



## AAHANA'S HOMECOMING

Actor Aahana Kumra is thrilled to have returned to the Prithvi Theatre, which she calls her home

LEISURE P2



## HUGE RELIEF

A US court has blocked two H-1B regulations which restrict American firms' ability to hire foreign employees

INTERNATIONAL P10



## CONSOLATION VICTORY

Men in Blue register a consolation win in the third & final ODI against Australia, who seal the series 2-1

SPORTS P12

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Are you sure you want to invite all these drug abusers, anti nationals, morally corrupt bollywood people to our state?

### SHORT TAKES

#### Bonded workers freed in Bolangir

**Bolangir:** Bolangir Police rescued as many as 74 labourers, including 13 children, when they were being transported to Hyderabad from Kantabanji railway station in Bolangir Wednesday. Among the labourers rescued from the railway station, 42 were men while 32 were women. Acting on a tip-off, Kantabanji police conducted a raid at the station and rescued the labourers. The investigation revealed that the labourers were from Belpada, Bangomunda, Muriabahal and Turekela in Bolangir district and Golamunda area of Kalandhandi district.

#### Fuel prices hiked after 2-day pause

**Bhubaneswar:** Petrol and diesel prices rose sharply by 43 paise per litre and 44 paise per litre respectively after a two-day pause Wednesday. After the surge, petrol prices stood at ₹83.12 per litre while diesel prices reached ₹79.14 per litre. Oil companies began increasing pump prices of the two petroleum products from last Friday after a nearly two-month-long hiatus in the fuel price revision. In five days, petrol price had gone up by 53 paise and diesel rate had risen by 95 paise per litre.

### MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VAIATION
SENSEX	44618.04 ↓ 37.40
NIFTY	13113.80 ↑ 4.80
DOLLAR	74.21 ↑ ₹0.13
EURO	89.14 ↑ ₹0.80
GOLD	₹48,849 ↑ ₹574
SILVER	₹61,743 ↓ ₹175

### WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	30.6°C	31.2°C
TEMP MIN	15.0°C	14.2°C
Humidity	61%	67%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Dry weather likely

# 'No control' over pvt schools

In an affidavit to the Orissa HC on a fee waiver case, the state government makes it clear that it has no control over the fee structure of private schools

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, Dec 2:** The state government Wednesday submitted an affidavit to Orissa High Court on a case seeking waiver of fees by private schools in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic.

In the affidavit, the state government made it clear that it has no control over private schools. But, the MoU between the stakeholders has a provision for reduction of fees within the range of 5 to 30 per cent, said the affidavit.

The affidavit stated that there are many government schools in the state, but parents are still enrolling their children in private schools.

While hearing the case, a division bench of Chief Justice Mohammad Rafiq and Justice Bishwanath Rath sought to know whether the state has any Act on private schools.

In his reply, Advocate General Ashok Kumar Parija told the HC that the state does not have a private school Act.

The bench posted the next hearing on the case to December 7.

Earlier, the HC had November 23 directed the state government to submit

### BURNING ISSUE

- The HC had November 23 directed the state govt to submit an affidavit mentioning its decision on the amount of waiver in private school fees
- The affidavit also stated that there are many government schools in the state, but parents still enroll their children in private schools



an affidavit mentioning its decision on the amount of waiver in private school fees.

November 10, the state government had requested the High Court to take a call on the waiver of private school fees. Notably, the Odisha Abhibhabaka Mahasangha, an outfit of parents, and

others had moved the HC seeking exemption of fees by private schools in view of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Confederation of Odisha Public Schools had also moved an intervention application in the Orissa High Court in connection with a PIL seeking exemption of tuition fees by private

schools during the lockdown, reports said. September 1, the HC had issued an order for mediation of the dispute and directed representatives from Confederation of Odisha Public Schools, representatives of the three PIL petitioners — Odisha Abhibhabak Mahasangha, Mohamed Mustaq and Prahallad Rout — and representatives of Odisha Private Schools Teachers Association to participate in the process to be convened by the secretary of the school and mass education department.

In his report, department principal secretary Satyabrata Sahu said near unanimity could be achieved except for the representative of one of the three PIL petitioners. He said all 14 members had signed an MoU agreeing for waiver of fees in a 'flat rate'.

The HC had asked Sahu to examine whether any unreasonable and excessive fees are being demanded by private educational institutions.

"This could not be verified by inspecting various schools with varied fee structure, in view of the restrictions on movement of officials into the school campuses," Sahu said.

# 7.71 pc growth in state's GST inflow

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 2:** Odisha reported 7.71 per cent growth in gross Goods and Service Tax (GST) collection for the third month in a row, commissioner of CT & GST said Wednesday.

As per his statement, the state collected ₹2528.01 crore GST (CGST, IGST, SGST & Cess) against ₹2347.03 crore collected during the same period last year.

"State GST during September, October and November registered a

growth rate of 3.42%, 5.16% and -2.71% in comparison to the corresponding periods of last year.

The SGST collection was ₹631.08 crore, 660.09 crore and 681.96 crore during the said periods against the collection of Rs.610.19 crore, 627.73 crore and Rs. 700.96 crore during September, October and November of 2019, respectively," the statement revealed.

There is also a positive trend in collection of CGST, IGST and Cess during November, 2020.

# Coming soon: Act on Lingaraj temple



CM Naveen Patnaik reviews the developmental project being undertaken at the 11th-century shrine in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 2:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Wednesday announced that a special act would be formulated for Lingaraj Temple on same lines of the mega heritage corridor project of Puri Srimandir.

Patnaik visited the Ekamra Khetra and reviewed development works carried out in the area.

"I express my sincere gratitude towards the people who have donated land for the development of Lingaraj temple area. I am delighted to see the progress of development works. Soon, there will be a special legislation for Lingaraj temple like we have for the Srimandir. It will boost the beauty and tourism of the area," he told reporters.

With the act, temple affairs will

be streamlined just like it was in case of Srimandir which is run according to the Shri Jagannath Act of 1955. The Act clearly talks about the formation of a temple committee and assigning of roles of the members of the panel.

When enquired about any deadline for the legislation, Patnaik declined to comment and proceeded with his officials works. Asked whether the state government has any plan for development of other heritage sites, he said, "There will be more, but we will discuss the matter."

"The special act for the Lingaraj temple will be enacted on the basis of Jagannath Temple Act, 1954. The act will first be approved by the State Cabinet and become a law after being passed in the Assembly," said Culture Minister Ashok Chandra Panda.

# State gets all-in-one helpline

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 2:** Odisha Wednesday launched emergency helpline '112' to provide all forms of assistance to the people in distress.

The '112' integrates emergency services such as police, ambulance, fire department and women's helpline under a Centre-sponsored scheme that is already functional in several states, officials said.

People in distress need to just dial '112' now, instead of remembering and calling different helpline numbers such as '100', '101', '102', '104', '108' and '181', they said.

All these numbers have now been clubbed into the single toll-free helpline of '112' for the convenience of the people, officials said.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said the unified emergency helpline will enable the police to provide services in a better and efficient manner. Patnaik expressed hope that the facility,

**CALL 112**

- People in distress need to dial '112' now, instead of remembering and calling different helpline numbers such as '100', '101', '102' & '104'
- The '112' integrates emergency services such as police, ambulance, fire department and women's helpline
- CM Naveen Patnaik said the helpline will enable the police to provide services in a better and efficient manner

which comes into force with immediate effect, will strengthen people's faith in the system. The chief minister also approved the creation of 1,098 posts in the police department for providing quick and efficient services to the people of the state through this facility.

Four Deputy Superintendents of Police, 151 Sub-Inspectors, 203 Assistant Sub-Inspectors and 740 Constables will be engaged to provide the '112' emergency service.

This apart, 198 call-receiver executives will be outsourced and 236 vehicles will be deployed for the purpose, it said.

The scheme is aimed at ensuring optimum utilisation of manpower and prompt action on emergency calls. The rescue and service vehicles of all services, including police, fire and ambulance, will be tracked on a real-time basis using a digital map and immediately directed to help those in need, officials said.

# EX-HC JUDGE KARNAN HELD BY TN POLICE



AGENCIES

**Chennai, Dec 2:** A former High Court judge, CS Karnan, was arrested Wednesday over offensive comments he allegedly made against woman judges and wives of judges, which were posted on YouTube.

Karnan had allegedly released the said videos, after which several lawyers had written to the Chief Justice of India against him. The apex court had asked them to approach appropriate authorities. The ex-judge was arrested by the Chennai police.

In October, Cyber Crime Wing of Chennai Police had registered a case against Karnan.

The complaint was filed by a non-practising advocate S Devika, a non-aggrieved party and Karnan's contention was that only an aggrieved party can file a complaint against any person.

Nevertheless, Karnan had appeared before the police for inquiry.

Meanwhile, a case was filed in the Madras High Court to register a case against Karnan.

# UK gives Pfizer a shot, rollout in days

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, Dec 2:** The UK Wednesday became the first country to approve the PfizerBioNTech vaccine against COVID-19, paving the way for mass vaccinations against the deadly novel coronavirus from as early as next week.

The British regulator, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), says the job, which claims to offer up to 95 per cent protection against COVID-19 illness, is safe for roll out.

The UK government said the approval follows a rigorous analysis of the data, conducted at a faster pace but without any compromise on standards.

I am thrilled. Help is on its way...We can see the dawn. Let's re-



double our efforts to follow the lockdown rules, said UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock.

It's been a very tough 2020 but 2021 will be brighter, he said.

The government has formally accepted the recommendation from the MHRA, which means the two-dose vaccine can be injected into arms of high-risk categories within

The UK is expected to receive a total of 40 million doses by the end of 2021, enough to vaccinate up to a third of the population

The vaccine must be stored at around -70C and will be transported in special boxes, packed in dry ice. Once delivered, it can be kept for up to five days in a fridge

days. Around 10 million doses should be available soon, with the first 800,000 arriving in the UK in the coming days.

"The vaccine will be made available across the UK from next week. The NHS (National Health Service) has decades of experience in delivering large scale vaccination programmes and will begin putting their extensive preparations into action to provide care and support to

all those eligible for vaccination," said a spokesperson for the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).

The UK's Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisations (JCVI) will now publish its final advice for the priority groups to receive the vaccine.

Around 50 hospitals are on standby and vaccination centres in venues such as conference centres are being set up now, with military personnel being deployed to assist with the logistics.

The joint vaccine, produced by American pharmaceutical giant Pfizer and German biotech firm BioNTech, had recently claimed trials suggested it works well in people of all ages, races and ethnicities.

# STIR GATHERS STEAM



Farmers stage protest at Singhu border against the Centre's new farm laws in New Delhi, Wednesday

PTI PHOTO



## STEVEN SPIELBERG GETS PROTECTION FROM STALKER

Filmmaker Steven Spielberg has secured a restraining order against a woman after she sent him death threats. The filmmaker took action against Sarah Char, claiming that she was harassing him for several months and even threatened to murder him.

## PAGE CHANGES NAME TO ELLIOT, ANNOUNCES BEING 'TRANS'

Ellen Page, the Oscar-nominated star of *Juno* and *Umbrella Academy*, has announced a change of name. Page will now be known as Elliot, and the star also announced the decision of being identified as transgender.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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accuracy • reliability • trust  
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

**ARIES**  
You are an imaginative and enterprising person, and today you may taste success. Ganesh says that you are ambitious but warns you not to take on more work than you can handle. You are positive about your capabilities, so work sincerely and have faith in God.

**TAURUS**  
Today, you are likely to be more reckless than ever in splurging your hard earned money. Ganesh strongly advises you to leave your credit card at home today. Using it for making purchases will only make matters worse. Money wise, be very careful in your business dealings, about the commitments you make.

**GEMINI**  
Your mind will be uneasy and anxious due to some reason today. You will be unable to express your anxieties. You will be able to secure the love of your partner by sharing your feelings. You need to let go of the past and strive to keep on moving forward with confidence, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
A restless or irritating mood is indicated. Keep you cool and be calm even in adverse circumstances, suggests Ganesh. If you do so, you will always succeed in life. It is difficult to wriggle out of adversity, if you have hot temper.

**LEO**  
You will seek the opinion of others in a lot of matters today. You need to patiently listen to others and keep your lips sealed during the course of conversations today. Your self-confidence may take a beating today, hence do not take any important decisions. It is time for a major change in your work or field of work, says Ganesh.

**VIRGO**  
Ganesh says today you will be highly motivated. Your creative talents and abilities set you apart as an excellent artist. Words will flow if you give vent to your creativity, and if you choose to sing or dance, you will be the focus of attention. Ganesh advises you to pursue the performing arts or writing as hobbies.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh says you will showcase your ability and skills today in your work field and impress people. You will develop and express your inner love for art and artistic things and you will purchase a new work of art today. Ganesh showers you with all his blessings.

**SCORPIO**  
You can be fondly called as 'the perfectionist' today. Right from being punctual to following a systematic method for your work, you do it all. All in all, you set an ideal example for the people around you, says Ganesh.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Suddenly, you discover that you are fully dedicated to your family. Kith and kins form the crux of your life, says Ganesh. Showing your love and affection to your kids will give you a feeling of satisfaction. Spend some quality time with your partner!

**CAPRICORN**  
Forced to some back-breaking work today, you will feel exhausted by the end of the day. It is a cut-throat competition when it comes to the business world. Your arch rivals are looking out for one small opportunity to damage your business and reputation. But, you are no less. You understand their moves.

**AQUARIUS**  
Academically, you have performed exceptionally well, and Ganesh congratulates you for that. You will inspire and motivate a number of people, and may create a fan following, too. This, however, doesn't mean that you throw your weight around.

**PISCES**  
The day will be exceptional for working people as the planets seemed to be aligned perfectly, portends Ganesh. You will achieve all the expected results in the office and/or at work today. Those looking to pursue further studies in foreign countries will also make progress and come closer to fulfilling their dreams.

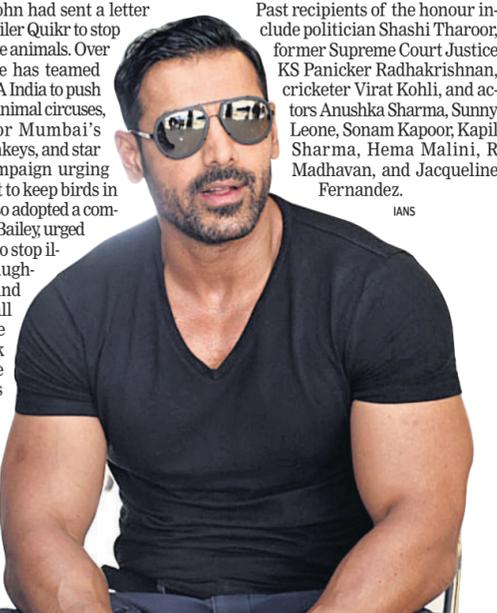
## John is PETA India's 'Person of the Year'

Mumbai: Actor John Abraham has been named the Person of the Year for 2020 by the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).

In 2020, John had sent a letter urging e-retailer Quikr to stop trading in live animals. Over the years, he has teamed up with PETA India to push for a ban on animal circuses, speak up for Mumbai's dancing monkeys, and star in an ad-campaign urging everyone not to keep birds in cages. He also adopted a community dog, Bailey, urged authorities to stop illegal pig slaughter in Goa and put a football jersey on the auction block to benefit the organisations work to help animals. "John Abraham has been helping PETA India advocate for animals since our

inception, and he shows no signs of slowing down," said Sachin Bangera, PETA India Director of Celebrity and Public Relations.

Past recipients of the honour include politician Shashi Tharoor, former Supreme Court Justice KS Panicker Radhakrishnan, cricketer Virat Kohli, and actors Anushka Sharma, Sunny Leone, Sonam Kapoor, Kapil Sharma, Hema Malini, R Madhavan, and Jacqueline Fernandez.



## 'No time to bond on Nolan's set'

New Delhi: Veteran actress Dimple Kapadia says there is no time to bond while working on the set of filmmaker Christopher Nolan.

The actress worked with Nolan on his much-awaited film *Tenet*. "There is no time to bond," Dimple said while giving a glimpse of the work style on Nolan's set.

"It is Nolan's set. You don't bond here, you work here, you just work. There are early calls, like 4am, and finish work. There is non-stop hard work. By the time you are done, you are ready to collapse," she added.

Nolan's new film takes one on a thrilling time-bending mission with two secret agents, essayed by Robert Pattinson and John David Washington. In the film, Dimple is seen as Priya, who is crucial to the narrative. Her character emerges as a deadly person, splashed with various shades of grey. Talking about her own experience, she said: "When I am working, I become the baby of the set. I don't know why. They took care of me. There was a lot of love and affection and care."

## Aahana Kumra feels at home returning to Prithvi Theatre

Mumbai: Actress Aahana Kumra, who calls herself a theatre kid, is thrilled to have returned to the Prithvi Theatre, which she calls her home, after one year.

Aahana took to her verified Instagram account Wednesday to share the news that Prithvi Theatre has reopened after a year and the actress described her experience with the hashtag #homecoming. She also became emotional after visiting the green room.

Aahana went to the theatre Tuesday evening to watch Makarand Deshpande's solo piece *Gandhi*. The actress shared her photographs from the theatre along with

Deshpande and other actors, who are her friends.

She wrote: "#HelloDecember, Last night was overwhelming! We returned home after a year! The feeling to be back at @prithvitheatre was unmatched! Prithvi Theatre, home to all of us has opened after a year and the energy was unparalleled! With all the safety norms we are equipped to make sure that the show goes on!"

On the work front, Aahana recently featured in the Zee5 anthology film series *Forbidden Love*, in the short film *Rules of The Game* directed by Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury.



## 'India key market for Japanese entertainment industry'

THE JAPANESE FILM FESTIVAL IN INDIA FOCUSES ON STRENGTHENING TIES BETWEEN PEOPLE OF THE TWO NATIONS, SAYS KAORU MIYAMOTO OF JAPAN FOUNDATION

Indian interest towards Japanese culture has been growing significantly over the last few years, especially amongst Gen Z, believes Kaoru Miyamoto, Director General, Japan Foundation, New Delhi.

The Foundation is set to launch the fourth edition of the Japanese Film Festival (JFF)-India 2020 digitally amid the pandemic, starting December 4.

Miyamoto, ahead of the event, expresses his views on a host of subjects on impact of Japanese lifestyle on the Indian population

India and Japan share close resemblance in terms of the culture, food, clothing, art, and social practices. Needless to say, Japanese culture is permeating in India, advancing and strengthening the relationship between the two countries.

**On Indian viewers' response towards Japanese culture**  
Cinema depicts all dimensions of a nation's culture. The interest

### SOCIO-CULTURAL BONDING



Screengrab of a Japanese movie

towards Japanese culture has been growing significantly over the last few years, especially amongst the Gen Z. The fourth edition of Japanese Film Festival will not only be successful and bigger with the virtual access but also promote the appreciation of Japanese culture and cinema in Indian landscape.

### On genres that receive more traction among Indians

Usually international award-winning films like the Cannes' winner *Shoplifters* or popular anime features like *Weathering with You* have been quite well-received in India, in fact, becoming the first of their kind commercial releases of Japanese films in India.

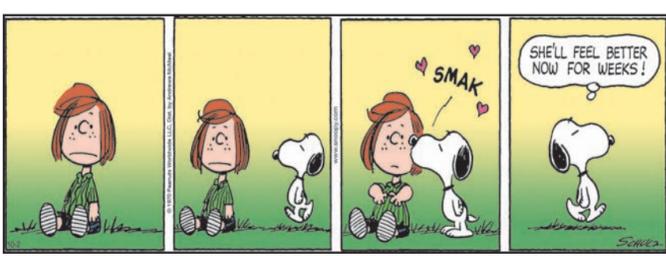
### On increasing popularity of Japanese content

The demand of Japanese films is significant beyond the metros and tier 1 cities. Entertainment has been the most potent source to share knowledge and therefore India is a key market for Japanese entertainment industry. The festival however focuses on strengthening the bond between the people of the two nations.

### On similarities in cultures of Japan and India

Be it the love for tea or rice being a staple, there is a striking resemblance between the customs of the two countries. In terms of culture and heritage, both have similarities and are connected due to their common practices and closeness with each other. Japan has a fascinating and multifaceted culture, known for its traditions, hospitality and value system. As we know, the same values are followed in India as well.

