



SARA'S SECRET

Actor Sara Ali Khan has shared the mantra she follows in her day-to-day life **LEISURE P2**



BABRI MASJID 'INJUSTICE'

On the 28th anniversary of demolition of the mosque, Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi took to Twitter to voice his view **TWO STATES P7**



INDIA WIN T20I SERIES

All-rounder Hardik Pandya's histrionics with the bat helps India win T20I series against Australia **SPORTS P12**

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Yes, country needs me, but party needs me more. There're some local polls and I've been asked to campaign

SHORT TAKES

Custodial death: Baselisahi IIC shifted

Puri: In a major reshuffle of police officials in Puri district Sunday, Puri SP Kanwar Vishal Singh transferred Baselisahi police station IIC Jibananda Jena to the District Headquarters here. The Baselisahi police station has been in the news during the past few days over the alleged custodial death of K Ramesh. The post-mortem report of Ramesh who had died in the custody of Baselisahi police November 18, confirmed that the victim died owing to multiple physical injuries. The victim was allegedly hacked to death, a few hours after he was picked up in connection with a case. The report said that the body of Ramesh had 16 injury marks and he died due to brain hemorrhage.

Woman, daughter found dead

Khurda: Bodies of a woman and her 10-month-old daughter were found lying on railway tracks near Abhimanpur village under Tangi police limits in Khurda district Sunday. The deceased have been identified as Jharana Swain from Abhimanpur village and her daughter. It is being suspected that the mother-daughter duo died after being hit by a train. On the other hand, the deceased's family members alleged that Jharana and her daughter were murdered by miscreants. Locals initially spotted the bodies lying on the track and informed Jharana's family members, who identified the bodies.

WEATHER	
	BHUB CTK
TEMP. MAX	31.2°C 31.0°C
TEMP. MIN	17.6°C 15.8°C
Humidity	66% 69%
Rainfall	Nil Nil
Forecast	Dry weather likely

3 new Chinese villages near Arunachal

CONSTRUCTION ACROSS THE BUM LA PASS IS EXACTLY WHAT THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT MOUTH PIECE, GLOBAL TIMES, IDENTIFIED IN A DETAILED REPORT IN AUGUST

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 6: China has constructed at least 3 new villages, about 5 kms from the Bum La pass that lies near the tri-junction between India, China and Bhutan in western Arunachal Pradesh.

According to a report, as Beijing disputes the boundary between India and China in this region, the new constructions could be a major step towards underlining its territorial claims along the Arunachal Pradesh frontier. "China has been using a strategy of settling Han Chinese and Tibetan members of the Communist Party along the India border to strengthen its territorial claims and escalate border intrusions," NDTV quoted China-watcher Dr. Brahma Chellaney as saying. "Like it used fishermen in the South China Sea, China uses civilian resources - herders and grazers - as the tip of the spear to intrude into Indian-patrolled Himalayan areas."

New satellite images, which come a week after high-resolution satellite images of Chinese village construction in Bhutanese sovereign territory, just seven kilometres from the Doklam face-off site between Indian and Chinese forces in 2017, show that the new villages lie within Chinese territory and were being constructed at the same time



Map showing location of new Chinese enclaves near the Bum La border which lie near the tri-junction between India, China and Bhutan

that Indian and Chinese soldiers faced off in Eastern Ladakh. That standoff continues with tens of thousands of soldiers having hunkered down for a long deployment through the intense winter after eight rounds of military talks failed to achieve a breakthrough. The images show a single village having been constructed in the area by February 17, 2020. This features more than 20 structures, thought to be chalets, which can be easily distinguished through their red roofs. Another image, dated November 28, 2020, shows the

addition of three additional enclaves with at least 50 structures. Each enclave is within one kilometre of one another. All of the enclaves are connected with tarred, all-weather roads. China disputes the legal status of the boundary in this region and Chinese maps continue to show 65,000 square kilometres of territory south of the line as being a part of Beijing's South Tibet Region. India, which has rejected Beijing's claim for decades, insists that the historic McMahon Line proposed by the British administrator Sir Henry McMahon at the 1914 Simla Convention

FACT FILE

The villages are about 5 kms from the Bum La pass that lies near the tri-junction between India, China and Bhutan in western Arunachal Pradesh

New satellite images show that the new villages lie within Chinese territory and were being constructed at the same time that Indian and Chinese soldiers faced off in Eastern Ladakh

China, a crucial border county in Shannan India plans "to relocate 3,222 people of 960 families to the weakly controlled areas on the borders on a voluntary basis"

Govt hints at odd-even formula for Class X to XII students

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 6: If sources in the Odisha Education department are to be believed, the government will soon announce the reopening of schools in the state. Possibilities are that physical classes for Higher Secondary students will commence after December 31, 2020.

The Higher Education department has already allowed the reopening of laboratories in higher educational institutions across the state. A few days ago, the Council of Higher Secondary Education, Odisha, directed all the government and private schools across the state to sanitise and clean the campuses of their institutions. Many are of the view, that this directive is an indication that the higher secondary schools will reopen soon.

The official order of December 4 read, "Resumption of physical mode of learning in all higher secondary schools across the state has been hampered due to Covid pandemic since March 2020. The school campuses need to be sanitised and cleaned for resuming classes. Even, accessories and amenities such as drinking water, toilets, classrooms, laboratory and equipment need to be

SCHOOL REOPENING

On December 4, the Council of Higher Secondary Education, Odisha, directed all the government and private schools across the state to sanitise and clean the campuses of their institutions

It is likely that the government will adopt the 'odd-even formula' or conduct classes in several shifts to prevent gatherings

The government is planning to reopen schools for Class X and XII students in the first week of January; Odisha Parents' Federation chairman Basudev Bhatt

brought to the pre-Covid situation." All these indicate that the Odisha government plans to reopen schools and colleges on a priority basis following a decline in the number of infections. It is expected that the government will soon announce the standard operating procedures (SOPs) for schools to reopen and commence physical classes amid the pandemic. However, since the fear of an-

other wave of the pandemic cannot be ruled out, it is likely that the government will adopt the 'odd-even formula' or conduct classes in several shifts to prevent gatherings.

While no comment could be obtained from the officials in the Education department, Sandhya Jena principal of BJEM School said, "We are already cleaning the school precincts and had successfully conducted the NEET at our school as per the SOP. We are also in talks with parents and will seek their consent before allowing their kids in school."

On the other hand, BN Patnaik, chairman of St Xavier International School, is of the view that schools should be reopened after February and the government must take any decision regarding altering the academic session or postponing examinations only after discussion with all stake holders.

Odisha Parents' Federation chairman Basudev Bhatt said, "The government is planning to reopen schools for Class X, XI and XII students in the first week of January. As for commencing physical classes for other classes, the government should wait till the effects of reopening Higher Secondary classes become clear."

TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS

DL of erring motorists to be suspended

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 6: Keeping in view the alarming rise in road mishaps, the Odisha Government Sunday announced that strict traffic rules under the new MV Act will be enforced in the state from January 2021.

The State Transport Authority (STA) issued a statement Sunday saying that violation of some traffic rules and road safety rules may now lead to suspension of the driving licences for three months.

"As per the directions of the Supreme Court Committee on Road Safety, driving licence will be suspended for three months for driving above speed limits, jumping red light, drunken driving, using mobile phone while driving, carrying passengers in goods vehicles and both rider and pillion rider on two-wheelers not wearing helmets," the STA statement read.

This comes in the wake of the STA has intensifying its scrutiny of traffic violations across the state and a day after it announced that driving licences could be suspended if both the biker and pillion rider do not wear helmets while travelling on two-wheelers.

FATIGUED BUT NOT FALLEN



A farmer sleeps on the road on NH-24 during farmers' 'Delhi Chalo' protest against the new farm laws at Ghazipur border in New Delhi, Sunday

COVID VAX UPDATE

PFIZER SEEKS INDIA'S APPROVAL

Pfizer India is the first company to seek an emergency-use authorisation for its coronavirus vaccine from DCGI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



New Delhi, Dec 6: Pfizer India has become the first pharmaceutical firm to seek from the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) an emergency-use authorisation for its Covid-19 vaccine in the country, after its parent company secured such clearance in the UK and Bahrain.

The firm, in its application submitted to the drug regulator, has sought permission to import the vaccine for sale and distribution in the country, besides waiver of clinical trials on Indian population in accordance with the special provisions under the New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019, official sources said.

"Pfizer India has submitted an application December 4 to the DCGI seeking emergency use authorisation (EUA) for its Covid-19 vaccine in India," a source said.

"The firm has submitted the EUA application in Form CT-18 for grant of permission to import and market Pfizer-BioNTech's Covid-19 mRNA vaccine BNT162b2 in the country," the source said, citing the application.

The UK Wednesday became the first country to approve the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine against Covid-19, with the UK regulator Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) granting a temporary authorisation for its emergency use. The British regulator said the job, which claims to offer up to 95 per cent protection against Covid-19, is safe for roll-out. The extreme low temperature of minus 70°C required for storing the vaccine poses a big challenge for its delivery in a country like India, especially in its smaller towns and rural areas where maintaining such cold chain facilities would be very difficult, top government officials have said. When contacted, Pfizer said it remains committed to engaging with the Government of India and explore opportunities to make this vaccine available for use in the country.

GREAT CONJUNCTION

Jupiter-Saturn to form 'double planet' Dec 21

JUPITER AND SATURN WILL BE SO CLOSELY ALIGNED THAT THEY WILL APPEAR AS A 'DOUBLE PLANET'

AGENCIES

Washington, Dec 6: The night sky has a special treat in store for stargazers this winter solstice.

On December 21, Jupiter and Saturn will be so closely aligned that they will appear as a "double planet," Rice University astronomer Patrick Hartigan announced in a university press release. This is called a conjunction, and the last time such a close one between the two planets was visible from Earth was in 1226.

A conjunction occurs when two celestial objects appear close together when seen from Earth. The conjunction between Jupiter and Saturn occurs when the orbits of the two planets align with Earth's, something that only happens once every 20 years and is referred to as a "great



An artist's impression of the 'Great Conjunction'

only 1/5th the diameter of the full moon," Hartigan said in the press release. "For most telescope viewers, each planet and several of their largest moons will be visible in the same field of view that evening."

However, if the skies are cloudy the night of the 21st itself, the planets will still be close from December 16 to 25. The space between them will be less than the diameter of the full moon.

The phenomenon will be easiest to see from the equator, but should be visible everywhere on Earth. To see it, look to the low western sky for about an hour after sunset. However, those in northern latitudes should try to look for the sight as closely after sunset as possible.

"The further north a viewer is, the less time they'll have to catch a glimpse of the conjunction before

the planets sink below the horizon," Hartigan explained.

If you miss this conjunction, another so close won't be visible until 2080. After that, it will not occur again until after 2400. While the last time the phenomenon was visible was in the Middle Ages, a similar alignment occurred in 1623, but it was too close to the sun to be seen from Earth.

"You would be lucky to see this once in a lifetime," Andrew Jacob of the Sydney Observatory said.

The event is also known as the "Christmas Star" or the "Star of Bethlehem."

German astronomer Johannes Kepler theorised in 1614 that a similar conjunction might have been the source of the bright "star" that the Wise Men followed to visit the baby Jesus in the nativity story.

leisure



RITA ORA APOLOGISES FOR BREAKING LOCKDOWN RULES

Singer Rita Ora is deeply sorry for not following lockdown rules. The singer flew by private jet to Cairo but instead of self-isolating for 14 days, she hosted a birthday party at a restaurant for which she has apologised, unreservedly, reports *dailymail.co.uk*.

'QUITE AMAZING TO WATCH CHRISTOPHER NOLAN WORK'

Actor Robert Pattinson says there is nothing that stresses filmmaker Christopher Nolan, adding that it is amazing to watch him work on set. The actor worked with the filmmaker in the new release, *Tenet*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Your sportsman spirit will find its way into both your professional and personal life. Today may be an important day in your life, and Ganesh says you must not forget your special quality.

TAURUS
You will put your heart and soul into whatever you do today, says Ganesh. But there may still be dark clouds hovering over the results. Don't let that bother you. You must keep up the hard work throughout the day. Finally, you will hit the deck with a feeling of happiness and satisfaction, predicts Ganesh.

GEMINI
Dress to kill today! People around you may or may not comment, but they will definitely notice you. Your sense of style and taste will bowl everyone over. People would scramble for a glimpse of you. In short, you will be a celebrity.

CANCER
You are at your industrious best today. You will be able to think the unthinkable, achieve the unachievable, and impress an emotionally impregnable boss. Your confidence level will be sky-high; in fact, it will make overconfidence wallow in self-doubt.

LEO
You will try to take up new projects to the best of your abilities today. You will be able to successfully tackle all your tasks today. You will face a little instability in your personal relationships, but will be able to solve all issues successfully, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Opening up to your beloved about your whims and fancies as well as your goals shall be the key today. And, why not, urges Ganesh. Your intimate relations should be built on trust and mutual compatibility. Your energy levels will hit the sky.

LIBRA
Today will be fabulous for you, especially if you are in the world of business. Long-term deals seem to be on the cards for you. If you happen to be a government officer, luck favours you today. Keep your ears and eyes open, there may be news of a possible promotion. All Ganesh has to say to you today is, keep your options open and hopes alive.

SCORPIO
Ganesh feels that your intuitive feelings will rule your actions today. You will need to break past your stress threshold and tackle work with zeal and zest. Follow your instincts and relax to some good music when the burden of work is overwhelming.

SAGITTARIUS
Ganesh sees a spectacular day in store for you, especially if you are an artist. Radio jockeys will be heard and cheered for. Television anchors will receive thundering applause and golden opportunities. Go ahead — seize the day!

CAPRICORN
Your extraordinary skills, passion for perfection, and an overpowering personality will inspire and motivate those around you, says Ganesh. Many will, in fact, emulate your actions, so much so that you could most likely have a fan following.

AQUARIUS
Spirituality is your new passion and Calvin Klein matters less today! Mysticism attracts you, says Ganesh. This may lead you to seek solace in holy books and religious places. It's going to take some time for you to understand that spiritual attainment can be had in the flesh-and-blood world as well.

PISCES
You are ceaselessly driven to find room for improvement. A part-time course to enhance your skills or to increase your efficiency is what you will likely be pursuing today, says Ganesh.

When in doubt, you must workout: Sara

Mumbai: Actress Sara Ali Khan has shared her mantra she follows in her day-to-day life.

Sara posted a video on Instagram. The actress is seen working out in a gym. She is seen dressed in a sports bra and exercise shorts.

"When in doubt, you must workout. Push-ups and crunches. Don't lose count. With health and fitness you must be devout."

Because that's what life is really about," Sara captioned the clip, which currently has 1.8 million views on the photo-sharing website.

