Commission (SEC) to stay the poll process on seats reserved for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the local bodies in the state and re-notify those seats for the general category.

While the BJP dubbed the Congress as 'anti-OBC', the latter alleged that the ruling party is trying to bring to reality the RSS "dream of ending reservation.

The Supreme Court decision Friday came after a Congress leader Manmohan Nagar, president of Bhopal Jila Panchayat, approached the apex court pleading that the BJP government in Madhya Pradesh violated the constitutional provisions on reservation rotation and delimitation for Panchayat polls in the state.

A bench of Justices AM Khanwilkar and CT Ravikumar observed that it had passed an order December 15, directing the SEC to notify the seats in the local bodies in Maharashtra, which were reserved for the OBCs, as general category. The bench passed



an order staying the election process only in respect of OBC seats in all the local bodies in MP and to re-notify those seats for general category.

After the SC stay, the BJP accused the Congress of opposing the OBC reservation.

"Congress has always been anti-OBC. The Supreme Court stay on OBC reservation came due to the opposition party. Congress entangled the OBC reservation into the legal process," Madhya Pradesh Minister for Urban **Development Bhupendra Singh** told reporters in Sagar Saturday. He claimed that the pleas of the

petitioner's lawyer led to the SC's decision. The decision of giving 27 per cent reservation to OBCs was

taken by the BJP government to fulfill the long-pending demand of these classes, Singh said.

Hitting back at the ruling party, former minister and sitting Congress MLA Kamleshwar Patel said, "The BJP government in MP is trying to bring to reality the RSS and its leaders' dream of ending the reservation.

Petitioner Manmohan Nagar told PTI that he had approached the SC as the present BJP government skipped the rotation in reservation and delimitation carried out in 2019 and went ahead on the basis of this process held before previous Panchayat elections. "We didn't approach the court for OBC reservation. We will again appeal in the Supreme Court after consulting with the lawyer," he said. Congress's Rajya Sabha MP and petitioner's lawyer Vivek Tankha took to Twitter to clarify the party's stand on this decision.

"OBC reservation was not challenged in our HC/SLP. Our petition was regarding mandatory (reservation) rotation, which is a constitutional requirement and in the interest of all classes. The lawyers of the MP Government and SEC were present in the court. They had to convince the court with the figures (of OBC) and that there is a fundamental difference between the cases of MP and Maharashtra. These facts can be presented before the court,' Tankha said

However, the focus of the state government was only to stop the reservation rotation and it did not pay attention to the decision taken in regard to Maharashtra, he said.

Tankha said the BJP government in MP should take necessary steps in public interest and in the interests of OBC.

Congress veteran and Rajya Sabha member Digvijaya Singh said the state government should stop the panchayat election process and move to court to ensure the OBC reservation remains intact.

raising marriage age for girls



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Muzaffarnagar, Dec 19: Khaps in western Uttar Pradesh have strongly opposed the Centre's decision to raise the eligibility age of

women for marriage to 21 years. The Khap leaders have said that the decision will lead to an increase in crime against women. They also said that the government should not interfere in the personal lives of people. Naresh Tikait, BKU leader and head of Baliyan khap that has over one lakh followers in 78 villages of west Uttar Pradesh, said, "Parents should have the sole right to decide on when to marry off their daughters." He further said that a 'mahapanchayat' of all khaps will soon be convened to discuss the matter.

"When a girl turns adult at 18, what is the harm in her marriage. At this age girls are also allowed to vote," he pointed out.

Chaudhary Brijpal of Thamba khap said, "The decision will increase crime in society. Girls should be married off at the age of 16."

The Thamba khap has over 50,000 members in Baghpat, Muzaffarnagar, Shamli and Kairana. It may be recalled that the Central government recently took the decision to raise the legal age of marriage for women from 18 to 21 years. The legal age of marriage for men is 21 years.

With this decision the government will be bringing the age of marriage for both men and women at par.

Indian desert cat spotted in Panna Tiger Reserve

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Panna, Dec 19: An Indian desert cat has been spotted for the first time in Madhya Pradesh's Panna Tiger Reserve (PTR), a senior forest official claimed.

"A tourist has shared the pictures taken by him of an Indian desert cat in the reserve's Akola buffer zone recently during the night safari," PTR's field director Uttam Kumar Sharma said

Saturday. As the name suggests, this cat is found in deserts and can survive without water. The toes of the species have cushion like hair which help it balance the fluctuating desert temperatures, the official said.

He said the presence of this wild cat was not reported in the PTR's records earlier.

"The name of the Indian desert cat was mentioned in old documents of the PTR, but the photographic presence of this species was not recorded earlier," the official said.

He said earlier, the presence of a desert cat was recorded in the state's Nauradehi sanctuary.

"We are looking for documents to ascertain where its presence was recorded earlier in Madhya Pradesh," he said.

The official also said the presence of the desert cat in the PTR indicates that the number of species of various wild animals is increasing in the reserve due to security being heightened in its forest areas

In August this year, a fishing cat, one of the endangered animals in India, was spotted in the PTR, state government officials earlier said. This species of cat, which mostly eats fish as its food, is becoming extinct, they had said. It was captured on a camera installed in the tiger reserve.







national



According to the **Election Commission** no cases have been reported regarding misuse of electronic voting machines KIREN RIJIJU | LAW MINISTER

DELHI SHIVERS

Intensifying the ongoing winter chill, the temperature in the national capital plunged to 7 degrees Celsius Sunday morning, according to the India Meteorological Department





India-Vietnam Parliamentary Friendship Groups in the respective Parliaments have been contributing to strengthen the bilateral cooperation

M VENKAIAH NAIDU VICE PRESIDENT

The Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) has fined the National Buildings Construction Corporation (NBCC) ₹1 crore for violating the ban imposed on construction activities to curb air pollution

GOPAL RAI ENVIRONMENT MINISTER

There has not been a single instance of corruption in the last seven years. We have provided a corruption-free

government. We have taken many decisions and one or two may be wrong. But no one, not even critics, can say that our intention is bad AMIT SHAH UNION HOME MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Terrorist killed

Srinagar: A Pakistani Lashkare-Taiba (LeT) terrorist was killed in an encounter with security forces in Harwan area of the city in the early hours of Sunday, police said, Security forces launched a cordon and search operation in Harwan following specific input about the presence of terrorists in the area, he said. The search operation turned into an encounter after terrorists fired upon the forces, who retaliated. In the ensuing gunfight, a terrorist was killed. the official said. The slain terrorist was identified as Saifulla, resident of Pakistan.

36 fall ill

Thane: Thirty-six people fell ill after having prasad in a village in Panvel, an official said Sunday. The prasad was distributed at a temple in Rithghar on Saturday on the occasion of 'Datta Javanti' Panvel tehsildar Vijay Talekar said."Thirty-six people complained of giddiness nausea and stomach problems after having prasad. They were admitted in a hospital and many have been discharged too. All are stable at the moment. A medical team is in the village to monitor the situation," he said.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 19: Congress Sunday demanded a time-bound SIT probe into an alleged land scam involving the Assam Chief Minister's family. It alleged that a company owned by Assam CM's wife and relatives has illegally grabbed government land.

Addressing a joint press conference, Congress leaders Gaurav Vallabh, Ripun Bora, Jitendra Singh and Gaurav Gogoi said: "Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, on one hand is showing hard-handedness in evicting poor and deprived families on the ground that no one has the right to illegally takeover the government land, but on the other hand he is handing over the government land worth crores of rupees to his family members on his own whims and fancies," they alleged.