### PEANUTS



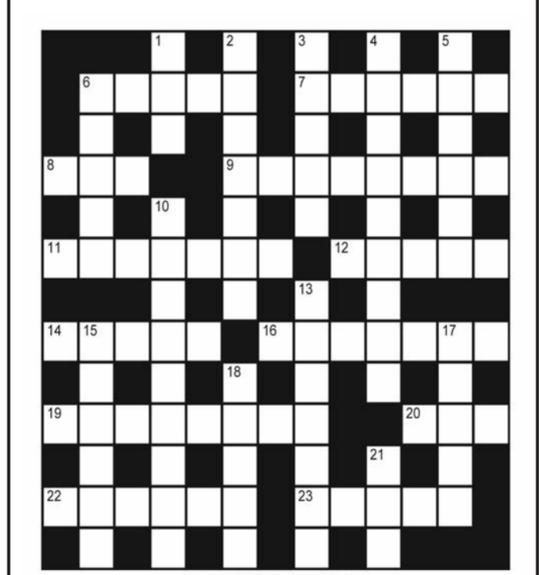
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



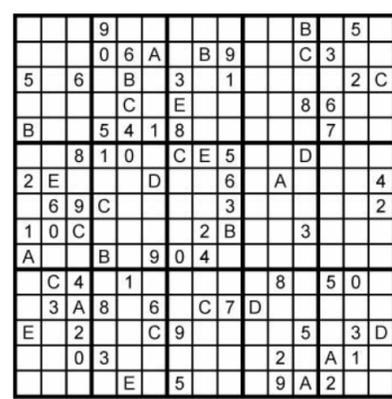
### FUN post CROSSWORD



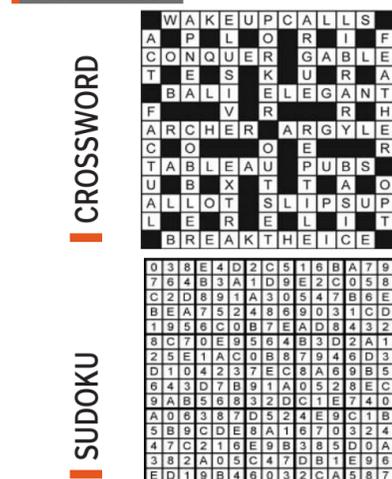
- Across  
6 Dirigible  
7 Justification  
8 Missile's path  
9 Forebear  
11 Trounce  
12 Petrol unit  
14 Inundate  
16 Dissect  
19 Just so-so
- 20 Family room  
22 Plump  
23 Coconut holders  
Down  
1 Lend a hand  
2 Clothes  
3 Armistice  
4 Mediterranean port city
- 5 Azure, for one  
6 Aquamarine  
10 Vulgar and offensive  
13 Scuffy  
15 Stay out of sight (3,3)  
17 Garden starters  
18 Corrosive liquids  
21 Ancient

### SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, each row, column and box must contain the numbers 0 to 9 and the letters A to E.



### SOLUTIONS



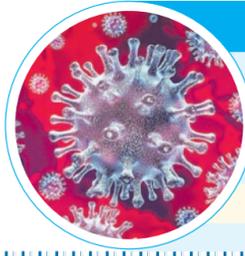
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



## BEAUTIFICATION PLAN

Puri administration demolishes Punjabi murt near the South Gate of Srimandir, Wednesday, to facilitate the heritage corridor project



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	6,44,19,703	4,46,69,606	14,91,338
India	94,99,710	89,31,798	1,38,159
Odisha	3,19,583	3,13,394	1,750

# I-T dept urged to probe 'tax evasion' by Pathak

**SUSPENDED IFS OFFICER ABHAY KANT PATHAK AND HIS SON AKASH PATHAK TAKEN ON 3-DAY POLICE REMAND**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 2:** The Special Vigilance Court here Wednesday allowed the police to take suspended IFS officer Abhay Kant Pathak and his son Akash, who have been arrested on charges of amassing assets disproportionate to their known sources of income, on a three-day remand for further investigations into the case, sources said.

Meanwhile, suspecting tax evasion in view of a staggering ₹9.48 crore cash deposits and deposits by transfers to the tune of ₹5.29 crore – totalling upto ₹14.77 crore – in three bank accounts belonging to the Pathak senior without any income tax returns, the state Vigilance has referred the matter to the Income Tax (I-T) department for investigation. "The Income Tax department has been urged to investigate the matter in accordance with the Income Tax Act, 1961 and Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act, 1988," read a statement issued by the state Vigilance.

Suspecting money laundering activities by the father-son duo, the



File photo of IFS officer AK Pathak

The Income Tax department has been urged to investigate the matter in accordance with the Income Tax Act, 1961 and Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act, 1988

Suspecting money laundering activities by the father-son duo, the anti-corruption wing of the state police has also referred the issue to the ED for conducting a probe under Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002.

anti-corruption wing of the state police has also referred the issue to the ED for conducting a probe under Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002, said the statement. Meanwhile, the Special

Investigation Team (SIT) of the Bhubaneswar Vigilance Cell quizzed the officials of three banks where the 'ill-gotten' money has been deposited.

Notably, Travel agency 'Sky King' has filed an FIR with Kharavela Nagar police against Abhay and Akash. In the complaint, the agency said that the father-son duo owes them over ₹65 lakh. The money had been spent on chartered flights and reservations in luxurious hotels.

Speaking to mediapersons Wednesday, the travel agency managing partner Prabhakar Choudhury said that Akash had booked 10 chartered flights and booked hotels through them on a number of occasions.

The total cost for flights and hotel bookings was approximately ₹2.78 crore of which the company has received ₹2.13 crore. Choudhury also said that the agency had booked rooms in five-star hotels in this city, Mumbai and Delhi for Akash. "Whenever we approached them to clear the dues, they threatened us with dire consequences," Choudhury said.

# AYUSH doctors seek reinstatement

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 2:** More than 267 AYUSH doctors Wednesday wrote to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik demanding their reinstatement in services as part of pandemic management.

In the letter, they said, "We 267 AYUSH doctors (130 in Ayurveda and 137 in Homoeopathy) beg to state that we were posted under Covid-19 in Odisha, from May 12, 2020 to July 31, 2020 on contract daily remuneration basis under the office of CDM and PHO in all districts. Then our contracts were extended till October 31. But after that

we are now disengaged." Stating that they had rendered their duty sincerely and dedicatedly at Covid care centres, OPD and Covid hospitals, the doctors said that not a single death occurred in Covid care centres during their entire duty period. "Many of us also had been affected seriously by Covid-19 during the duty but we did our duty without hesitation," they added.

Since the WHO and health experts have predicted a second wave of Covid-19 due to the onset of winter, the public health system needs to be strengthened, they said in the letter. "Based on these aspects, we make an earnest request before you for our kind consideration to engage us in activities like treating Covid patients, sensitising people, guiding ASHA, ANMs for identification of patients with symptoms among others," they said.

# GRACEFUL MOVES



Artists perform on the second day of Konark Festival, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

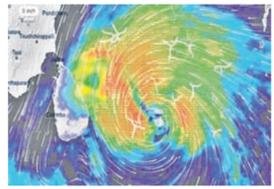
# Cyclone Burevi to spare Odisha: IMD

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 2:** Another cyclonic storm Burevi which has formed over southwest and adjoining southeast Bay of Bengal will have no impact on Odisha, said the regional centre of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) here, Wednesday.

The IMD confirmed that the impact of the cyclonic storm will only be felt in Tamil Nadu December 4. Bhubaneswar Met Centre Director HR Biswas said, "There will be no impact of the system on Odisha and there is no such warning. Weather will remain dry for next five days and there will be no major changes in minimum temperature during the period."

However, there is a possibility of shallow to moderate fog in some parts of the state including Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj and Subarnapur December 4 and 5," added Biswas.



The IMD confirmed that the impact of the cyclonic storm would only be felt in Tamil Nadu December 4

The IMD in its latest bulletin said that the deep depression over southwest and adjoining southeast Bay of Bengal has intensified into a cyclonic storm-Burevi and moved west-northwards with a speed of 12 kmph during past six hours and lay centered over southwest Bay of Bengal about 300 km east-southeast of Trincomalee (Sri Lanka), 530 km east-southeast of Pamban (India) and 700 km nearly east of Kanniyakumari (India).

"It is very likely to intensify further during the next six hours. It is very likely to move west-northwestwards and cross Sri

Lanka coast between latitude 7.50N and 9.00N, close to Trincomalee during evening/night of December 2 as a Cyclonic Storm with a wind speed of 75-85 kmph gusting to 95 kmph. It is very likely to move nearly westwards thereafter, emerge into Gulf of Mannar and adjoining Comorin area on December 3 morning," said the IMD.

The department also predicted that it would then move nearly west-southwestwards and cross south Tamil Nadu coast between Kanniyakumari and Pamban around early morning of December 4.

# BJP seeks CBI probe into Pari 'murder' case

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 2:** Apprehending involvement of an organ trade racket in the alleged abduction and murder of 'Pari', a minor girl of Nayagarh district, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Wednesday demanded a CBI probe into the incident.

BJP's state unit president Samir Mohanty Wednesday told the media that the parents of the deceased have levelled serious allegations. "They suspected stealing of eyes and kidneys of Pari. The government has claimed that there was no trace of any attempt to outrage her modesty," Mohanty said. He also added, "The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data claims that several children are missing from the state. The report said that the cases



BJP's state president Samir Mohanty and other party leaders address the media

of human trafficking have increased in Odisha and the state has seen non-performance of the police. Organ smuggling racket is flourishing in Nayagarh district. There should be a CBI enquiry into the matter."

The leader also said that the parents of the deceased as well as the villagers are now being pressured by the ruling

dispensation to suppress the issue. "The parents have often raised the names of some BJD leaders and hinted at their involvement. The police have been putting pressure on the families of the deceased and on the villagers. The parents have raised their allegations before the media against the police. The local sarpanch has been put

The party said Pari's parents and the villagers are now being pressured by the ruling dispensation to suppress the issue

under pressure not to protest against the incident and stay silent," he said. He also said that there is need to investigate the alleged involvement of a Cabinet minister in the state. "This is disturbing for the people of Odisha as to how the accused in the case have been let off the purview of investigation," he said. He also alleged that the BJD and the Congress are hand in gloves and suppressing the case for political benefits.

## CORRECTION

Apropos the news item with the headline 'Only 7% of DMF funds spent in mining-affected areas' that appeared on November 28 issue of this newspaper, the Public Relations Officer, Planning and Convergence department, Government of Odisha, has sent the following contradiction:

Sir, I am directed to say that the news item titled "Only 7% of DMF funds spent in mining-affected areas" published on 28th November, 2020 in **Orissa POST** based on the reply given by Hon'ble Minister, Planning and Convergence in the Odisha Legislative Assembly has come to the notice of the State Government. It is in all likelihood liable to create a wrong impression amongst the stakeholders of District Mineral Foundations (DMFs) about utilization of DMF Funds.

The information stated in the news item is factually incorrect. The %age of DMF Funds spent in the directly mining affected areas i.e., within 10kms radius of the mine, was misrepresented in the above-mentioned news item as Rupees in crores utilized out of DMF Funds in various Districts. For example, 63.80% has been spent in directly affected areas in Keonjhar district and not Rs 63.80 crore as per the newspaper report.

It is therefore, requested to kindly publish the factual position as stated in the reply to the Unstarred Assembly Question No-654 in Odisha Legislative Assembly by the Hon'ble Minister, Planning and Convergence on 26th November, 2020, through a suitable correction or clarification in your esteemed Daily, which may help in removing wrong impression created by the published news item in the minds of the stakeholders of DMF not only within Odisha, but at the National Level, lest they may take it as a point of reference in future.

**Editor's Note:** We sincerely regret the inadvertent mistake.

# VOLUNTEERS LEARN WASTE SEGREGATION SKILLS

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 2:** The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), Wednesday, began training and education for various associations and volunteers on effective garbage segregation in order to ensure smooth functioning of micro composting centres (MCCs) in the city.

The training which began in all the three zones saw programmes and sensitisation of about 150 organisations from three zones. With about 50 members from each zone, the volunteers and NGOs were trained about segregation of wet and dry wastes which will help in smooth functioning of the MCCs.

"The programme is being carried out under decentralization of waste initiative. Since MCCs are being set

up in the city for decomposing organic wastes, it's imperative to segregate waste at source and not mix them up which will defeat the purpose. Thus sensitisation is important part which will help the MCCs in the long run," a BMC official said.

Notably, the BMC has planned to complete construction of as many as 32 MCCs out of the proposed 43 by end of December this year. As of now, four MCCs – one each at Nicco Park for Ward No – 55, Laxmi Sagar for Ward No – 32 and 33, Unit – VIII for Ward No-51 and another at the Temporary Transit Centre (TTC) near Sainik School for Ward No – 12 and 17 – are operational. While MCCs at TTS, Nicco Park, Laxmi Sagar can process wastes up to 5 tonne per day, the capacity of Unit – VIII is 3 tonne per day.

# 2 MORE HELD IN IIFL HEIST CASE

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, Dec 2:** The Commissionerate Police arrested two more accused in connection with the much talked about dacoity at India Infoline Finance Ltd (IIFL) of Nayasarak in Cuttack.

According to Lalbagh police, the accused were identified as Debashish Hazra and Nilamani Saha, associates of Lala Amrit Ray. The total number of arrests over IIFL loot has reached 13 till date.

Notably, gold traders Saroj Prusty of Mangalabag and Lalit Kumar Sodhi of Alamchand Bazaar in the city including IIFL security guard Harmohan Das were arrested by the police last November 28. Ray and his accomplices had executed the dacoity plan by threatening a staffer of the firm with a toy gun November 19. Acting on an FIR lodged by the firm's territory manager Tapas Ranjan Swain, Lalbagh police had registered a case and initiated the probe.

# Pact for promotion of green energy

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 2:** Atal Incubation Centre-Nalanda Institute of Technology Foundation, Bhubaneswar (AIC-NITF) has signed an agreement with Odisha Corporate Foundation (OCF) for industry partnership at a solar energy conclave organised by AIC-NITF recently.

The memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed to promote renewable energy in Odisha and create a new direction for young entrepreneurs to promote renewable energy. The pact was signed between Atal Incubation Centre CEO Durga Prasad Gowda and OCF president Hrishikesh Behera.

On the occasion a seminar on Renewable Energy for Inclusive Development-Policies and Strategy was also organised. In the seminar, Upendra Tripathy, Director General, International Solar Alliance, stressed the idea that solar energy should be used for the benefit of the common man. He also hinted that World Solar Investment Summit is going to be organised in



India in the coming days.

Former additional chief secretary Gujarat government, Maheswar Sahoo, in his address emphasised on the development of a Centre of Excellence in AIC-Nalanda to promote startups in solar energy sector. While ORERA chairperson Siddhanta Das presented a carbon sequestration project which is claimed to be the first-of-its-kind in India,

The MoU was signed between Atal Incubation Centre CEO Durga Prasad Gowda and OCF president Hrishikesh Behera

Prof Saroj Ku Nayak gave example of solar lighting in tribal hamlets of Damanjodi ushering in inclusive growth.

Likewise, former chairman-cum-managing director of NALCO Tapan Kumar Chand stated that India is the third largest solar capacity in the world and the country is well poised to make solar energy as an alternative to traditional energy base. Chand was requested in the session to join as Director-General of AIC-NITF.

AIC-NIT Foundation, Bhubaneswar is a technology business incubator supported by Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog to promote culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the eastern region of India.

**RELIANCE HOME FINANCE** **RELIANCE HOME FINANCE LIMITED**

Branch Office: Plot No. 2863/3719, 3rd Floor, Gitanjali Complex Lewis Road, Bhubaneswar, Orissa 751002, Registered Office: - 11th Floor, The Ruby, Plot No. 29 Ruby Mills Compound, Senapati Bapat Marg, Dadar West, Mumbai-400028

**POSSESSION NOTICE (As per Rule 8(1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002)**

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Reliance Home Finance Ltd. under the Securitization, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(4) read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued Demand Notices upon the Borrowers/Co-borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower/Co-borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Co-borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates.

The Borrower/Co-borrowers in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Reliance Home Finance Ltd.

Name of The Borrower / Address	Co-Borrower And Guarantor Name	Date & Amount mentioned as per Demand Notice	Date & Amount mentioned as per Possession Notice	Date of Symbolic Possession	Property Address of Secured Assets
SATYAJIT PATI, residing at SAI GOVINDAM JEWELLERS WARD NO 27 PLOT NO 200442 HOLDING NO 546/C AT B K ROAD PO MANGALABAG, CUTTACK - 753001, Also at: RESIDENTIAL PLOT NO 426/1779 KHATA NO70/13 PLOT NO 409/1780 KHATA NO 350/28 MZ RAMDASPUR TAHASIL, BARANGA, CUTTACK- 754006	2) SARAT CHANDRA PATI 3) BISWAJIT PATI, Both all residing at SAI GOVINDAM JEWELLERS WARD NO 27 PLOT NO 200442 HOLDING NO 546/C AT B K ROAD PO MANGALABAG, CUTTACK - 753001,	31st August, 2020 Rs. 20,58,031/- (Rupees Twenty Lac Fifty Eight Thousand and Thirty One only)	30th November, 2020 Rs.20,77,688/- (Rupees Twenty Lac Seventy Seven Thousand Six Hundred and Eighty Eight only)	30th November, 2020	Description of immovable Property <b>SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY</b> Dist. Cuttack, S.R.O Cuttack Sadat, Tahasil: Cuttack Sadar, PS. Baranga, P.S. Na., Revenue Village: Mouza: Ramadaspur (1) Khata No. 70/13, Plot No.426/1779, Area: Ac 0.04 decimals; Kisan Sarad-II; Sabik Mouza: Ramadaspur, Sabik Khata no.30, Sabik Plot No. 426, Area Ac. 0.24 decimals; (2) Khata No. 350/28, Plot No. 409/1780 Area—0.04 decimals; Kisan: Sadar -III; Sabik Mouza: Ramadespur, Sabik Khata No. 204, Sabik Plot No. 409 Area: Ac 0.12 decimals; NORTH :- Dinabandhu Pal SOUTH :- Netrananda Pal EAST :- Dinabandhu Pal WEST :- BY Road
1) KUSHA CHANDRA BEHERA residing at NILACHAKRA LANE SIDHAMAHABIR PATNA STATION ROAD SARBODAYA NAGAR PURI - 752002, and also at: KHATA-84/457, PLOT-195/872, SUB PLOT-22(P & 23(P), MZ-SEREIKONA, TAHASIL PURI (684) PURI SADAR (100), DIST-PURI PURI - 752002.	1) SABITA BEHERA, residing at KHATA-84/457, PLOT-195/872, SUB PLOT-22(P & 23(P), MZ-SEREIKONA, TAHASIL PURI (684) PURI SADAR (100), DIST-PURI PURI - 752002.	08th September, 2020 Rs.11,75,749/- (Rupees Eleven Lac Seventy Five Thousand Seven Hundred and Forty Nine only)	30th November, 2020 Rs.12,48,315/- (Rupees Twelve Lac Forty Eight Thousand Three Hundred and Fifteen only)	30th November, 2020	Description of immovable Property <b>SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY</b> District-Puri, Sub-Registrar Office - Puri, P.S.: Purisadar, No. 100, Tahasil: Purisadar No. 684, Mouza: Sereikona, ssthiban status Mutation Khata No. 84/457 (eight four by four hundred fifty seven), Plot No. 195/872 (one hundred fifty five by eight hundred seventy two), Kisan: Gharabari, sold area Ac0-020.7 decimal (twenty point seven decimals) out of Ac0.190dec. out of Ac1-466.67dec. (According to one thousand decimals = one Acre) with annual rent Rs. 4,00/- (Rupees four) only. Corresponding to 1977 settlement ROR Khata No. 66, Plot No. 195 Part. in spot measurement Eastern & Western side Arm 45' and Northern & Southern side Arm 20' total 900 sqft. Bounded by : East : Vendor, West : Vendor, North : 18 ft wide proposed Road, South : Revenue plot No. 192. The land is not leasehold or an endowment land. The land is not within the consolidable limit.

The Borrower/co-borrowers/Mortgagor(s) attention is invited to the provision of Section 13(8) of the SARFAESI Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Date: 03-December-2020  
Place: Orissa

Sd/-  
(Authorized Officer)  
**Reliance Home Finance Limited.**

# State logs 6 more Covid fatalities

ODISHA REPORTS 480 NEW CORONAVIRUS CASES IN 24 HOURS, TAKING THE CASELOAD TO 3,19,583



PNN & AGENCIES

## IN NUMBERS

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 2:** State's Covid-19 tally mounted to 3,19,583 Wednesday as 480 more people tested positive for the disease, while six fresh fatalities pushed Odisha's death toll to 1,750, a senior Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department official said.

Of the new cases, 276 were reported from various quarantine centres and 204 detected during contact tracing.

Khurda district recorded the maximum number of fresh cases at 51, followed by Angul at 41 and Mayurbhanj at 36. Two districts Gajapati and Sambalpur have not registered any fresh case, said the official.

Khurda recorded the maximum number of fresh cases at 51, followed by Angul at 41 and Mayurbhanj at 36

Ganjam district recorded two deaths, while Khurda, Balasore, Jharsuguda and Mayurbhanj reported one fatality each

The positivity rate stands at 5.35 per cent

Over 59.77 lakh samples have so far been tested in the state including 37,069 Tuesday

Taking to Twitter, the H&FW department said, "Regret to inform the demise of six Covid pos-

## NOW, RT-PCR TEST AT ₹400 IN PVT LABS

**BHUBANESWAR:** The state government Wednesday slashed the price of RT-PCR tests for detection of Covid-19 at private laboratories to ₹400 from the existing ₹1,200, a notification said.