On the work front, Sara is gearing up for the release of her upcoming film *Coolie No 1*, which also stars Varun Dhawan. The film is a remake of the 1995 hit starring Govinda and Karisma Kapoor.

The movie is directed by Varun's father David Dhawan. She has also started shooting for *Atrangi Re*.



Priyanka is a 'day dreamer, night thinker'

Mumbai: Actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas, in her latest social media post, has tagged herself as a day dreamer and a night thinker.

Priyanka posted a picture on Instagram, wherein she is seen wearing a white ensemble and is looking at the camera. The actress completed her look with minimal make-up.

"Day dreamer, night thinker," Priyanka wrote alongside the image.

On the work front, Priyanka has started shooting for the upcoming Hollywood romantic drama, tentatively titled *Text For You*.

Written and directed by Jim Strouse, the film is an English remake of the German-language film *SMS Fur Dich*, based on Sofie Cramer's novel.

According to the storyline, Priyanka's character is a heartbroken woman who has just lost her fiancé. In her attempt to send constant messages to her fiancé's old number, she connects with a man across the town who is suffering from a similar heartbreak.



Saif apologises for 'humane' Ravan statement

Mumbai: Actor Saif Ali Khan has apologised after getting trolled for his 'humane' Ravan statement.

In a recent interview, the actor said that his upcoming film *Adipurush* was going to show the 'humane' side of Ravan.

This didn't go down too well with people, including BJP leader Ram Kadam, who tweeted Sunday: "Saif who plays Ravan's character says his abduction of Sita Maa will be justified in the film. We will never allow that to happen. Hope better sense prevails #JaiShriRam"

Sharing an clarification regarding his statement on his *Adipurush* character of Ravan, Saif said on Sunday: "I've been made aware that one of my statements during an interview has caused a controversy and hurt people's sentiments. This was never my intention or meant that way. I would like to sincerely apologise to everybody and withdraw my statement."

"Lord Ram has always been the symbol of Righteousness & Heroism for me. *Adipurush* is about celebrating the victory of good over evil and the entire team is working together to present the epic without any distortions."

700 shorts to be shown on local streaming platform

A jury made up of acclaimed film directors like RV Ramani, Rajesh S Jala, Jugal Debata, Sushant Mishra, Tusar Wagela and Smruti Choudhury will select the best three films of the festival

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar: Odisha-based audio visual streaming platform AAO TV is all set to unveil more than 700 short films from across the globe between January and March next year.

The films will be streamed online at a festival — AAO TV Creative Collective Short Film Festival (ACCSFF), informed the organisers at a presser Sunday.

A jury, comprising renowned film personalities, will select the best film of the festival which will get a cash prize of ₹one lakh while ₹50,000 each will be awarded to the second and third best films,



Screengrab of a film to be shown at the festival

said Kaushik Das, CEO of AAO TV and Chairman of ACCSFF.

The festival committee started accepting entries September 14

which was closed November 30.

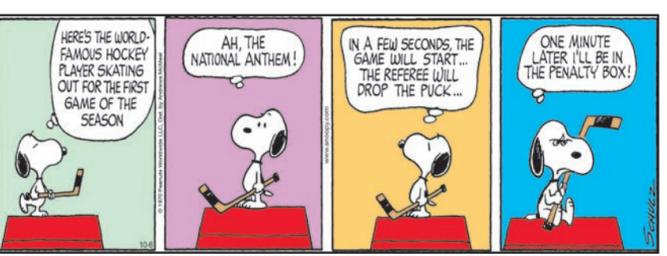
"The festival has evoked overwhelming response as we have received more than 700 entries in

over 50 languages from as many as 40 countries including Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan, Brazil, Spain, France, Turkey, Uruguay, Serbia, Taiwan and India," said Siddhartha Mohapatra, vice-president of AAO TV and also a promoter of the festival.

MOVIE MARATHON

The movies to be displayed have been shortlisted by a jury made up of acclaimed film directors like RV Ramani, Rajesh S Jala, Jugal Debata, Sushant Mishra, Tusar Wagela and Smruti Choudhury, the organisers said.

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

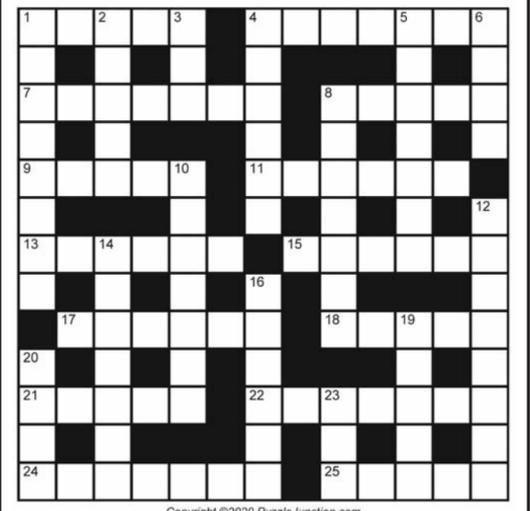


BREVITY



FUN post

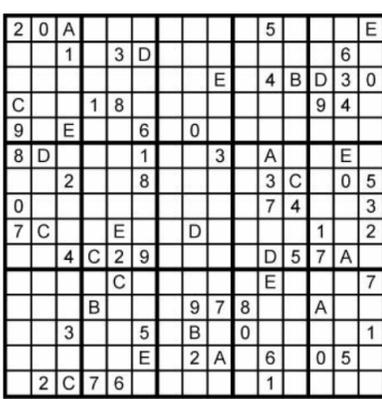
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Ward off
 - 4 An arc above
 - 7 Diapers
 - 8 Europe's longest river
 - 9 Kind of stare
 - 11 Docket
 - 13 Modernise
 - 15 Poser
 - 17 To the rear, at sea
 - 18 Coffee shop order
 - 21 Out of whack
 - 22 Hot spot
 - 24 Shake
 - 25 Rock bottom
 - Down**
 - 1 Small motorboat
 - 2 ___ New Guinea
 - 3 Luau souvenir
 - 4 Rapsallion
 - 5 Sturdy thickset canine
 - 6 Watered-down locale
 - 8 Haiphong
 - 10 Some litter members
 - 12 Lover
 - 14 Really, really dislike
 - 16 Inveigle
 - 19 Healed
 - 20 Can of worms?
 - 23 Summer cooler

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

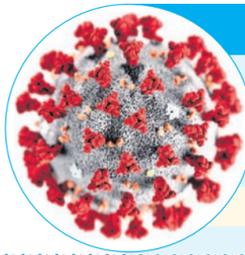


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	6,70,09,214	4,63,89,620	15,37,092
India	94,99,710	89,31,798	1,38,159
Odisha	3,21,196	3,15,840	1,771

CHRISTMAS CAKES

Cakes being baked at a bakery in Sutahata area of Cuttack ahead of Christmas, Sunday



Pari: Political slugfest intensifies

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 6: Odisha Congress in-charge and member of the All Indian Congress Committee (AICC) A Chellakumar here Sunday alleged that BJP and BJD in Odisha are committed to protect the interests of each other.

During a presser from the Congress Bhawan, he also raked up the issue of Pari murder case and accused the BJP of protecting the BJD government.

He said, "The Congress party was one of the first ones to raise the issue of Pari murder case. In the Assembly, we demanded a SIT probe under the supervision of a High Court judge. But, the Chief Minister initially came up with a SIT probe by police. We didn't accept it."

"BJP created ruckus in the House and their only aim was to save the culprits. Finally, the government agreed to a SIT probe under a HC judge. This was a triumph of our demand. BJP and BJD are different sides of the same coin. We are ready for any kind of debate on who is working with the BJD in disguise," he added.

The leader also said that in the infamous Itishree Pradhan case,



Congress leader A Chellakumar addresses the media in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

BJP and BJD in Odisha are committed to protect each other's interest. The Congress party was one of the first ones to raise the issue of Pari murder case

A CHELLAKUMAR | IN-CHARGE, ODISHA CONGRESS

Why did the Congress demand a non-SIT probe in the infamous Kunduli case but shift their stance in the Nayagarh minor's murder case?

PRADIPTA NAIK | LEADER OF OPPOSITION

BJP slams Cong's 'double standards'

Leader of Opposition in the Assembly and BJP leader Pradipta Naik Sunday slammed Congress on their double standards in seeking SIT probes. He said, "Why did the Congress demand a non-SIT probe in the infamous Kunduli case but shift their stance in the Nayagarh minor murder case?" Addressing reporters, the leader said that the Congress party was politicising the issue. "Congress leaders like Suresh Routray and Santosh Saluja have already showed which party has a nexus with the BJD. Why was the party mum on the issue in the Assembly?" he asked. He also said that the BJP and Congress are different in their style of working. "They just want to politicise issues. They do not serve the people but we are here to work for the people. We still reiterate our demand of removal of the tainted minister involved in the Pari issue, a CBI probe and justice for Pari's family," he added.

the CBI failed in giving justice. "CBI investigated the case. The so called accused were not punished. What did the CBI do in that case? BJP leaders admitted the accused in the case was from their own party. People have seen the performance of the CBI."

The Congress leader also talked about BJP-BJD nexus. "A BJP MP

in Rajya Sabha has admitted that he was admitted to the Upper House with the blessing of BJD. Jual Oram has also hinted towards the nexus between the two parties. The BJP government has always saved BJD leaders. What happened to the chit fund case, mining case and others which were undertaken by the CBI?" he added.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Lingaraj servitors lodge plaint over online Abadha sale

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 6: Servitors of Lingaraj temple Sunday lodged a complaint with the police seeking action against a state-based e-commerce firm for posting ads on online sale of 'Abadha'.

The e-commerce start up 'Tashkeru' also offers Abhadha from Ananta Basudev shrine. Lingaraj police has started a probe into the incident upon receipt of the complaint by the Brahman Nijog Samiti. Police sources revealed that authorities of the firm have been asked to appear at the police station Monday. The firm has reportedly been buying Abadha from Lingaraj Temple and Ananta Basudev Temple and handing it over to customers. Meanwhile, another firm hungryfree.com is also supplying prasad to its clients. Police sources said that the incident will be brought to the notice of higher authorities before taking any action.

Auto-rickshaws plenty, parking space scanty



Auto-rickshaws parked roadside due to crunch in parking space in Rasulgarh area of Bhubaneswar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 6: With widespread beautification and expansion works in Bhubaneswar, auto rickshaw drivers have complained about shortage in parking space which forces them to park at roadsides, resulting in traffic snarls during rush hours.

In a meeting held between members of Auto Chalaka Mahasangha and officials of Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) and Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), the association brought forward the paucity of space the drivers are facing as development and beautification projects have sped up in the city.

"The authorities are least bothered of providing any space to us. As a result, we are forced to park on the roadside at prime pickup locations. The traffic police constantly threatens us to fine for irregular parking but we are left with no choice," complained Auto Mahasangha Secretary, Padman Kumar Samal.

With more than 30,000 autos running in the city, Samal added that about 150 out of 400 associations in the union have complained of inability to pick up customers from preferred locations at various parts

of city. Out of this, Shishu Bhavan, Vani Vihar, Rajmahal Square, Bapuji Nagar, Congress Bhawan and Rupal Chak are said to be the most problematic ones.

While authorities have come up with designated parking areas for the auto rickshaws, the union has rejected the initiative terming it as exploitative. "The idea is to pass tenders for a paid parking system, like the one in airport. This model will ruin the livelihood for many who are already having a tough time making ends meet after COVID and introduction of app-based cab services," Samal added.

Furthermore, things have become tougher for the drivers with BMC now promoting bicycle culture in the city. Addressing encroachment free bicycle tracks as key to boost cycling, the BMC has now turned up against the auto drivers parking in the tracks. "We too don't want to create traffic snarls, but what about our space," Samal lamented.

Meanwhile, acknowledging the concerns of auto rickshaw drivers, BDA Vice Chairman Prem Chandra Chaudhary said, "We accept that there has been miscommunication between the union and authorities. However, we will be looking into the issue and will be providing space for parking."

6 SUSTAIN INJURIES IN BOAR ATTACK



The wild boar caught in a CCTV

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, Dec 6: At least six persons were injured in wild boar attack in the Holy City here in the wee hours of Sunday, said an official of the Forest Department.

"This was the first incident when a wild boar strayed into Puri city and attacked people. Wild boars are often seen in Brahmagiri area of Puri city," said Forester Swapneswar Jali.

According to Forest Department sources, the wild boar attacked Urmila Nayak and Rohini Nayak of Sarada Devi Sahi while they were doing some work near a school in the locality. "The duo was rushed to the District Headquarters Hospital (DHH) with critical injuries. Four morning walkers also sustained injuries in the wild boar attack," said the Forester.

Soon after the incident, a team of Forest Department officials led by Ranger Rajat Kumar Mahapatra visited Baliapanda, Lokanath Sahi and some other localities to trace the wild boar.

"The wild animal might have hidden inside a forest near Balisahi. We will try to locate the wild boar if it comes out in search of food at night. We are planning to lay a trap to capture the wild animal," added the Forester.

Air quality to worsen Dec 8

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 6: The second week of December might see severe deterioration of air quality in the state capital with reports suggesting more than 250% increase in levels of Particulate Matter (PM) owing to pollutants and fog.

As per the Quality Early Warning model of the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, the forecast in PM 2.5 level in the air of Bhubaneswar will rise to 219 microgram/m³, Tuesday (December 8), when the safe limit for PM2.5 in the air is stipulated at 60 micrograms per m³.

The quality of air is also going

to deteriorate in coastal districts like Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Balasore and a few other cities. As per the model, while the air quality in the whole state is predicted to remain moderately polluted, the air quality in Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Balasore and adjoining areas will turn poor; Monday.

"The incursion of pollutants is likely due to air flowing from North India and development of foggy conditions till Friday in the coastal districts. The direction of wind flow to Odisha will be from the north east, and the anti cyclonic air circulation over Odisha and adjoining states is the major reason

behind the incursion of the pollutants," the report suggested.

It can be mentioned here that PM 2.5 are pollutant particles having a diameter of less than 2.5 micrometer, which is smaller than the width of human air. Since these pollutants are fine particles, they can penetrate deep into the lungs. Hence, a high level of PM2.5 concentration is very harmful for human health.

Meanwhile, the Air Quality Index as observed by Skymet during noon, Sunday, was ranged under moderately polluted. While the air quality is specified as unhealthy in Jayadev Vihar, it was moderate in other areas.



Ignoring Covid-19 norms, people in large numbers throng Unit-II market in Bhubaneswar for shopping ahead of the Prathamastami festival, Sunday

Sanitation drive 'fails' in Khurda

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khurda, Dec 6: The 'Swachh Bharat, Sustha Bharat' campaign launched by Khurda Municipal Council to score a top position in Swachh Survekshan list has failed despite lakhs being spent on it.