The Congress alleged: "As per an investigation by leading media houses, a real estate company, RBS Realtors, Co-founded by the chief minister's wife, Riniki Bhuyan Sarma is allegedly occupying around 18 acres of government land intended for landless indi-



'LAND GRAB' BY ASSAM CM'S FAMILY

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma

viduals and institutions." The party alleged that RBS Realtors Private Limited acquired most of the 18 acres in two stages. first in 2006-2007 and then in 2009. Individuals, who are landless and needy, are granted ceiling surplus land by the Assam government and are prohibited from selling that land for a 10-year period.

"In 2009, a total of 11 bigha three katha and four lessa (i.e. 3,01,674 square feet or 6.92 acres) of ceiling surplus land in Bongora intended for and allotted to supposedly needy individuals by the government of Assam was bought by Himanta Biswa Sarma's wife's company, violating the 10-year lock-in period," it said. "A total of seven plots in North Guwahati were allegedly allocated to RBS realtors between 2008 and 2009 Plot 1-4.37 acre land: Assam government allotted 4.37 acre ceiling surplus land to Lalmoti Talukdar on condition that it couldn't be sold for ten years. Barely two months later, on January 28, 2009, Talukdar sold 3.19 acres of the 4.37 acre to RBS Realtors Plot 2-1872

square feet land: Assam government allotted 1,872 square feet (0.042 acre) ceiling surplus land to Basanta Nath with a 10-year lock-in period for sale," it said.

"In 2017, 23.61 per cent of the ₹100 face value shares of Vasistha Realtors were transferred to Meena Bhuyan, mother of Riniki Bhuyan Sarma and mother-in-law of the chief minister. On September 16, 2019 -- barely 18 days after Himanta Biswa Sarma's son Nandil Biswa Sarma became an adult -- Meena Bhuyan transferred her shares to him. As of FY-20, the chief minister's son owns 23.61 per cent shares of the company," the Congress alleged. Gaurav Vallabh said that a sitting CM, whose family is directly "involved in land grabbing", has no right to remain in power.

Himanta Biswa Sarma should be sacked from his Chief Minister's post immediately, Gaurav Vallabh added. All unlawful land transfers to the aforementioned realtors must be immediately cancelled and provisions must be made to provide alternate land to the landless and needy people whose land was unscrupulously taken away, the Congress demanded.

Cong demands SIT probe RS productivity plunges to 37.60%



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 19: The productivity of Rajya Sabha hit a low of 37.60 percent during the third week of the ongoing Monsoon Session owing to disruptions and forced adjournments over the issue of suspension of 12 member of the House, officials said Sunday.

The continued disruptions pulled down the cumulative functionality of the House for the first three weeks to 46.70 percent, the RS secretariat said. According to the data collected by the secretariat, the productivity of Rajya Sabha was 49.70 per cent and 52.50 per cent during the first and the second

week, respectively. During the third week, of the total scheduled sitting time of 27 hours 11 minutes, the House could function only for 10 hours 14 minutes, losing 62.40 per cent of available time on account of disruptions and forced adjournments on the issue of suspension of 12 member of the House, the officials said.

"During the third week, Question Hour which is meant for seeking the accountability of the Government has suffered the most with only four of the 75 listed Starred Questions orally answered by the concerned ministers," the RS secretariat said.

Only 11.40 per cent of the time available for Question Hour was utilised during the week, while 62.70 per cent of the functional time has been spent on the government's legislative business. Three bills were passed and re-

According to the data collected by the secretariat. the productivity of Rajya Sabha was 49.70 per cent and 52.50 per cent during the first and the second week, respectively

turned during the week after discussing for a total of 6 hours and 25 minutes in which 33 members participated. A Short Duration Discussion on the 'situation arising out of the cases of Omicron variant of COVID-19' taken up during the week remained inconclusive. This discussion is listed for resumption Monday, the officials said. Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu had adjourned the House on Friday after 17 minutes of Zero Hour, urging the government and the Opposition parties to resolve the stalemate on the suspension issue. During the 15 sittings of the first three weeks of ongoing monsoon session, the House functioned for less than an hour per day for six sit-

tings, according to official data. About 42 per cent of the functional time of the House has been spent on the government's legislative business passing a total of eight bills so far, while only about 18 per cent of the time has been spent on the Question Hour with only 56 of the 217 listed questions orally answered, said the secretariat.

3 farmers found dead

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Arrested scientist attempts suicide, admitted to AIIMS INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 19: The DRDO scientist, who was arrested by the Delhi Police's Special Cell in connection with the December 9 Rohini Court blast, Sunday tried to com-

mit suicide, sources said. According to the sources, arrested scientist, Bharat Bhushan Kataria. tried to consume some poisonous substance while he was in police custody and has been admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences. "His condition is said to be stable," sources said.

On December 9, a low-intensity blast ripped off inside courtroom number 102 of Rohini court complex at around 10.30 a.m. injuring one person present within the blast radius

The police on Saturday said that Kataria, 47, planted the IED at a place where a lawyer was likely to sit inside the courtroom, as he was "highly frustrated due to the protracted legal battles which were causing problems in his career as well as prolonged mental harassment and monetary loss to him and his family".



Birds search for food on a frozen surface of Dal Lake during a cold winter morning, in Srinagar

Κ.

Couple attacked

Palghar: A newly married couple was allegedly stabbed by an unidentified person at their home here in Maharashtra, police said Sunday. The incident took place around 2 am on Saturday in Nallasopara area Tulinj police station's senior inspector Raiendra Kamble said. While the 24-year-old man and his wife, aged 22, were asleep, the accused allegedly broke into their house and attacked them with knife, he said.

The probe revealed that Kataria and Advocate Vashistha were living in the same building till about 3 years ago. They were having a long-standing dispute of over 10 years and had filed over a dozen civil and criminal cases against each other.

The Rohini Court has been in limelight for the past two months after two back-to-back attacks that have raised several questions on the security arrangements at the court premises

Even local courts have several times come down heavily on the security scenario at the Court. Earlier on September 24, in an

incident that seemed ripped from a Bollywood potboiler, top Delhi gangster Jitender Singh Mann, alias Gogi, was shot dead in Rohini Court by two assailants dressed in lawyers' garb.

Unlike the first phase of protest, which was confined to 'dharnas' in all the 119 Assembly constituencies, and the subsequent mega dharna led by KCR, as the Chief Minister is popularly known, in Hyderabad, the third phase will include demonstrations and burning of effigies INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad, Dec 19: Telangana Chief Minister Chandrasekhar Rao is gearing up for a direct fight with the Narendra Modi government at the Centre over the 'raw deal' being meted out in the state, especially in paddy procurement.

After two rounds of sit-in, including the one led by the Chief Minister himself in Hyderabad last month, demanding the Centre to lift entire paddy produced in the state. the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) chief has asked his party cadres to widen the

scope of the fight by staging protests in every village against 'anti-farmer' policies of the BJPled NDA government. Unlike the first phase of protest,

which was confined to 'dharnas' in all the 119 Assembly con-

stituencies, and the subsequent mega dharna led by KCR, as the Chief Minister is popularly known, in Hyderabad, the third phase will include demonstrations and burning of effigies.

At a meeting with ministers, TRS state legislators, MPs and other leaders on December 17, KCR had declared an open war

with the Centre. "The party cadres have been told to burn effigies of BJP-led Centre and Union ministers who are speaking lies and spreading misinformation over the issue of paddy procurement," a senior party leader had said after the meeting.

KCR gearing up for showdown with Centre

This will be the first time in seven years that TRS will be organising protests of this nature against the BJP-led Central government. KCR, who last week completed three years as Chief Minister in his second term, minced no words in slamming the Centre for doing injustice to Telangana. He asked the party leaders to go to the people in their respective constituencies and explain to them the antifarmer policies of the Centre. KCR told the party cadres that the time has come for a decisive fight with the Centre, which is harming the interests of Telangana farmers by running away from its constitutional duty to lift paddy from the state.