In July, the state government had capped the price of RT-PCR tests at private laboratories at ₹2,200 and it was then reduced to ₹1,200 in August.

According to the notification issued by the Health and Family Welfare department, anyone undergoing RT-PCR test at private laboratories, within the state, will now have to pay a maximum amount of ₹400 including GST.

The tests will be conducted by private laboratories under the supervision of Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC), Bhubaneswar, following ICMR

The tests will be conducted by private laboratories under the supervision of RMRC Bhubaneswar following ICMR guidelines

(Indian Council of Medical Research) guidelines, it said, adding that the tests at government laboratories are free of cost.

The state has four ICMR approved laboratories where RT-PCR tests can be done. With the latest reduction of testing prices, Odisha has landed amongst a few states where the price of the testing has come down to ₹400.

In another major development,

the department Wednesday issued notification to the district Collectors, Municipal Commissioners and other officials asking them to discontinue with the practice of pasting posters in front of the houses of Covid-19 patients.

"In inviting a reference to the subject I am to say that the number of Covid-19 positive cases is declining steadily in the state. It is now felt that identification of the houses of Covid-19 patients under home isolation by pasting of posters outside their houses is not a requirement anymore. You are therefore requested to discontinue the practice of affixing of posters outside Covid-19 positive patients under home isolation immediately," the notification from the department said.

itive patients while under treatment in hospitals."

Ganjam district recorded two deaths, while Khurda, Balasore, Jharsuguda and Mayurbhanj reported one fatality each.

Fifty-three Covid-19 patients have died due to comorbidities, the offi-

cial said. The positivity rate stands at 5.35 per cent. Over 59.77 lakh samples have so far been tested in the state, including 37,069 Tuesday.

Meanwhile, another 660 Covid patients recovered in Odisha, taking the total recovered cases in the coastal state to 3,13,394, the H&FW

department tweeted.

The recovered cases include 56 from Mayurbhanj, 55 from Angul, 54 from Khurda, 46 from Sundargarh, 42 from Bolangir, 39 from Jagatsinghpur, 38 from Balasore, 38 from Cuttack and 37 from Keonjhar, the department said.

# Since April, 8L given employment in kendu-related work

The info was shared during the state-level coordination meet chaired by the Chief Secy with higher officials of Forest dept



FILE PHOTO

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 2:** The state Forest and Environment department Wednesday informed Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy that around eight lakh persons have been given employment in kendu leaf-related works since April this year.

The information was shared during the state-level coordination meeting chaired by the Chief Secretary with the higher officials of the Forest department. "A total of 7,54,631 pluckers and 18,223 binders were engaged in the work among whom nearly 80 per cent were women. More than 60 lakh man-days were created during the current year in the works like bush cutting, procurement of leaves, phadi repairing, leaf drying and storage, processing, binding, bagging and transportation," said Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (kendu leaf) Pravakara Behera.

The department is optimistic about generation of a trade surplus of ₹100 crore from the kendu leaf operations in the current fiscal. Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy directed the officials to ensure more bush cutting in convergence with the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Generation Scheme (MGNREGS).

He said that the bush cutting works can pave way for better production and production of the processed leaves for which the state is known in the country. Meanwhile, the Development Commissioner

A total of 7,54,631 pluckers and 18,223 binders were engaged in the work among whom nearly 80 per cent were women. More than 60 lakh man-days were created during the current year in the works like bush cutting...

PRAVAKARA BEHERA I  
PCCF (KENDU LEAF)

Suresh Mohapatra asked the officials to prepare a district-wise plan of bush cutting in convergence with the Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water department.

Additional Chief Secretary, Forest department Mona Sharma also appreciated the top bureaucrat about the latest developments. She said that the procurement of kendu leaves was taken up during April-May and near about 2 lakh quintals of leaves of worth about ₹119.57 crore were procured from the pluckers. The cost of the leaves was directly disbursed to bank account of the pluckers.

As per the official data, during last year, the value of kendu leaf sales stood at Rs377 crore. During 2020 (till November), the sales reached up to ₹321 crore. The government claims that it is likely to gain additional ₹100 crore as around 50,000 quintals of kendu leaves are in the process of sales.

# City IIT to hold its 9th Annual Convocation

The institute will confer degrees to 446 students including 35 Ph. D., 141 M. Tech., 70 M.Sc. and 200 B. Tech students



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 2:** IIT Bhubaneswar is all set to celebrate its 9th Annual Convocation December 4, 2020, live by a hybrid mode where students participate with physical presence or by online in view of the pandemic time. Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank, Union Minister of Education will grace the occasion via online as the Chief Guest and address the Convocation. Sanjay Dhotre, Minister of State for Education will be the Guest of Honour and Rajendra Prasad Singh, Chairman, Board of Governors (BoG), IIT Bhubaneswar will preside over. Prof RV Raja Kumar, Director, IIT Bhubaneswar will present the report and award the degrees to the students.

During the 'hybrid convocation', the institute will confer degrees to 446 students including 35 Ph. D., 141 M. Tech., 70 M.Sc. and 200 B. Tech.

The President of India Gold Medal will be awarded to Aditya Pal of the Computer Science and Engineering for the best academic performance among the entire outgoing B. Tech. batch of students.

The Director's Gold Medal will be awarded to Sanket Dey Chowdhury of the School of Infrastructure for the best academic performance among the entire outgoing M. Tech. batch of students.

The Director's Gold Medal will be awarded to Souvik Chakraborty of the Physics, School of Basic Sciences for the best academic performance among the entire outgoing M. Sc. batch of students.

## NO TO FAKE PRODUCTS



Amid busting of various fake ghee and spices manufacturing units, Cuttack Collector Bhabani Shankar Chayani and CMC Commissioner Ananya Das address a meeting at the Collector's office in the Silver City calling for a curb on selling of the bogus products, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

# State relaxes expenditure rationalisation measures

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 2:** When the pandemic was on the verge of hitting the peak in state around July this year, the government adopted some rationalisation measures in the wake of economic downturn.

In a move to enhance capital investment for revival of the economy and generation of livelihood, and

facilitate higher public spending within the resources, the government has decided to relax some expenditure rationalisation measures adopted by the Finance department July 7, 2020.

The state government had completely banned the purchase of new equipment except medical equipment and equipment required for internal security. However, as per

the latest order of the Finance department, equipment required for promoting digital communication can be procured within the delegated financial power without reference to Finance department.

"The government has been successful in minimizing the impact of the COVID-19 on the state economy as well as realization of resources. After initial shortfall in resources

in the early part of the financial year following enforcement of lockdown and shutdown, the resources are now looking up due to partial recovery in the State economy, and some innovation in mobilization of resources," stated Odisha Finance Secretary Ashok Meena in a letter to all the departments.

There shall be complete ban on sanction and draw of new Long-

term Advances (HBA, Motor Car Advance, Computer advance etc.) and other advances. However, if a part of the HBA out of the total sanctioned amount is drawn, the balance will be allowed to be drawn.

The ban on sanction and draw of new Long-term Advances (HBA, Motor Car Advance, Computer advance, etc.) and other advances have now been relaxed and allowed.

## Clerk comes under Vigilance scanner

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jagatsinghpur, Dec 2:** Vigilance sleuths raided several places belonging or having links with senior assistant Sanjukta Das who works at Jagatsinghpur sub-Collector's office Wednesday on charge of amassing assets disproportionate to her known sources of income.

According to sources, searches were conducted by the anti-corruption department officials on her residential building at Satapura area and another double-storied building at Panisalia in Jagatsinghpur district, a 3-BHK flat at Mahanadi Vihar in Cuttack including her office in the district.

Important documents and bank passbooks including her lockers were being searched. The total value of the disproportionate assets in possession of the clerk was to be ascertained. Raids were still underway when the last reports came in, the sources added.

Challenges ranging from trying to access sanitation services for PWDs to prevent the virus, to securing social protection including financial assistance and necessary support for developing alternative livelihood were discussed

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 2:** On the eve of International Day for Persons with Disabilities a webinar titled "Towards a disability-inclusive, accessible and sustainable post COVID-19 world" was organised by Centre for Advocacy and Research, Wednesday.

The webinar focused on the challenges that persons with disabilities (PWD), are facing in the context of COVID-19. The challenges ranging from trying to access essential sanitation services to prevent the virus to securing social protection including financial assistance and necessary support for developing alternative livelihood were discussed. The event was supported by Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, Blind Association of India and Bhubaneswar and Odisha Livelihood Mission. Akhila Sivadass, executive di-

rector, CFAR in her opening remarks, said, "This webinar is the third in the series and today we are here not only to take stock, reflect but also act together to address the present crisis that the disabled living in informal settlements are facing especially in trying to access adequate water, sanitation and hygiene services and facilities."

Pramodini Maharana, 42, of Bastibikash association, highlighted the plight of disabled persons. Speaking about this, she said, that "after a lot of struggle, when persons with disabilities were able to earn their livelihoods doing petty business, the



The webinar in progress

OP PHOTO

The government should come up with a plan to map the vulnerabilities of persons with disabilities and respond to their acute distress and deprivation

SANNYASHAI KUMAR BEHERA I  
SSEPD DEPT

pandemic has once again pulled us down." She went on to add that the government has not extended enough support to help them overcome their day to day travails. She urged the government to think of some doable ways of supporting

the disabled persons during this period of distress.

Dwelling on the emergency response needed for the disabled, Sannyashai Kumar Behera, SSEPD department, stated: "The government should come up with a plan to map the vulnerabilities of persons with disabilities and respond to their acute distress and depriva-

tion." Behera added that a special package should be made available to take care of the livelihood activities of the disabled who are poor and living in cramped spaces.

Basant Nayak, programme manager, Centre for Youth and Social Development, Bhubaneswar underlined that behind any intervention, budgeting is the most essential component and when we talk about budgeting for disabled, data segregation is the most essential element. The government must enumerate persons with disabilities to know the actual size of the population and allocate the resources accordingly.

Water, sanitation and hygiene are essential for prevention of COVID-19 and more importantly for persons with visual impairment, limited mobility and those who are mentally challenged stated Dr. Bhushan Punani, executive secretary, Blind People's Association.

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# 'Scam' in free rice scheme in Sambalpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sambalpur, Dec 2:** Massive irregularities in advance distribution of free rice to PDS beneficiaries during the Covid-19 restrictions have been alleged in the district, a report said.

The state government and the Centre issued directions for advance distribution of free rice to the beneficiaries so that they will not face hardship in arranging their food during the Covid induced lockdowns and shutdowns.

The rice was to be distributed in advance for a period of five months under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana. However, the welfare measure did not have a smooth sailing as allegations of irregularities in rice distribution rocked the district administration.

It was alleged that a major racket was involved in the irregularities as many of the beneficiaries failed to get free rice during this period. This happened as the civil supplies officials failed to make timely verification of rice supply, its stock and distribution. Moreover, it was also alleged that the irregularity is



The rice was to be distributed in advance for a period of five months under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana. But, the welfare measure did not have a smooth sailing over allegations of irregularities

A racket was allegedly involved in the scam as many beneficiaries failed to get free rice as the civil supplies officials failed to verify rice supply and stocks

Some civil supplies officers, level-2 contractors, supply assistants of panchayats and the municipal corporation are hand in gloves in the wrongdoing, it was alleged. The prob order has left many unnerved

not limited to the Sambalpur Municipal Corporation area alone but is spread to Redhakhol and Kuchinda sub-divisions.

The matter came to the fore after vernacular daily 'Dharitri' published a report in this regard in its

November 22 edition.

The report rocked the district administration as the district civil supplies officer, Subodh Mallick, sought a probe.

It was alleged that some civil supplies officers, level-2 contrac-

tors and supply assistants of panchayats and the municipal corporation are hand in gloves in the wrongdoing.

The order unnerved many as the sale and stock registers of supply assistants were not updated during the verification for which they have been asked to update the same within a particular time frame.

Attempts are being made to get the sale and receiving dates of rice from the level-2 contractors and update the same in their sale and stock registers. A supply assistant on condition of anonymity sought to clarify stating that the government ordered distribution of rice, pulses, wheat, kerosene during the Covid restrictions. This pushed them into severe stress as they had to handle huge stocks that arrived for distribution among the beneficiaries.

It was nearly impossible for them to make regular entries in the sale and stock registers. Delay and short supply of food stocks by the contractors was a regular affair for which they had to sign and receive the stocks in the report. The CSO said an investigation has been ordered.



Even as temperatures dip in Daringbadi area of Kandhamal district, people huddle around fire to keep them warm

## SIT questions prime accused

### PARI MURDER CASE



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nayagarh, Dec 2:** The Special Investigation Team (SIT) formed by the state government to investigate the alleged murder of minor girl Pari in Nayagarh district, interrogated prime accused Babuli Nayak Wednesday. The team led by IPS officer Arun Bothra questioned Nayak at Nayagarh Town police station for close to two hours from 11 am to 1.30 pm. The SIT members also held discussions with district cops who were earlier investigating the case.

Police had earlier conducted a polygraph test on Pari's parents, her uncle (father's elder brother) and aunt (wife of father's elder brother). They are still awaiting the results of the tests. The parents of the girl November 24 attempted self-immolation demanding justice in front of the Odisha Assembly. They were saved in the

nick of time by the police. At that time, the couple said they went for the extreme as they were failing to get justice for the alleged murder of their daughter. So they had decided to end their lives in front of the Assembly.

"We are yet to get justice for our Pari (victim). No one is listening to our complaints. Instead of delivering justice to us, we are being harassed. There is no reason for us to live," Pari's father had said.

The five-year-old girl was found dead at Jadupur village under Sadar police limits of Nayagarh district under mysterious circumstances June 14. Her body was recovered from a spot 50 metres from the place where she went missing a day earlier.

The Nayagarh Sadar police had registered a case under Sections 363, 364, 302, and 201 of the IPC on the basis of a complaint lodged by Pari's parents.

## 9-year-old tribal boy wins gold at judo competition

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kesinga, Dec 2:** KH Aryan Majhi, 9, from Hatapada in Titilagarh town has stunned all by winning the gold medal at a judo competition organised by the Odisha State Qwan Ki Do Association in the 'single leg kick' and the 'middle punch' segments. Majhi is a Class IV student and has been creating wonders with his judo and martial skills.

The nine-year-old is a student of the Titilagarh branch of the Odisha State Qwan Ki Do Association. He has been training seriously and has won several prizes in various categories of martial arts like karate and judo. He won a bronze medal in karate in 2018 and a silver medal in the kick-boxing category in 2019 in a district level tournament.

No doubt, the feats of Majhi have made his family proud. The boy has a patriotic mind. In future, Majhi wants to be Army officer and also wants to represent India at the Olympics.



## Covid aid: No trace of ₹29.10L utilisation

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Chhatrapur, Dec 2:** Ration card holders were provided Rs 1000 each as Covid assistance under the National Food Security Act, but there is no trace of the utilization of Rs 29.10 lakh in Ganjam.

The managing director of the state civil supplies corporation has issued a letter (14960) dated November 27 to the district civil supplies officer in this regard.

In the letter, it was stated that Rs 29.10 lakh has not been utilized and is pending at the district administration.

During the pandemic, the state civil supplies corporation had provided over Rs 76.19 crore as Covid assistance to ration card holders.

The district administration has submitted utilization certificates for over Rs 72.96 crore.

Meanwhile, Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange has issued show causes to BDOs of Chhatrapur and Belaguntha and the executive officer of the Buguda NAC.

## BOMBS HURLED AT GROOM HOURS BEFORE WEDDING

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, Dec 2:** In a shocking incident late Tuesday night, a youth sustained critical injuries hours before his marriage was to be solemnised Wednesday as unidentified people opened fire at Manikapur village under Khallikote police limits in Ganjam.

According to police sources, the injured was identified as Jitendra Barik. The youth was admitted to MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur in critical condition.

The incident occurred when the groom visited his relative's house in Manikapur village in the district. The miscreants came from rear and opened fire at him. They also hurled bombs to create panic and fled from the spot soon after committing the crime.

Family members of Barik rushed him to hospital for treatment. Khallikote police initiated a probe in this connection.

# Woman Maoist with ₹4L on head surrenders in Koraput



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Koraput, Dec 2:** A woman Maoist, carrying a cash reward of Rs 4 lakh on her head and allegedly involved in several incidents of crime and violence, surrendered before police in Koraput district, Wednesday.

The woman Maoist, Rame Madkami, is a resident of Koraput district. She gave up arms to return to the mainstream, said police.

Madkami, who had joined the outlawed CPI (Maoist) seven years ago, worked as an Area Committee Member (ACM) in the group of dreaded Maoist leader RK.

She has 10 cases pending against her at various police stations in Koraput and Malkangiri.

Suspected to be involved in many incidents of crime, including assault and killing of civilians, exchange

## Security stepped up as Maoists observe 'PLGA Week'

**MALKANGIRI:** The Malkangiri district administration has tightened security as Maoists are observing the 'People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA) Week', starting Wednesday. It will continue till December 8. The Maoists have decided to observe the event to regain their hold on the region. The Red rebels are determined to increase their control in the region by making new recruits.

"Elaborate security arrangements have been made by the district administration in order to avert any untoward incident. High

of fire with security forces and destruction of government properties, Madkami told police that she decided to give up the path of violence as she was disillusioned by the Maoist leaders.

Koraput SP Mukesh Kumar Bhadoo hailed the decision of the woman Maoist to shun violence and join the mainstream.

Bhadoo said, Madkami saw various developmental activities being undertaken by the government in this area and realized the futility of

the violent path of Naxalism before deciding to join the mainstream of the society.

Their cadres became disheartened with the organisation and they are surrendering as they realized that Maoists are not for the development of the region or for the welfare of people, he said.

Madkami will be provided with monetary assistance as per the surrender and rehabilitation scheme of the state government, Bhadoo informed.

# Big money spent, Udaysagar is no use for farmers

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhawanipatana, Dec 2:** Over a crore of rupees was spent for renovation of the Udaysagar minor irrigation project under Thuamul Rampur block in Kalahandi district, but it has failed to deliver water to farmers due to massive irregularities in the repair, a report said.

According to reports, the authorities have spent over Rs 1.30 crore for renovation of the Udaysagar irrigation project in Karlapat panchayat. Farmers alleged, a canal that provides water has still been choked with silt and earth. This indicated that the funds utilised for the project renovation have gone down the drains while the canal lies unused, they lamented.

Even in rainy season, water is not coming through the canal. Alleging

massive irregularities in its renovation, various farmers' bodies demanded a Vigilance investigation into it.

Keeping in view the need of water for farming, the minor irrigation department had set up the check dam at Dumurijhola in 1967-80. After the project was commissioned, it irrigated 150 hectares in Karlapat, Saydamunda, Tikraguda and some other villages.

In the past, lakhs of rupees have been spent for renovation, desiltation, canal repair and construction of guard walls, but all the works have been botched up by contractors, it was alleged. Under various schemes, Rs 1.33 crore has been spent for the project renovation in different times in the past since 2006-7.

Rs 2.10 lakh has been used for renovation of the project between 2007



FILE PHOTO

and 2009. In 2009-10, the department had spent Rs 9, 98, 445 for its multiple repairs under MGNREGS.

Under the MR grant, Rs 22 lakh was spent for the project in 2010-11 while another Rs 22 lakh was under RRAR scheme. Rs 3 lakh was used for building shutters while Rs 9 lakh was spent for canal lining work under the MGNREGS.

Under the Biju KBK Yojana, Rs 7.45 lakh was used for a part of left canal in 2012-13. In 2019-20, Rs 20

lakh more was used for upgradation of the project.

It was alleged that due to technical defects and botched work, the canals have collapsed. As canals remained unused for a long time, iron gates of the canal had been stolen in 2013. In 2016, canals also suffered complete damage due to floods.

Farmers in the area said the project has been mired in irregularities and there is a need for a vigilance investigation into it.

Though they had drawn the attention of the officials of the department and the administration toward the sorry state of the project, no step is being taken to make the project workable for farmers.

Udaysagar pani panchayat was formed in 2013 and the department is being apprised of such irregularities.

# 74 bonded labourers rescued in Bolangir

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kantabanji, Dec 2:** Labour migration and trafficking are rampant in Bolangir district even as the pandemic is raging in the state. Police rescued 74 labourers including 13 children when they were about to be transported to Hyderabad from Kantabanji railway station in Bolangir district, Wednesday morning.

Among the labourers rescued from the railway station were 42 men and 32 women.

Acting on a tip-off, Kantabanji police conducted a raid at Kantabanji railway station and rescued the labourers. The investigation revealed that the labourers were from Belpada, Bangomunda, Muribahal and Turekela in Balangir district and Golamunda area of Kalahandi district.