The civic body administration here deployed 'Swachh Sathis' and sanitation workers to ensure cleanliness in the town. Garbage cleaning in 20 out of the 22 wards here has been outsourced to private agencies.

To ensure a garbage-free town, 204 contractual workers, 17 'Swachh Sathis' and two supervisors have been pressed into service in areas under the municipality. At the same time, 174 workers are working under contractual firms.

According to municipality sources, a volume of 14 to 16 tons of wet and dry wastes are generated in the town a day. To lift the garbage from the sources and carry them to end destinations, six battery-operated garbage lifting vehicles, 30 tri-cycles and six tractors have been engaged. These vehicles are



being managed by SHGs.

Despite these arrangements, piles of garbage can be seen everywhere in the town. At places, stray dogs and cattle can be found spreading the muck on to the roads making nearby residents prone to health hazards.

When asked, Khurda municipal council executive officer Swetapadma Satpathy said they have been giving priority to cleanliness. The garbage generated in the town is being lifted only once in the morning giving rise to such a situation. The issue will soon be addressed, she added.

Coastal ecosystems of state under 'severe stress'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 6: A webinar on human impacts on coastal ecosystems of the state was organised by Orissa Environmental Society (OES) here Sunday.

In the webinar titled 'Coastal Ecosystems of Odisha: Human Impacts and Changing Scenario', Prasanna Kumar, a scientist of ORSAC, Govt. of Odisha, shared his view on coastal wetland resources of the state and their management. On similar lines, Gopal Krishna Panda, Professor Emeritus, Dept. of Geography, Utkal University discussed climate change hazards and their impacts on coastal zone management in Odisha.

S N Patro, President, OES, said, "Coastal ecosystems of Odisha are under enhanced stress. The coastal zones of the world and the dynamic natural ecosystems they sustain are currently under extraordinary and mounting pressure from diverse human activities and increasing human population." "The flow of pollutants from



UNSUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

THE SIX COASTAL DISTRICTS SUPPORT 36% OF THE TOTAL POPULATION AND 43% OF THE URBAN POPULATION OF THE STATE

HOWEVER, UNSUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENTAL PRACTICES HAVE HAD DETRIMENTAL IMPACTS ON THE COASTAL ECOSYSTEMS

landmass, global warming and climate change are exacerbating the challenges further. Odisha is blessed with a coastline of 482 km extending from the river Subarnarekha in the north to the River Bhadua in the south. These areas encompassing river basins

and catchments, estuaries and coastal seas are blessed with abundant resources and amenities, which are crucial to the commercial and socio-economic benefits and opportunities," he added.

Jaya Krushna Panigrahi, secretary OES, presented the welcome ad-

dress and elucidated the significance of the theme. He said that the coastal belt comprises of a wide range of ecosystems, from parts of Eastern Ghats, Chilika Lagoon and its Nalaban bird sanctuary to Bhitarkanika

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groves and sandy beaches of Puri, which are rich repositories of economically important flora and fauna.

"The zone has significant contributions to several sectors such as agriculture including fisheries, minerals and other geological products, industrial development, transport and tourism. The six coastal districts support 36% of the total

population and 43% of the urban population of the state. However, environmental degradation is gaining momentum for unsustainable developmental practices that has detrimental impacts on the coastal ecosystems," he added.

On the occasion, Panda explained how developmental activities along with erosion, inundation, saltwater intrusion and flooding are aggravating the situation and causing ecosystem disruptions in the coast region.

He suggested for location-specific multi-hazard assessment with risk levels and emphasized on eco-friendly and cost-effective coastal protection measures by way of beach nourishment, planting vegetation, dune fencing and dune stabilisation.

Speaking on 'Coastal wetland resources of Odisha and their management', Kumar narrated the significant functions, values and attributes of wetlands, and stressed on integrated wetland management adhering to CRZ Regulation, 2019.

Name illegal miners: NGT

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 6: National Green Tribunal (NGT) Sunday reiterated its demand that a government panel should name stone miners who flout environmental laws.

The order from the tribunal came to the limelight in the latest hearing, when the bench did not find the affidavit from the committee formed under NGT orders. It asked the panel to submit the report again before the bench.

Earlier, the tribunal directed the administration to furnish names of the people involved in illegal laterite mining. The order was passed by the NGT after the administration told the tribunal that they have penalised the truck drivers who were involved in transporting the illegally mined laterite stones. In the latest written order, NGT said, "On 1.10.2020 the Committee constituted by the Tribunal was once again directed to examine the various aspects as pointed out...of order of the said date and submit a report on the identity of the persons running il-

legal quarries and also as to whether or not the unavoidable Environmental Impact Assessment process had been followed while permitting Sri Jagannath Temple Administration to mine the area."

The NGT earlier had claimed that the whole approach of the Khurda administration was an attempt to hoodwink the tribunal in order to protect the perpetrators of the crime. A committee formed after the NGT direction had said that at Jhinkijhari area in Khurda district all mines are illegal. It also had said that a few mines are dangerously abandoned.

The orders of the NGT into the matter came after a petition was filed by one Bidu Bhushan Harichandan alleging illegal laterite stone mining by rat hole mining method without following the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for mining and other environmental laws.

It was said that 40 sites in Khurda have been witnessing illegal stone quarries in areas like Tapang, Anda, Jhinkijhari and others.



Earlier, NGT stated that Khurda officials were trying to hoodwink the tribunal in order to protect miners indulged in illegal stone mining

PADDY AS OFFERING



A vendor sells paddy bunches at Unit-1 market in Bhubaneswar, Sunday, for the worship of Goddess Laxmi as part of Manabasa ritual in the Hindu month of Margasira

CB likely to take Akash on remand

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 6: The Crime Branch (CB) is likely to take Akash Pathak, son of suspended IFS officer Abhay Kant, on remand from Monday to further probe into the alleged job fraud case. The Special vigilance court will hear the plea of the Crime Branch Monday.

The CB has been interrogating personal assistant of Akash, David Peter who is reportedly his close confidant. Meanwhile, some police sources also revealed that Tata Motors authorities have already informed the Commissionerate Police that Akash was never an employee of the company.

He allegedly duped several persons by falsely claiming to be the Managing Director of Tata Motors

(Passenger Division). A city-based travel agency, Sky King has accused Akash of denying making payment of bills worth around Rs 65 lakhs while Tata Motors has duped several job aspirants from Gopalpur impersonating the MD of company.

Akash's father, Abhay Kant has also moved Orissa High Court seeking bail in a Disproportionate Assets (DA) case.

Similarly, the Khurda district and sessions court is going to hear the bail application filed by Gopalpur MLA Pradeep Panigrahi Monday. Panigrahi has been arrested by Crime Branch for allegedly receiving money on behalf of Akash from the duped job aspirants.



State's Covid-19 caseload reaches 3.21L

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 6: State's Covid-19 tally Sunday mounted to 3,21,196 after 393 more people tested positive for the infection, while six fresh fatalities pushed the toll to 1,771, a senior Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department official said.

Of the 393 new cases, 229 were reported from various quarantine centres, and the rest were detected during contact tracing, the official said.

Khurda district, of which state capital Bhubaneswar is a part, recorded the maximum number of new cases at 49, followed by Sundargarh at 45 and Mayurbhanj at 32. Two districts, Boudh and Subarnapur, did not report any



Flouting social distancing norms, health workers protest at PMG Square in Bhubaneswar

new case in the last 24 hours, said the official.

According to the official, Khurda reported two fresh casualties and one each succumbed to the infection in Balasore, Bolangir, Kalahandi and Nuapada districts.

As many as 53 Covid-19 patients in the state have died due to morbidities.

The positivity rate in the coastal state stands at 5.23 per cent, the official said.

Over 61.43 lakh samples have

IN NUGGETS

KHURDA RECORDED THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF NEW CASES AT 49, FOLLOWED BY SUNDARGARH AT 45 AND MAYURBHANJ AT 32

KHURDA REPORTED TWO FRESH CASUALTIES WHILE ONE EACH SUCCEMDED TO THE INFECTION IN BALASORE, BOLANGIR, KALAHANDI AND NUAPADA

THE POSITIVITY RATE IN ODISHA STANDS AT 5.23 PER CENT

Saranghi seeks impartial probe against CDPO

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Dec 6: Union Minister of State (MoS) for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Pratap Chandra Sarangi Sunday requested Women and Child Development Minister Tukuni Sahu to initiate enquiry against the CDPO of Nilgiri block.

In the letter, Sarangi stated that several self-help groups (SHGs) have filed complaints against the CDPO of Nilgiri alleging irregularities, highhandedness and corruption in distribution of woollen sweaters to children in

ANGANWADI 'IRREGULARITY'

Anganwadis. The SHGs alleged that as per the valid order of CDPO, women members of SHGs have knitted woollen sweaters by taking loans for distribution to Anganwadi children. However, Anganwadis centres have refused to take the delivery of sweaters from the SHGs under the plea that CDPO, Nilgiri has instructed all Anganwadis not to accept the sweaters from SHGs.

Even though the SHGs brought the matter to the notice of the CDPO, the official refused to support them.

The Union minister further said that the poor women groups in the villages are facing financial hardship as they are now unable to pay the loans taken for this purpose.

The Union minister urged Tukuni Sahu to initiate an impartial inquiry into the alleged irregularities under the official.

Fake scribe arrested in fraud case

Bhubaneswar: Commissionerate police Sunday arrested a fake journalist for duping a woman of ₹7,000 on the pretext to open a web news channel. The accused has been identified as Rincon Narayan, 32, of Bomkhal area in Sahid Nagar police limits.

STIR OVER FARM LAWS



Activists of AIMSS hold a demonstration near Netaji Setu in Cuttack, Sunday, to protest against the new farm laws

Round-the-clock call centre to hear complaints in Holy City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, Dec 6: Soon, a round-the-clock call centre would be opened at the district police headquarters here to accept people's complaints quickly. "People can ring 7653891030 to lodge their complaints. They can also send their complaints through WhatsApp. Our officials will take action on the complaints immediately," said a source in the district police.

According to sources, the Superintendent of Police (SP) will review the action taken on the complaints every day. "In the absence of SP, the additional SP will look into the complaints. Steps would be taken to probe the allegations at the earliest," added the source.

This apart, a reception centre would be opened at the district police headquarters. "People can lodge

their complaints directly at the reception centre within 10 am and 6 pm every day. The reception centre will remain open on holidays," said a police officer.

It is learnt that Human Rights Protection Cell DSP Manobrata Satpathy and a few other senior police officials would be appointed as nodal officers to ensure timely action on complaints. It is worth mentioning here that Puri police has received flaks from several quarters recently for the alleged death of a 32-year-old man in custody November 18.

The incident caused a lot of hue and cry across the state. Some police officials were transferred and a few others were suspended by the state government in connection with the incident.

The postmortem report of victim

SP seeks inputs from scribes

SP Kanwar Vishal Singh Sunday collected inputs from media persons to check crimes in the Holy City here. The media persons put emphasis on the safety of tourists and pleaded for stern action against extortion and people-friendly behaviour by the police.

K Ramesh has revealed that his body bore as many as 16 injury marks.

"Ramesh's body bore 16 injury marks. He had died due to severe injuries on his head. A clot of around 250ml blood was found in the victim's brain," stated the post-mortem report.

City temple looted

After preliminary probe, cops recovered the CCTV camera installed in the temple and discovered the act of the theft captured in the footage

broken and immediately informed the trust members about the theft.

"As per our estimation, the donation box gives us Rs 30,000 to Rs 40,000 revenue every month. However, the hundi was not opened for the last two months due to Covid-19 pandemic. So we guess there must be Rs 60,000 or more cash in the donation box," he stated in the FIR.

After preliminary probe, cops recovered the CCTV camera installed in the temple and discovered the entire act of the theft captured in the footage. In the video, a youth was seen entering the temple premises and damaging the electric lights.

"We have the proof of the theft recorded in the CCTV camera. In the recorded video, the youth barged into the temple and executed the act in around 20 minutes," the temple priest said.

Local residents of the region have requested the IIC to investigate the matter and take action immediately.

For comedians, the pandemic has been no laughing matter

City-based comedians are gearing up to perform for live audiences after months of shows on social media platforms

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Dec 6: For comedians based in Bhubaneswar, the coronavirus pandemic has been no laughing matter - in more ways than one. People losing their lives to a deadly virus hardly provided rich picking for jokes. And then there was the problem with comedy venues closing en masse during lockdown.

On social media, comedians are finding ways to make followers laugh during the lockdown, but for them it's no laughing time. Stand-up comedy, which enjoys 75-80 per cent of the comedy pie, epitomises the gig economy.



However, after several months of low-profile events through apps such as Zoom and Google Meet, city comedians are gearing up to perform in front of live audience.

Comedy Highway member Satyabrata Mohapatra, who recently performed in a live show, said, "People have finally shifted to live

open mics and shows. We ensure implementation of Covid regulations and guidelines. Although, it is a bit tough due to the financial part of it as we can accommodate only limited people after social distancing.

During the beginning of lockdown, Zoom shows had become the

new normal but now, people are craving for live events and we are here to provide them with the same seamless experience that they had over a year ago, he added.

"The quality of content has not deteriorated at all and people should rest assured of having immense fun. It's amazing to be back on stage and hold the mic in front of a non-virtual audience. The audience has been a part of the online shows throughout the lockdown," he said.

Another city-based comedian Alokesh Sinha, who participated in a live show, said, "I was nervous because it has been 8 months. I haven't been on stage and somehow, I got used to the open mic system. We were initially skeptical if people would buy tickets but to our surprise, even with social distancing in place, we were able to sell 36 tickets in a 60-seater auditorium.

Some of the comic artistes are planning for shows in the coming days. Akash Baghar of Bhubaneswar Komedians, who cre-

ated popular shows like Bhubaneswar Bula Buli said, "As stage artists, there's obviously some amount of craving to see live audience. We would have done another year round up show if not for the uncertainty of the post Covid world." "Additionally, with pre-production work for Cuttack Bula Buli going on, we've got our hands full. But if the craving gets stronger, we'll probably end up doing a show towards December-end with limited seating," he added.

Meanwhile, some of the artistes are in two minds about live shows. Roshan Bisoi of The Chain Jokers said, "It certainly felt like a fish out of a bowl, but it was important as well to keep the distance. I'm still skeptical about bringing in crowds."

Comedian Priyaranjan Sahoo said, "We will do shows once things are normalised. Lots of shows are planned but I am not in a hurry. We will do a round-off of the year 2020 and will release it in social media."

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Decks cleared for crude oil import terminal at Paradip

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paradip, Dec 6: Work for the establishment of a proposed crude oil refinery unit here got a kick start as slum dwellers of Sandhakuda near the Paradip Port signed in a tripartite agreement, Saturday.

The crude oil refinery is being established by state-owned Numaligarh Refinery Ltd (NRL) of Assam. It will be established over 200 acre of land provided by the Paradip Port authorities near the Sandhakuda slum. NRL is a joint venture between Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), Oil India Ltd and the Assam government.