The TRS decision to intensify the protest comes close on the heels of the face-off during the ongoing Winter Session of the Parliament. After taking on the Centre on the floor of the House for not lifting paddy from the state, the TRS announced boycott of the rest of the session over paddy procurement, other issues related to Telangana and suspension of 12 members of Rajya Sabha belonging to other opposition parties.

The 16 MPs of TRS, including seven from Rajya Sabha, wanted the Centre to announce a national food grain procurement policy and also take a decision on paddy procurement from the state during the Rabi season.

Bardhaman (WB), Dec 19: Three farmers have been found dead in West Bengal's rice bowl Purba Bardhaman district in the last two days, police said Sunday.

The deceased farmers' families claimed that they have died by suicide after Cvclone Jawad-induced untimely rain destroyed potato and paddy crops, while the district administration is probing the incidents.

Two farmers were found hanging in their houses in Debipur and Bantir villages in Raina I block on Saturday. Another farmer was found hanging in his house in Biruha village in Kalna II block Friday.

The bodies have been sent for post-mortem examination, a police officer said. District Magistrate Priyanka Singla said that the incidents are being investigated. However, Raina I block BDO Soumen Banik said that after preliminary investigation, it was found that the suicides were not due to crop loss, and the police and agriculture department have been asked to further investigate the incidents.

Goat pox vaccine launched in India

Bangalore: A vaccine to control goat pox disease among India's significant goat population, which has high economic importance for rural livestock growers, was launched Sunday. 'Raksha Goat Pox', of leading Indian Immunologicals Ltd (IIL), is a live attenuated vaccine I.P. (Uttarkashi strain) grown on vero cell culture. The primary vaccination has to be done at 3 months of age and revaccination annually. The technology for the vaccine and its testing was obtained from Indian Council of Agriculture Research-Indian Veterinary Research Institute (ICAR- IVRI), Government of India and has been tested and certified by it for commercial release.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Patna, Dec 19: With the majority of the Bihar police busy in enforcing the liquor ban, the fuel mafias are using this situation to their advantage to smuggle fuel from the border areas, especially from the border districts adjoining Uttar Pradesh.

At present, the difference in petrol and diesel prices in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh is big and it is turning out to be a great source of income for people living in West Champaran, Gopalganj, Siwan, Saran Bhojpur, Buxar, Kaimur and

Rohtas districts. Such a situation emerged in the border areas after the central government reduced Value Added Tax

(VAT) on petrol and diesel ahead of assembly elections in five states including Uttar Pradesh. It has also asked all the states to reduce VAT.

Following the instructions of the Narendra Modi government at the Centre. the BJP ruled states reduced VAT more than the states ruled by other parties. In Bihar, the NDA is in power in alliance with the JDU to which Chief Minister Nitish Kumar also belongs. But he has not reduced VAT as much as BJP ruled states like Uttar Pradesh did.

At present, the price difference in petrol is ₹13 per litre. In Bihar, the price of petrol is ₹108.71 per litre while in Uttar Pradesh the price of petrol is just ₹95.71 per litre.



In Bihar, smuggling fuel from UP is a rewarding affair

Similarly, the price of diesel in Bihar is ₹93.72 per litre while it is available at ₹87.24 in Uttar Pradesh

As a result, people living in West Champaran are crossing Kushinagar border, purchasing the fuel in gallons and returning to their native places during the night. Similarly, people living on the borders of Uttar Pradesh in Gopalganj district go to Kushinagar

and Deoria, residents of Siwan and Saran go to Balia, residents of Buxar are frequently crossing the Bharauli border to enter Ghazipur district, Kaimur's residents go to Chandauli and Sonbhadra districts while Rohtas's residents generally go to Sonbhadra district to buy fuel at cheaper rates.

"Smuggling of petrol and diesel is less dangerous than smuggling of liquor from Uttar Pradesh to Bihar. I used to go to Kushinagar in the evening and wait in the queue at fuel pumps for my turn. I used to completely fill the petrol tank of my WagonR car and also fill two cans of 30 litres each in the dickey and easily return to my native place in West Champaran. It is a fruitful business for us as we used to sell it for ₹5 to ₹6 less compared to the price of petrol at the petrol pumps in West Champaran," said Radhe Verma, a resident of West Champaran who did not mention the name of his village.

"After the Bihar police's continuous raids to search of liquor in the state, we have left the manufacturing of liquor for some time. Now, we have jumped into the smuggling of petrol. It has a good margin of ₹7 to ₹8 per litre. The chances of a raid are minimal in this case. Moreover, we take non-motorable routes to smuggle petrol in the night using bicycles. The district police cannot dare to challenge us," said Lal Kishore Prasad, a resident of Gopalganj who also goes to Kushinagar.









international

Migrants continue to face widespread stigmatization, inequalities, xenophobia, and racism. Migrant women and girls face heightened risk of genderbased violence and have fewer options to seek support ANTONIO GUTERRES UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

RUSSIA OFFICIALLY WITHDRAWS FROM OPEN SKIES TREATY

Russia has officially withdrawn from the Treaty on Open Skies, the Foreign Ministry announced in a statement. "Unfortunately, all our efforts did not allow us to preserve the treaty as it was intended by its authors," the Ministry statement said



uote

Daily Omicron cases in the UK triple to more than 10K **JUMPED FROM ONE TO SEVEN** THE DEATH TOLL FROM THE OMICRON VARIANT

NATO will discuss Russia's security proposals but it will not let Moscow dictate the alliance's military posture

CHRISTINE LAMBRECHT GERMAN DEFENCE MINISTER

We were preparing to travel to Doha to negotiate with the Taliban about convening a Loya Jirga (National Assembly) and about a transition of power

HAMDULLAH MOHIB FORMER AFGHAN NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER

Sooner or later. just as we lowered inflation all the way to 4% when I came to power, we will lower it again, we will make it fall again TAYYIP ERDOGAN TURKEY PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Bandits kill over twenty

Abuja: Over 20 people were killed when bandits attacked villages in Nigeria's northwestern state of Kaduna Saturday, a local official said Sunday. Samuel Aruwan, the commissioner for internal security affairs in Kaduna, said in a statement that four villages in the state's Giwa local government area came under heavy attacks, as the bandits went on the rampage, shooting at the villagers and setting ablaze houses late Saturday, as per Xinhua report.

Pak hosts OIC meet on Afghan

Islamabad/New Delhi: Pakistan will Sunday host the 17th extraordinary session of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) **Council of Foreign Ministers** to focus on the current aggravating humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, Geo

above 90,000 cases

cases to 24,968.

AGENCIES

125, up Friday's count of 111, but down on the 132 reported last London, Dec 19: More than 10,000 Saturday new Omicron cases have been re-"We've shown in the past as government in dealing with this ported in the UK in the highest daily surge so far, as the number of

pandemic that we will do what is necessary, but it's got to be backed overall Covid-19 infections stood well up by data," UK Health Secretary The UK Health Security Agency Sajid Javid said in reference to re-(UKHSA) has confirmed an adports that the government is planditional 10,059 cases of the new ning tighter lockdown restrictions variant Saturday, more than three due to the Omicron surge.

times as many as reported Friday 'We are watching the data and discussing it with our scientists and (3,201), taking the total number of our best advisers almost on an A total of 90,418 infections have hourly basis. We will monitor very also been reported, as the UK's carefully and keep the situation Covid-19 daily deaths tally stood at under review," he explained.



Ministers have received a briefing on the latest Covid-19 data and a meeting of the Cabinet Office Briefing Room A emergency committee will be held over the weekend to assess if further measures are to be brought in.