The labourers said a middleman was taking them to Andhra



Pradesh to engage them at a brick kiln. The middleman, however, managed to escape from the railway station.

Source said the labourers had taken Rs 30,000 each from the contractor to get engaged in Vishakhapatnam. According to the rescued labourers, every year people leave Odisha for other states as bonded labourers as they don't get enough work in their localities. This year, they were devoid of work due to the pandemic. So they had no other choice but to leave for other states. Later, the Kantabanji Tahasildar made arrangements to send them back to their respective homes.

# Coriander leaves fetch them lakhs of rupees

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, Dec 2:** Kadagad under the sadar block in Keonjhar is known for its vegetable cultivation. Coriander leaves produced in this village have high demand in Cuttack market. Some farmers earn from this in lakhs every season. They do not go out to sell their leaves; traders instead come to their doorsteps to buy leaves.

Turning away their focus from traditional paddy farming, some farmers in the village have found the coriander leaf farming as lucrative, a report said.

A major portion of the leaves produced here is sent to Chhatra Bazar market in Cuttack every day. About one and a half quintals of leaves is sent by buses to Cuttack regularly.

Reports said, Chandrabhanu Dehuri is a successful coriander farmer in the village. This year, Dehuri has cultivated coriander in three acres of land.

Dehuri used to work in the mining sector. After closure of the mine, he was rendered jobless and looked for an alternative source of livelihood.

He wanted to start coriander farming. He said a kg of coriander leaf is sold for Rs 100. A bundle of coriander is now sold for Rs 10 in



the market.

20 other farmers of the village have also cultivated coriander.

Chandrabhanu had earned Rs 2 lakh from selling coriander leaves last year. "Till Baliyatra, coriander leaves are sent to Cuttack. Then, we start vegetable farming like tomatoes, brinjals and palak leaves," he said.

"Every year, we get good returns from coriander leaves for three months. For the past

two years, we have been growing tomatoes, leafy vegetables," the farmer said.

They pointed out that market rates for coriander are skyrocketing. A bundle is now sold for between Rs 5 to Rs 10.

Farmers in the village make use of the water from Sanamachhakandana creek for raising dhania leaves. They buy seeds from outside for Rs 300 a kg.

Chandrabhanu has been cultivating co-

A major portion of the leaves produced in Kadagad is sent to Chhatra Bazar market in Cuttack every day. About one and a half quintals of leaves is sent by buses to Cuttack regularly

Chandrabhanu Dehuri is a successful coriander farmer, who has cultivated coriander in three acres of land this year. He earned Rs 2 lakh from selling coriander leaves last year

20 other farmers of the village have also cultivated coriander. "Till Baliyatra, coriander leaves are sent to Cuttack. Then, we start vegetable farming like tomatoes, brinjals and palak leaves," he said

riander for 20 years and running his family with whatever he earns from this. "There are good profits in coriander farming. Absence of market facility in the area is a major problem. Cold stores are needed for farmers for preservation of vegetables," he observed.

The other farmers who earn from this farming are Bimbadhur Dehuri, Khirod Amant, Nabina Amant, Chhabina Amant and Muralidhar Amant.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. B-485  
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,  
GANJAM (R&B) DIVISION NO.-II, BERHAMPUR  
Phone/Fax: 0680-2233996, E-mail: eernb2\_bam@yahoo.co.in  
INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB) [e-Procurement]  
TENDER CALL NOTICE  
Bid Identification No. SC (R&B)-GM-II-19/2020-21  
No. 9367 Dated: 26.11.2020  
1. The Executive Engineer, Ganjam (R&B) Division No. II, Berhampur on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid in Double cover system to be received in ONLINE MODE only for the work as detailed below:  
2. Nature of Work : Building Work  
3. No. of Work : 02 Nos.  
4. Tender Cost : Rs. 10,000/-  
5. Class of Contractor : 'B' Class & 'A' Class  
6. Availability of bid documents : From 08.12.2020, 10.00 A.M. to 23.12.2020, 4.00 P.M.  
7. Date of Opening of Bid : 24.12.2020 at 11.30 A.M.  
8. The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website <https://tendersorissa.gov.in>.  
(Sd./ T.K. Panigrahy)  
Executive Engineer  
Ganjam (R&B) Division No. II  
OIPR-34080/11/0010/2021

FOCUS PANDEMIC

# LANGUAGE & LOCKDOWNS



**India's number of daily COVID-19 cases rose without interruption for six months, a trend seen in very few places. India's crude mortality rate (CMR) of 99 is now the highest among South and East Asian countries (and higher than in most of Africa), largely because the 'lockdown' actually unlocked the coronavirus and scattered it nationwide**

interruption for six months, a trend seen in very few places. India's CMR of 99 is now the highest among South and East Asian countries (and higher than in most of Africa), largely because the 'lockdown' actually unlocked the coronavirus and scattered it nationwide. But instead of lamenting the past, we need to move on. At least until a safe, effective COVID-19 vaccine becomes available, all countries need different forms of tailored, limited lockdowns and rules of behaviour. And as far as possible, this should be implemented through persuasion and leadership rather than by police enforcement. Here is one suggestion. We have to begin to rely on people who have already had COVID-19 and are now immune. Instead of resorting to compulsion, we should offer people with certified immunity attractive pay to take jobs that involve physical human interaction and contact. This will help to keep supply chains open and the overall economy running. Once governments take the lead, market forces will kick in and do the job. As we discuss in the Brookings paper, this option is not risk-free. But it has huge potential, and economies that develop a functioning 'immune labour market' can reap big benefits. Now that the US election is over, there seems to be more flexibility in the lockdown debate. Encouragingly, many on the left support tailored lockdowns and rules of behaviour that can enable the bulk of the economy and society to remain open. Assuming that Trump, who has adamantly opposed any lockdown, does not lock himself down in the White House beyond January 20, 2021, the US response to COVID-19 is likely to be overhauled accordingly. *The writer, a former Chief Economist of the World Bank and Chief Economic Adviser to the Government of India, is Professor of Economics at Cornell University and Nonresident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution.*

nesses and immunities, viral strains, ecology, or some other factor that we are yet to identify. To see the effect of policy, we need to make within-region comparisons (as I recently argued in a co-authored paper for the Brookings Institution). The experience of India also demonstrates the risks of lockdown semantics. On March 24, the Indian government announced a 'lockdown' that supposedly was even more severe than those in Europe, often described as the strictest possible. The problem with this policy became evident after a week or two. The authorities had made no provision for the country's poor migrant workers who, stranded in urban centres without work or pay, had no choice but to walk hundreds of miles back to their homes, mostly in the countryside. So, although India's cities, towns, and economy were locked down, the opposite was true of 23-40 million migrant workers. For them, this could be described as the 'Great Unlocking.' This misstep is now showing up in the statistics. India's number of daily COVID-19 cases rose without

Our recent experience with COVID-19 and the word 'lockdown' once again illustrates the power of language to influence our lives and wellbeing. The infinite variety of reality, and the finite number of words and phrases we have to describe it, creates an inescapable philosophical challenge to articulating policy. Adding to the challenge is our tendency to regard a person's usage of certain words as a signal of their political ideology. In managing the pandemic, much of the policy discussion has coalesced around lockdowns. But reducing the issue to a binary question (Should we lock down or not?), or even a linear one (How much should we lock down?), oversimplifies a complicated problem. The binary tendency has been prominent in US President Donald Trump's recent statements. At an Iowa campaign rally shortly before the presidential election, Trump claimed that, "The Biden plan will turn America into a prison state, locking you down." He also tweeted that, "Biden wants to LOCKDOWN our Country, maybe for years. Crazy! There will be NO LOCKDOWNS." Trump's brazen politicisation of the COVID-19 policy debate put left-wing groups on the defensive, because, unlike the president, they accepted the science and usually favoured certain aspects of lockdowns. To see why linearising the lockdown debate is equally problematic, consider a restaurant where the menu asks how salty, on a scale of 0-10, you want your food to be. Chaos will ensue, with some customers who ordered a seven complaining that they received a salty dessert, and others who asked for a zero (because they wanted a pudding) grumbling about their bland pizza. Tragically, this situation has parallels in the real world of pandemic management, where there are a thousand dimensions to policy. For example, governments can lock down bars while keeping schools open, or ask people who do not wear face masks to remain at home while allowing those who do to go outside. They can also in-



**AT LEAST UNTIL A SAFE, EFFECTIVE COVID-19 VACCINE BECOMES AVAILABLE, ALL COUNTRIES NEED DIFFERENT FORMS OF TAILORED, LIMITED LOCKDOWNS AND RULES OF BEHAVIOUR**



## Sameness of all beings

It is only Western philosophy that draws a dividing line between human and animal ('man and beast'). The religions - that emerged from the earth organically - have never done so. Hindu dharma holds that all creation is interconnected—*vasudhaiva kutumbakam* - and has always acknowledged animals as sentient beings. Finally science is catching up with what our belief systems have always known. Over the last 50 years, with increasing frequency and accuracy, countless studies are proving the 'sameness' of all living beings. Human beings have a left and right side of the brain which both do different things. Till now this was assumed to be specific to the human brain. But chickens have the same brain as humans. The chicken's brain subdivides its cognitive processing so that the right hemisphere (left eye) is specialised to detect unexpected stimuli and the left hemisphere (right eye) to categorise stimuli based on past experience. The right hemisphere has broad spatial attention, while the left hemisphere has focussed attention. Chicks can attend to at least two visual tasks simultaneously. The tasks used in tests, done by University of New England, were a) searching for foodgrains scattered on a background of small pebbles, and b) detecting a predator moving overhead. The left hemisphere is specialised to carry out the former task and the right hemisphere to carry out the latter. Have you ever found yourself humming a song that's stuck in your head? That's just like dolphins. At an aquatic park, Planete Sauvage in France, a group of five captive dolphins has been recorded making whale-like noises late at night - despite the fact that they have only heard whale sounds as recordings during their daytime shows. Ethologist Martine Hausberger, of the University of Rennes, and her colleagues had hung microphones in the tank to hear what dolphins sound like at night. One night, they heard 25 new sounds that the dolphins had never made before. Because dolphins are known for mimicry, the researchers examined their daytime environment for clues. They found that the park was playing music, sea gulls' calls, the dolphins' own whistles, and humpback whale calls. The dolphins, all of whom were born in captivity, had never had the opportunity to hear a whale sing, except on the soundtrack, yet they were singing whale songs. Do you remember your mother yelling after you that you had forgotten your lunchbox? According to goat specialist Dr Daniel Waldron (cited in Wickman, 2013) goats are great yellers too. Both sheep and goats have larynxes and vocal tracts similar to humans and they use them to great effect. When a mother goat is separated from her kid, she will yell; when it's time for them to be fed, the herd will yell to remind you. And the similarity doesn't end there. Like humans, goats too develop different accents depending on the company they keep. According to recent research by Briefer and McElligott (2012), the calls of goats within the same social group became more similar over time. Comparing the calls of goats at one-week-old and five-weeks-old, they found that the calls of kids raised in the same social groups were more similar than those from different groups. The same is true of cows. After English dairy farmers noticed their cows had slightly different moos, depending on which herd they came from, a study revealed that cows have regional accents like humans. So, clearly animals can modify their vocalisations according to their social environments, which means they can learn languages easily as well. While on the subject of communication, remember the Mahabharata story of how the unborn child, Abhimanyu, heard the secret of the maze when it was told to his pregnant mother, Subhadra? It is now widely accepted that babies in the womb respond positively to external stimuli like music and conversation. Expectant mothers can often be seen crooning and whispering to their unborn child. It is the same with animals. A mother hen talks to her chicks before they are born. She will cluck and purr softly while sitting on the eggs or moving them around under her. This early messaging imprints on them their mother's voice and enables newborns to distinguish their mother's call from rest of the flock. Towards the final hours of the hatch, you can hear them responding to Mama as she encourages them to break out of the shell, reassuring them that they are safe. It has also been proven that mother hens can modify their teaching of their chicks based on their understanding and aptitude. If the chick is a slow learner, Mama will slow down the pace of the lesson. And just like our mothers push our veggies at us and our colas away, so too do mother hens encourage their children to eat healthy. In a recent study, mother hens were conditioned to identify one colour of food as preferable and another colour of food as unsuitable. From a separate room they were given to watch as their chicks chose to eat the colour of feed they (the hens) deemed less preferable. Perceiving the chicks making an error, the mother hens responded by pecking and scratching the ground more frequently in an attempt to attract their chicks away from the bad food and toward the better food. Mums will be Mums. Now that even science can no longer deny that animals think, speak and behave just like us, how can we deny them even the basic consideration that we, as humans, take for granted?



**Now that even science can no longer deny that animals think, speak and behave just like us, how can we deny them even the basic consideration that we, as humans, take for granted?**

SPECTRUM DISABILITY

## Society should overcome its handicaps



**AS A THUMB RULE, WHEN WE FOCUS ON SOMEONE'S FLAWS, WE ARE OFTEN DISABLED TO APPRECIATE THEIR TALENT, ABILITIES AND SKILLS**

Ever pondered how the disabled persons with bowl in hand, some on wheelchair, pass their day around the religious and tourist spots or in row at a corner in market with soliciting eyes. These hapless, helpless persons also witnessed loitering at road crossings or on footpath, are often derided at, reprimanded and scorned. A section of them is those of cursed children who were cruelly crippled, and dragged into begging by the mafias. No one is perfect. As a thumb rule, when we focus on someone's flaws, we are often disabled to appreciate their talent, abilities and skills. Robert Hensel of Guinness World Record fame, himself having inborn disability said, "There is no greater disability in society than the inability to see a person as more." What matters in the context of disability is our perception and not the lacuna in someone. "The only disability in life is a bad attitude," said Scott Hamilton. In India, prevalence of disability is higher in rural than in urban areas, gender-wise it is more among males than females. Overriding the 1995 Act, the amended Right of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 defines debility as "a person with

long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with barriers, hinders his full and effective participation in society equally with others." With very large populations having deficit of some kind, one with 40 per cent or above disability of a specified type came to be accepted as disabled. In the amended Act, the categories of disabilities have been increased from 7 to 21. A major issue that hampers mainstreaming of the disabled is tardy execution of programmes. For example, concerned that over 74.05 per cent schools don't have ramps for the disabled, just a month ago Madras High Court summoned the chief secretary, Tamil Nadu school education department to explain the steps taken to provide disabled-friendly toilets and other facilities. Globally, over a billion people (15 per cent of world population) are living with disability, according to WHO World Report on Disability. Unfortunately, two-thirds of these do not seek medical help due to ignorance or stigma or because they have no access to requisite help. In line with the universal buzzword, 'Leave No One Behind (LNOB)', the UN document 'Agenda

2030' exhorts member-nations to evolve appropriate mechanisms and strategies so that the interests of the disabled are not compromised. The UN-promoted International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD), an annual observance on 3 December, aims to promote an understanding of people with disability and encourage support for their dignity, rights and wellbeing. Noting that 'Not all Disabilities are Visible' this year's focus of IDPwD is on spreading awareness and understanding of disabilities that are not immediately apparent, such as mental illness, fatigue, chronic pain or sight, diabetes, brain injuries, neurological disorders, learning differences as well. The isolation, disconnectedness, disrupted routine and diminished therapeutic services due to ongoing Covid-19 pandemic have added to the woes of the disabled across the world. In the inclusiveness model that an egalitarian growth-oriented society seeks to follow, the disabled lot cannot be sidelined. They need to be assisted with proper rehabilitation, offered equal opportunities, and encouraged to act proactively to serve their role. It is possible only after empowerment that the

disabled can become vibrant members of society. Quite many labelled as 'disabled' have outperformed the able-bodied in several arenas attesting the belief that they are generally imbued with special guts or that Nature more than makes up for their deficiency in one organ with enhanced capability of other senses, one reason they are renamed, Divyangjan by the current governance. We have luminaries like Stephen Hawking who set benchmarks what disability means. In our own country we did it despite formidable odds: classical dancer Sudha Chandran; Dr Satendra Singh who helped develop disabled-friendly machines; sightless film musician Ravindra Jain, badminton player Girish Sharma; journalistic doyen H. Ramakrishnan, cancer expert Dr Suresh Adwani, and so on. It is said, difficult roads often lead to beautiful destinations. Let it not be overlooked, what Nido Qubein said, "Your present circumstances don't determine where you can go; they merely determine where you start." *The author, a Delhi-based senior journalist, writes on health, social and spiritual issues.*

WISDOM CORNER

- True life is lived when tiny changes occur. **LEO TOLSTOY**
- Vision is the art of seeing what is invisible to others. **JONATHAN SWIFT**
- Every blessing ignored becomes a curse. **PAULO COELHO**

WORDSWORTH

**Violent**  
In the Canterbury Tales, Geoffrey Chaucer wrote "In woman violent is no defence, This known lechours by experience," meaning that lechers succeed by getting women drunk, since violent means intemperate or addicted to wine. It has nothing to do with violence, but is from Latin violentus in the same sense, obviously enough a relative of vinum, wine. Chaucer's use is easily its most famous appearance in literature, because violent has never been common and indeed has almost completely vanished from the English language (though a web search did turn up a firm apparently willing to print the word on a T-shirt for you; if you wore one it might provoke spectators to ask whether you were boasting or complaining).

## Letters

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

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

### Compensate acid attack victims

Sir, The neglect on the part of the states to provide compensation to acid attack victims is glaring. Reports say that till October 2018, nearly 60 per cent of acid attack survivors had not received compensation that was rightfully due to them under Section 357 B of IPC. The systematic time frame fixed by the provisions of the criminal law amendment, for payment of compensation, has had no takers in the governments. Reimbursement of medical expenses is vital for the victims to withstand the trauma, and undergo quick surgeries that most of them require. Not all hospitals possess facilities and faculties to manage acid attack survivors. All hospitals should be directed to admit acid burn patients and provide priority treatment before shifting them to specialty hospitals. On an average, 300 to 500 cases of acid attacks on women are reported in a year in India. The actual number is much more. There is also a large gap between acid attack incidents and police chargesheets. Section 326(A) of IPC provides for a punishment of not less than 10 years that may extend to imprisonment for life with or without fine. Many women who have survived acid attacks have lived with grit, courage, dignity and determination sending a firm message that their willpower cannot be destroyed by meek sadists hoping to scar their bodies. Unfortunately, the efforts of governments have not matched with that of survivors. In 2013, the Supreme Court mandated videography of acid buyers, by sellers, for easy identification; but the rule has been, more often than not, flouted. States were directed to allow only select stores to sell acid, and ensure there was no over the counter business of acid. One cannot say states have not taken stock of the situation. But it is also true that the SC order has not been implemented with seriousness. **Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA**

### Stalemate continues

Sir, Talks between the Centre and the farmers who are demanding a rollback of the three recent farm sector legislations ran into rough weather, with the farmers' unions rejecting the government proposal to set up a small expert committee to examine the three controversial laws. Railway Minister Piyush Goyal and Minister of State for Industries Som Prakash represented the government. It will be interesting to see if the government adopts a new strategy to break the stalemate when the two sides meet again Thursday. **NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE**

# UP may scrap 44-yr-old incentive scheme for interfaith marriages



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lucknow, Dec 2:** After bringing in the anti-conversion law to check forced religious conversions, the Yogi Adityanath government is now planning to withdraw a scheme that has encouraged interfaith marriages for almost 44 years.

The Inter-caste and Interfaith Marriage Incentive Scheme has been in place since 1976 and was initiated by the national integration department in Uttar Pradesh.

Under the scheme, an interfaith couple can apply to the district magistrate within two years of marriage. After verification, the district magistrate forwards the application to the Uttar Pradesh national integration department.

"In U.P, 11 interfaith couples were beneficiaries of the scheme last year and got Rs 50,000 each," said a government spokesman.

This year, no amount has been released. The four applications that were filed remain pending.

"The scheme will be reconsidered after the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion ordinance. In any case both work at cross purposes," the spokesman added.

The ordinance, signed by Governor Anandiben Patel Saturday, makes way for punishment for the "forced" conversions, including those by marriage.

In 2017, the state government had added a caveat to the scheme - the interfaith couple could not convert after they got married, or they would lose the incentive.

Uttarakhand, which had adopted the scheme after it was carved out

## Two booked under anti-conversion law

**Muzaffarnagar:** Two more persons have been booked under the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance in Muzaffarnagar district. According to Station House Officer, KP Singh, a case has been registered against Nadeem and Salman, who work as labourers in a factory in Haridwar Tuesday. He said that the complainant in the case alleged that Nadeem would frequent his place in Haridwar in connection with the work and gradually got acquainted with his family, particularly his wife. The SHO said that the complainant alleged that Nadeem, with the help of his friend Salman, started pressurising his wife to marry him after conversion. When the complainant came to know about it, he shifted his family to Mansoorpur, but Nadeem and his friend continued mounting pressure on the woman through phone calls. The police official said that no arrests had been made and a team was being sent for an investigation. This is the third case to be filed under the ordinance since it came into force.

of Uttar Pradesh, is also planning to withdraw the same.