The facility will enable the oil firm to import crude oil via the major port at Paradip to cater to its requirement post ramp up of its refinery from three million tonnes per annum (mtpa) to nine mtpa.

NRL has deposited Rs 20 crore with the Paradip Port Trust (PPT) as initial land deposit. The refinery to be built at a plan outlay of Rs 22,000 crore will trade in 3 to 9 million tonne of crude oil. The refinery here will supply crude oil to its Assam based refinery through pipelines. The NRL authorities had signed a memorandum of understating with the port authorities February 7, 2020.

The slum dwellers were opposing the project apprehending displacement. They also feared that the dredging works might inundate the slum with saline water. However, the differences were re-



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solved at a meeting held in the town, Thursday.

The tripartite meeting was attended by deputy secretary of Paradip Port K Thirumollar, project manager of NRL Bikash Das and a delegation of residents from the Sandhakuda slum. The port and NRL authorities claimed that the slum dwellers will not be displaced because of the project.

The deputy secretary and the NRL project manager also assured

the delegation that the local youths will be given employment in the refinery on the basis of existing vacancies in the plant.

The port authorities and NRL project manager claimed that the dredging works for laying the pipelines will not inundate the slum. Proper arrangement will be made to discharge the groundwater gushing out of the pit during dredging works, the authorities said.

TRIBAL FAITH



Tribals blocking NH-20, demanding official religion status to their faith Sarna, at Mashapal under Ghasipura block of Keonjhar Sunday

OP PHOTO

Pradeep misused his power: Cong MLA

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Dec 6: While three-time MLA and former minister Pradeep Kumar Panigrahi has been in 14-day remand by the Crime Branch over his alleged links with tainted IFS officer Abhay Kant Pathak and his son Akash and the recruitment scam, Congress leader and Sanakhemundi MLA Ramesh Jena alleged that Panigrahi has indulged in corruption and many illegal activities by misusing his power as the representative of the Chief Minister in Ganjam.

Addressing a press meet Sunday at Kukudakhandi, he said that officials of various departments should be included in the investigation of the CB.



Congress leaders at a press meet

After he was elected from Gopalpur in 2004 and became the representative of the Chief Minister, Panigrahi misused his power and looted crores of rupees through corrupt and fraudulent activities, Jena alleged.

The Sanakhemundi MLA further alleged that officials of some departments and block chairpersons

helped the Gopalpur MLA in shoddy activities.

"Panigrahi has grabbed 111 acres of land belonging to tribals and the forest department in Sorada area. When thousands of migrant labourers were going through hardships during the lockdown, Panigrahi used to enjoy service of chartered flights to Rajasthan and

Mumbai," he said.

Jena also claimed that the Gopalpur MLA has grabbed the land of a gullible person at Courtpetta Chowk by using threat tactics, apart from being involved in illegal murram lifting at Karlapalli hill and Kankada hill.

"When Panigrahi was powerful, he used to harass Congress workers. I was implicated in 54 cases. In many cases, Panigrahi was operating behind the scene. He is even involved in various illegal activities outside the state," Jena asserted.

He observed that the Chief Minister has taken the right step, but stern action should have been taken against Panigrahi much earlier.

Man beaten to death over meat price

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Dec 6: A man who was beaten up for not being able to pay the final installment of the price for mutton he had purchased breathed his last at Tilaka Nagar under Bandhmunda police limits in Sundargarh district Sunday.

The deceased was identified as Padmalochan Purty, an employee of Rourkela Steel Plant.

According to sources, Padmalochan had brought mutton from Debashis some days ago, paying half of the price at the time of purchase and promising the rest to be paid soon.

However, due to some reasons he fell behind with his promise. After several reminders, Debashis arrived at Padmalochan's house last Friday and asked the latter to pay the balance amount. Then, the murder took place.

Micro projects planned for mining-hit areas in Sundargarh

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sundargarh, Dec 6: The state government has planned to implement micro projects in mining-affected areas of Sundargarh district so as to improve life and livelihood of the people living in those areas.

The micro projects will be tailor-made according to suitability and existing opportunities of income generation in the specific areas.

Ahead of the project execution, a survey was started Saturday to assess the socio-economic status of the people, a report said.

According to the report, the survey is being funded by the district mineral foundation (DMF). The survey will cover 40,000 families in six mineral bearing areas. Three voluntary organisations have been roped in for the survey. Youths of these organisations have received

The survey is being funded by the district mineral foundation (DMF) which will cover 40,000 families in six mineral bearing areas

training in this regard.

They will take part in door-to-door survey and make use of a mobile application. The survey will be carried out for three to four months in mining-affected areas like Hemagiri, Koida, Kutra, Lahunipada, Kuanrunda and Rajgangpur.

A database will be prepared and accordingly the administration will draw up micro projects aimed at bringing around a change in the life and livelihood of the people.

Five poachers held in Kapilash

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, Dec 6: Officials arrested five poachers in Dhenkanal forest division Sunday. Four country-made guns, two deer antlers, 100 traps, three scales of pangolin have been seized from their possession.

The accused have been identified as Naba Balmuchi (21), Budu Balmuchi (27), Ratna Balmuchi (30), Kurupa Baiji (28) and Sanatan Dehury (33) of Dhenkanal.

All the accused have been booked under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 on the charges of poaching activities in Kapilash forest range. The development comes at a time when there is a rise in poaching activities in Kapilash forest range. Recently, the forest department had arrested two persons with a live pangolin.

Probe says tusker died after falling 150 ft down rail track

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Dec 6: A joint inquiry by forest and railway officials Sunday into the death of a tusker on the railway tracks on Sambalpur-Talcher route the previous day revealed that the animal was thrown off 150 feet down the rail tracks and died after being hit by a speeding express train from rear.

The animal after falling down the tracks broke its two legs and died. The rail track is placed 150 feet above the land surface with large pits on both sides. Notably, four elephants have died during the last one year due to various reasons in Sadar forest range under Sambalpur forest division.



Sanjeet Kumar, divisional forest officer (DFO) of Sambalpur, said the elephant, part of a herd, came in front of the Rourkela Intercity Express near the pillar no 33 of

Gadgadhahal bridge between Jujumura and Hatibari railway stations Saturday evening. The incident occurred at around 6:30 pm, said the DFO.

Sunday, DFO Sanjeet Kumar and DRM Pradip Kumar of Sambalpur railway division visited the spot and conducted a probe into the mishap. They discussed about the steps to be taken for the protection of elephants. The mishap occurred as the tusker instead of taking the elephant corridor to cross to the other side chose to walk over the railway track which resulted in the mishap. A post-mortem was conducted on the carcass and the tusks were trimmed before burying the carcass on the spot.

AWARENESS DRIVE



An awareness campaign on sanitation is under way in Hinjilicut area of Ganjam, Sunday

OP PHOTO

Women oppose Kharasrota drinking water project

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara/Rajkanika, Dec 6: The mega water project proposed to draw water from Kharasrota river in Kendrapara district faced strong opposition from locals Sunday.

Hundreds of women under the banner of Kharasrota Bancho Sangram Samiti (KBSS) observed 'Jal Satyagraha' in the river at Bharigada village under Rajkanika block Sunday.

The project is being built at Barunadiha in Bhadrak to provide safe drinking water to 91 panchayats under Basudevpur, Thidhi,



Dhamnagar and Chandbali blocks. A sum of Rs 892 crore will be spent on the project. The women plunged into the water of the river while opposing the government bid to divert the water from Kharasrota.

The protesters demanded that the government should initiate steps for construction of a project in the lower catchment of the river for supply of drinking water in

Aul and Rajkanika before taking up the project for diversion of water from the river.

The agitators said, "We will do everything to save our river. If required, we will not hesitate to sacrifice our lives. Kharasrota is the lifeline of our locality. We will not allow any attempts to dry up the river." If water is extracted for the mega pipe water project, the flow of water would decrease while sea water will flow into the river. It will cause severe damage to the biodiversity of Bhitarkanika, hamper agriculture and lead to acute water scarcity in the Aul and Rajkanika blocks, the locals alleged.

7-year-old girl raped in Jharsuguda

POST NEWS NETWORK

Brajrajnagar, Dec 6: A minor girl was allegedly raped December 1 evening at Brajrajnagar in Jharsuguda district by a man who was well known to the victim's family.

The incident took place when the girl child had been returning home with the accused from a private coaching centre here. After returning home, the girl cried and asked her mother not to send the youth to bring her back home anymore. She, however, did not reveal about the incident any further that day. Later, the victim narrated her plight to her mother December 4 night following which an FIR was lodged by her family with the help of Jharsuguda Childline.

Turtles arrive in droves at Rushikulya beach

POST NEWS NETWORK

Ganjam, Dec 6: Congregation of the endangered Olive Ridley sea turtles for mating at the river mouth of the Rushikulya near Purunabandh village in Ganjam district has delighted wildlife experts.

The turtles started arriving in large numbers around the first week of December and were noticed between Gopalpur and Nuagaon, around four to five km from Rushikulya beach, said DFO Amlan Nayak.

The rare turtles are arriving in thousands at the river mouth and found engaged in mating, the DFO added. The process will continue till December last week, he said. The river mouth is known as the nesting site of the rare turtles. The turtles travel thousands of miles through the sea and come here for mating and laying eggs.

The mating of the sea turtles has



Olive Ridelys

spread cheers among environmentalists as thousands of turtles in pairs could be seen floating in the sea about four km from shore for hours together within five to six km stretch of the sea beach, the DFO said.

The mating starts in the second week of November usually at a dis-

stance of 18 to 20 km off the coast. Initially a few turtles were seen mating. Later, the number registered a big jump, the DFO said.

The forest officials as part of preventive measures have declared the area extending from Prayagi in the north to Aryapalli in the south as a prohibited zone by putting up

barricades, and have banned the entry of visitors.

Forest officials are also keeping tabs on trawlers, and have formed a 10-member team for surveillance. The coastguard and other security personnel have been asked to keep a watch on the shores to provide a peaceful atmosphere to the marine turtles during their mating season, he said. At least 24 forest officials have been deployed in six camps to keep a tight watch during the period.

The mass nesting of turtles will start when the winds start blowing southwards from February, the forest official said.

Olive Ridley turtles travel thousands of miles from as far as the coasts of Costa Rica, Sri Lanka and Japan to mate and lay eggs at the mouth of Rushikulya. Female turtles lay around 140 to 160 eggs and it takes 40-50 days for the hatchlings to come out of eggshells.

OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, ASKA (GANJAM)
(E Mail: askanac@gmail.com Ph.No.-06822-273068)
L.No.2482/2020/N.A.C. Dated 05.12.20

QUOTATION CALL NOTICE

Sealed quotations are invited from Govt. authorized firms/dealers for selling of waste materials of MRF Centre of Aska N.A.C. The rate should be quoted against the item excluding taxes. The quotationers are essentially required to enclose their GST registration certificate, PAN Card, FIRM registration certificate etc. The quotationer shall be required to produce the original copy of the required document before the undersigned at the time of opening of tender.

The quotationer should submit EMD @1% of quoted rate in shape of B.D./D.D./T.D.A. pledged in favour of Executive Officer, ASIKA NAC as mentioned detailed below. The quotation paper will be available at the office of the undersigned from date 08.12.2020 10 A.M. to 17.12.2020 in the office hour except holidays and the quotation received on or before date- 21.12.2020 at 5 P.M. on TENDER BOX / SPEED POST / REGISTERED POST and the same will be opened on date 22.12.2020 at 5 P.M. in presence of respective quotationers or their authorized representatives.

The authority reserves the right to reject any or all the quotations without assigning any reason thereof.

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1	Selling of waste materials of MRF centres of ASIKA N.A.C.	Rs.1000/-

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NAC, Asika

It is the Divine Presence that gives value to life. This Presence is the source of all peace, all joy, all security. Find this Presence in yourself and all your difficulties will disappear.



The Mother

Looking Away

India is now paying dearly for what may be called diaspora politics that Prime Minister Narendra Modi played by canvassing for US President Donald Trump asking Indian-origin settlers in the USA at the 'Howdy Modi' programme in Houston last year to vote for Trump. Modi turned India's time-tested, age-old foreign policy of non-involvement in internal elections of other democracies on its head and interfered in the internal affairs of the USA.

Resultantly, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau merrily threw to the winds whatever scruples he might have had over 'interfering' with India's internal affairs and openly extended support to farmers of Punjab and Haryana agitating outside Delhi for the repeal of the three controversial farm Bills the BJP-led NDA government has passed, bulldozing protests by farmer organizations and Opposition parties.

Now, to the consternation of India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), the UN chief António Guterres has apparently taken a cue from the Canadian Prime Minister and supported the cause of the Indian farmers saying "people have a right to demonstrate peacefully and the authorities should let them do so." Compounding matters further, 36 cross-party UK parliamentarians have also rallied behind the agitating farmers, while Trudeau didn't pay any heed to India's protest against the remarks he and some of his ministers had made expressing concern over the plight of farmers of Punjab and Haryana. He even iterated "Canada will always stand for the right of peaceful protests anywhere around the world."

Because of the current Indian government's adventurism in foreign relations other countries, they too have now started interfering with India's internal matters in the name of making common cause with the relatives and friends of Indian diaspora in their respective countries. "This is an issue of particular concern to Sikhs in the UK and those linked to Punjab, although it heavily impacts on other Indian states. Many British Sikhs and Punjabis have taken this matter up with their MPs as they directly affected with family members and ancestral land in Punjab," said a letter written to UK foreign secretary Dominic Raab by 36 MPs.

The response by the MEA so far tends to create the impression that it is trying to defend the indefensible. For this, the career diplomat and foreign minister S Jaishankar has to make a puerile move of staying away from Canada-led Foreign Ministers' meeting on the COVID situation to be held on 7 December, obviously in protest against Trudeau's support to the protesting Indian farmers. The COVID meeting is aimed at forging a common strategy to tackle the pandemic. Other members of the grouping include the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Brazil and Singapore. In fact, the group has been meeting once a month and Jaishankar himself attended the previous meeting on 19 November.

He performed a similar act by refusing to be at a programme held in the USA on the plea that a US Congresswoman, Pramila Jayapal, a Democrat, who had criticised the Modi government's Kashmir policy, was to participate in it. Notably, Vice President-elect Kamala Harris has been a consistent supporter of Pramila in her activities.