"I think if new restrictions are

brought in, and by the way, it's inevitable, there must be a major package of financial support for our hospitality, culture, and retail sectors," London Mayor Sadiq Khan said, who declared a "major incident" in the UK capital to help deal with the city's massive surge in the coronavirus cases.

"I'm afraid over the last few days we've seen a major surge of Omicron. Although those in hospital is less than what it was this time last year, including those on ventilators, the number of positive cases is way above. In the last 24 hours, we've had almost 30,000 confirmed new cases, and in the last

seven days, more than 130,000 confirmed new cases. So, the direction of the travel is only going one way," he warned.

Current Plan B rules for England include Covid passes for certain events, face-masks in more places and people being urged to work from home if they can.

Other parts of the United Kingdom have similar rules in place, but Scotland has gone further by asking people to limit social contact to three households at a time in the run-up to Christmas. Wales has also ordered nightclubs to close post-Christmas from December 27.



Paragliders fly over the city during military parade to mark Qatar's National Day celebration in Doha

Mass anti-coup protests in Sudan

The demonstrations mark the third anniversary of the uprising that eventually forced the military removal of longtime autocrat Omar al-Bashir and his Islamist government in April 2019

AGECIES

Cairo, Dec 19: Sudanese took to the streets in the capital of Khartoum and elsewhere across the country for mass protests Sunday against an October military takeover and a subsequent deal that reinstated Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok but sidelined the movement. Sudan then followed a fragile

path toward democracy and ruled by a joint military-civilian government. The October 25 coup has rattled the transition and led to relentless street protests. Video footage circulated online

purported to show tens of thou-

sands protesters marching in the

Security forces used tear gas to disperse protesters headed toward the palace on the bank of the Blue Nile in the heart of Khartoum, according to activist Nazim Sirag. The Sudan Doctors Committee

said some protesters were injured,

Typhoon deaths in Philippines top 100 rately reported 10 deaths just from a few towns, bringing the overall



A house damaged by Typhoon Rai lies along a road in Surigao del Norte province, southern Philippines PTI PHOTO

AGENCIES

Manila, Dec 19: The death toll in the strongest typhoon to batter the Philippines this year has reached at least 146, and the governor of an island province especially hard-hit by Typhoon Rai said there may be even greater devastation that has yet to be reported.

Gov. Arthur Yap of Bohol province in the central Philippines said 72 people died there, 10 others were missing and 13 injured, and suggested the fatalities may still considerably increase because only 33 of 48 mayors were able to report back to him due to downed communications.

Officials were trying to confirm a sizable number of deaths caused by landslides and extensive flooding elsewhere. In statements posted on *Facebook*. Yap ordered mayors in his province of more than 1.2 million people to invoke their emergency powers to secure food packs

for large numbers of people along with drinking water. Both have been urgently sought in several hard-hit towns. After joining a military aerial sur-

vey of typhoon-ravaged towns, Yap said "it is very clear that the damage sustained by Bohol is great and all-encompassing." He said the initial inspection did not cover four towns where the typhoon blew in as it rampaged through central island provinces Thursday and Friday. The government said about 780,000 people were affected, including more than 300,000 residents who had to evacuate their homes. At least 64 other typhoon deaths were reported by the disasterresponse agency, the national po-

lice and local officials. Most were hit by falling trees and collapsed

fatalities so far to 146. President Rodrigo Duterte flew to the region Saturday and promised 2 billion pesos (\$ 40 million) in aid. He met officials in Maasin City in Southern Leyte province where he was born. Duterte's family later relocated to the southern city of Davao, where he served as a longtime mayor before rising to the presidency.

The moment I was born into this world, I told my mother, 'Let's not stay here because this place is really prone to typhoons," Duterte told officials. At its strongest, the typhoon packed sustained winds of 195 kilometers (121 miles) per hour and gusts of up to 270 kph (168 mph), making it one of the most powerful in recent years to hit the disaster-prone archipelago, which lies between the Pacific Ocean and the South China Sea.

Floodwaters rose rapidly in Bohol's riverside town of Loboc, where residents were trapped on their roofs and in trees. They were rescued by the coast guard the following day. On Dinagat Islands, an official said the roofs of nearly all the houses, including emergency shelters, were either damaged or blown away entirely.

At least 227 cities and towns lost

the uprising and ensuing protests. Ahead of the demonstrations,

Sudan's authorities tightened security across the capital, barricading government and military buildings to prevent protesters from reaching the military's headquarters and the presidential palace. They also blocked major roads and bridges linking Khartoum and Omdurman across the Nile River.

News reported.

Netherlands to go into lockdown

The Hague: The Dutch government has announced a stricter lockdown out of fear for the rise of the Omicron variant of Covid-19 in the country. "I stand here with a gloomy mind," Prime Minister Mark Rutte said at a press conference Saturday in the Hague. "The Netherlands is going into lockdown again.

Karachi blast: Death toll climbs to 17

Karachi: The death toll in the powerful blast that ripped through a building of a private bank in Pakistan's financial capital of Karachi has gone up to 17 after another injured person died at a hospital Sunday. The blast took place in a gas pipeline running through a sewage drain Saturday, killing at least 16 people and wounding 15 others while causing immense damage to the building constructed atop the drain, a spokesperson for the Karachi Police said.

12 killed in flash floods in Iraq

Baghdad: A total of 12 people were killed in floods caused by torrential rain in northern Iraq, governor of Erbil province Omed Khoshnaw said Sunday. The torrents swept 15 areas in Erbil, a total of 2,509 homes and 867 civilian cars were damaged by the floods, Khoshnaw said in a press conference in Erbil, the capital of Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdistan region.

walls, drowned in flash floods or

were buried in landslides. Officials on Dinagat Islands, one of the southeastern provinces first pounded by the typhoon, sepa-

electricity, which has since been restored in only 21 areas, officials said, adding that three regional airports were damaged, including two that remain closed.

streets of Khartoum and its twin city of Omdurman Sunday

but didn't provide a tally. Activists Protesters were seen waving the described chaotic scenes, with Sudanese flag and white ones with many protesters rushing to side printed images of those killed in streets from the tear gas.

LANKAN NAVY ARRESTS **43 INDIAN FISHERMEN** The arrests were made by the

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The Navy arrested the fisher-

men in seas Southeast of the Delft

Island in Jaffna Saturday.

"A special operation conducted by

the Navy in seas Southeast of the

Delft Island, Jaffna on the night

of 18th December 2021, led to seizure

of 6 Indian fishing trawlers poach-

ing in Sri Lankan waters, with 43

Indian fishermen aboard," the

Navy said in a statement.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Fast Attack Craft of the 04th Fast Attack Craft Flotilla (4 FAF) Colombo, Dec 19: The Sri Lankan Navy has arrested 43 Indian attached to the Northern Naval fishermen and seized six trawlers Command, it said, adding that the for allegedly poaching in the operation was carried out while country's territorial waters, an adhering to the Covid-19 protocols. official statement said Sunday.

Arrangements are being made to hand them over to relevant authorities for legal action after conducting Rapid Antigen Tests of the apprehended Indian

fishermen, it said. Fishermen from both countries are arrested frequently for inadvertently trespassing into each other's waters. The fishermen issue has become a major irritant in bilateral ties

Hong Kong votes in 'patriots only' polls

AGENCIES

Hong Kong, Dec 19: Hong Kong government efforts and last-ditch campaigning by candidates were struggling Sunday to boost turnout in an overhauled "patriots"-only legislative election, the first under a sweeping new security law.

After eight hours of voting, turnout was more than 10 percentage points below the previous Legislative Council election five years ago.