Uttar Pradesh Minister Shrikant Sharma said, "The scheme does exist for now. I cannot comment on its continuation. The ordinance means to stop forced conversion and punish those who hide their identity to cheat their partners."

# Not 'stealing' business from Maha: Yogi on Noida film city

*The UP CM's remark apparently came in response to Uddhav Thackeray's comment that he will not allow anyone to take business out of Maharashtra*

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lucknow/Mumbai, Dec 2:** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said Wednesday that the proposed film city in Noida would offer 'world class' facilities to the entertainment industry.

The Chief Minister also said that he is not 'stealing' any business from Maharashtra.

Adityanath, who was on a one-day visit to Mumbai to attract investors, said the setting up of a film city in the state is an "open competition."

His remark apparently came in response to his Maharashtra

counterpart Uddhav Thackeray's comment that he will not allow anyone to take business out of Maharashtra. Adityanath said that his government is building a 'world-class' film city in Noida, which will be well-connected by road and air with Delhi, Lucknow, Agra.

"The new film city will be built on a 1000-acre plot, 6 km from the proposed Noida international greenfield airport in Jewar. It will be connected to Delhi, Mathura-Vrindavan, Agra and state capital Lucknow. The interest shown by the people associated with the film industry is a good sign," he said.

He further said, "How can anybody take away anything from somebody. It is not a wallet to steal. This is an open competition for whoever can give secure atmosphere, better facilities and most importantly, social security in which all people can work. The film city in Mumbai will continue to work. A film city in UP will be built as per the requirement, in a new atmosphere."

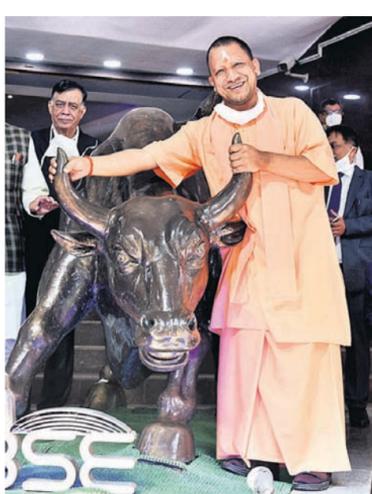
The Chief Minister in Mumbai held meetings with companies interested in investing in his state, including N. Chandrasekaran, Chairman, Tata Sons, Niranjan Hiranandani, CMD, Hiranandani Group, and Baba N. Kalyani of Kalyani Group.

"I also interacted with companies that are interested in investing or have invested in the defence manufacturing corridor, including Adani Defence, L&T Defence, Mahindra

Defence, Hinduja, Seimens etc. Their suggestions have been taken. For the film city, we spoke to personalities from the industry about their requirements," he said.

Earlier in the day, the Chief Minister listed a Rs 200-crore bond of Lucknow Municipal Corporation, the first civic body in north India, in the Bombay Stock Exchange.

"Uttar Pradesh has the highest municipal bodies in the country. Nearly 80 million population lives in urban areas. In a bid to provide better infrastructure and facilities, we have listed a bond for Lucknow Municipal Corporation, the first civic body in north India. After Lucknow, we will inspire Ghaziabad to do the same. This move will help bring in transparency and financial discipline in their workings, along with creating healthy competition," he said.



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during a visit to the Bombay Stock Exchange in Mumbai, Wednesday. PFI PHOTO

# 2 adults can live together without interference from families: HC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Allahabad, Dec 2:** Two adults in a live-in relationship have the right to cohabit peacefully, the Allahabad High Court has observed while directing the SSP Farrukhabad to provide security to a couple that lives together and has been facing harassment by family members.

"Hon'ble Apex Court in a long line of decisions has settled the law that where a boy and a girl are major and they are living with their free will, then nobody including their parents has authority to interfere with their living together," a bench comprising Justice Anjni Kumar Mishra and Justice Prakash Padia said in an order passed Monday.

The bench was hearing a writ petition filed by Kamini Devi and Ajay Kumar of Farrukhabad.

The petitioners contended before the court that both of them are adults and in love with each other. They have been living together as a couple for the last six months but Kamini's parents were harassing them as they want her to marry another man.



The petitioners contended before the court that both of them are adults and in love with each other. They have been living together as a couple for the last six months but Kamini's parents were harassing them as they want her to marry another man

The couple said they made a complaint to the SSP, Farrukhabad in this regard March 17 but their application was still pending.

The bench while allowing the petition observed, "We are of the view that the petitioners are at liberty to live together and no per-

son shall be permitted to interfere in their peaceful living, as Right to Life is a fundamental right insured under Article 21 of the Constitution of India in which it is provided that no person shall be deprived of his right to life and personal liberty."

# Min temperatures dip below zero in Valley

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Srinagar, Dec 2:** Night temperatures across Kashmir again dropped below the freezing point Wednesday as the weather office forecast dry and cold weather across Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh till Saturday.

Morning chill kept most Kashmiris indoors Wednesday till a feeble sun started struggling its way through thin layer of winter clouds.

The 40-day long period of harsh winter cold called the 'Chillai Kalan' in Kashmir starts December 21 and ends January 31.

Almost all major and minor water bodies of the Valley freeze and the perennial water reservoirs of Kashmir get replenished due to

heavy snowfall during this period.

An official of the MET department said minimum temperatures remained below the freezing point in both UTs. "Dry and cold weather conditions are likely to continue till December 5. From December 6 onwards another spell of rain and snow is likely in the two union territories of J&K and Ladakh," the official said.

Srinagar recorded minus 1.0, Pahalgam minus 2.3 and Gulmarg minus 1.4 degrees Celsius. In Ladakh, Leh town recorded minus 7 and Kargil minus 4.3 as the night's lowest temperatures.

Jammu city was at 9.7, Katra 10.7, Batote 7.1, Bannihal 3.6 and Bhaderwah 3.7 as the minimum temperatures.



# Roshni scam illuminated Gupkar bungalows: Singh



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jammu, Dec 2:** Firing a fresh salvo at rival parties in Jammu and Kashmir, BJP leader and Union Minister Jitendra Singh Wednesday said that the Roshni scam had illuminated the "Gupkar bungalows" but extinguished hope for the poor.

He said the Roshni scheme was launched in 2001 by the then government with an envisaged objective of raising an amount of Rs 25,000 crore for setting up power projects which were to provide electricity to every household, including those of economically weaker sections of society.

"However, in the final bargain, what was witnessed was that all the loot out of the scam went into the construction of lavish bungalows at Gupkar Road and other VIP locations, whereas the poor neither got the electricity nor the house," said Singh, the Minister of State for Personnel.

"Roshni scam had illuminated the Gupkar bungalows, but extinguished hope for the poor," he told PTI.

The BJP has been targeting leaders of the Congress, PDP and

NC including former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Farooq Abdullah, who lives in a bungalow on Gupkar Road in Srinagar, over alleged encroachment of government and forest land.

The NC leader has, however, denied the charge.

November 1, the Union Territory administration cancelled all land transfers that took place under the JK State Land (Vesting of Ownership to the Occupants) Act, 2001 - also known as the Roshni Act - under which 2.5 lakh acres of land was to be transferred to the existing occupants.

The Jammu and Kashmir High Court had declared the Roshni Act as "illegal, unconstitutional and unsustainable" and ordered a CBI probe into the allotment of the land under this law.

Singh said over the last decade, the BJP had been consistently demanding a thorough and impartial probe into the "embezzlement" that had taken place in the name of the Roshni scheme.

But, he alleged, successive governments run by the National Conference, Congress and the PDP did not agree to the probe and instead sought to "cover-up" the scam because the ministers and the chief ministers of the then governments were themselves beneficiaries.

It is only now under the Modi government, said Singh, when the investigative agencies were given a free hand to carry on their task that the entire scam has got unearthed and the skeletons are tumbling out.

While the "Gupkar governments robbed the land" that should have legitimately gone to the poor, he said, it is under Prime Minister Modi that targets have been set to construct a house for each family under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY).

# BJP-backed councillor becomes Srinagar mayor

*Election of a BJP-backed councillor as mayor in the UT's most important ULB-the stronghold of the NC and the PDP-is seen as a setback for the PAGD as well as the Congress*

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Dec 2:** BJP-supported independent councillor Junaid Azim Mattu has become the first mayor in the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) after Jammu and Kashmir was created as a Union Territory in August 2019.

After his education in Michigan, Mattu had a brief tryst with the secessionist ecosystem. His exit had come amid sharp protests from his friends about a decade back. Omar Abdullah picked him as the NC's spokesperson.

Mattu dissented NC's decision to boycott the Urban Local Body (ULB) elections after the downfall of Mehbooba Mufti's PDP-BJP gov-

ernment in 2018. He joined Sajad Lone's unrecognised Peoples Conference (PC) and was returned as that party's nominee from two wards in the summer capital traditionally monopolised by the NC and the PDP. With the support of the BJP and the PC, as also a number of independent councillors controlled by the two parties, Mattu was elected as mayor in the 74-ward SMC on November 6, 2018, when J&K existed as a State with special status.

The NC and the PDP had boycotted the much-delayed elections in the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and the ULBs in 2018 in protest of the Centre's perceived plan to withdraw J&K's Statehood and the special status which was ul-



Junaid Azim Mattu

timately executed in August 2019. Leaders of several political parties, including the NC, the PDP and

the PC-as also the former Ministers and legislators who subsequently joined Altaf Bukhari's Apni Party-were arrested in apprehension of a political turmoil and detained for six to fourteen months. Leaders of the BJP and the Congress, however, were not detained in this crackdown.

Mattu continued as the PC's spokesperson but he was not arrested. June 16, 2020, he was removed through a no-confidence motion which was supported not only by the BJP but also its rivals, the NC and the Congress. Affiliated to the NC, an independent councillor Parvaiz Qadri was elected as deputy mayor.

Weeks after the political detainees were released, Mattu regained prox-

imity to the BJP. In September, 2020, he announced his resignation from the PC as Sajad Lone's party had become a key constituent of the pro-370 Peoples Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD).

After deferring elections several times for one or the other reason and affecting changes to the law and its pertinent rules, the Department of Housing and Urban Development on November 19 notified the polling to fill up the post of the mayor in SMC. Three candidates filed the nomination papers. The Congress nominee, Aijaz Rasool, withdrew at the eleventh hour as the party issued a whip, binding its members to vote for Imran in his direct contest with the BJP-backed Mattu.

# Cong attacks BJP for dubbing Oppn leaders as 'anti-national'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jammu, Dec 2:** The Jammu and Kashmir Congress Wednesday hit back at BJP leaders for calling the Opposition "anti-national", alleging the saffron party was using every tool and instrument to "target political rivals" at the time of elections.

While campaigning for the District Development Council polls, J&K BJP president Ravinder Raina has been describing the opposition parties, including Congress, as "anti-national". He was recently joined by party general secretary Tarun Chugh who alleged that Peoples Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) was indulging in anti-social and anti-national rhetoric.

"The ruling party (at the centre) is vitiating the political atmosphere and even harming the broader national interest by dubbing the political rivals including Congress,



as anti-nationals for petty political gains, which is cheapest political tactics," J&K Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) chief spokesperson Ravinder Sharma said in a statement.

Reacting to statements of senior BJP leaders who are campaigning in Jammu and Kashmir for campaigning for the District Development Council polls, he said they are using "highly loaded language" against political rivals and even terming them anti-nationals.

"Congress has a history of struggle and sacrifices for the nation. The cheap political tactics of the ruling party for mere electoral gains is hurting the nationalist sentiments," the party said.

"The participation of all political forces despite reservations over the central government's arbitrary decisions goes against the designs of terrorists and Pakistan, which is the basic strength of our vibrant

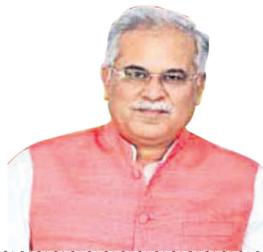
democracy and reflects the unflinching faith of the people in the power of the ballot," the Congress leader said.

He said this should have been encouraged and welcomed by all especially the party in government but "unfortunately the kind of vocabulary and political gimmickry used by the top leaders of the ruling party has shown the political bankruptcy of BJP".

"It always tries to polarise and communalise the atmosphere during elections and even targets its old allies with all sorts of loaded propaganda and questioning their patriotic credentials, forgetting that it had shared power with them at one or other point in near future," Sharma said.

He appealed people to see through the "political opportunism" of the BJP and its mastery to "hoodwink people during elections by deceit and then betray their faith".

# national



**Being a tribal-dominated state, Chhattisgarh should be given priority in the first phase of vaccination drive and the vaccine should be allocated for free**  
BHUPESH BAGHEL | CHHATTISGARH CHIEF MINISTER

## SUSHIL MODI FILES NOMINATION FOR RS BYPOLLS

Former Bihar Deputy Chief Minister and BJP leader Sushil Kumar Modi Wednesday filed his nomination for the upcoming Rajya Sabha bypolls in Bihar



### of the day quote

There is not even one year left of this BJP government's tenure now. As the elections are drawing closer, the Yogi Adityanath has started travelling to other places like Hyderabad, Mumbai, West Bengal and Bihar. His becoming active in other states, leaving his duties behind, only shows that he has sensed people's disenchantment with the BJP

AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY (SP) PRESIDENT

Chandrababu Naidu's frustration is understandable, he must be thinking if Jagan Mohan Reddy's regime continues the way it is going now with welfare then he and his party will fall into oblivion

V. VIJAYSAI REDDY | YSRCP LEADER

The crisis is a closed chapter now. Suwendu Adhikari will remain in the party. There were some misunderstandings, but it has been resolved through dialogue

SAUGATA ROY | SENIOR TMC LEADER

## CCTVs must in CBI, ED and NIA offices: Top court

### WELCOME MOVE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 2:** The Supreme Court directed the Centre Wednesday to install CCTV cameras and recording equipment at the offices of investigating agencies, including the CBI, ED and National Investigation Agency (NIA), which conduct interrogations and have the power of arrest.

A bench headed by Justice R F Nariman said that states and Union Territories (UTs) should ensure that CCTV cameras are installed at each and every police station. The apex court, which had earlier ordered installation of CCTV cameras in police stations to check human rights abuses, said that as most of the probe agencies including Narcotics Control Bureau, Department of Revenue Intelligence and Serious Fraud Investigation Office carry out interrogation in their offices, CCTVs be "compulsorily installed" in all offices where such questioning takes place and accused are kept.

It said the CCTV systems must be equipped with night vision and have audio as well as video footage and it shall be mandatory for the Centre, states and UTs to purchase such system which allows storage of data for maximum period possible, and in any case not below one year. "In addition, the Union

of India is also directed to install CCTV cameras and recording equipment in the offices of: Central Bureau of Investigation, National Investigation Agency, Enforcement Directorate, Narcotics Control Bureau, Department of Revenue Intelligence, Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO), any other agency which carries out interrogations and has the power of arrest," said the bench, also comprising Justices K M Joseph and Aniruddha Bose.

"As most of these agencies carry out interrogation in their office(s), CCTVs shall be compulsorily installed in all offices where such interrogation and holding of accused takes place in the same manner as it would in a police station," the bench said in its order.

The top court said that in September this year, it had implemented all the states and UTs in the matter to find out the exact position of CCTV cameras in each police station as well as constitution of Oversight Committees in accordance with the April 3, 2018 order.

The apex court, while dealing with a matter related to custodial torture, had in July this year taken note of a 2017 case in which it had ordered installation of CCTV cameras in all the police stations to check human rights abuses, videography of crime scene and setting up of a Central Oversight Committee and such a panel in every states and Union Territory.

## NGT imposes total ban on crackers in NCR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 2:** In a fresh directive, the National Green Tribunal has directed that there would be a total ban on the sale and use of all kinds of firecrackers during COVID-19 pandemic in the NCR and all cities/towns in the country where the ambient air quality falls under the 'poor' and above category.

The green panel, however, said during Christmas, and new year, green crackers can be used from 11:55 pm to 12:30 am only at places where air quality is 'moderate' or below.

A bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said its direction to restrict the use of firecrackers in cities/towns where air quality is 'moderate' or below to green crackers and for the duration of not more than two hours will continue.

Other than specified festivals,



Representative image

prior permission of the District Magistrate of the area will be required for use of crackers for limited period which will be given having regard to air quality, the tribunal said.

"There will be a total ban on the sale and use of all kinds of firecrackers during COVID-19 pandemic in the NCR and all

cities/towns in the country where the ambient air quality falls under the 'poor' and above category," the bench said.

"Since pandemic is still continuing and aggravated by the addition of pollution by fire crackers, having potential of damage to public health, invoking precautionary principle under section 15 and 20 of

the NGT Act, 2010, we are satisfied that there is need to continue directions for prohibition and regulation of use of fire crackers," the bench said.

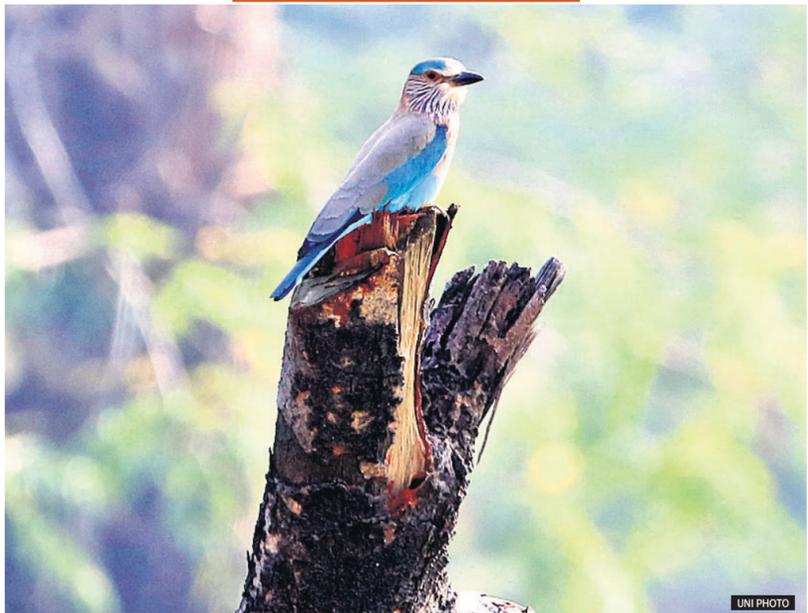
It directed all District Magistrates to ensure that banned firecrackers are not sold and asked them to recover compensation from violators.

Any victim of pollution, apart from other remedies, can approach District Magistrate for compensation, it added.

"Any victims of pollution, apart from other remedies can approach the District Magistrate for compensation, by showing evidence of individual damage and the person responsible for the damage. Such claim may be dealt with by a reasoned order," it said.

The NGT also directed that at least one air quality monitoring station must be set up at every district headquarter at the earliest.

## ENJOYING SUNBATH



A lovely bird takes Sun-rays on the branch of a tree during winter season in Daltonganj area under Palamu district, Jharkhand

## DGPs, IGP MEET BEGINS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 2:** Key role played by police during times of disaster and pandemic, new-age crimes like cyber terrorism and radicalisation of youth are some of the issues to be discussed at the annual DGPs and IGPs conference that began Wednesday, officials said.

About 250 officers in the rank of DGP and IGP from all states, union territories and central government are taking part in the four-day virtual meet, organised by the Intelligence Bureau and being attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and NSA Ajit Doval among others.

"Union Home Minister @AmitShah addressed the inaugural session of All India DGP/IGP Conference-2020 via video conferencing today in New Delhi. HM has also awarded Police Medals for meritorious service to the valiant officers virtually," Shah's office tweeted. This is for the first time ever, the annual conference of the country's top police brass is being held virtually amid the coronavirus pandemic.

## 'Make community service must for mask rule violation'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ahmedabad, Dec 2:** The Gujarat High Court Wednesday ordered the state government to come up with a notification, making it mandatory for those violating the face mask rule to do community service at COVID-19 centres as a punishment in addition to the fine imposed on them.

A division bench of Chief Justice Vikram Nath and Justice J B Pardiwala said the community service at COVID-19 centres shall be non-medical in nature and shall be for four-six hours for a period of 5 to 15 days, as authorities deem it fit and necessary. The HC also asked the government to widely publicise this in the media so it could have a "desirable deterrent effect", noting that a person not wearing a mask is not only putting himself at risk, but putting the community at risk.

"Hence, the said violator must extend services to the community which is put at risk," the court said.

## SHORT TAKES

### Amarinder to take first vaccine shot

**Chandigarh:** Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh will take the first shot of the anti-Covid vaccine in the state after it is cleared by the ICMR following which 1.25 lakh health workers would receive it. The state government has also prioritised nearly 23 per cent of its 73 crore population, totalling 70 lakh, comprising healthcare workers, frontline workers, the elderly population above the age of 50 years and people with comorbidities for the first phase of vaccination, an official statement said Wednesday. The CM made this announcement at a virtual Cabinet meeting here, convened to discuss the Covid situation in Punjab and the state's preparedness to roll out the vaccine, it said.