It seems like the MEA has no option but to go through the motions of registering protests at various forums according to the set pattern, though these are bound to prove futile because of the government's amateurish foreign policy initiatives solely aimed to suit the domestic needs of the ruling party. Staying away from such crucial discussions may eventually grossly harm India's interests in the long run. Earlier, the Canadian High Commissioner Nadir Patel was summoned to the MEA and handed over a demarche registering India's strong protest: "The Canadian High Commissioner was informed that comments by the Canadian Prime Minister, some Cabinet Ministers and Members of Parliament on issues relating to Indian farmers constitute an unacceptable interference in our internal affairs. Such actions, if continued, would have a seriously damaging impact on ties between India and Canada." What Trudeau and some of his ministers, UK MPs and the UN said, indeed, constituted gross interference with India's internal matters. But, in spite of India's protests, the persistence in policy, especially of Canada, implies something sinister.

It's an irony that the country's internal problem has now got mixed up with foreign relations. The BJP led government, under PM Modi's leadership has, for some time, been gearing the foreign policy to suit domestic electoral politics. Like India's diaspora politics, Trudeau's interference also has the fig leaf of Sikhs being the dominant ethnic group in some eight seats of the House of Commons in Canada and a significant minority group in 15 other seats where they can change the polling equation. That way, expressing concern for the well being of relatives of the Sikh populace living in Canada has far greater justification for Trudeau than Modi asking Indians who have renounced India to become US citizens to vote for Trump. That too did not really happen as Indians in America are reported to have en masse voted Democrat.

Experts in foreign relations read very deep into these multiple opinions recently aired. According to them, Canada, UK and the UN would not issue such reckless statements unless they very clearly understood where US President-elect Joe Biden's Administration was headed. This could indicate an isolated India having to deal not only with China's veto and Pakistan's terror but also a US that looks away.

WISDOM CORNER

- Do not take life too seriously. You will never get out of it alive. **ELBERT HUBBARD**
- Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow. **MELODY BEATTIE**
- Success is getting what you want. Happiness is wanting what you get. **DALE CARNEGIE**

WORDSWORTH

Woot

This weird term was the word of the year 2007 from the dictionary maker Merriam-Webster. It presented a list of 20 words on its website that had been the subject of a large number of searches during the past year and asked visitors to vote. Woot came out top. Woot is spelled with a couple of zeroes in the middle but it's said as "woot". It's a small cry of joy, perhaps after completing a task, after besting an opponent, or for no reason at all. Merriam-Webster says, "It became popular in online gaming as part of what is known as 133t ('leet', or 'elite') speak, an esoteric computer hacker language in which numbers and symbols are put together to look like letters." Its origins are disputed. Some say it's a blend from the cry Wow! Loo!, one that might be uttered when a Dungeons & Dragons player came across treasure; Merriam-Webster notes that it has been said to be an acronym for we owned the other team (meaning that our team bested them utterly); others argue that it derives from the Scots hoot!, which really is a bit of a hoot, since the Oxford English Dictionary describes that as an "ejaculation expressing dissatisfaction with, or impatient and somewhat contemptuous dismissal of, a statement or notion," which hardly fits the context. Grant Barrett, who runs the Double-Tongued Dictionary site, is sure these are all folk etymologies. He says that woot was most likely derived from and popularised by the US dance catchphrase of 1993, woot, there it is! "In clubs and on dance floors across the country, in half-time shows and in baseball stadiums, 'woot, there it is' and plain 'woot!' were shouted long and loud by millions. It was used by hype men at hip-hop shows, dancers and cheerleaders at ball games, DJs at discos, and probably by ball-callers at bingos." But what of its future? Allan Metcalf, executive secretary of the American Dialect Society, was quoted in an Associated Press story as being rather less than wootish about it. "It's amusing, but it's limited to a small community and unlikely to spread and unlikely to last".



Kingshuk Nag

BJP LEADERS SAY THEY WILL CHANGE THE NAME OF HYDERABAD TO BHAGYANAGAR. THIS IS SCARING THE MUSLIM POPULATION, ALTHOUGH AHMEDABAD - WHERE THE BJP HAS BEEN IN POWER SINCE 1995 - HAS NOT BEEN RENAMED KARNAVATI

FOCUS TELANGANA

BITTER BATTLE AHEAD

After the State of Hyderabad was forced to merge with India on September 17, 1948, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru also re-structured the dominions of the Nizam. In a couple of years, Hyderabad was merged with the Telugu speaking area of Andhra, that had been earlier a part of the Madras Presidency under the British, to create Andhra Pradesh. It was the first linguistic State in India. The Marathi and Kannada speaking dominions of the Nizam's State were hived off and merged with Maharashtra and Karnataka (which were then called the Bombay State and Mysore State). This left the Muslims. The well-to-do and the enterprising migrated to Canada, UK and Pakistan leaving their poorer brethren back home. They stayed back - mostly in Hyderabad city where their population at that time was no less than 50 per cent. Telugu became the lingua franca in Hyderabad but they managed with Urdu, helped by the fact that during the Nizam's time many Hindus from what is now UP and Gujarat had also migrated to Hyderabad. They also knew no Telugu: so Urdu/ Hindi became another widely spoken language in Hyderabad. Even as dosas and idlis were introduced for the first time, the population also took to biryanis and other Hyderabadi specialities with gusto. Life continued with no hassles.

But Nehru had made a mistake: he had merged two Telugu speaking areas but had not accounted for the fact that language did not make up for cultural homogeneity. Sometimes people speaking the same language are very different from each other: This was the case in Andhra Pradesh where people from the Andhra areas very openly looked down upon folks from the erstwhile Hyderabad State (or Telangana region). This had to do with the fact that English (those days taken as an indicator of education) was widely spoken by those hailing from Andhra region while most of the people from Telangana spoke Urdu but knew no English. This is not surprising because Urdu was the language of administration under the Nizam and



Seeing that KCR has been growing weaker, the BJP decided to re-enter Telangana and challenge the TRS. This would be their major foray into South India. Also, on target is the Majlis- Ittehadul- Muslimeen which represents the Muslims in Hyderabad

even the Hyderabad-based Osmania University taught in Urdu. Things became so bad that a movement for a separate Telangana State began in 1969 and became very intense. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister, managed the situation with great difficulty and defused the movement and made a Telangana leader Narasimha Rao (later to be Prime Minister) chief minister in what was a compromise. Things remained under control for many decades as the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) under cine star NT Rama Rao and later his son-in-law Chandrababu Naidu occupied centre stage. Under them the Telugufication of Andhra Pradesh intensified and in a real sense Hyderabad became a Telugu city.

In 1999 prompted by his own woes, K Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR) then part of the Naidu raj resigned from TDP and formed the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS). The party had a single point agenda: demand for a separate State of Telangana. It tied up with the Congress party in 2004 and after the death of then chief minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy (who besides being a strong leader was also greatly opposed to the creation of a Telangana State), the separate Telangana movement intensified.

As KCR seemed much stronger and scared by a fast he undertook, Union minister P Chidambaram announced on December 9, 2009 (Sonia Gandhi's birthday) that a separate Telangana State would be created. But soon it was clear to the Congress high command that KCR had taken them for a ride; moreover, there was great opposition from the Andhra region leaders. Thus, within a fortnight, the Union government reneged on its plans.

This was a signal to KCR and his associates to return to the path of agitation. In fact, the agitation intensified and assumed gargantuan proportions. Before the 2014 general elections, UPA chief Sonia Gandhi announced that she was granting Telangana. This step was a reversal of the decision taken by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. In the 2014 elections, KCR swept the field, winning most of the seats in Telangana. The Congress which had been very strong in the Andhra region got wiped out there as people took the move to dismantle an integrated Andhra Pradesh as an act of betrayal. KCR won the elections.

Once in power, K Chandrasekhar Rao became like a neo-Nizam, rebuilt the chief minister's residence like a palace and has now demolished the secretariat to make way

for a grand building overlooking the waters of the Hussainsagar Lake. He seldom goes to office and lives in his farm house. Not many have access to him and this includes many ministers and senior officers of the government. The government is now running on remote, one that is operated by his young son KT Rama Rao (who is however seen as a smart leader). The KCR government has made many promises to the poor - these include two bed-roomed houses that have not been implemented.

Seeing that KCR has been growing weaker, the BJP decided to re-enter Telangana and challenge the TRS. This would be their major foray into South India. Also, on target is the Majlis- Ittehadul- Muslimeen (MIM) which represents the Muslims in Hyderabad. Targeting the MIM also was born out of the desire to neutralise MIM's boss Asaduddin Owaisi, the energetic barrister who studied in London but now wants to contest elections in West Bengal. His foray in Bihar where he won a few seats, and earlier in Maharashtra, is seen as his strength in garnering votes.

The next assembly polls in Telangana will be fought in 2023. But fresh after its good performance in the municipal polls in Hyderabad - where it won 48 seats up from the previous 4, the BJP is buoyant. TRS won 55 seats down from 99 seats the last time. Though Hyderabad is just one city in a State and this is only a civic election, the BJP sees this as an indicator of things to come. BJP leaders say they will change the name of Hyderabad to Bhagyanagar. This is scaring the Muslim population, although Ahmedabad - where the BJP has been in power since 1995 - has not been renamed Karnavati. Name changes have been a recurring demand and very much on the BJP agenda. Here in this Southern State, it is a new beginning. And from now onwards to 2023 it will be bitter battle on a new warfront called Telangana.

The writer is a senior journalist and author based in Hyderabad.

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SPECTRUM GLOBAL ORDER

The case for a quadripolar world

Having diminished America's global role while refusing to accept China's growing clout, Trump's presidency represents the last gasp of a unipolar epoch. But while many assume the unipolar post-Cold War world is giving way to a bipolar order dominated by the United States and China, that outcome is neither inevitable nor desirable. Instead, there is every reason to hope for, and work toward, a world in which Europe and the emerging economies play a more assertive role.

To be sure, as the world's most economically successful autocracy, China has already achieved significant geopolitical influence in Asia and beyond. During the two most recent global crises - the 2008 financial collapse and today's pandemic - the Communist Party of China quickly adjusted the country's political economy in response to changing circumstances, thereby solidifying its grip on power. Because countries that do not want to toe the US line now routinely turn to China for inspiration and, often, material support, what could be more natural than China emerging as one of the two poles of global power?

In fact, a bipolar world would be deeply unstable. Its emergence would heighten the risk of violent

conflict (according to the logic of the Thucydides Trap), and its consolidation would make solutions to global problems wholly dependent on the national interests of the two reigning powers. Three of the biggest challenges facing humanity would either be ignored or made worse.

The first challenge is the concentrated power of Big Tech. While technology is often presented as a key front in the US-China conflict, there is considerable congruence between the two countries. Both are committed to the pursuit of algorithmic dominance over humans, whereby digital platforms and artificial intelligence (AI) are used as tools by the government and corporations for surveilling and controlling the citizenry.

There are differences, of course. Whereas the US government has adopted Big Tech's own vision and become subservient to the industry, Chinese tech giants remain at the mercy of the government and must abide by its agenda. Likewise, advocacy for human rights and democracy would be a low priority in a bipolar world. With repression in China growing, the US may appear by comparison to remain an exemplar of these values. But America's principled commitment to democracy and human rights

is thin and generally not taken seriously abroad. After all, the US has overthrown democratically elected but insufficiently friendly governments in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. And when it has supported democracy in places like Ukraine, it has generally had an ulterior motive, such as the desire to counter or weaken Russia.

The third big issue likely to receive short shrift in a Sino-American bipolar world is climate change. In recent years, China has appeared more supportive of international agreements aimed at reducing greenhouse-gas emissions than the US has. But the two superpowers are not just the world's two biggest emitters; they also are both beholden to energy-intensive economic models.

China will remain dependent on manufacturing growth, while consumers and growth industries will sustain high demand for energy in the US. And one can expect that both sides' short-term interest in economic supremacy will trump every one else's interest in a swift green transition. All of these problems would be more likely to be addressed in a world with two additional poles, represented by the European Union and a consortium of emerging economies, perhaps within a new organization - an 'E10' - comprising

Mexico, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey, South Africa, and others. Such a quadripolar world would be less conducive to a new cold war, and it would bring more diverse voices to global governance.

The EU has already emerged as a standard-bearer for privacy protection and regulation of Big Tech, and it is well positioned to push back against algorithmic automation. Even though it is US and Chinese companies that largely drive concerns about privacy, consumer manipulation, and labour-replacing AI, the European market is so large and important that it can tilt the playing field globally.

But a strategic pole that speaks for emerging economies may be even more consequential. If AI continues to displace humans in the workplace, emerging economies will be the biggest losers, because their comparative advantage is abundant human labour.

Emerging economies can cooperate as a united front only if they abandon their most authoritarian, nationalistic, and destructive behaviour: Ushering in a quadripolar world may thus yield unexpected dividends.

The writer is Professor of Economics at MIT.

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Daron Acemoglu

A BIPOLAR WORLD DOMINATED BY THE US AND CHINA IS NEITHER INEVITABLE NOR DESIRABLE

Ensure children's safety

Sir, The years from 2015 to 2019 saw a huge surge in child missing cases in Odisha. During this period, the cases filed in various police stations across the state rose by 75 per cent. The tracing rate of missing children in Odisha was lowest in the country throughout the years except in 2017. Under these circumstances, the well-highlighted programmes such as 'Operation Muskan' and 'Operation Smile' are proving less effective. The latest 'Pari' case is one such instance of failure. Therefore, formation of high level special task forces under the direct supervision of the chief minister is the need of the hour to accelerate the tracing out activity to attain 100 per cent recovery. The safety and security of children in the state should be among the priority of good governance. Thus, the state government should look into the matter seriously, at least now and after.

Santosh Kumar Satapaty,
PARALAKHEMUNDI

China's attempt to weaponise water

Sir, China's plan to build a 'super' dam on the lower reaches of the Yarlung Zangbo river close to the LAC will have far-reaching consequences for northeast India's water security. From Tibet the river flows through Arunachal Pradesh as Siang and through Assam as the Brahmaputra. The purpose of construction of the dam that will be close to Arunachal Pradesh is maintaining China's national security. The new dam will have the ability to generate hydropower three times that of central China's Three Gorges Dam which has the largest hydropower capacity in the world. China has already built several smaller dams on the Yarlung Zangbo. China is currently the controller of seven of South Asia's mightiest rivers. These rivers flow through Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam. About 48 per cent of that water runs directly into India. Even though there is a water data sharing agreement between India and China, the latter stopped sharing data in 2017 in the wake of the long standoff between Indian and Chinese troops at Doklam. Apart from this, the two countries reached an agreement on sharing hydrological information on the Brahmaputra in flood season. India is considering a plan to build a dam on Brahmaputra to offset Chinese construction upstream. India is concerned that the Chinese construction could trigger flash floods or create water scarcity. The development against the backdrop of the border standoff in Ladakh has the potential to complicate bilateral relations. China wants to weaponise water and control it.