The election - in which only candidates screened by the government as "patriots" can run - has been criticised by some activists, foreign governments and rights groups while mainstream prodemocracy parties are not par-

Uyghur woman recalls torture at China labour camp



Hong Kong government leaders have been urging people to vote, saying the poll is representative (AFP)

ticipating. Turnout is a central issue, as observers consider it a barometer of legitimacy in an election where pro-democracy candidates are largely absent, more than a third of the seats

will be selected by a committee stacked with Beijing loyalists and a crackdown under a China-imposed national security law has jailed scores of democrats. Civil society groups have disbanded. The government Saturday sent blanket text messages to Hong Kong residents urging people to vote, and some critics calling on people to stay away as a protest. It is a crime in Hong Kong to incite someone not to vote or to cast an invalid vote.

Hong Kong leaders say the poll is representative. They insist the overhaul, like the security law imposed last year, was needed to ensure stability after protracted protests that rocked the Asian financial hub in 2019.

Threat of Omicron looms over X-mas holidays in Europe, US

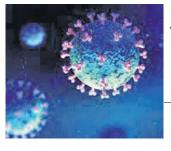
REUTERS

London, Dec 19: The Netherlands went into lockdown Sunday and the possibility of more Covid-19 restrictions over the Christmas and New Year period loomed over several European countries as the Omicron coronavirus variant spreads quickly.

In the United States, White House medical adviser Anthony Fauci urged people travelling over the holidays to get booster shots and always wear masks in crowded public spaces.

He described Omicron as "raging through the world," and said travelling will increase the risk of infection even among vaccinated people. Dutch urban centres were largely deserted as the country began a snap lockdown that left people's Christmas plans in disarray.

Prime Minister Mark Rutte announced the shutdown Saturday evening, ordering the closure of all but essential stores, as well as restaurants, hairdressers, gyms, museums and other public places from Sunday until at least January 14.



ported

Beijing/New Delhi, Dec 19: An Uyghur woman, who was arrested in northern Chinas Xinjiang region, has recalled the physical torture she endured during her detention at a labour camp, saying that she was gang raped and her my "private parts were tortured with electricity", the New York Post re-"You're left with marks on your

body that make you not want to look at yourself," the newspaper quoted Tursunay Ziyawudun as saying. Her story is, tragically, not uncommon for members of the minority Uyghur community, with Turkish roots, in President XI Jinping's China, the report said.



"They gave me sterilisation pills," said Ziyawudun. "I am pretty sure that is why I cannot have a baby now." Since around 2016, the Uvghurs have been pulled off streets and sent to re-education camps,

where reports have surfaced about people being tortured, raped and even killed. They are sent there under the auspices of learning a trade and having their patriotism reinforced, the New York Post said.

Since around 2016, the Uyghurs have been pulled off streets and sent to re-education camps, where reports have surfaced about people being tortured, raped and even killed

In 2017, Ziyawudun was arrested, forced by police officers to turn over her passport and taken to a prison camp about 30 minutes from

and repeatedly told that her Muslim religion does not exist, the report said. After a month, she developed stomach issues, fainted and was released.

"They sent me to the hospital," Ziyawudun, who came to the US as a political refugee in 2020, said. "If they hadn't I might have died." The year after she was arrested, she was summoned to a police station and told that she needed to complete her training.

She was sent back to the

"re-education" camp, where her hair was shorn, likely to be sold as a wig, and her earrings were ripped out. "They pulled it so hard that my ears were bleeding," Ziyawudun recalled. "I was being treating like an animal."







her village.

There, she was made to sing communist songs of patriotism



business



During the first half of the current fiscal (April to September), **OPaL made a profit** after tax of Rs 18 crore SUBHASH KUMAR | CHAIRMAN AND MD, ONGC

CSC, INFOSYS COLLABORATE TO UPSKILL KIDS

CSC e-Governance Services India and IT giant Infosys have collaborated to impart digital skills among six crore students of the age of 10 to 22 years, mainly in rural areas in the country. According to the statement through this engagement, CSC and Infosys will upskill students and learners from underprivileged communities and help them develop vocational and professional skills



uote

This will really be a statement to everybody that IndiGo is very serious about cargo and that cargo is going to become a significant part of our business

WILLIAM BOULTER CCO, INDIGO

We believe that Clear can get \$50-100 million in the next 3-5 years from Middle East region, a good portion of which will be from KSA and UAE

ROHIT RAZDAN CHIEF BUSINESS OFFICER CLEAR

CCI order for imposing 202 crore penalty on Amazon exposes fraudulent and mischievous attempts by it to control e-commerce and retail trade. No more evidence needed after CCI order PRAVEEN KHANDELWAL GENERAL

SECRETARY, CAIT

SHORT TAKES

Foreign investors pull out ₹17,696cr

New Delhi: Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have pulled out Rs 17,696 crore from the Indian markets in December so far amid uncertainty due to a new coronavirus strain, Omicron, and expectations of faster tapering by the US Federal Reserve. According to the depositories data, FPIs took out Rs 13,470 crore from equities, Rs 4,066 crore from the debt segment and Rs 160 crore from hybrid instruments between December 1-17. In November, FPIs were net sellers to the tune of Rs 2,521 crore in Indian markets. "There continues to be uncertainties on the global as well as domestic fronts," said Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director - Manager Research, Morningstar India. The concerns over the highly transmissible Omicron variant of coronavirus persist and have impacted global growth outlook, he added.

Apple urges CCI to quash apps mkt antitrust case

AGENCIES

Washington, Dec 19: Apple Inc has asked India's antitrust watchdog to throw out a case alleging abuse of market power in the apps market, saying it is too small a player in the South Asian country where Google is dominant, a filing seen by Reuters shows.

The filing was made after the Competition Commission of India (CCI) started reviewing allegations that Apple hurts competition by forcing app developers to use its proprietary system which can charge commissions of up to 30% on

in-app purchases Apple denied the allegations in its filing to the CCI and stressed that its market share in India is an "insignificant" 0-5%, while Google commands 90-100% as its

Android operating system powers most other smartphones. The complainant in the case, a little-known non-profit group called 'Together We Fight Society", said that Apple with iOS dominates the market for non-licensable mobile

operating systems. Apple countered that in its filing. saying the entire smartphone market - which includes licensable systems like Android - is the market that should be taken into consideration.

Apple also described the Indian complaint as a "proxy filing" in its CCI submission, saying that the complainant was "likely acting

Appl is not dominant in the Indian market .. Without dominance, there can be no abuse. It has lready been established that

The CCI is separately conducting an investigation into Google's in-app payment system as

Google is the dominant in conplayer in India cert KYLE ANDEER CCO, APPLE with parties with whom

Apple has ongoing commercial and contractual disputes globally and/or that have complained to other regulators." The US tech company did not

sion to support its claim. The nonprofit told Reuters that Apple's remark was "made to prejudice the mind" of the CCI "without any iota of proof."

of 520 million smartphones in India as of end-2020 with the rest using Android, according to Counterpoint Research, though it adds that Apple's smartphone base in the country has more than doubled in

give any evidence in its submis-

the in-app commissions it charges are "not unfair or excessive'

Apple's iOS powered about 2%

part of a broader probe into the company after Indian startups last year voiced concern GLOBAL ISSUE South Korea this vear became the first country to

ban dominant app store operators from forcing developers to use their payment systems In the EU.

regulators last vear started an investigation into Apple's in-app fees for distribution of paid digital content and other restrictions

In the US, Apple is locked in a legal battle with "Fornite" creator **Epic Games over** the same issue

and have decreased over time, adding that it charges lower rates from small developers

the last five

In its CCI

filing, Apple

argued that

years.