### 5 students killed in road accident

**Silchar (Assam):** In a tragic road accident, at least five college students were killed on the spot and one was critically injured at Cachar in southern Assam Wednesday, the police said. According to the police, the mishap occurred while an Alto vehicle and a truck collided head-on at Kalain in Cachar district. The critically injured student was taken to the Silchar Medical College and Hospital.

### Three drown

**Shahdol (MP):** Three minor girls drowned in a pond Wednesday in Madhya Pradesh's Shahdol district, police said. The deceased were in the age group of 5 to 9 years. The incident occurred this afternoon when four girls entered the pond while playing, Sohagpur police Station in-charge Sudeep Soni said, adding that parents of the girls were working in nearby agricultural fields at the time of the incident.

### Cop shoots man

**Azamgarh (Uttar Pradesh):** A police man in Uttar Pradesh has allegedly shot at a man who objected to his sexually harassing women. The injured man, Kishan Lal, has been admitted to a hospital in Varanasi for treatment. The accused policeman has been identified as Sarvesh, who is presently posted in Gonda district. The incident took place in Kamalpur village Tuesday.

## 59% Indians sceptical about vaccine

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Dec 2:** With chances of affordable Covid-19 vaccine likely to be available by February 2021, 59 per cent Indians divulged that they will not rush to take it, a survey revealed Wednesday.

The last few weeks have given hope to the world with three vaccine makers -- Pfizer, Moderna and Oxford-AstraZeneca releasing their efficacy data. Oxford-AstraZeneca has a partnership with Serum Institute of India for production and reports suggest that the vaccine could be available as early as February at Rs 500-600 per dose.

With the possibility of an affordable vaccine by February 2021, a survey was conducted by 'LocalCircles' to understand the hesitancy levels. The survey received more than 25,000 responses from citizens across 262 districts of India.

The first question in the survey asked, "The Covid-19 vaccine is likely to be available from February 2021 via private and Government channels. If that happens, what will be your ap-



proach to taking this vaccine?"

Responses from 8,936 citizens were received. Of which, 8 per cent said, "I am a health or frontline worker and will get it on priority through the government", 13 per cent said "will get it as quickly as it becomes available via any healthcare channel", 11 per cent said "will get it as quickly as it becomes available via private healthcare channel".

Another 59 per cent of re-

spondents said that they will not rush to take the vaccine even if it is available in the near future. The perception of the majority of citizens sceptical on taking vaccine has not changed much as compared to the result of the survey conducted in mid-October by LocalCircles.

Sixty-one per cent of 8,312 voters at the time had said they are sceptical about COVID-19 vaccine and will not rush to take it in 2021 even if it is available.

Closer home in India, where Serum Institute of India is conducting trials for the vaccine under name Covishield, a participant who undertook the trial has alleged the vaccine of causing him serious side-effects, both neurological and psychological filing for damages against Serum.

Serum has dismissed the claims as "oblique pecuniary motive" maintaining that the participant's suffering was independent of the vaccine trial he underwent and has sought damages for malicious allegations in excess of Rs 100 crores.

## '2nd wave of nCoV in K'taka likely in Jan-Feb'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, Dec 2:** The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for COVID-19 in Karnataka has said the second wave of the pandemic is expected in early 2021 and has made a slew of recommendations including banning public celebrations ahead of the new year in a bid to avert a crisis.

It has also recommended clamping night curfew during that period, but the government said it was yet to take a call on the matter.

The TAC has said the second wave of the pandemic was expected in January-February next year.

It has asked to keep ready by first week of January, clinical facilities at October level (when daily cases were about 10,000 per day) in terms of beds, ICUs, ventilators, and so on, both in government and private hospitals or this could be ramped up at a short notice of 2-3

days maximum. It has also recommended a ban on new year public celebrations from December 26 to January 1 and impose night curfew (8 pm to 5 am) during this period. The TAC, based on the deliberations at its 53rd meeting held November 24, has given advisory on recognition and containment measures for the second wave of COVID-19 in Karnataka.

According to TAC, early recognition of the second wave of COVID-19 in the state can be done by closely monitoring the 7-day average growth rate and reproduction number (R0) at district and state levels.

It said an epidemic intelligence team shall be supporting the state war room for early recognition of the second wave and alert the Additional Chief Secretary and Commissioner of the Health and Family Welfare department.



## India's readiness prompts China to scramble for high-altitude gear

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Dec 2:** China is making last minute efforts to make emergency procurements of high-altitude gear and clothing for its troops as they were caught unaware with India's readiness for the harsh winter atop the Eastern Ladakh heights -- that has been the bone of contention between the two Asian majors.

India has occupied critical mountain heights on the southern bank of the Pangong Lake including Rechin La, Rezang La, Mukpari that were unmanned till now.

This along with some other peaks allows India to dominate Spangur Gap under Chinese control and also the Moldo garrison on the

Chinese side. This has irked the PLA which has made multiple attempts to dislodge Indian troops leading to instances of warning gunshots being fired.

Now, witnessing that India continues to occupy heights even as dark winter months approach just as temperatures have started to dip beyond minus 20 degrees Celsius, China is making emergency procurements to keep their troops also deployed at more than 16,000 feet.

Intelligence sources said that Chinese had procured bulk winter clothing meant for 9,000-10,000 feet but with no disengagement taking place and the standoff continuing, China started bulk procurements to winter gear. Both the Asian majors have refused to blink despite a long



and harsh winter ahead, deployment is being enhanced on either sides. Sources said that PLA Joint Logistics Support Force (JLSF) has constituted a Quality Supervision Team for emergency procurement of Extreme Cold Climate clothing.

This team has now been tasked to ensure good quality clothing and fast delivery to forward area troops.

Whereas Indian Army -- having an edge of experience of troop deployment at Siachen heights -- in October made procurement of ad-

ditional high altitude winter clothing from US keeping in mind the needs of the enhanced troop deployment in Ladakh in peak winter amid the military tussle with China.

It was purchased under the Logistics Exchange Memorandum Agreement (LEMOA) between India and US that facilitates logistical support, supplies and services between the armed forces of the two countries.

These include clothing, food, lubricants, spare parts, medical services among other essentials. Apart from that the Indian Army has also completed establishment of habitat facilities for all troops deployed in the sector, sources said. The living accommodation that will protect the troops from the severe cold and

wind chill factor includes fast erectable modular shelters. The force has also made state of the art habitat with integrated arrangements for electricity, water, heating facilities, health and hygiene have been recently created to accommodate the troops. These shelters can withstand temperatures dipping to minus 50 degrees Celsius.

India and China are engaged in an eight-month-long standoff at the Line of Actual Control in Eastern Ladakh. Despite several levels of dialogue, there has not been any breakthrough and the deadlock continues. On June 15, at least 20 Indian soldiers and an unknown number of Chinese troops were killed in a violent clash in the Galwan Valley.

## of the day quote

Since the pre-independence era, people who had come from other states played a crucial role in Bengal's development. Most of those who worked at mills and factories here were from other states. So those from outside played a bigger role than the Bengalis in developing the state

DILIP GHOSH | WEST BENGAL, BJP CHIEF

The Indian Navy did play a crucial role in preventing any misadventure by the Chinese Navy in the Indian Ocean Region during the peak of the border standoff between the two countries

VICE ADMIRAL AK CHAWLA | INDIAN COMMANDING OFFICER

Because of Ayushman Bharat all over the country, we could have witnessed growth in the medical world unfortunately some could not (take) part in this great venture, our state of West Bengal could not, our health infrastructure was stressed on that count

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR | WB GOVERNOR

## SHORT TAKES

### Modi invites Boris as R-Day chief guest

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has formally invited UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson to be the chief guest for the Republic Day celebrations January 26, 2021. The invitation was extended by Modi to Johnson during their phone conversation November 27, sources said. It is after a gap of 27 years that a UK Prime Minister will be the chief guest at India's 70th Republic Day next month. John Major was the last British Prime Minister to attend the Republic Day parade in New Delhi in 1993. The government is yet to confirm Johnson's visit. However, Prime Minister Modi hinted in a tweet on November 27 that India-UK are embarking on an ambitious partnership.

### Man stripped over dispute

**Khambhalia (Guj):** Five persons have been arrested for allegedly stripping a man and parading him naked in a busy market here in Gujarat after he accused them of indulging in cricket-betting, police said Wednesday. The incident took place on Tuesday following which the accused uploaded a video of the incident on social media. They were angry with the man as he had posted a video on Facebook, accusing them of indulging in cricket-betting, a police official said.

### Pakistan Rangers violate ceasefire

**Jammu:** Pakistani Rangers opened fire at border outposts along the International Border (IB) in Hiranagar sector of Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district, drawing retaliation from the Border Security Force, officials said Wednesday. There was no report of any damage on the Indian side.

### 4 of family killed in road mishap

**Kondagaon:** Four members of a family were killed and a relative was seriously injured when their car rammied into a stationary truck on a highway in Chhattisgarh's Kondagaon district, a police official said Wednesday. The accident took place Tuesday night on the National Highway No. 30 near Joba village when the victims, all natives of Bijapur district, were returning from a wedding.



There won't be any reshuffle in the cabinet. The minister (Lobo) never discussed the issue with me. It is not for the minister, but for the party to decide about the reshuffle

PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CHIEF MINISTER

## RHEA'S BROTHER SHOWIK GETS BAIL

A Mumbai court Wednesday granted bail to actress Rhea Chakraborty's brother Showik Chakraborty, who was arrested in a drugs case linked to actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death case



# Farmers seek spl session to repeal new laws

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Dec 2:** The agitating farmers Wednesday urged the Union government to convene a special session of Parliament to repeal the three farm laws, besides threatening to hold a nationwide protest December 5.

Addressing a press conference at the Delhi-Haryana border in Singhu, Darshan Pal, President of the Krantikari Kisan Union, said, "We will celebrate December 3, when the Bhopal gas tragedy took place several decades ago, as anti-corporate day. On December 5, we will protest against the Modi government and the corporate houses and burn their effigies."

It will be a nationwide protest where the farmers will burn the effigies. He said that artists and sports persons have given a call to return the awards they have received from the government.

"We thank the people who have announced to return their awards to the government and we are hopeful that those who have got national awards will also return them as a mark of solidarity with the farmers' movement," Pal said.

He added that the farmer leaders



Members of Bharatiya Kisan Union during their Delhi Chalo protest march against the Centre's new farm laws, in Noida, Wednesday

will give a written 7-10 page recommendation on why they want the farm laws to be repealed.

"We demand the government to call a special session of the Parliament to repeal the three farm laws," Pal said. He informed that during the meeting with the government Tuesday, it seemed to them that the government tried to divide them and tried to mislead them on the three farm laws.

The press conference was held after the farmers' groups held talks earlier in the day. Pratibha Shinde of Lok Sangharsh Morcha while addressing the media said that they

shall burn effigies in every district of Maharashtra December 3.

"We shall burn the effigies of government and corporates in Maharashtra December 3 and in Gujarat December 5," she said, adding that Thursday is the last chance for the government to take a decision to repeal the laws otherwise this movement will become huge and the government will fall.

Even as the farmers threatened the government, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar told the media that they will hold discussions with the farmers' leaders Thursday.

## India, Russia hold talks on UNSC issues

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 2:** India and Russia Wednesday held consultations on UN Security Council related issues and agreed to deepen cooperation on counter-terrorism at multilateral platforms.

The consultations come ahead of India taking up the non-permanent seat at the UNSC for the period 2021-22. The Indian delegation for the consultations was led by Vikas Swarup, Secretary (West), Ministry of External Affairs, while the Russian delegation was led by Sergey Vasilyevich Vershinin, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and included other Russian Foreign Ministry officials. The Russian side welcomed India taking up the non permanent seat at the UNSC for the period 2021-22, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement.

Both sides held wide ranging discussions on issues on the UN Security Council agenda and recent developments, the MEA said.

## Sasikala applies for remission

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, Dec 2:** Late Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalithaa's close aide V K Sasikala, serving a four-year jail term on graft charges, has sought remission and early release from prison, official sources said Wednesday.

Sasikala, lodged at the Parappana Agrahara prison here, is expected to come out on January 27, 2021 after she deposited ₹10 crore fine at a special court.

The prison authorities have forwarded her application to higher officials. "She has applied for remission of her jail term and it has been forwarded to the head of the department for their consideration," a source said. Authorities are yet to take a call on it. After the

Supreme Court restored the trial court judgment in toto against Sasikala and two of her close relatives in the disproportionate assets case, she surrendered before the court in Karnataka on February 15, 2017 and has been lodged in Parappana Agrahara Central Jail since then.

Her two relatives are also undergoing four years simple imprisonment and all three of them were slapped with a fine of ₹10 crore each. With the death of Jayalithaa in 2016, who was the first accused in the case, the appeal by Karnataka against her stood abated. As per the norms, three days of remission for good conduct is available for every month in jail and so far, she has completed 43 months, making her eligible for a reduction of 135 days in prison.

## ON A MISSION



Youngsters participate in a run as part of preparations for recruitments in security forces, in Ranbir Singh Pura Sector, near Jammu

PTI PHOTO

## CHINA TURNS TO INDIA FOR RICE

REUTERS

**Mumbai, Dec 2:** China has begun importing Indian rice for the first time in at least three decades due to tightening supplies from Thailand, Myanmar and Vietnam and an offer of sharply discounted prices, Indian industry officials said.

India is the world's biggest rice exporter and China the biggest importer. Beijing buys in around 4 million tonnes a year but has avoided purchases from India, citing quality issues.

India has tightened rules for investments from China and banned dozens of Chinese mobile apps, including from tech giants Tencent, Alibaba and ByteDance.

Although the public mood in India has been anti-China, the country has remained engaged with Indian businesses.

"For the first time China has made rice purchases. They may increase buying next year after seeing the quality of Indian crop," B.V. Krishna Rao, president of the Rice Exporters Association, said Wednesday.

Indian traders have contracted to export 100,000 tonnes of broken rice for Dec-February shipments at around \$300 per tonne on a free-on-board (FOB) basis, industry officials said. China's traditional suppliers, such as Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar and Pakistan, have limited surplus supplies. Thailand, the world's

second-largest rice exporter and key supplier to China, suffered a drought this year that has affected the rice crop. Its shipments in 2020 could fall to 6.5 million tonnes, the lowest in 20 years. "Thailand, Myanmar and Vietnam are struggling due to limited supplies. China eventually was left with no option but to buy from India," said Himanshu Agarwal, executive director at Satyam Balajee, India's biggest rice exporter.

"China buying rice from India, or US or any country, is just adding some flavor to the domestic market," said Yin Xiuying, analyst with trade website www.ChinaGrain.CN, based in Harbin, capital of China's northeastern province of Heilongjiang.

# India records largest reductions in malaria cases: Govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 2:** The WHO's World Malaria Report (WMR) 2020, which provides estimated cases for malaria across the world based on mathematical projections, indicates that India has made considerable progress in reducing its malaria burden, the Union health ministry said Wednesday.

India is the only high endemic country which has reported a decline of 17.6 per cent in 2019 as compared to 2018 as far as malaria cases are concerned, it said.

"The Annual Parasitic Incidence (API) reduced by 27.6 per cent in 2018 as compared to 2017, and by 18.4 per cent in 2019 as compared to 2018. India has sustained API less



Representative image

than one since year 2012," the ministry said. India has also contributed to the largest drop in such cases region-wide, from approximately 20 million to about 6 million.

The percentage drop in the malaria cases was 71.8 per cent and deaths was 73.9 per cent between 2000 to 2019, the ministry said.

India achieved a reduction of 83.34 per cent in malaria morbidity and 92 per cent in malaria mortality between the year 2000 (20,31,790 cases, 932 deaths) and 2019 (3,38,494 cases, 77 deaths), thereby achieving Goal 6 of the Millennium Development Goals (50-75 per cent decrease in case incidence between 2000 and 2019).

"Decrease in incidence of malaria cases is also exhibited in the year-

on-year tally. The cases and fatalities have declined significantly by 21.27 per cent and 20 per cent, respectively in the year 2019 (3,38,494 cases, 77 deaths) as compared to 2018 (4,29,928 cases, 96 deaths).

"The total number of malaria cases reported in 2020 till October (1,57,284) has further decreased by 45.02 per cent as compared to the corresponding period of 2019 (2,86,091)," the ministry said.

Malaria elimination efforts were initiated in the country in 2015 and intensified after the launch of the National Framework for Malaria Elimination (NFME) in 2016 by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

The National Strategic Plan for Malaria Elimination (2017-22) was

launched by the health ministry in July, 2017 which laid down strategies for the next five years.

The first two years saw a 27.7 per cent decline in cases and 49.5 per cent reduction in fatalities; 11,69,261 cases and 385 deaths in 2015, and 8,44,558 cases and 194 deaths in 2017.

The states of Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Meghalaya and Madhya Pradesh disproportionately accounted for nearly 45.47 per cent (1,53,909 cases out of India's 3,38,494 cases) of malaria cases and 70.54 per cent (1,10,708 cases out of India's 1,56,940 cases) of falciparum malaria cases in 2019.

The health ministry said 63.64 per cent (49 out of 77) of malaria deaths was also reported from these states

Eighteen killed in separate accidents in UP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow, Dec 2:** At least 18 people were killed in separate accidents in Uttar Pradesh, police said Wednesday.

While eight people were killed in Kaushambi, three were killed in Shravasti, two each in Unnao and Jalaun and three in Chitrakoot, they said. In Kaushambi, eight people were killed when a sand-laden truck overturned on a stationary SUV in Kada Dham area of the district Wednesday, police said.

The victims were returning to Shahjadpur after attending a wedding ceremony in Deviganj in the district when the accident took place.

Superintendent of Police, Abhinandan, said the bodies were taken out of the vehicle with the help of gas cutters and sent for postmortem.

Two girls travelling in the SUV managed to come out of the window, police said, adding that they sustained minor injuries. The truck driver is absconding and police is trying to trace him.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has condoled the loss of lives and directed the local administration to provide all possible help to family members of the victims.

In Shravasti, three people, including two women, were killed in a collision between two vehicles.

In Unnao, two people were Wednesday killed and as many injured when a car collided with an unidentified vehicle on the Lucknow-Agra expressway near Guluapur village here, police said. In the accident, two people were killed on the spot, police said.

All of them were going to Gorakhpur from Gurugram, they said adding bodies have been sent for postmortem. In Jalaun, a woman and her son died when two bikes collided in Kuthaunth area Tuesday.

# international



**The government will work on a priority basis to grant the provisional provincial status to Gilgit Baltistan**  
IMRAN KHAN | PAKISTAN PM

## NEW REVELATION

Using computer simulations, scientists have shown that the relatively safer far-ultraviolet C (UVC) light can be used to disinfect in-room air, an advance that may pave the way for a new solution to kill aerosolised novel coronavirus in enclosed environments such as hospitals



## of the day quote

**China stands ready to work with India and other members to coordinate and communicate and work together to elevate the SCO and open up another decade of development and cooperation of SCO**  
HUA CHUNYING | CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON



**President-elect Biden and I, with this economic team, will be ready to hit the ground running on day one. Because that's what this crisis demands. And that's what the American people deserve**  
KAMALA HARRIS | US VICE PRESIDENT-ELECT



**I want maritime border talks with Israel to succeed and disagreements during the last round of negotiations can be resolved based on international law**  
MICHEL AOUN | LEBANON'S PRESIDENT



# Court strikes down Trump admin's H-1B rules

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Washington, Dec 2:** In a huge relief to tens of thousands of Indian professionals and top American IT firms, a US court has blocked two H-1B regulations proposed by the Trump administration to restrict the ability of American companies to hire foreign employees.

H-1B visas is a non-immigrant visa that allows American companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. The US issues up to 85,000 H-1B visas each year. Usually, they're issued for three years and renewable. Most of the nearly 600,000 H-1B visa holders are from India and China.

In his 23-page order on Tuesday, US District Judge Jeffrey White of Northern District of California blocked the Trump administration's recent policy that required employers to pay foreign workers on H-1B visas significantly higher wages. He also set aside another policy that narrowed the eligibility of H-1B valued by US tech firms and



H-1B visas is a non-immigrant visa that allows American companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise

The US issues up to 85,000 H-1B visas each year. Usually, they're issued for three years and renewable. Most of the nearly 600,000 H-1B visa holders are from India and China

other employers. As a result of the ruling, the Department of Homeland Security rule on occupations and other issues that was to come into effect from December 7, stands invalid. The Department of Labour rule on wages, which took effect on October 8, is also now no longer valid.

The COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc on the nation's health, and millions of Americans have been impacted financially by restrictions imposed on businesses, large and small, during the pan-

dem; the consequences of those restrictions has been a fiscal calamity for many individuals, the judge wrote.