Venu GS, KOLLAM (KERALA)

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

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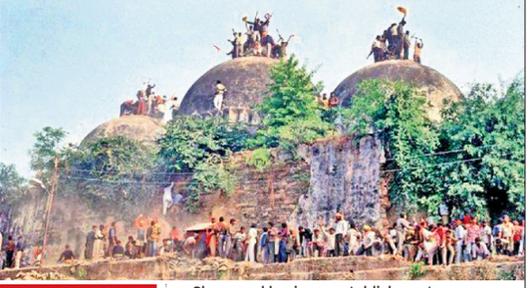
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BABRI MASJID 'INJUSTICE'

On the 28th anniversary of demolition of the mosque, Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi took to Twitter to voice his view

AGENCIES

Hyderabad, Dec 6: Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (MIM) chief Asaduddin Owaisi Sunday urged people to remember and teach the next generation to remember 'the injustice' done with the demolition of Babri Masjid at Ayodhya.



BLACK DAY
The anniversary was observed as black day in Hyderabad and other parts of Telangana on an appeal by various Muslim organisations

- Shops and business establishments were closed in some localities
- The MIM had appealed to Muslims to observe a shutdown to register their democratic protest on the anniversary of demolition of Babri Masjid
- The party, however, appealed that businesses shouldn't be forced to close

"Remember & teach the next generation to remember: For 400+ years our Babri Masjid stood in Ayodhya. Our ancestors prayed in its hall, broke their fasts together in its courtyard & when they died, they were buried in the adjoining graveyard. Never forget this injustice," Owaisi wrote.



"On the night of December 22-23, 1949, our Babri Masjid was desecrated & illegally occupied for 42 years. On this date in 1992, our masjid was demolished before the whole world. The men responsible for this did not see even a day's punishment. Never forget this injustice," he added.

observed as black day in Hyderabad and other parts of Telangana on an appeal by various Muslim organisations. Shops and business establishments were closed in some localities.

The MIM had appealed to Muslims to observe a shutdown to register their democratic protest on the anniversary of demolition of Babri Masjid. The party, however, appealed that businesses should not be forced to close.

Police had made tight security arrangements to prevent any untoward incident. Additional forces were deployed in Hyderabad, especially in the communally sensitive old city.

Police personnel were deployed at various places while patrolling was intensified. Personnel of the Rapid Action Force were deployed

near the Charminar and the historic Mecca Masjid.

Police arrested five activists of Darasgah Jihad-o-Shahadat (DJS), who tried to take out a rally in the old city to mark Babri Masjid demolition anniversary.

The United Muslim Forum, an umbrella group of various Muslim organisations and Islamic scholars, called for observing December 6 as black day. It said in a statement that it was not only a mosque which was demolished but the secular and democratic structure of the country was razed.

It also appealed to Muslims to offer prayers on the occasion for restoration of Babri Masjid. It urged them to regularly offer 'namaz' in mosques and educate the new generation about the history of Babri Masjid.

TN issues SOPs for college-reopening

NOT MORE THAN 50PC OF THE TOTAL STUDENTS CAN BE PRESENT ON CAMPUS AT ANY GIVEN TIME

AGENCIES

Chennai, Dec 6: With universities and colleges reopening across the state December 7 for final year undergraduate students across all streams, Tamil Nadu government issued a set of Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) guidelines for institutions. Tamil Nadu government allowed students pursuing post-graduation in science and technology stream and students of final year classes for all colleges and Universities including Arts, Science, Technical (including Polytechnic and Hotel Management Institutions) Engineering courses to return to their campuses beginning December 7.



phased reopening and complete rosters for all departments and batches of students accordingly.

If required, students can be allowed to visit their respective departments in a small number to meet and discuss with faculty members. However, institutions will have to make provisions for students opting to study online. The SOP adds, "If some students opt

not to attend classes and prefer to study online while staying at home, Institutions are to provide online study material and access to e-resources to such students for teaching-learning."

In addition to compulsory wearing of face masks at all time, screening at entry and exit points, regular sanitisation, other pointers in the SOP include:

Teaching hours in a day to be extended, as per requirements of the institution.

Six-day schedule to be followed so that classes can be conducted in phases and the seating arrangement be made keeping in view the requirements of physical distancing. Universities and colleges have to reduce the class size and break them in multiple sections to maintain physical distancing during the classes. Depending on the avail-

ability of space in classrooms or learning sites, up to 50pc students alone are allowed on a rotation basis to attend the classes.

Since residential students who are coming from different locations, they shall remain in quarantine and self monitor their health for a period of 14 days before being allowed to attend classes (even if they bring a negative test report or the university/college plan to test them on arrival). Set up helplines for health, psychological concerns and well-being of students in Universities/ Colleges which need to be regularly monitored by counsellors and other identified faculty.

Form COVID-19 helps groups of students headed by hostel wardens / senior faculty who can identify friends/classmates in need of help and provide the immediate necessary help.

Recoveries continue to outnumber new infections in T'gana

AGENCIES

Hyderabad, Dec 6: Telangana has reported 622 fresh Covid-19 infections, pushing the state's tally to over 2.72 lakh, health officials said Sunday. Recoveries continued to outnumber the new cases.

The declining trend in new cases continued despite authorities stepping up daily tests to over 57,000.

The fresh cases pushed the state's tally to 2,73,341 while two more people have succumbed to the disease during the last 24 hours, taking the toll to 1,472.

The fatality rate stands at 0.53 per cent against the national average

of 1.5 per cent.

According to the Director of Public Health and Family Welfare, 44.96 per cent of the fatalities were due to coronavirus while the remaining 55.04 were on account of comorbidities.

Recoveries continued to outnumber the new cases. The last 24 hours registered 993 recoveries, pushing the cumulative recoveries to 2,63,744. The number of active cases dropped further to 8,125 including 6,116 who are in home or institutional isolation.

The recovery rate jumped to 96.48 per cent, which is higher than the national average of 94.3 per cent.

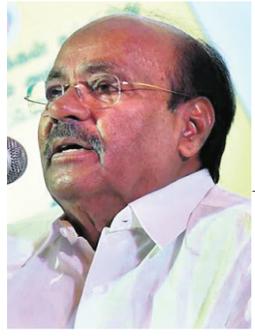
Greater reported 104 new cases. Rangareddy district the second highest number at 55 followed by Medchal Malkajgiri (55), Warangal Urban (33), Nalgonda (29) and Bhadradi Kothagudem (29).

The authorities have increased the number of daily tests to 57,308.

Officials said that 54,436 samples were tested in government-run laboratories and 28,723 in private. Out of 2,73,341 total positive cases so far, 70 per cent (1,91,339) were asymptomatic while the remaining 30 per cent (82,002) were symptomatic. The data shows that 63.9 per cent of those tested positive were aged between 21-50 years.

Guv 'unnecessarily' holding back nod for reservation Bill

The PMK founder says that the Governor has no right to reject a Bill once passed by the Assembly



AGENCIES

Chennai, Dec 6: Pattali Makkal Katchi founder S Ramadoss Sunday said that Governor Banwarilal Purohit was "unnecessarily" holding back nod to the 20 per cent reservation in government jobs for those who had studied in Tamil-medium schools and colleges.

In a statement issued here, Ramadoss said that the state had passed the Bill nine months ago but Purohit was since delaying his nod which was against social justice.

The PMK founder said that the Governor has no right to reject a Bill once passed by the Assembly. "If he does not agree with the objective of the proposed law, he can send it back to the government. If the government sends it back for Governor's assent, then he has to give his nod."

Since no time frame was fixed for the Governor to take a decision, Purohit is in the habit of keeping pending Bills and resolutions he is not agreeable to, Ramadoss claimed.

TRS supports call for Bharat Bandh

AGENCIES

Hyderabad, Dec 6: The ruling Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) also extended support Sunday to the 'Bharat Bandh' called by farmers' unions December 8 to oppose and seek repeal of three new central farm legislations.

Telangana Chief Minister and TRS President K Chandrababhan Naidu said that the TRS rank and file would participate actively to make the proposed shutdown a success. Several trade unions and politi-

cal parties, including the Congress, Rashtriya Janata Dal, Trinamool Congress and the Left parties have already announced their support to the countrywide shutdown.

KCR, as the TRS leader is popularly known, justified the support by stating that the farmers are agitating through lawful means against the Centre's farm laws.

He recalled that the TRS had opposed the farm Bills in Parliament in September as they were allegedly aimed at harming the interests of Indian farmers.

The TRS chief felt that there was need to continue the agitation till the new legislations were withdrawn. He also appealed to the people to stand by farmers and make the bandh successful.

KCR had earlier said that the farm laws would benefit the corporates and adversely impact the farmers. "For public consumption, it was mentioned in the Bills that the farmers can sell their produce anywhere in the country. But in reality, the Bills will enable the traders to go anywhere in the country to buy the produce. The Bills will also help the corporate lobby to spread in all corners of the country and thus pave the way for private traders," he had said.

Farmers are demanding the withdrawal of the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020; the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020; and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020.

As the fifth round of talks between the farmers and the Centre remained inconclusive Saturday, the sixth round is scheduled to be held in Delhi December 9.

In TN, 10 Oppn parties support strike

CHENNAI: The DMK and its nine allies Sunday gave a call to farmer, trader, trade union, government employee and other associations to make the December 8 Bharat Bandh called by the farmer unions a success. In a joint statement issued here, the ten parties condemned the central government's silence on the demands of the protesting farmers along the borders with Delhi against the three farm laws. Farmers in large numbers are converging in along borders with Delhi with food stock for six months and their tractors, while the BJP-led Central government is delaying a decision in the guise of talks and is not agreeing for the farmer's just demands, the opposition parties in Tamil Nadu said. The ten parties are - DMK, MDMK, CPI, CPI(M), VCK, IUML, Congress, MMK, UK and KNMNK. Meanwhile, Kamal Haasan's MNN has sent a delegation to Delhi to lend their support to the farmers' protest.



DD 'doesn't' have copyright over launch broadcast: ISRO

In a reply to questions raised under RTI Act, the ISRO said it is the producer of the launch broadcast which is telecast by DD, social media handles and official website



AGENCIES

Chennai, Dec 6: The Indian space agency has said it is the producer of its entire rocket/satellite launch broadcast/telecast by Doordarshan (DD) and the latter does not have any copyright.

In a reply to questions raised under the Right to Information (RTI) Act, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said it is the producer of the launch broadcast

which is telecast by DD, social media handles and official website.

"DD does not have any rights over the ISRO footage. However, DD, being a government entity, supports broadcasting of ISRO launches from Sriharikota on a request basis," ISRO said in its RTI reply.

The space agency also categorically said DD does not have rights over independent animations produced by ISRO.

To a query whether ISRO rocket launch footage in public domain are available for free to independent creators and whether DD can claim copyright revenue from someone using it for educational purposes the space agency replied: "The material of ISRO launches available in public domain can be used by an individual(s) for non-commercial activities with the permission of the department."

The ISRO also said there is no written contract between it and the DD.

T'gana cinema halls are back in biz

Most theatres celebrated the return with the screening of Christopher Nolan's much awaited sci-fi action thriller 'Tenet'

AGENCIES

Hyderabad, Dec 6: Cinema halls in Hyderabad and rest of Telangana are back in business with the audiences returning after more than eight months to enjoy their favourite entertainment.

Since reopening December 4, most of the theatres have seen 80-90 per cent occupancy in the permitted 50 per cent seating, giving a hope for revival of the film industry after severe blow due to Covid-19 pandemic.

Owners of the majority of 175 movie screens in Greater Hyderabad are happy over the public response received during the last three days and they see it as a positive development for the recovery and revival of the film exhibition business.

Telangana, which has about 600 theatres, was late compared to many other states in allowing reopening of screens but authorities justified the move in view of the pandemic situation. They moved ahead with their plans only after significant drop in Covid cases.

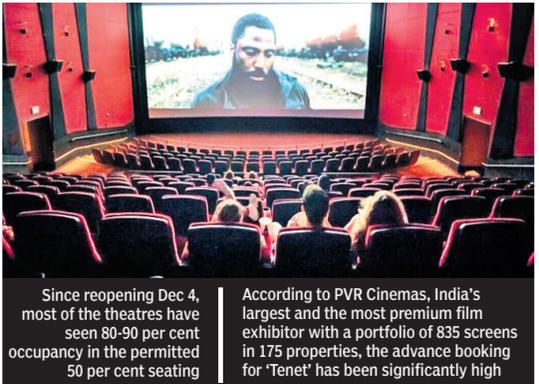
As the daily count dropped to less than 1,000 over the last couple

of weeks, the government decided to allow reopening of theatres. Officials said improvement in the situation especially in Greater Hyderabad, which has 175 theatres, including 70 multiplex screens, led to the decision.

The state government was not in a hurry to allow reopening of theatres. Some industry leaders had suggested that the authorities go step-by-step in the direction so that theatres don't have to be closed down abruptly after reopening as happened in China and some other countries. They felt that such a development would cause more damage.

The authorities also ensured that all precautionary measures are in place before allowing the reopening of theatres. They allowed alternate seating. Thus, the theatres will screen the shows with 50 per cent capacity till further orders. The seating capacity in theatres varies from 400 to 1,300.

The response came as a boost to the theatre owners, who feel that people are no longer scared. Audiences returned to the cinema halls with friends and families and they ex-



Since reopening Dec 4, most of the theatres have seen 80-90 per cent occupancy in the permitted 50 per cent seating

According to PVR Cinemas, India's largest and the most premium film exhibitor with a portfolio of 835 screens in 175 properties, the advance booking for 'Tenet' has been significantly high

pressed happiness over being able to enjoy it after a long time.

Audiences thronged multiplexes, including PVR Cinemas, Inox, Cinepolis and AMB cinemas. According to the Telangana Exhibitors Association, most multiplexes and single screen theatres have resumed screening.

"There is nothing like watching movies on the big screen and with friends. We thoroughly enjoyed the

experience after a long time," said P Ravikumar, a college student.

Theatre owners are also ensuring adherence to the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) prescribed by the state government. Wearing face masks is a must for the audiences. Their body temperature is checked at the entrance. Theatres have also made provision for hand sanitizers at different points. The employees of theatres were seen

wearing gloves, masks and visors.

They expect that with further improvement in the overall situation, the government will relax the guidelines and increase maximum seating capacity.

Most theatres celebrated the return with the screening of Christopher Nolan's much awaited sci-fi action thriller 'Tenet'.

According to PVR Cinemas, India's largest and the most premium film exhibitor with a portfolio of 835 screens in 175 properties, the advance booking for 'Tenet' has been significantly high.

In an effort to ensure health, safety and sanitization, and to build customer confidence, PVR is implementing stringent hygiene protocols, social distancing and food safety measures, along with minimal human contact across all touchpoints. "Chequered Audi seating with only 50 per cent occupancy, social distancing marked queuing, digital contactless transactions, operating 50 per cent of the restroom facilities, installation of fiber and glass shields are some of the initiatives that have been introduced", it said.