"Only a small number of large developers, many of which are multi-billion-dollar conglomerates, pay the headline rate of 30%,' Apple said.

"Competing platforms have charged similar or higher commissions as Apple. Particularly, Google has charged a 30% commission on its app store," it said.

Amid speculation over LIC IPO's delay, govt says it is on course

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 19: Government is unlikely to come up with the much awaited initial public offer (IPO) of Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) in the current financial year ending March 2022, as the valuation of the state-owned behemoth is taking more than anticipated time, and preparatory work is still far from complete.

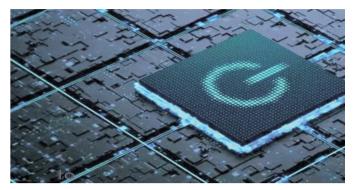
Secretary in the department of investment and public asset management (DIPAM) Tuhin Kanta Pandey however stated that the LIC IPO is very much on course.

"There are still some issues that need to be addressed with regard to the valuation of LIC," a senior official of one of the merchant bankers said.

Even after the valuation, there are several regulatory processes that have concluded, the official said. The official added that the IPO requires vetting not only by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) but also the Insurance **Regulatory and Development** Authority of India (IRDAI) that has been headless for almost seven months.

DIPAM Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey in a tweet expressed confidence that IPO plans of LIC is on course and it would happen in the January-March quarter of 2021 22. "It is reiterated that the plan is on course for the IPO in the last quarter of this fiscal," Mr Pandey tweeted. "Some media speculation doubting the feasibility of LIC IPO this fiscal year is not correct. It is reiterated that plan is on course for the IPO in the last quarter of this fiscal." Valuation of LIC is a complex process because of its size, product mix, real estate assets, subsidiaries and profitability sharing structure, and the size of share sale depends on the valuation, another official said.

BILATERAL ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT India, Taiwan talk on FTA, looking at setting up semiconductor hub



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 19: India and Taiwan have started negotiations for a freetrade agreement and the setting up of a semiconductor manufacturing facility by a Taiwanese firm in India, in a significant step signalling their resolve to broad-base the overall bilateral economic engagement.

If the move to set up the semiconductor manufacturing plant succeeds, then it will be the second such facility to be set up by a Taiwanese company in a foreign country after a similar hub in the United States, people familiar with the development said.

The Indian government has already proposed a number of sites for the facility and one of Taiwan's leading semiconductor producers, including the Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC) and the United **Microelectronics** Corporation (UMC), may implement the mega project, they said.

The move to set up the facility comes amid increasing demands for chips in India by automakers and

technology companies, among others, when there is a global shortage of chips.

The people said the proposal to set up the semiconductor hub is largely driven by the strategic significance of the ties between India and Taiwan, rather than the commercial aspect of it.

"The semiconductor plant in the US was set up in the reflection of the close strategic ties between the two sides. It will be the same in India's case as well," said one of the people cited above.

India has been promoting its ties with Taiwan in the areas of trade, investment, tourism, culture, education and people-to-people exchanges.

The cooperation in the areas of trade, investment and industry be tween the two countries has been on an upswing in the last few years.

The volume of bilateral trade has grown nearly six-fold from \$1.19 billion in 2001 to almost \$7.05 billion in 2018 and India ranks as Taiwan's 14th largest export destination and 18th largest source of imports, according to official data.

8 mobile games cross \$1bln in player spending this year

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 19: A recordbreaking eight mobile games, including PUBG Mobile from Tencent, Honor of Kings from Tencent, and Genshin Impact from miHoYo, have generated more than \$1 billion globally from the App Store and Google Play so far this vear. PUBG Mobile, localised as Game For Peace in China and Battlegrounds Mobile in India, and Honor of Kings rank as the number 1 and number 2 revenue generating mobile titles worldwide this year, accumulating \$2.8 billion each so far this year, up 9 per cent and 14.7 per cent yearover-year, respectively. Ranking at number 3 this year is Genshin Impact, which has stormed to \$1.8 billion in revenue so far in 2021. Launched on September 28, 2020, publisher miHoYo has continued to provide the game with a plethora of updates, regularly adding new islands, characters and features to keep players engaged, reports Sensor Tower. September's Version 2.1 release showed just how effective these updates can be with its launch sparking a five times increase in player spending week-over-week. To date, Genshin Impact has gen-

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 19: Central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) have registered 45 per cent growth in investment on capital expenditure over the previous year, the power ministry has said.

For FY2021-22, the capital expenditure (capex) target of the PSEs, under the Ministry of

Power CPSEs log 45% rise in capex money

which is 63.4 per cent of the annual capex target.

Thus, the capex performance of the ministry in absolute as well as relative terms is better compared to the previous year. In absolute terms, it has shown a growth of 45 per cent over last year's performance, it stated.

Even in the schemes for inrastructure development, the ministry has been making good progress. It has spent Rs 1,593.72 crore in IPDS. Rs 1.007.51 crore in DDUGJY and Rs 890 crore in transmission development schemes for North Eastern region. Hence besides the expenditure of Rs 32,137.37 crore by

the CEOs polled expect that the

services sector would get adversely

impacted due to the spread of the

new variant of coronavirus, while

another 34 per cent of the CEOs

indicated that it could adversely

impact manufacturing activities.

According to the CEOs poll, 56 per

cent of the respondents indicated

that the economy would grow in

the range of 9 per cent to 10 per

cent during 2021-22, while another

10 per cent polled expected the

growth rate in excess of 10 per cent

this fiscal year, CII said.

CPSEs, an additional amount of Rs 3.491.23 crore has been invested in infrastructure through development schemes of the ministry, it added.

In all, till end of November, the power ministry has invested Rs 35.628.6 crore in infrastructure development, it stated. The progress of the schemes

and projects is being monitored on a weekly basis by Secretary, Ministry of Power. Through regular monitoring and coordina tion with other ministries and state governments, the power ministry is making rapid strides in infrastructure development, it stated.

Coal import dips 27% in October

New Delhi: India's coal import registered a decline of 26.8 per cent to 15.75 million tonne (MT) in October over the same month a year ago. The country had imported 21.50 MT of coal in October 2020, according to data compiled by miunction services, "India's coal and coke imports in October 2021 through the major and nonmajor ports are estimated to have decreased by 26.8 per cent over October 2020," it said. Miunction -- a joint venture between Tata Steel and SAIL -- is a B2B ecommerce company and also publishes research reports on coal and steel verticals. However, coal import in October was up 6 per cent as compared to 14.85 MT imported during September 2021, the data shows.



erated \$2.4 billion worldwide from the App Store and Google Play.

Roblox from Roblox Corporation ranks at number 4 having picked up \$1.3 billion on mobile so far this year, a rise of 20.3 per cent YoY, while Coin Master from Moon Active ranks No 5, accumulating \$1.3 billion, a rise of 13.8 per cent YoY. Ranking at number 6 is Pokemon GO from Niantic, which has generated \$1.2 billion, putting the title on track for its best year ever, more than five years on from its launch.

Rounding out the billion dollar hits are Candy Crush Saga from King at number 7 with \$1.2 billion, while Garena Free Fire from Garena has shot past \$1.1 billion in worldwide player spending to reach number 8.

Power, is Rs 50,690.52 crore, a power ministry statement said. Power sector CPSEs incurred a capex of Rs 22,127 crore till November 2020, which was 49.3 per cent of the total expenditure for the fiscal.

However, it stated that during

New Delhi, Dec 19: Indian economy

is all set for a strong rebound in the

current fiscal posting a growth rate

of 9-10 per cent, says a CEOs poll con-

ducted among the members of the

A large number of CEOs polled,

however, appeared worried about the

impact of the new Covid variant

Omnicron on services and the man-

As regards growth, about 10 per

cent of the CEOs polled believe that

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

CII National Council

ufacturing sector.