"However, the history of the US is in part made of the stories, talents, and lasting contributions of those who crossed oceans and deserts to come here. The national government has significant power to regulate immigration. With power comes responsibility, and the sound exercise of national power over immigration depends on the nation's meeting its responsibility to

# PoK govt signs deal with Chinese firm

*China Gezhouba Group and its local partner Laraib Group Pakistan are the shareholders of the 'Azad Pattan Hydropower Project', which is located on Jhelum river in Sadhanoti district of PoK*



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Islamabad, Dec 2:** The government in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir has signed agreements with a Chinese company and a local renewable energy firm for the construction of 700MW hydropower project at an estimated cost of USD 1.35 billion in the region as part of the ambitious China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a media report said on Wednesday.

China Gezhouba Group and its local partner Laraib Group Pakistan are the shareholders of the 'Azad Pattan Hydropower Project', which is located on Jhelum river in Sadhanoti district of PoK, Dawn newspaper reported.

The consortium of lenders consists of China Development Bank, China Construction Bank, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China and Bank of China, the paper said. The implementation agreement and water use charges agreement for construction of the project were signed by PoK Electricity Secretary Zafar Mahmood Khan and Azad Pattan Power Private Limited CEO Li Xiaota on Tuesday, the paper said.

The CPEC, which connects Gwadar Port in Balochistan with China's Xinjiang province, is the

flagship project of Chinese President Xi Jinping's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Originally valued at USD 46 billion, the CPEC projects were worth USD 62 billion as of 2017.

India has protested to China over the CPEC as it is being laid through PoK. The Ministry of External Affairs early this year said that Pakistan was told that the entire Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, including areas of Gilgit and Baltistan, are an integral part of India and that Islamabad should immediately vacate the areas under its illegal occupation.

The government of Pakistan implementation agreement, Punjab water use agreement and tripartite power purchase agreements of the project had already been signed in the presence of Prime Minister Imran Khan in July. Tuesday's agreement signing will enable the achievement of financial close of the project.

The project involves no fuel import and will enable the country to move towards cheaper and greener power generation, according to government officials. The project is expected to create 3,000 jobs. It is expected to provide about 3,266 GWh electricity per year to the national grid by 2027.

# Russia to begin mass COVID-19 vaccinations

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**Moscow, Dec 2:** Russian President Vladimir Putin told health officials Wednesday to start widespread vaccinations next week, adding that the country had produced close to 2 million doses of its Sputnik V vaccine.

The announcement came the same day Britain approved the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for a roll-out starting next week. Last week Russia announced that interim test results showed the Sputnik V vaccine was 95 per cent effective, a higher efficacy than its international competitors. Sputnik V -- named after the Soviet-era satellite -- is in its third and final stage of clinical trials involving some 40,000 volunteers. "I would ask you to organise the work so that by the end of next week we will have started this vaccination," Putin said, speaking in a video conference call with Deputy Prime Minister Tatiana Golikova.

# CYCLONE READINESS



Sri Lankan fishermen arrange their accessories on the beach as they prepare for cyclonic storm 'Burevi' on the Bay of Bengal coast in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Wednesday

PTI PHOTO

## SHORT TAKES

### 5 militants killed

**Baghdad:** Iraqi security forces carried out an operation against militants of the extremist Islamic State (IS) group in the northern part of Salahudin province, killing five militants, said a provincial police source Wednesday. The troops, backed by the army's artillery and US-led international coalition aircraft, attacked IS hideouts in Makhmour mountain range which extend in the provinces of Salahudin and Nineveh, Mohammed al-Bazi told Xinhua. The operation resulted in the killing of five IS militants and the capture of two others including a local IS leader, al-Bazi said, adding weapons and ammunition were seized during the operation.

### 4 mowed down

**Berlin:** At least four people, including a baby, were killed and at least 15 others injured in Germany's Trier town on Tuesday afternoon as a speeding car, driven by a drunk man, ploughed through people in a pedestrian zone, reports said. The driver, a local resident identified as 51-year-old Bernd W., has been arrested, police said. According to police, Bernd was drunk and there were no indications that the incident was politically motivated, the BBC reported.

### Migrants rescued

**Athens:** A search and rescue operation has been launched in the eastern Aegean Sea after a dinghy carrying migrants either sank or overturned off the Greek island of Lesbos, the Greek coast guard said Wednesday. It said 32 people -- 15 men, 14 women and three children -- had been rescued from the sea, while two women were missing. The migrants were located during a routine patrol in early Wednesday. Two Greek patrol boats, one vessel from the European border agency Frontex and two helicopters were participating in the search and rescue operation.

### Two injured

**The Hague:** Two people were injured in a stabbing Wednesday in a shop in the center of The Hague and a suspect has fled the scene, police said. The city's police force tweeted that there also was a fire at the store that was quickly extinguished. The two injured people were being taken to a hospital by ambulance. Police launched an investigation and appealed for witnesses.

# China's Chang'e-5 probe collects moon samples

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Beijing, Dec 2:** On the most complex mission to the moon, China's Chang'e-5 probe drilled the lunar surface, collected samples Wednesday in the first such effort in over 40 years and began preparations to bring the precious soil to earth, the country's space authority said.

The Chang'e-5 probe has collected moon samples after landing on Tuesday, the China National Space Administration (CNSA) announced on Wednesday. The unmanned probe landed in the area called Oceanus Procellarum, also known as the Ocean of Storms, on the near side of the moon and started rolling out its solar panel wings and unlocking some of the payloads on-board to prepare for sample collection.

The lander first drilled a 2-meter-deep hole, digging out soil, and sealed it up at 4:53 a.m. on Wednesday. Next, it will use its robotic arms to scoop up more samples from the lunar surface for backup, state-run media reported. About two kgs of samples are expected to be collected and sealed in a container, CNSA officials said.



State-run media has shown photos of the lander on the lunar surface after it landed successfully. "We designed two methods for the spacecraft to collect samples. One is to sample the lunar surface, and the other is to drill underground. The two methods could increase the chance of getting more diverse samples," Peng Jing, deputy chief designer of the Chang'e-5 probe said.

It is China's maiden attempt to retrieve materials from an extra-terrestrial body. The United States sent astronauts to the moon to collect samples. In the Soviet Union's unmanned lunar sampling missions, the spacecraft took off from the moon and returned to Earth directly.

# China planned Galwan Valley incident: US report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Washington, Dec 2:** The Chinese government had planned the Galwan Valley incident in June, potentially including the possibility for fatalities, a US Congressional Commission has said, asserting that Beijing "provoked" the first deadly clash on the Sino-India border in nearly half a century.

The ruling Chinese Communist Party employs its armed forces as a coercive tool during peacetime, carrying out large-scale intimidation exercises around Taiwan and in the South China Sea, the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission said in its latest annual report to Congress. "This year, it provoked the first deadly clash on the China-India border in nearly half a century. China's rising aggression has not gone unnoticed," the report said. In June, China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) and Indian troops engaged in a massive physical brawl in the Galwan Valley, located in the far-western Ladakh region along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) separating the two countries, said the report dated December 1.

The clash, which followed a se-



ries of standoffs beginning in early May along multiple sectors of the LAC, led to at least 20 Indian deaths and an unconfirmed number of Chinese casualties, the first time since 1975 that lives were lost in fighting between the two sides.

"Some evidence suggested the Chinese government had planned the incident, potentially including the possibility for fatalities," the report said. For instance, several weeks prior to the clash Chinese Defence Minister Gen. Wei Fenghe made a statement encouraging Beijing to "use fighting to promote stability."

Just over two weeks before the incident, in another potential indication of Chinese leaders signalling their intent to escalate tensions, an editorial in China's state-owned tabloid Global Times warned that India would suffer a "devastating

blow" to its trade and economic ties with China if it got "involved in the US-China rivalry."

Further satellite images depicted a large Chinese buildup in the Galwan Valley, including potentially 1,000 PLA soldiers, the week before the deadly skirmish, said the Congressional Commission created in 2000 for monitoring and investigating national security and trade issues between the US and China.

China and India have engaged in multiple physical clashes along their border for decades, but since General Secretary Xi Jinping assumed power in 2012 the two countries have seen five major altercations along their border. The exact motivations behind the Chinese government's provocative behaviour on the LAC this year remain unclear, it noted.

# More midwives could save millions of lives per year by 2035: Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, Dec 2:** Increasing the number of midwives and their level of care could save up to 4.3 million lives per year over the next 15 years, particularly in low and middle income countries, according to a study published in The Lancet Global Health journal.

This modelling study estimates that scaling up the provision of midwife-led care across the world could potentially reduce maternal deaths by 67 per cent, newborn deaths by 64 per cent and stillbirths by 65 per cent if midwives were enabled to provide a range of interventions from family planning to

post-natal care. This could equate to saving 4.3 million lives per year by 2035, the researchers noted.

"Supported by appropriate professional education, regulation and improved working environments, it is possible to achieve a substantial increase in the level of provision of essential interventions delivered by midwives. This could save millions of lives," said study lead author Andrea Nove from Novametrics Ltd, UK.

"However, there are numerous barriers to fulfilling this level of scale-up, particularly in low to middle income countries," Nove said. These limitations, he explained, include inequitable dis-

tribution of qualified midwives, poor transport links, lack of supplies and equipment and, in some countries, a lack of trust from the public, adding there is need for greater recognition of the importance of supporting and enabling this service to reach its potential.

The new study follows a past report on midwifery in The Lancet journal and uses the Lives Saved Tool (LiST) which models the deaths that could be avoided, assuming a specific uptake, effectiveness and impact of a range of interventions.

Using an updated version of LiST, the current study aimed to provide a more accurate estimate of the impact of increasing the provision of



midwife healthcare around the world. The study used the LiST to model effects on mortality at a country level of about 30 essential interventions which can be delivered in their entirety by competent and enabled midwives, the researchers said. These were treatments, responses

and procedures that can be provided before conception, in antenatal care, during labour and birth and after birth, such as family planning, hypertension screening, induction of labour and the use of antibiotics for newborn sepsis, they said. The study modelled the effect of changes in the level of provision of healthcare interventions delivered by midwives for 88 countries and amalgamated the results.

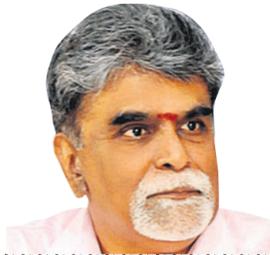
This was also done for three groups of countries that were categorised according to their level of development. If current mortality rates persist, in these 88 countries there will be over three million stillbirths per year by 2035, three mil-

lion newborn deaths per year by 2035 and over 400,000 maternal deaths per year by 2035, according to the researchers.

They estimated that relative to the current provision of healthcare by midwives, a 25 per cent increase every five years in the 88 countries would result in 41 per cent fewer deaths of mothers, 26 per cent fewer stillbirths and 39 per cent fewer deaths of newborn babies.

The researchers noted that this would mean averting 170,000 maternal deaths, 852,000 stillbirths and 1.2 million newborn deaths per year by 2035, adding the reduction in deaths was estimated to be greater in the least developed countries.

# business



**The formation of a dedicated export promotion council for technical textiles will help boost shipments from the sector and promote domestic manufacturing**  
A SAKTHIVEL | CHAIRMAN, AEPIC

## VIVO MANUFACTURES SLIMMEST 5G PHONE

Smartphone maker Vivo has said the slimmest 5G phone from its stable, V20 Pro, is being manufactured at the company's factory in Greater Noida. The company has started the sale of Vivo V20 Pro across retail stores and e-commerce portals priced at ₹29,990 per unit



## of the day quote

India's exports declined by 17.84% during April-November this fiscal while imports contracted by 33.56% in the same period whereas the trade deficit has come down



The all-new Nissan Magnite marks the beginning of a new chapter in the Nissan NEXTstrategy for both the Indian and global market. Built on the philosophy of 'Make in India, Make for the World', it comes with more than 20 first-in-class and best-in-segment features



SINAN OZKOK | PRESIDENT, NISSAN MOTOR INDIA

Since the lockdown began, we have worked relentlessly to ensure the transport of vital goods and medical supplies to all corners of India and the world. We have been preparing for the humongous task of transporting medicines, vaccines, and temperature-sensitive cargo by developing end-to-end cold chain logistics solutions



AJAY SINGH | CHAIRMAN AND MD, SPICEJET

## SHORT TAKES

### Razorpay, PayPal join hands

**New Delhi:** Financial solutions provider Razorpay has said it has partnered with global digital payments platform PayPal to facilitate international payments for small businesses and freelancers. The company's partner businesses can now integrate with PayPal and accept payments from international customers from across 200 markets in a convenient, fast and secure manner, Razorpay said in a release. Razorpay said that having faced stiff challenges due to the pandemic, the domestic SMEs are hoping to bounce back soon.

### Porsche gets new India head

**New Delhi:** Luxury sports car maker Porsche Wednesday said it has appointed Manolito Vujicic (48) as the new head of India operations. Porsche Middle East and Africa FZE announces the appointment of Vujicic as the new Head of its Division in India, the company said in a statement. Vujicic would start his tenure from February 2021, following his departure from the position of Porsche Brand President at PAIG (China) Automobile Investment Co in Hangzhou, China, it added.

### Rhizen Pharma gets USFDA nod

**New Delhi:** Rhizen Pharmaceuticals, an associate company of Alembic Pharmaceuticals, said it has received approval from the US health regulator to commence phase one clinical trials on retroviral oral drug for the treatment of COVID-19. The Switzerland-based firm, has received approval for its investigational new drug application from the USFDA to study its oral DHOHD inhibitor for SARS-CoV-2 infection.

### Extended contract for Wipro

**Bangalore:** Wipro Limited Wednesday announced that it has won a multi-year contract from Verifone, a global leader in payments and commerce solutions, to drive agility across its cloud services offerings. Bangalore-headquartered Wipro said it would develop new features, capabilities and interfaces for Verifone's Cloud Services offerings, enabling seamless and flexible transaction processing for the company.

## GDP to see positive growth in Q4: NITI

**The second quarter GDP figure reflects that the economy is coming out of this pandemic-induced degrowth phase and my expectation is that in the third quarter, we will achieve the same level of economic activity as the year-ago period**

RAJIV KUMAR | VICE CHAIRMAN, NITI AAYOG

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 2:** The Indian economy is coming out of the pandemic-induced degrowth and GDP growth will enter the positive territory in the fourth quarter of this fiscal, Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar said Wednesday.

Kumar, also said the Centre's new agriculture reform laws are aimed at increasing the income of farmers and the present agitation was a result of misunderstanding and miscommunication which need to be removed. "The contraction of



RAJIV KUMAR

7.5% reflects that the economy is coming out of this pandemic-induced degrowth phase and my expectation is that in the third quarter, we will achieve the same level of economic activity as the year-ago period.

"And the fourth quarter will show a small but positive growth over the previous year because the government

has...Ushered in many structural reforms and some more are in the pipeline," he said.

Stating that all those reforms will provide a very strong foundation for accelerating the economic growth in the fiscal year 2021-22 and beyond, Kumar said, "we have now shrugged off the negative impact of the pandemic and are moving towards a sustained high growth trajectory in the coming years".

About India's growth figure in the current fiscal year, he said it will be better than negative 9 or 10%, as has been forecast by many, including the RBI.

Kumar noted that the

COVID-19 pandemic had an unprecedented negative impact on economic activities but this was completely in the nature of a natural disaster and not related to the regular economic cycle.

"Therefore, it is quite irrelevant to talk about the economy being in a technical recession," he emphasised.

On better than expected manufacturing growth of 0.6% in the second quarter of 2020-21, Kumar said this has come as a pleasant surprise but there is a base effect but nonetheless, it is also endorsed by the higher collection of GST in the last three months, he said.

## SC stays NCLAT order for CCI probe against Flipkart

*A bench of Chief Justice SA Bobde and Justices AS Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, which initially was of the view to send back the matter to NCLAT after setting aside March 4 order, later stayed appellate tribunal's decision*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 2:** The Supreme Court Wednesday stayed the March 4 order of National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) asking fair trade regulator CCI to again initiate the probe against e-commerce major Flipkart for an alleged use of its dominant position.

A bench of Chief Justice SA Bobde and Justices AS Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, which initially was of the view to send back the matter to NCLAT after setting aside March 4 order and decision on all aspects including the issue of dominant position being enjoyed by Flipkart, later stayed appellate tribunal's decision.

The top court issued notice to All India Online Vendors Association (sellers association) and Competition Commission of India (CCI).

Senior advocate Harish Salve, appearing for Flipkart, said that CCI doesn't look at the findings of the Government and relied on the tax department findings and misread the findings of the tax tribunal. He said that the other e-commerce major Amazon is against his client company and if he is not a dominant player then the allegations of predatory pricing does not apply on Flipkart.



Salve submitted that the predatory pricing is an issue to be considered against the dominant player as a case of abuse of power but his client has not been held as a dominant player.

The bench said that the CCI has rendered a categorical finding that Flipkart does not have the dominant position and the NCLAT has not reversed the findings on the dominant position.

It told the counsel for vendors association that if they are agreed that the NCLAT should have considered the issues of dominant position then it can remand back the matter. To which counsel appearing for All India Online Vendors Association (sellers association)

said that they would like to argue the matter.

The bench then issued notice and stayed the March 4 order of NCLAT and listed the matter for further hearing. On March 4, the NCLAT has set aside the earlier order passed by the CCI absolving Flipkart of unfair practices using its dominant position and directed it to ask its probe arm Director General (DG) to investigate into the allegations. The NCLAT said that the All India Online Vendors Association (AIOVA) had successfully made its case here.

In November 2018, the AIOVA had approached the CCI alleging abuse of market dominance by e-commerce major.

## Exporters seek extension of tax benefits for SEZs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 2:** Exporters Wednesday suggested to the government a series of steps, including extension of fiscal benefits to SEZ units, presumptive tax for cross-border e-commerce and free trade pacts with countries like the US and UK, to boost domestic manufacturing and outbound shipments.

These recommendations were made by the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) at a meeting of the Board of Trade (BOT) which was chaired by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal. Other suggestions included permitting duty free import of equipment required for R&D and product development; setting up of a Niryat Vishwavidyalay; extension of interest subsidy scheme in the new foreign trade policy; and immediate release of GST and drawback funds.

Further, the federation recommended refund of GST to foreign tourists, RoDTEP (Remission of Duties or Taxes on Export Products) scheme covering all products; and amnesty scheme for schemes prescribing export obligation.

FIEO Director General Ajay Sahai said that these measures would help in significantly promoting manufacturing and boosting the country's exports.

He further said the minister asked the officials present in the meeting to examine these suggestions. Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPIC) Chairman A Sakthivel sought resolution of operational issues for ease of doing business and redressal of the issue of duty disadvantage in



REPRESENTATIONAL PIC

**The recommendations were made by the FIEO at a meeting of the Board of Trade which was chaired by Piyush Goyal**

overseas markets by entering into early negotiations for free trade agreements (FTAs). He also asked for changes in the Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) scheme to take care of the growing need of capital investment in the sector.

He added that the entire process of flagging an exporter as a 'risky exporter' to removal of the tag and resumption of refunds should be completed within 30 days, and a protocol must be developed for transparent flow of information.

Engineering exporters too suggested for easing of GST refund rules and extending affordable credit to the sector.

Measures to boost exports, manufacturing and the new foreign trade policy figured in the meeting.

The board, which includes members from both public and private sector, advises the commerce and industry ministry on policy measures related to foreign trade policy (FTP). Secretaries of different departments, heads of various government bodies, representatives of apex industry associations and export promotion councils are members of the BOT.

## BIZ BUZZ

### New production director joins Nalco

**Bhubaneswar:** Bijay Kumar Das took over as the Director (Production) of the Navratna CPSE National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO) with effect from December 1, 2020. Prior to the new assignment, he was serving in the company as Executive Director (Projects) at Corporate Office, Bhubaneswar. Das, a graduate in Mechanical Engineering from NIT, Rourkela, began his career in NALCO as a Graduate Engineer Trainee in 1984. He was posted in Nalco's Captive Power Plant in Angul since the inception of the project, where he held different key positions before taking over the challenging assignment of Business Development. He subsequently took over as GM (Corporate Planning & Strategic Management) to plan and strategise the growth path of Nalco before being elevated to Executive Director (Projects).



### Infosys, Rolls-Royce ink strategic p'ship

**New Delhi:** Indian IT services firm Infosys and Rolls-Royce, an aerospace and defence technology major, Wednesday announced signing a strategic partnership for sourcing engineering and R&D Services for the latter's Civil Aerospace business. As part of the overall partnership, Rolls-Royce will "transition a significant part of its engineering centre capabilities for civil aerospace in Bangalore to Infosys", a statement said. However, the number of people who will move to Infosys was not disclosed. "Leveraging its expertise in core engineering services, digital transformation capabilities, Infosys will provide a full range of high-end engineering and R&D services," it added.



## PAYTM QUASHES REPORTS OF STAKE SALE BY INVESTORS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Dec 2:** Quashing rumours of a stake sale, sources close to India's leading financial services and payments firm Paytm said that global fintech giant Ant Financial is not planning to sell its shares in the company.