Today we remember Dr Ambedkar's contribution to nation building. Working to make India free from all forms of discrimination is the only truthful way to pay homage to him
RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

DAYTIME TEMPERATURE RISES IN MANY PARTS OF MP

Madhya Pradesh experienced warm weather during daytime in the first week of December, India Meteorological Department (IMD) said



of the day quote

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is constructing a film city in Greater Noida, while Pilibhit is more appropriate for it. Pilibhit in Rohilkhand should have the 'Chalchitra Nagari' (film city), as it has jungles, hills and valleys. Making a film city there will not incur much expenses

RAJPAL YADAV | HINDI FILM ACTOR

Testing, tracking and treatment should continue aggressively to break the chain so that the second wave can be checked

YOGI ADITYANATH | UP CHIEF MINISTER

The ruling party is withdrawing security of leaders who have left the TMC and slapping false cases on opponents. This will stop after six months

DILIP GHOSH | WB BJP PRESIDENT

OPPN PARTIES SUPPORT 'BHARAT BANDH'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Hyderabad/Mumbai, Dec 6: The Congress, TRS, DMK and the AAP Sunday joined other opposition parties in extending support to the 'Bharat Bandh' December 8 called by farmer unions which have been protesting on Delhi's borders for 11 days demanding repeal of the Centre's new agri-marketing laws.

The Trinamool Congress, RJD and the Left parties, besides a joint platform of ten central trade unions, had Saturday backed the countrywide strike.

NCP chief and former union agriculture minister Sharad Pawar warned the Centre that if the deadlock continues, the agitation will not be limited to Delhi and people from across the country will stand by the protesting farmers. Expressing the Congress "wholehearted" support to the strike call, party spokesperson Pawan Khara said it will hold protests that day at all district and state headquarters in



Farmers during their Delhi Chalo protest march

PTI PHOTO

solidarity with the demands of the farmers. Addressing the media at the AICC headquarters in Delhi, he said former party chief Rahul Gandhi, through tractor rallies, signature campaigns and Kisan rallies, has been raising the party's voice in support of the farmers. TRS president and Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrababhan Naidu said the party rank and file would actively participate in the bandh to

ensure it was a success, according to an official statement. Rao justified the support, stating that the farmers are legally agitating against the farm bills enacted in September and recalled his party's opposition to the legislation in Parliament.

The DMK-led opposition bloc in Tamil Nadu too extended support to the strike, saying the farmers' demand for repealing legislation was "totally justified." DMK Chief MK

Stalin had led a state-wide protest Saturday against the farm laws. In a statement, Stalin, TNCC chief KS Alagiri, MDMK founder Vaiko and Left leaders, among other DMK allies, said the ongoing protest outside Delhi by farmers was growing every day and drawing global attention. The grouping appealed to farmer unions, traders' bodies, government employees' associations, labour unions and others in the state to extend "grand support" to the bandh and make it a success Tuesday.

Actor Kamal Haasan's Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM) also extended support to the protest by farmers. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said that all AAP workers across the country will join the nationwide strike and appealed to all citizens to support the farmers.

The ruling TMC in West Bengal had Saturday extended "moral support" to the December 8 nationwide strike and said it would stage sit-ins in various areas for three days.

249 candidates in fray for 4th phase of DDC polls in J&K



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Dec 6: More than seven lakh voters will decide the fate of 249 candidates contesting in the fourth phase of the District Development Council (DDC) elections in Jammu and Kashmir Monday.

The polling will be held between 7 AM and 2 PM in 34 constituencies - 17 each in Kashmir and Jammu divisions. Besides DDC elections, polling will be held for panchayat bypolls in 50 vacant sarpanch seats and 216 vacant panch seats falling within the DDC constituencies, an official spokesman said.

So far, three phases of the maiden DDC elections, the first democratic exercise in Jammu and Kashmir after the reorganisation of the erstwhile state last year, were held on November 28, December 1 and December 4, registering a voter turnout of 51.76 per cent, 48.62 per cent and 50.53 per cent, respectively. In the fourth phase, out of the total 280 DDC constituencies in the Union Territory, 34 are going to poll, the spokesman said.

In the 17 DDC constituencies of Kashmir division, 138 candidates, including 48 women, are in the fray. In Jammu division, 111

candidates, including 34 women, are contesting in this phase.

"There were 123 sarpanch vacancies notified in the 4th phase and out of these 45 have got filled unopposed. There shall be a contest in 50 constituencies and 137 candidates, including 47 women, are in the fray," the spokesman said.

Similarly, he said, out of the total 1,207 panch vacancies notified in this phase, 416 have got filled unopposed and there is no contest in these constituencies. Polling would take place in 216 panch constituencies and there are 478 candidates in the fray including 129 women, the spokesman said.

In the 4th phase, he said, 7,17,322 electors are eligible to cast their votes - 3,76,797 men and 3,40,525 women. Amongst them, 3,50,149 are from Jammu division and 3,67,173 from Kashmir division, the spokesman said.

He said there are 1,910 polling stations across the union territory for this phase - 781 in Jammu division and 1,129 in Kashmir division of the 1,910 polling stations, 1,152 are hyper-sensitive, 349 are sensitive and 409 have been categorized as normal. The spokesman said all arrangements for this phase are in place.

Two PoK girls held as they cross over LoC in J&K's Poonch

AGENCIES

Jammu, Dec 6: Security forces have detained two girls who inadvertently entered Indian territory in Jammu and Kashmir from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir Sunday morning, officials said.

The Army said that Laiba Zabair, 17, and Sana Zabair, 13, of Abbasspur village in Forward Kahuta area inadvertently crossed over in the Poonch Sector of Line of Control. "Own troops deployed along the Line of Control detected the crossing, exercised complete restraint to prevent any harm to the teenagers," the Army said. Efforts were on for their early repatriation to their country, it added.

The spokesperson said that efforts are being made for their early repatriation.

CELEBRATION TIME



People release sky lantern to celebrate Fanus (sky-lantern) festival, in Kolkata

PTI PHOTO

SHORT TAKES

Trouble in Haryana's JJP

Chandigarh: Trouble seems to be brewing within the BJP's main coalition partner Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) in Haryana with two more out of its 10 legislators coming out openly to support the protesting farmers against new farm laws they say will destroy livelihoods. The legislators who posed a challenge to the just one-year-old post-election alliance government are Ram Kumar Gautam, the JJP's senior-most rebel, and Amarjeet Dhandha.

1 dead, 15 injured in cylinder blast

Mumbai: A 62-year-old woman died and 15 people were injured in a fire caused by a gas cylinder blast in a residential building in Lalbaug area of Mumbai Sunday morning, officials said. The condition of nine people, including a minor girl, is reported to be critical as they received 70 per cent to 95 per cent burns, a fire official said. Sushila Bangre, who was critically injured in the incident, succumbed to her injuries on Sunday night at KEM hospital, the official said.

PM to inaugurate Agra Metro today

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the construction of the Agra Metro Project December 7, via video conferencing. Union Housing & Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will also attend the event to be held at 15 Battalion PAC parade ground in Agra. Prime Minister tweeted: "At 12 noon tomorrow, 7th December, construction work of the Agra Metro Project will commence."

Drug peddler held

Mumbai: Mumbai police have arrested a drug peddler in the city and recovered from him MD drug and cash, collectively worth over ₹24 lakh, an official said Sunday. Accused Shakeel Qureshi (50) was caught Saturday night on J J Road in South Mumbai by the Anti Narcotics Cell (ANC) of Ghatkopar and the Azad Maidan unit, he said. Police said that he has been booked under relevant sections of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act and investigation was on.

FARMERS' PROTEST

SHARAD PAWAR TO MEET PREZ ON DEC 9

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 6: NCP chief Sharad Pawar is scheduled to meet President Ram Nath Kovind December 9 over the ongoing farmers' protest against the new agrarian laws, the party said here Sunday.

NCP spokesperson Mahesh Tapase said the former Union agriculture minister will apprise Kovind of the situation in the country in the backdrop of the protest.

Pawar will be accompanied by CPM leader Sitaram Yechury, CPI leader D Raja and DMK MP T R Baalu. They will meet Kovind at 5 pm Wednesday, NCP sources said.

The NCP Sunday joined other opposition parties in extending sup-

port to the 'Bharat Bandh' called December 8 by farmer unions, which have been protesting on Delhi's borders since November 26 demanding repeal of the Centre's new agri-marketing laws.

The representatives of thousands of agitating farmers have said that their call for a 'Bharat Bandh' would be observed with full force.

Earlier in the day, Pawar asked the Centre to take serious cognisance of the ongoing farmers' protest and said if the deadlock continues, the agitation will not be limited to Delhi and people from across the country will stand by the protesting cultivators. The NCP had staged a walk-out in the Rajya Sabha when the three farm bills were introduced in September during the Parliament's Monsoon session.



EARLY WINTER: POWER DEMAND IN DELHI INCREASES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 6: Plummeting temperatures in the city have seen the winter power demand surpassing that of the corresponding period last year, discom officials said.

Delhi's early winter is getting reflected in the city's power demand. The peak power demand in November 2020 surpassed the peak power demand of November 2019, said a BSES discom official.

"Delhi's peak power demand in November this year was 3678 MW (November 20) as compared to last November's peak power demand of 3631 MW (November 15). Also, it surpassed the power demand of November 2019 on 15 corresponding days," he said.

In the first five days of December also, Delhi's peak power demand has been more than the peak power demand of December 2019 on three corresponding days.



₹48L sedan out of garage

The ₹48-lakh Jaguar sedan bought by Speaker Sumitra Mahajan lying idle in the Parliament garage for four years, has finally found a user. Speaker Om Birla mustered the courage to put the car into some use as it was rusting. According to highly placed sources in the Parliament House, the car was recently taken out of the garage and put to use for VIP guests and others. Om Birla was left with no other option after the company executives conveyed it won't stand guarantee if it remains parked in the garage for an

unlimited period. Om Birla decided that the car needs to be put to some use and ordered the same be taken out of the garage. Earlier, he was very reluctant to use the up market ₹48 lakh Sedan bought by his predecessor Speaker Sumitra Mahajan in 2016. Though in the Order of Precedence, the Lok Sabha Speaker comes sixth after the President, Vice-President, Prime Minister, former presidents and deputy prime minister and governors. Yet Birla was disinclined to use this high-end vehicle for his personal use.

After ED, its SFIO's dismal show

If the Enforcement Directorate could secure 14 convictions only in 15 years, the track record of another prime agency to fraud corporate houses is no better. The Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) under the overall supervision of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs is dismal if not disastrous. The SFIO is pretty

independent in its function, having the powers to arrest and conduct even searches. The government had set up SFIO to deal with serious frauds by corporate houses and companies. Data shows the SFIO probed as many as 132 companies during the year 2017-18. But it could complete the investigation only in five cases. The record next year was no good when it could complete probes in 12 cases though it initiated inquiries into 83 companies. The worst came in 2019-20 when 361 companies were probed and only in 12 cases the probe was completed.

Why Mishra's extension stoked fire

For a change, Prashant Bhushan who runs the NGO Common Cause, may have overlooked certain facts when it filed a PIL against the one year extension given to Enforcement Director Sanjay Kumar Mishra (IRS IT: 1984) by one year. The unprecedented extension had already stirred a

hornet's nest across the bureaucracy. The NGO's petition November 27 argued that Section 25 of the Central Vigilance Act, 2003 stipulates that only an officer holding a rank higher than that of an Additional Secretary would be considered eligible for appointment as ED. It says Mishra has already reached his retirement age in May 2020, therefore, after the end of two-year period November 19, 2020, he cannot be given an extension.

Gadkari's bonanza to home state

Road Transport & MSME Minister Nitin Gadkari's enormous love for Maharashtra was clearly reflected in the data accessed. In fact, Maharashtra has stolen the thunder when it comes to National highways construction. Of the 49740 kms of national highways under construction in the entire country, as much 9283 kms are in Maharashtra alone. This is nearly 20% of the total length of the highways in India. When it comes to

OVER 2,500 COURT COMPLEXES TO GET VIDEO CONFERENCE CABINS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 6: Seeking to boost the capability of the lower judiciary to hear cases online, funds have been released to set up 'video conference cabins' in 2,506 court complexes across India, Law Ministry officials said.

While funds to the tune of ₹5.21 crore were released in September to set up video conference cabins, another ₹28.886 crore were given in October to buy additional video conference equipment, including hardware, cables and monitors, the officials.

The funds were provided by the e-committee of the Supreme Court and the Department of Justice in the Law Ministry.

While India has 3,288 court complexes, which house thousands of subordinate courts, the funds have been released for 2,506



REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE

court complexes to set up video conference cabins. Bigger court complexes with a large number of courtrooms would get multiple cabins as compared to smaller complexes. The size of a court complex, including the number of courts it houses, depends upon the size or population of the state. As courts continue to hear cases online amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the government has pro-

vided 1,500 additional video conferencing licences at an approximate cost of rupees nine crore for providing the facility for high courts and district courts. While the procurement has been completed, the process of installation is on, an official said. Such licences are required for legal and extended use of the video conference facility software, the official said. From the day the nationwide lockdown was imposed to check the spread of coronavirus in till October 28, high courts and district courts across India have heard over 49.67 lakh cases virtually, according to data collated by the Law Ministry.

The Centre had imposed the lockdown from March 25 to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus. From June 8, it started gradually relaxing restrictions under 'Unlock'.

allocation of funds, Maharashtra obtained ₹1.01 lakh crores, highest money allocated to any state in the country. There are as many as 223 highways in Maharashtra. Even the BJP ruled UP was sanctioned 3266 kms which is one third compared to Maharashtra. The BJP-JD(U) ruled Bihar was given 2416 kms of highways while Madhya Pradesh had to be contended with only 3205 kms roads. Nitin Gadkari was allocating huge funds to his home state of Maharashtra which rose year after year beginning with ₹1371 crores in 2016-17 and touched ₹9718 crores in 2019-20 - a seven-fold rise. Surprisingly, PM Modi's home state of Gujarat did not get a better deal either and had to be contended with ₹28425 crores for 44 national highways.

Focus on bungalow now!

After losing the Rajya Sabha seat for his mother Reena Paswan, the BJP chief is working hard to retain the palatial ministerial

bungalow at Janpath in Lutyen's Delhi. The 12 Janpath Road Bungalow had been allotted to Ram Vilas Paswan more than three decades ago when he became a Minister in the VP Singh government. He was Food and Consumer Affairs Minister when he breathed his last. His son, Chirag Paswan who donned the mantle as BJP chief has been a member of the Lok Sabha for second term and not entitled to type VIII bungalow. Now the bungalow falls under the "general category" which is under Housing & Urban Affairs. Chirag got a first set back when his 'Ram' (PM Modi) did not oblige him with a Rajya Sabha seat. With no Cabinet berth round the corner for Chirag, the BJP Chief may be left with no option but to vacate the bungalow. Of course, the Cabinet Committee on Accommodation can allow him to retain it under "special circumstances". One will have to watch out what happens to this "Hanuman". His hopes rest on BJP Chief JP Nadda who said recently, "At the Centre, the matter is different. But in Bihar, this is what it is."