2021-22, the CPSEs have so far invested capex of Rs 32,137 crore.

CEOs expect 9–10% growth this fiscal

it could even exceed 10 per cent

during 2021-22, the CII said in a re-

sis on public works, timely inter-

ventions to boost liquidity and sev-

eral reforms carried out in the

recent months including easing

regulations, Production Linked

Incentives scheme, RoDTEP and

several other bold reforms have

buoyed the optimism on higher eco-

nomic growth," said CII President

T V Narendran. On the impact of

Omicron on business, 55 per cent of

"Government's strong empha-

lease Sunday.

Diagnostic biz may grow 20-25% YoY

INDO-AISAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 19: A rise in Covid-19 and allied tests due to the pandemic, and specifically during the second wave, is expected to raise the diagnostic sector's revenue growth by 20-25 per cent YoY in FY22, rating agency ICRA said in a report.

Operating margins of the sector are seen increasing by 300-400 basis points during the period.

"Recent trends such as focus on digital brand building, improved offerings in bundled medical packages, changing consumer mindset towards organised players is likely to support demand traction for national diagnostic chains going forward," ICRA Assistant Vice President and Sector Head Mythri Macherla said.

For FY23, with expected sequential improvement in non-Covid revenues and consolidation of regional chains, revenue growth for the sector is estimated at 8-10 per cent YoY in FY23. Macherla said.

Most diagnostic chains have invested in moderate levels of organic expansions and focused on consolidation with regional chains to tap the under-penetrated market.

"With news around the Omicron variant, testing is expected to increase in December 2021 due to travel norms in certain states.' That said, increasing the pace of vaccinations could mitigate the spread of the new variant and reduce thelevel of Covid-19 related tests in the medium term, Macherla added.

Story of two of the biggest privatisation drives

Changing tracks helps. But, not taking the beaten path isn't always helpful. This is the story of two of the country's biggest privatisations - Air India and Bharat Petroleum

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 19: Nearly two decades after the last privatisation, a landmark divestment concluded this year when the lossmaking national carrier Air India was sold to the Tatas. This was made possible only after the government changed the track from selling 76 per cent of its stake in the national carrier to putting on block its entire 100 per cent holding as well as giving bidders an option of deciding how much debt they were willing to take over.

But in the case of BPCL, the government ignored suggestions of following its time-tested policy of putting on block 26 per cent stake along

with management control, just like it had done in the case of Hindustan Zinc and Balco. Instead, it offered its entire 52.98 per cent in the company operating in a sunset sector.

The result - just three bids came in, and two of them struggled to arrange for finances for the acquisition which going by current market value should not be less than \$10-12 billion.

So, while Air India privatisation sailed, BPCL is dragging on. Some say that if the government had offered just 26 per cent along with management control, it would have given a better value for the remainder stake once the company added value under private management. The year 2021 was a land-



mark in many aspects in terms of the government's disinvestment

programme, as it saw the first privatisation in 19 years and catego-

Two CPSEs, Air India and Central Electronics Ltd, were privatised in 2021-- the first since 2003-04

Tata group bought the ailing carrier Air India for Rs 18,000 crore

Central Electronics was sold to Delhi-based firm Nandal Finance and Leasing for Rs 210 crore

Also, work is underway to privatise 5 CPSEs -- BPCL, BEML, Shipping Corp. Pawan Hans and NINL

Alliance Air and three other Air India subsidiaries too would be privatised during 2022

rizing government companies as strategic and non-strategic -- mak-

ing it clear to the private sector that the government will walk the talk when it says that 'government has no business to be in business'. The tone was set by PM Narendra

Modi early in February making a strong pitch for privatisation of public sector units and fiscal support to sick PSUs puts a burden on the economy and public sector units should not be run just because of legacy. The budget for 2021-22 set a target of Rs 1.75 lakh crore from disinvestment. Of this, Rs 1 lakh crore is estimated to come from the sale of government stake in PSU banks and insurance companies -- the majority from the IPO of LIC. A sum of Rs 75,000 crore is budgeted from

CPSE stake sale.





SPORTS

FORMER WORLD NO.1 INDIAN BECOMES FIRST MAN FROM THE COUNTRY TO CLAIM WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS SILVER MEDAL, WHILE LAKSHYA SETTLES FOR BRONZE

SRIKANTH SECURES SILVER Sen 'not satisfied' with WC bronze

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Huelva, Dec 19: Kidambi Srikanth clinched a historic silver medal in the World Badminton Championships after suffering a straight-game defeat to Loh Kean Yew of Singapore in the summit clash to notch up the best ever performance by an Indian in the men's singles here Sunday.

A former World No.1, Srikanth lost 15-21, 20-22 to Malaysia-born opponent in 43 minutes. The 28-year-old Srikanth thus bettered the feats of legendary Prakash Padukone (bronze in 1983), B Sai Praneeth (bronze in 2019) and Lakshya Sen (bronze in this edition), whom he had beaten in the semifinals Saturday. The maiden silver also placed

Srikanth alongside PV Sindhu and Saina Nehwal, who had finished runner-up in the past. Sindhu had won the coveted gold in 2019, two silver and two bronze, while Saina claimed the silver at the 2015 Jakarta and a bronze at 2017 Glasgow.

It is also the first time that India won two medals in men's singles at the World Championships. Despite the loss, it is a significant achievement for Srikanth, who has been dogged by fitness issues and lack of form ever since injuring his knee during the 2017 French Open final after claiming four Super Series titles that year.

Playing his first final since the 2019 India Open, 12th seed Srikanth fought dogged battle for supremacy with Loh, who relied on his explosive attacking game and lightening footwork to put pressure on the Indian.

Srikanth, currently ranked 14th in the world, had his moments but he squandered leads of 9-3 and 18-16 in the two games to see the coveted title slip out of his fingers.

The 24-year-old Loh started with a superb net dribble, opening up a 3-1 lead early on but Srikanth soon turned the tables by engaging his rival in short rallies and using his deception to set up the points.



A RARE VIEW: Kidambi Srikanth (L) and Lakshya Sen (R) are on the podium alongside other medallists, Sunday

In few tournaments, I played really well and in few tournaments I

couldn't play well this year, but again, to reach the final of a world championship is something, that I really worked hard for, and I am really happy to be here

KIDAMBI SRIKANTH

Srikanth's tactics of delaying his returns earned dividends as he moved to a 9-3 advantage with a powerful smash. Loh then tried

to dominate the front court but Srikanth took a four-point lead with another smash on his rival's backhand at the mid-game interval.

After resumption, Loh found his footing as he clawed back 11-11 by winning the next four points and then unleashed a jump smash to grab the lead. World No.22 Loh soon moved to 17-13 with Srikanth committing too many unforced errors. A lightening fast net play helped Loh earn five game points and he sealed it when Srikanth erred next.

After the change of sides, the duo fought tooth and nail, moving 4-4 together. Srikanth tried to engage his gside other medallists, Sunday rival in flat exchanges, sandwiched with angled returns and smashes to

move to a 7-4 advantage. But again, unforced errors came back to haunt Srikanth as Loh made it 9-9. Another net error and

YAMAGUCHI BAGS GOLD

Huelva (Spain): Second seeded Akane Yamaguchi clinched the title of women's singles at the BWF World Championship here Sunday. The 24-year-old Japanese shuttler beat World No.1 and top seed Tai Tzu Ying of Chinese Taipei with convincing win in two games, 21-14, 21-11 in 39 minutes at Carolina Marin Stadium. Yamaguchi, currently World No.3, becomes the second Japanese women player winning the BWF World Championships title in the history.

it was advantage Loh, who entered the mid-game interval at 11-9.