While reports claimed that Ant Financial is planning to sell its stake in the company, both Paytm and Ant denied them as rumours and called the reports 'false' and 'misleading'.

"The information is absolutely false and misleading. There has been no discussion with any of our major shareholders ever about selling their stake or becoming the controlling shareholder. Our mission is to empower half a billion Indians with digital financial services and pursue the vast opportunity presented by the digital fi-



ancial revolution in our country. We are seeing a dramatic increase in revenues and acceleration of our path to breakeven," said a Paytm spokesperson.

Sources close to the company said that there has been no change in the ownership pattern of Paytm and the investors completely back its financial services foray which

has now expanded pan-India.

Ant Group took to Twitter to deny the reports, saying: "The Reuters story is untrue. We are disappointed that Reuters decided to run the story based on false information."

According to the sources, the overall investor sentiment surrounding Paytm is at an all time high. Over the last several quarters, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, Paytm has been constantly increasing the scope of its services, adding more use cases to the app as well as expanding fast into the financial services territory.

It has launched new insurance and wealth products which are getting adopted by its users as more people are transacting digitally in India. The progress has helped in instilling more confidence in all its investors and they expect expansion of these services going forward.

## Conditions to improve for Indian corporates in 2021: Moody's

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Dec 2:** Conditions will improve for Indian corporates next year as economic activity picks up steam post-lockdown and earnings grow on the back of widespread demand revival across sectors, Moody's Investors Service said Wednesday.

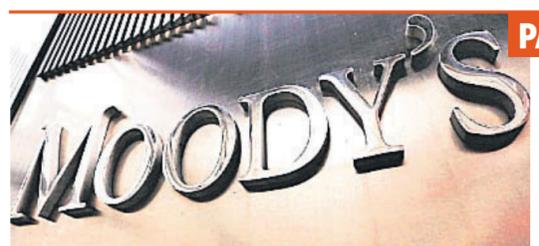
Most companies' earnings will grow as demand starts to recover following a sharp slump, and financially strong companies will maintain good access to funding, but speculative-grade issuers will face challenges, it said.

"Broad-based demand revival and a low base in 2020 will support

strong GDP growth of 10.8 per cent in India in fiscal 2022 ending March 2022, following a decline of around 10.6 per cent in fiscal 2021 - the country's first contraction in four decades," Moody's Analyst Sweta Patodia said.

In 2021, conditions will improve for Indian corporates as economic activity gathers pace post-lockdown and earnings grow on the back of widespread demand revival across sectors, underpinning Moody's stable outlook for the corporates next year, Moody's said.

"A combination of higher earnings and reduced capital spending will support deleveraging over the next 12-18 months," Patodia added.



MOODY'S RATES 21 INDIAN CORPORATES ACROSS 5 KEY SECTORS: OIL AND GAS, TELECOMMUNICATIONS, AUTOMOBILE MANUFACTURERS AND SUPPLIERS, STEEL AND MINING

Overall recovery will remain fragile as new infections continue

to grow - although at a slower rate - and therefore new lockdowns can-

### PATH TO RECOVERY

MOST COMPANIES' EARNINGS WILL GROW AS DEMAND STARTS TO RECOVER FOLLOWING A SHARP SLUMP

CONDITIONS WILL IMPROVE FOR THE CORPORATES AS EARNINGS GROW ON THE BACK OF WIDESPREAD DEMAND REVIVAL ACROSS SECTORS

OVERALL RECOVERY WILL REMAIN FRAGILE AS NEW INFECTIONS CONTINUE TO GROW

Moody's noted. It said the low interest rate environment and widespread credit availability will allow corporates with strong balance sheets to refinance and grow. But liquidity will be tight for financially weaker issuers, exacerbating their operating challenges.

Moody's rates 21 Indian corporates across five key sectors: oil and gas, telecommunications, automobile manufacturers and suppliers, steel and mining.

It said the outlook for the Indian corporate sector reflects its expectations for fundamental business conditions for the sector over the next 12-18 months.

## ADB inks \$50mn loan pact with Centre



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 2:** The Asian Development Bank (ADB) Wednesday said it has inked a \$50 million (around ₹669 crore) loan pact with the Indian government for improving fiscal management in West Bengal.

"The ADB and the Government of India today signed a \$50 million policy-based loan to improve financial management procedures and operational efficiencies aimed at achieving more fiscal savings, promote informed decision making, and improve service delivery in the state of West Bengal," ADB said in a release.

The signatories to the West Bengal Public Finance Management Investment Program were CS Mohapatra, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance and Takeo Konishi, Country Director of ADB's India Resident Mission.

West Bengal's financial and information systems through this whole-of-government approach will help improve delivery of public services and generate fiscal savings that could help the state augment growth-enhancing development financing, Mohapatra said. Konishi said: "Through support to interoperable e-Government platforms, the programme will ensure streamlining of social protection benefits such as pension and provident fund, facilitate gender-disaggregated data, tax payments, and revenue collection."

ADB said development projects could be better tracked and monitored with the help of a new module within the integrated financial management system leading to improved project management. A center for fiscal policy and public finance will be established to deepen capacity of the state government officials on public finance management, it added.

## Parcel cargo trains transport 1,373 tonne of commodities

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 2:** Khurda Road railway Division, Bhubaneswar Parcel office recorded the highest transportation of essential commodities through Parcel Cargo Express trains and Parcel vans surpassing last year's record. The division transported parcels by an additional transport of 64 tonnes.

In the month of November-2020, 1,373 tonnes of essential commodities like fish, hatching eggs, betel leaves, cashew, household articles, machinery parts, scrap and other hard parcels were transported from Bhubaneswar Parcel office to different parts of the country. Also, it added revenue of ₹64.12 lakh to the administration. This is an additional parcel loading of 64 tonnes in comparison to the corresponding month of 2019.



# SOMETHING TO SMILE FOR

## HARDIK, JADDU, KOHLI AND BOWLERS HELP INDIA SECURE A CONSOLATION VICTORY OVER AUSTRALIA IN THE FINAL ODI; CONCEDE THE SERIES 1-2

## How they reacted...



**IMPRESSIVE DEBUT:** Indian players surround debutant Thangarasu Natarajan after his maiden wicket in ODIs

SCORECARD	
<b>INDIA INNINGS</b>	
Shikhar Dhawan c Agar b Abbott 16, Shubman Gill lbw b Agar 33, Virat Kohli c Carey b Hazlewood 63, Shreyas Iyer c Labuschagne b Zampa 19, KL Rahul lbw b Agar 5, Hardik Pandya not out 92, Ravindra Jadeja not out 66; Extras: 8 (B-1, LB-1, NB-2, W-4); TOTAL: 302/5 (50 OVERS).	
<b>Fall:</b> 1/26 (Dhawan), 2/82 (Gill), 3/114 (Iyer), 4/123 (Rahul), 5/152 (Kohli).	
<b>Bowling:</b> Josh Hazlewood 10-1-66-1, Glenn Maxwell 5-0-27-0, Sean Abbott 10-0-84-1, Cameron Green 4-0-27-0, Ashton Agar 10-0-44-2, Adam Zampa 10-0-45-1, Moises Henriques 1-0-7-0.	
<b>AUSTRALIA INNINGS</b>	
Marnus Labuschagne b Natarajan 7, Aaron Finch c Dhawan b Jadeja 75, Steve Smith c Rahul b Thakur 7, Moises Henriques c Dhawan b Thakur 22, Cameron Green c Jadeja b Kuldeep 21, Alex Carey run out 38, Glenn Maxwell b Bumrah 59, Ashton Agar c Kuldeep b Natarajan 28, Sean Abbott c Rahul b Thakur 4, Adam Zampa lbw b Bumrah 4, Josh Hazlewood not out 7; Extras: 17 (LB-6, NB-2, WD-9); TOTAL: 289 ALL OUT (49.3 OVERS).	
<b>Fall:</b> 1/25 (Labuschagne), 2/56 (Smith), 3/117 (Henriques), 4/123 (Finch), 5/158 (Green), 6/210 (Carey), 7/268 (Maxwell), 8/278 (Abbott), 9/278 (Agar), 10/289 (Zampa).	
<b>Bowling:</b> Jasprit Bumrah 9.3-0-43-3, T Natarajan 10-1-70-2, Shardul Thakur 10-1-51-3, Kuldeep Yadav 10-0-57-1, Ravindra Jadeja 10-0-62-1.	



Hardik Pandya bottom-edges one during his splendid innings against Australia in Canberra, Wednesday  
PHOTOS: ESPNCRINFO

**VIKAS KOHLI SAYS**  
We were put under the pump in the first half and in the second half of Australia's innings. Shubman (Gill) and others coming in, it brings in a bit freshness. The team needed that kind of a boost... I think the pitch was much better for the bowlers. So the confidence levels go up. Playing international cricket for so long, that's the challenge you face. We were clinical with the ball and in the field... Happy with the performance and hopefully we take the momentum forward. I would have liked to go on for a bit longer, but it was a great partnership between Pandya and Jadeja.

**AARON FINCH SAYS**  
I thought we fought really well. It was a great partnership between Hardik and Jadeja. If we got one of those wickets, we could have chased 240 max. Cameron Green (debutant) came in and made an impact with ball and bat, and showed he belongs here... Agar bowled beautifully, it was a good day in terms of the changes we made. The impact that the two spinners are having, that's important. It's nice when the guys in the top order contribute and then Maxi (Maxwell) can come in and do his thing with Carey and other guys.

**HARDIK PANDYA SAYS**  
It's (winning the match) fantastic. You need to be on your

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Canberra, Dec 2:** Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah found his mojo and the Indian team their winning ways in a morale-lifting 13-run triumph over Australia in the third and final ODI Wednesday, salvaging some of the lost pride in a 1-2 series defeat. An in-form Hardik Pandya blasted 92 not out off 76 balls and Ravindra Jadeja's useful 66 off 50 took India to a healthy 302/5 in 50 overs after an inept show in the first 30 overs. It was at least 30 runs short of a par-score on a good batting track but a rejigged bowling attack managed to restrict the home team to 289 all out in 49.3 overs.

Shardul Thakur (3/51) and debutant Thangarasu Natarajan (2/70) did their bit but it was Bumrah's (2/43) controlled effort with some swing upfront and the dismissal of a marauding Glenn Maxwell in the nick of time which ultimately turned the match in India's favour. The cushion provided by his 'senior' helped Natarajan to start bowling his yorkers under pressure and Thakur also chipped in with necessary wickets. The inconsequential match became something of consequence for Virat Kohli and his men as they



Jasprit Bumrah reacts after casting Glenn Maxwell to end Oz fightback

when Steve Smith (7) tried to tinkle one down on the 'fifth leg stump' to be caught by KL Rahul behind the stumps. Moises Henriques (22) and skipper Aaron Finch (75) looked good during their 51-run stand for the third wicket before the former failed to keep a pull-shot down off Thakur's bowling. However, what was more heartening was Kuldeep Yadav's (1/57) restrained bowling in the middle overs with the last over punishment by Maxwell being more of an aberration. Jadeja (1/62), who had a field day, topped up a solid batting show with the prized wicket of the rival captain Finch as Shikhar Dhawan managed to make an easy catch look difficult at long-on. Maxwell and the calm Alex Carey (38) looked like doing an encore of their victorious effort against England at Old Trafford last September. But just when they settled down, Carey went for non-existent single only to be sent back by Maxwell as Australia were reduced to 210/6. Earlier, an in-form Pandya and the effective Jadeja helped India make an impressive recovery after the team struggled during the first 30 overs with only skipper Kohli's

fighting half century being the bright spot. Coming together in the 32nd over, Pandya and Jadeja stitched 150 runs for the unbroken sixth wicket to change the complexion of the game, which would make no difference to the final score-line as Australia have already sealed it with back-to-back wins in Sydney. It looked like India would barely reach 250 but Pandya and Jadeja took it a different story. The duo took some time to settle down before opening the floodgates of boundaries. They scored 53 runs from the 46th to 48th over. In all, 76 runs came from the last five overs.

gearing up for the next white-ball series - three T20Is in less than 48 hours. India's bowling attack had a different look and it did perform way better compared to the first two games. Natarajan was very steady in his first spell and got his maiden wicket when Marnus Labuschagne (7), in an unfamiliar role as opener, dragged a wide delivery back onto the stumps. Thakur, replacing a rested Mohammed Shami, was also lucky

## KOHLI FASTEST TO 12K ODI RUNS

**Canberra:** India captain Virat Kohli Wednesday became the fastest cricketer to score 12,000 ODI runs, breaking a record held by legendary compatriot Sachin Tendulkar. Kohli reached the milestone during the third and final match against Australia here. Kohli, who needed 23 runs for the landmark coming into the match, touched the figure in his 242nd innings when he took a single off Sean Abbott in the 13th over of India's essay. In comparison, it took Tendulkar 300 innings to get there. The 32-year-old Indian captain was playing in his 251st ODI and averages close to 60 in the format with 43 hundreds and 59 half centuries. He made his debut in 2008. Tendulkar scored 18,426 runs from 463 ODIs between 1989 and 2012 at an average of 44.83 with the help of 49 hundreds and 96 half centuries.



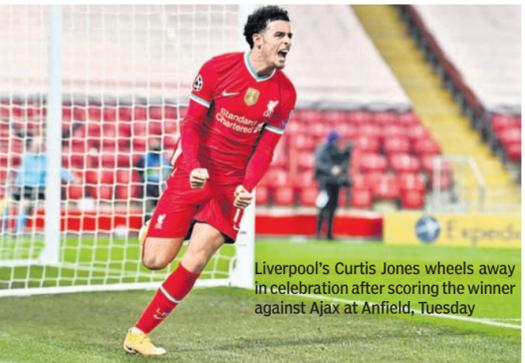
## Oz move to top of ICC Super League table, India sixth

**Dubai:** Australia Wednesday jumped to the top of the ICC World Cup Super ODI League points table following their 2-1 series victory over India, who are placed sixth. With the series win, Australia moved to 40 points, overtaking second-placed England (30 points). On the other hand, India are sixth with nine points. Australia had defeated England 2-1 in their previous series of the 13-team championship, which was introduced this year to bring context to ODI cricket and also to decide the seven direct qualifiers for the ICC World Cup 2023. India, though assured of a berth as hosts, were to use the opportunity for long-term preparation.

## STARC JOINS WARNER IN AUSTRALIA'S INJURY LIST

**Canberra:** Australia pacer Mitchell Starc is nursing a back and rib niggle, captain Aaron Finch revealed Wednesday after the pacer was not named in the playing XI for the third and final ODI against India here. Starc, who struggled in the first two matches of the ongoing ODI series, joined David Warner in the injury room. "Starcy has got a little bit of a back and a rib niggle. The medical staff thinks he will benefit from a few days off," Finch said at the toss. In the first two ODIs in Sydney, Starc took just one wicket for 147 runs. He conceded a whopping 20 runs, bowling four wides and a no ball, in the opening over in the first match. Australia won the ODI series 2-1, Wednesday.

## Liverpool advance, Real in deep mess



Liverpool's Curtis Jones wheels away in celebration after scoring the winner against Ajax at Anfield, Tuesday

**Paris, Dec 2:** While former champions Liverpool and Porto eased to the knockout stage of its previous group-stage campaigns but things are looking tense. Madrid have conceded nine goals in five games for their worst-ever defensive record at this stage, losing twice to Shakhtar side who leaked 10 goals in two defeats to Gladbach. Brazilian forward Dentinho profited from a mix-up between Ferland Mendy and Raphael Varane to net in the 57th minute following a counterattack. Zidane's players failed to take heed and the second stemmed from another counter as substitute Manor Solomon finished confidently. Over in Germany, Inter had to win to have a chance at reaching the next round and the ever-reliable Romelu Lukaku saw to that with two goals. Midfielder Matteo Darmian netted early on for Inter and French striker Alassane Plea nodded the home side level, only for Lukaku to net twice after the break before Plea replied again. Remarkably, all four sides in Group B can still qualify. Gladbach needs only draw at Madrid, while last-place Inter advance with a home win over Shakhtar next week unless Gladbach and Madrid draw.

Atletico Madrid did not do enough, drawing 1-1 at home to Bayern Munich even though the de-

## ATK Mohun Bagan challenge ahead of Odisha FC

**Margao, Dec 2:** Fresh from their Kolkata derby win, ATK Mohun Bagan (ATKMB) will aim to continue their red-hot form in the Indian Super League (ISL) when they take on bottom-placed Odisha FC at the Fatorida Stadium here Thursday. The two sides have witnessed contrasting fortunes so far this season. Odisha are winless and find themselves in the bottom half of the table, having accumulated just one point after their opening two games.

For ATKMB, a third-straight win Thursday could put them on top of the table. They had beaten rivals SC East Bengal 2-0 in the first ISL derby, November 27. Odisha FC came from behind to secure their first point of the campaign against Jamshedpur FC but there will be concerns over their backline that has appeared shaky. Stuart Baxter's side has conceded 29 shots so far, joint-most by a team this season. ATKMB striker Roy Krishna, with two goals in as many games, will look to continue his fine form. Antonio Habas' side, having scored



all their goals from open play, will once again aim to hit their opponents on counter-attacks. Baxter is, however, well aware

of this and wants his side to keep things tight at the back. "You respect them because they have good and experienced players," Baxter said. "While throwing players forward, we're aware of the fact that, in transition, they get into the game quickly when we're spread out. It's up to the players on the day to make sure we take away the spaces they want and we defend well one-versus-one." Odisha FC will also have to be effective at the front as they face a side who are yet to concede a goal this season. Apart from ATKMB, Hyderabad FC are the only side who haven't con-

## Eze saves JFC the blushes

**Goa, Dec 2:** Stephen Eze's late equaliser helped Jamshedpur FC (JFC) snatch a point from Hyderabad FC (HFC) as the teams played out a 1-1 draw in their third match in the Indian Super League (ISL) at the Tilak Maidan here, Wednesday. Aridane Santana handed the lead to HFC in the 50th minute but Eze's equaliser in the 85th minute sealed a point for the Men of Steel. It was a cagey start to the match as both teams took a safety-first

approach. As the game progressed HFC grew into the game in spite of them playing with just three overseas players. They were dominant proceedings and were frequently venturing into the attacking third but lacked the final pass which would split open the backline. The best opportunity of the half was carved out by Hyderabad's Halicharan Narzary when the winger shrugged away Dinliana and fired in a curler from the left side of the penalty box. The keeper was beaten but the ball hit the

wrong side of the far post before going out of play. Hyderabad took an early lead in the second half thanks to some sloppy goalkeeping by Pawan Kumar: Hitesh Sharma sent a long ball for Halicharan, who cut in from the left inside the box and attempted a shot on goal. Pawan unconsciously slapped the ball away from going in but Aridane pushed the rebound ball into the net. Coyle brought in Isaac Vannalsawma and Aniket Jadhav around the hour mark in search of an equaliser. Marquez, on the other end, focused on sitting back and protecting their lead. Jamshedpur were denied a genuine goal in the 76th minute when Kattiman's attempt to fist Aitor Monroy's free-kick hit Aridane and went in. But the linesman flagged Peter Hartley offside and ruled out the goal. The replays though suggested the Jamshedpur skipper was in no way in an offside position. The Men of Steel finally restored parity in the game in the 85th minute thanks to a thunderous strike from Eze. Valskis initiated the move with a cross which Adil Khan cleared but the ball fail to Monroy who set up for Eze to shoot and the Nigerian found the back of the net.



Stephen Eze (L), who scored JFC's equaliser, in action during the match

## Malan, Buttler help Eng conquer SA T20Is

**Cape Town, Dec 2:** England swept the T20I series against South Africa 3-0 with a blistering 99 not out (47, 11x4, 5x6) from Dawid Malan seeing the tourists romp to a nine-wicket win in the final game here. Malan knock made a difficult run chase look like a breeze as England overhauled South Africa's 191/3 with more than two overs to spare. England finished on 192/1 in 17.4 overs, with Malan and Jos Buttler (67 n o, 46b, 3x4, 5x6) sharing an unbroken partnership of 167 for the second wicket to take England charging home at Newlands. It was England's highest partnership in T20s and the eighth-highest of all time. The only disappointment was Malan missing out on a second T20I century, which he could have got if he'd hit what turned out to be the last ball of the game for a boundary. Instead, with him on 98 and England needing one to win, he took a single out on the off side and then appeared to re-



alize his error. South Africa appeared in good position to take something from the series when Faf du Plessis (52 n o, 37b, 5x4, 3x6) and Rassie van der Dussen (74 n o, 32b, 5x4, 5x6) put on 127 for the fourth wicket. Their stand resurrected South Africa from 64/3. **BRIEF SCORES** South Africa 191/3 (Rassie van der Dussen 74 n o, Faf du Plessis 52 n o) lost to England 192/1 (David Malan 99 n o, Jos Buttler 67 n o) by 9 wickets.