Srikanth drew parity with a backhand cross court flick, before moving to 16-14 by winning the longest rally with a precise cross court net return.

At 18-16, Srikanth sent one to the net and missed the line, while Loh unleashed a body smash to gain a 19-18 lead. Another fast-paced rally ended with the Indian going to the net to leave Loh with two match points.

Srikanth showed great courage at the net to save two match points but he erred next as Loh then pushed the shuttle at the backline with a precise return to go down on his knees in disbelief.

Loh thus became the first man from his country to win the World Championships title. It was a big achievement for Loh, who made it to the final after a sensational post-Olympics season which saw him win the Dutch Open, Hylo Open and finish runner-up at the Indonesia Open Super 1000.



I'm looking to get back to training after the assured break. The season starts with the India Open and then Syed Modi for me. All the big tournaments such as CWG, Asiad, All England are lined up next year and I am looking forward to do well in these events

LAKSHYA SEN

NEW DELHI: Not satisfied with a bronze medal in his maiden World Championships, Lakshya Sen has vowed to go for the gold next time, even as the young shuttler trains his eyes on the All England Championships and 2022 Commonwealth Games.

The 20-year-old from Almora signed off with a creditable bronze after losing an extremely close semifinal to seasoned compatriot Kidambi Srikanth Saturday.

"It has been a long tournament and it is difficult to take such a loss when you are so close. I, at least, got a bronze, but I am not happy. I'm not very satisfied with the performance in the semifinals," Sen, who squandered a slender 15-13 lead in the decider, told this agency. "In layed a lot of good matches

"I played a lot of good matches, faced some tough opponents, even in the semifinal it was a close match, it could have gone in anybody's favour. The medal is something to look forward to... Next time I will go for the gold." With this medal, Sen joined his

mentor – the legendary Prakash Padukone (bronze in 1983) and B Sai Praneeth (bronze in 2019) – as the Indian medal winners at the showpiece.

"It is a good thing that in my first world championship, I made it to the semifinals and joined Prakash sir but I am looking forward to winning many more medals and events like him. Especially, I want to win the All England Championships, like him. The bronze medal is a big confidence booster for me, it is a stepping stone for future tournaments."

Sen played with a strapped shoulder and a bandaged knee and he said he is looking forward to fix all his niggles during the break.

"I had hurt my knee at Hylo Open when I had dived, there was pain but I managed it well. The shoulder was strapped as a safety_ measure as we have to play a lot of smashes during the rallies and, in slow conditions, it can be difficult. So I will fix all the niggles during the break."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Youngsters lift Barca

BARCELONA: Barcelona have long been out of contention for the title, but their fans could at least believe in a brighter future for the team after 17-year-old Gavi Páez teamed with two more youths to beat a resilient Elche 3-2 and end a three-game winless run. Ferrán Jutlgà and Gavi scored their first goals for Barcelona to give it a 2-0 halftime lead. Elche rallied with two goals early in the second half through substitutes Tete Morente and Pere Milla, but Gavi assisted 19-year-old Nico González to score the 85th-minute winner. In another match, Lucas Ocampos late goal helped Sevilla beat Atlético Madrid 2-1 and keep the pressure on Spanish league leaders Real Madrid. Secondplaced Sevilla moved to within five points of Real Madrid. Barcelona's first win in four games across all competitions moved them to seventh place, still a distant 15 points from Madrid.

rca City rout Newcastle

MANCHESTER: Premier League leader Manchester City made it 11 goals in two games by sweeping aside struggling Newcastle 4-0 Sunday. Ruben Dias and Joao Cancelo scored before the break, and Riyad Mahrez and Raheem Sterling netted in the second half. Newcastle have now won just one of their 18 league games this season. Earlier Saturday, injury-hit Leeds slumped to their second alarming loss in five days, 1-4 at

India humble Japan in ACT hockey meet

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, Dec 19: Defending champions India crushed Japan 6-0 to remain unbeaten in the round-robin stage of the Asian Champions Trophy men's hockey tournament here Sunday.

Harmanpreet Singh (10th and 53rd minutes) scored a brace, while Dilpreet Singh (23rd), Jaramnpreet Singh (34th), Sumit (46th) and Shamsher Singh (54th) also registered their names on the scoresheet for India at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey www.toyotabharat.com



MOVING AROUND IN STYLE IS

P12

home to Arsenal in the only EPL match to take place because of a wave of pandemic-affected postponements. The match was marred by an allegation of racial abuse from a spectator toward Arsenal's players. Gabriel Martinelli scored twice and Bukayo Saka added another in the first half. The hosts managed a consolation when Raphinha converted a penalty. Substitute Emile Smith Rowe's 84th-minute goal piled on the misery for Leeds.

2nd Ashes Test: Australia inch closer to win

ADELAIDE: Mitchel Starc (1/21) removed England captain Joe Root in the last over as Australia pushed for victory in the second Ashes Test after setting a record target of 468 runs Sunday. Root, who was struck hard in the groin by Starc in his penultimate over on the fourth day, edged the leftarm paceman after scoring 24 in the last over that left England stuttering at 82/4. England need to create history to win. The highest successful fourth-innings Test run chase is the West Indies' 418/7 against Australia in 2003. The highest successful fourth-innings chase in Adelaide is Australia's 315/6 to beat England in 1901-02. Jhye Richardson (2/17) got rid of the openers – Rory Burns (34) and Haseeb Hameed (0), while Michael Neser (1/7) dismissed Dawid Malan (20.) Earlier, Australia declared its second innings at 230/9 during the middle session. First-innings centurion Marnus Labuschagne (51) and Travis Head (51) top-scored, with Cameron Green adding an unbeaten 33 as Australia sought quick runs in the evening session.

Stadium.

India, who have already sealed a semifinal berth, ended the round-robin stage of the five-nation tournament at the top of the standings with 10 points, ahead of Korea (6), Japan (5), Pakistan (2) and hosts Bangladesh (0).

This was India's third win on the trot. Held to a draw by Korea in their lung-opener, the Manpreet Singh-led side turned things around defeating Bangladesh 9-0, while also getting the better of archrivals Pakistan before easily overcoming the Japanese challenge.

India dominated the first half. They kept on attacking and received a penalty corner (PC), and Hardik Singh injecting the ball to perfection for Harmanpreet to flick it home and give the holders a 1-0 lead. The scoreline could have been 2-0 towards the end of the first quarter had veteran Lalit Upadhyay not missed a sitter.

In the 23rd minute, the trio of Mandeep Singh, Shilanand Lakra and Dilpreet combined well as Dilpreet doubled India's lead.

Japan tried to up the ante in the second half as they attacked in numbers. Japan continued to test the Indian defence but the backline stood tall.

India inflicted further pain on Japan as Sumit scored in the first minute of the final quarter. Harmanpreet then made it 5-0 by smashing the ball in the top right corner of the goalpost for his second of the match.

Two minutes later – juniors Shamsher and Shilanand – combined beautifully as the former scored India's sixth goal.



The 'Golden' girls

O disha girls' team emerged cham-pions and secured gold medal in the Senior National Rugby 7s Championship (Men & Women) at the KIIT Rugby Stadium in Bhubaneswar, Sunday. The state eves outplayed Maharashtra, who eventually settled for silver, 20-10 in the final. Delhi defeated West Bengal for bronze. However, the state men's team finished with bronze after edging past Delhi 12-10 in a thrilling encounter. Haryana won the gold, while Maharashtra settled for silver. The tournament was organized by Rugby India, Odisha Rugby Football Association (ORFA), Department of Sports & Youth Services, Govt. of Odisha & KIIT -Deemed to be University.



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