All other political parties have become confined to families, whereas ours is a party which in itself is one big family
J P NADDA | BJP PRESIDENT

SECURITY FORCES RECOVER EXPLOSIVES

Security forces Sunday recovered explosives and detonators from a panchayat ghar in Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir, Army said



of the day quote

A country is not run by stubborn attitude. It is rather run through dialogue, consultation and communication (with stakeholders). But our Prime Minister's attitude is like a dictator. He wants to run the country like a dictator

TARIQ ANWAR | SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER

I am deeply disturbed, concerned, worried and pained that the governance in West Bengal is getting away from the path of the Constitution

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR | WEST BENGAL GOVERNOR

I am here in politics with a mission, with a principle not for personal gains. Everyone knows that several TMC leaders had been arrested by the CBI in chit fund scam cases. But none will be able to point finger at the Congress, at Adhir Chowdhury

ADHIR CHOWDHURY | SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER

Mystery disease: Over 290 hospitalised in AP

A 45-year-old man who was admitted to the government general hospital in Vijayawada this morning with symptoms of nausea and epilepsy died in the evening

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Amaravati(AP), Dec 6: A mysterious disease that began spreading in Eluru in Andhra Pradesh claimed one life Sunday even as about 292 fell sick.

More than 140 of the patients have returned home after treatment at hospital while the condition of others was stable, medical and health officials in West Godavari district said.

Nothing has yet been established as to what caused the disease that saw people suddenly falling unconscious after suffering from symptoms of fits and nausea.

A 45-year-old man who was admitted to the government general hospital in Vijayawada this morning with symptoms of nausea and epilepsy died in the evening.

Majority of the people had recovered within a few minutes but at least seven were shifted to the government hospital Sunday for better treatment.

Special teams of doctors have been rushed to Eluru to treat the victims while a house-to-house survey has been undertaken to identify prospective patients. State Health Commissioner Katamaneni Bhaskar also reached Eluru to take stock of the situation and monitor the treatment.

Expressing concern over the spread of the mysterious disease, state Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan directed the health authorities to ensure proper medicare to the afflicted persons.

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has scheduled a visit to Eluru Monday to visit the patients in the GGH and later hold a review meeting with the West Godavari district officials. Deputy Chief Minister (Health) A K K



ANI PHOTO

Srinivas (Nani), who represents Eluru, said tests established that water contamination was not the cause of the unknown disease.

Nani visited the hospital again on Sunday and reviewed the situation and said there was no need to panic. "Most of the victims have recovered and others are stable. We have readied 50 beds in the GGH in Vijayawada to shift patients, if required. Our medical teams are attending to every patient," the Deputy Chief Minister said. BJP MP GVL Narasimha Rao, who spoke to state Chief Secretary Nilam Sawhney, said a five-member team of doctors from AIIMS at Mangalagiri here was visiting Eluru to treat the patients.

Rao said he spoke to AIIMS, Delhi Director Randeep Guleria and other experts on the mysterious disease and also made them talk to the West Godavari district medical officials. Poisonous organic substances could be the most likely cause of the disease, the MP said after talking to the experts.

TDP general secretary Nara Lokesh too visited the hospital and spoke to the victims. He blamed the Jagan Mohan Reddy government's negligence for the disease outbreak, though initially it was suspected that water contamination caused it.

17 volunteers given Sputnik V vaccine in Pune

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pune, Dec 6: A total of 17 volunteers have been administered Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine at a Pune hospital as part of phase-II human clinical trials, doctors said Sunday.

Sputnik V vaccine has been developed by the Gamaleya National Research Center of Epidemiology and Microbiology and Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF).

As per reports, India has purchased 100 million doses of the candidate from Russia.

"Seventeen healthy volunteers were administered Sputnik V vaccine in the last three days as part of the human trials," said Dr S K Raut, Head of Clinical Research



Department of Noble Hospital, where the phase-II trials are on.

The inoculation process began on Thursday, he added. "All the vol-

unteers, who were administered the vaccine, will be under observation for the next few days," Dr Raut added. The selection of the

volunteers was done as per the laid-down norms as they need to be healthy, doctors said.

The third phase trials of the vaccine are planned to be held at the KEM Hospital Research Centre located near Pune, another doctor said. According to the Clinical Trial Registry- India (CTRI), a total of 1,600 subjects are planned to be roped in for these trials (100 in phase-II and 1,500 in phase-III). Besides Pune, trials for this vaccine are also planned to be held in Lucknow and Kanpur (Uttar Pradesh), Jaipur (Rajasthan), Vellore (Tamil Nadu), Mysore (Karnataka) and Pondicherry. Dr Reddy's Laboratories Limited and Sputnik LLC are jointly conducting these trials.

SHORT TAKES

Mumbai cops 'all out' operation

Mumbai: Mumbai police recently carried out an "all out" night operation against illicit activities with each police station deploying maximum manpower and acting in coordination for full effect, an official said Sunday. "The operation, which was held between 11pm Friday to 2am Saturday, comprised combing exercises, nakabandis, road checks and search of hotels and other such premises," he said.

Three killed in road mishaps

Noida (UP): Three people died in two separate accidents on the Yamuna Expressway in Greater Noida, police said Sunday. In the first incident that took place around midnight, a 28-year-old man was crossing the road between Pari Chowk and Zero Point when he got hit by an unidentified vehicle, the police said. In the other incident, two men died after their car rammied into a stationary truck near the ATS society in Rabupura police station area, the official said.

Unique COVID rule

Gwalior: Now people in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior will have to write an essay on COVID-19 as a punishment for violating the COVID-19 norms. The violators will be put in open jails, the district administration has said. Gwalior District Magistrate Kaushendra Vikram Singh said the district authorities have launched a 'Roko-Toko' campaign to curb the spread of coronavirus.

Woman ends life

Hyderabad: A 32-year-old woman from Karnataka allegedly died by suicide at her house here Sunday after taking a selfie video, police said. The woman, running a bakery here along with her husband, hanged herself, the police said based on a complaint filed by her brother. According to the complainant who too is into bakery business in Karimnagar district of Telangana, his nephew called him over phone and informed him about the suicide, police said.

Man kills father

Palghar: A man was arrested in tribal-Dominated Jawhar in Palghar district for allegedly killing his 65-year-old father with a sickle after a dispute, police said Sunday.

NATURE'S BOUNTY



Villagers ride past a mustard farm, on the outskirts of Amritsar

PTI PHOTO

4 cyclones this year were in severe category or above

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 6: Four of the five cyclones that originated either in the Bay of Bengal or in the Arabian Sea this year were in the category of severe cyclonic storm or above including Amphan which had escalated into a super cyclone.

Formation of cyclones is not uncommon in the Arabian Sea during the pre-monsoon period and in the Bay of Bengal during the post-monsoon months of October to December.

India Meteorological Department (IMD) Director General Mrutunjay Mohapatra said since 1990 four cyclones have formed every year in the seas along the eastern and western coasts (Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea) of the country.

"It is normal to have five cyclones a year," he said. 'Amphan' was the first cyclone of the year. It



formed in the Bay of Bengal and intensified into a 'super cyclonic storm', the first since the super cyclone of Odisha that had ravaged the state in 1999, killing thousands.

Another circulation formed in the Arabian Sea within a fortnight, intensifying into a severe cyclonic storm which was called 'Nisarga'. The storm hit Alibag, near Mumbai, and helped monsoon to arrive in Kerala on its normal date of June 1.

Three cyclones - two in the Bay of Bengal and one in the Arabian Sea - have formed in the last one month. Cyclone 'Gati' intensified into a very severe cyclonic storm. It affected the western coast during its intensification stage, bringing rains over Kerala, but it crossed the Somalia coast on November 23.

Another cyclone was brewing in the Bay of Bengal at the same time. Cyclone 'Nivar' was initially projected to be a 'severe cyclonic storm'. However, it intensified into a 'very severe cyclonic storm', crossing the Tamil Nadu coast on the night of November 25.

Less than a week later, another storm gathered momentum and intensified into a cyclonic storm. Cyclone 'Burevi' crossed the Sri Lanka coast November 2 but as it crossed the south Tamil Nadu coast, having its intensity reduced to deep depression.

Punjab seeks priority allocation of nCoV vaccine

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Dec 6: Chief Minister Amarinder Singh has urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to ensure priority allocation of COVID-19 vaccine to Punjab on account of its higher mortality rate and high levels of co-morbidities in the state.

In a letter to Modi, the CM said despite its relatively low caseload, Punjab has higher fatality rate due to coronavirus, and, therefore, it needs special attention in the allocation of the vaccine once available.

Punjab has so far witnessed 1.55 lakh coronavirus cases and 4,905 deaths. Pointing out that the vaccines currently under consideration would not perhaps reduce transmission much but prevent the disease from escalating to serious levels, Amarinder said their best use would therefore be

among the most susceptible groups, including the elderly and persons having co-morbidities.

According to a state government release, Amarinder also wanted to know if the COVID-19 vaccination exercise would be entirely funded by the Centre, including the cost of vaccines and supplies.

He further asked for clarity on the principles based on which the priority groups are to be identified for sequential immunisation phases.

The CM also sought expansion of the definition of frontline workers for the purpose of immunisation to include administrative officials and others responsible for essential functions. While the definition of healthcare worker was relatively precise and Punjab had compiled data based on it, the definition of frontline workers lacked clarity, he opined.



'Ensure implementation of new warnings on tobacco products'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 6: The Union Health Ministry has asked all states to ensure implementation of a new set of health warnings with enhanced pictorial images on all tobacco products as notified by it.

According to the ministry, the depiction of specified health warnings would bring greater awareness and sensitisation about the serious and adverse health consequences of tobacco use, especially among the youth, children and the illiterate.

The Union health ministry had notified the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Packaging and Labelling) Rules March 15, 2008. The rules have been amended from time to time for display of specified health warnings on all tobacco product packs, thereby mandating the display of specified health warn-



AFP file photo

ings on both sides of tobacco product packages covering 85 per cent of the principal display area.

According to rule five of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Packaging and Labelling)

Rules, the specified health warning on tobacco product package shall be rotated every twenty-four months.

The new sets of health warnings with enhanced pictorial images on all tobacco products were notified July 21.

"The depiction of specified health warnings would bring greater awareness and sensitisation about the serious and adverse health consequences of tobacco use especially among the youth, children and the illiterate. "Effective implementation of the Rules depends on concerted efforts of all ministries and departments concerned of the Government of India as well as state governments. I shall be grateful, if you could kindly take the necessary steps to ensure that the provisions of these Rules are duly enforced, under your jurisdiction," Union Health Secretary Rajesh

Bhushan said in a recent letter to chief secretaries and administrators of all states.

The new set of health warnings were notified on July 21 by making an amendment in the Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Packaging and Labelling) Rules, 2008 and will be called 'The Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Packaging and Labelling) Third Amendment Rules, 2020'.

All tobacco products manufactured or imported or packaged on or after December 1, 2020, shall display the first set of images while the second set of images will be displayed by the tobacco products manufactured or imported or packaged on or after December 1. "Any person engaged directly or indirectly in the manufacture, production, supply, import or distribution of cigarettes or any tobacco products shall ensure that all to-

bacco product packages shall have the specified health warnings exactly as prescribed. "Violation of the above mentioned provision is a punishable offence with imprisonment or fine as prescribed in Section 20 of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003," the health ministry had said.

According to the rules laid down under the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), during the rotation period of 24 months, two images of specified health warnings as notified in the schedule shall be displayed on all tobacco product packages and each of the images shall appear consecutively on the package with an interregnum period of 12 months, a notification issued earlier read.

international



We have achieved an uneasy deterrence with Iran. That uneasy deterrence is exacerbated by world events and by events along the way
VICE ADMIRAL SAM PAPARO | COMMANDER, US NAVAL FORCES CENTRAL COMMAND

CHINA LAUNCHES SATELLITE

China Sunday successfully launched a new Earth observation satellite which can take high-resolution pictures of ground objects across the globe. The satellite was launched from the Xichang Satellite Launch Centre in southwest China's Sichuan province, state-run Xinhua news agency reported



of the day quote

We were able to land the treasure box (Hayabusa2 spacecraft) onto the sparsely populated Australian desert of Woomera as planned. I really look forward to opening it and looking inside

YUICHI TSUDA | HAYABUSA2 PROJECT MANAGER, JAXA

I'm not planning to join social media anytime soon as I'm sure I would end up in a spat with a random person every other day

DANIEL RADCLIFFE | ACTOR

We now don't anticipate that that (bush) fire will run into the Happy Valley settlement today but we'll continue to work hard. We will continue to have aircraft on the fire from first light tomorrow to try and knock that fire down as best we can

GREG LEACH | SESC, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA

SHORT TAKES

Romanians elect new lawmakers

Bucharest: Romanian voters cast ballots Sunday in a legislative election that many hope will restore some stability in one of the poorest European Union nations after five years of political and social turmoil. More than 18 million Romanians are registered to vote for a new national parliament but turnout is expected to be low due to voters' fears about becoming infected with coronavirus.

UK Oppn leader self-isolates

London: Britain's Leader of the Opposition, Labour leader Keir Starmer, has gone into self-isolation for a second time after a member of his staff tested positive for COVID-19. In line with the current government rules, even though Starmer was said to be well and not displaying any symptoms of COVID-19, he will now have to stay at home for 14 days since his last contact with the affected person, which his spokesperson said ends December 16.

Saudi prince criticises Israel

Dubai: A prominent Saudi prince harshly criticised Israel Sunday at a Bahrain security summit that was remotely attended by Israel's foreign minister. Prince Turki al-Faisal, who led Saudi intelligence for more than two decades and served as ambassador to the US and Britain, warned that any normalisation deals needed to help the Palestinians obtain their own independent state. He described Israel as a "Western colonising" power.

US-Iran reach 'deterrence'

Dubai: The top US Navy official in the Mideast said Sunday America has reached an "uneasy deterrence" with Iran after months of regional attacks and seizures at sea, even as tensions remain high between Washington and Tehran over the Islamic Republic's nuclear programme. Vice Adm. Sam Paparo, who oversees the Navy's 5th Fleet based in Bahrain, struck an academic tone in comments to the annual Manama Dialogue hosted by the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

FIGHTING COVID

UK braces for 'historic moment' of vaccination



Frontline healthcare staff, people over the age of 80 and care home workers will be among the first to get the vaccine

AGENCIES

London, Dec 6: The first 50 National Health Service (NHS) hospitals are gearing up for what the UK government has described as the "biggest immunisation programme in history" as the first doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine against COVID-19 arrived at "secure locations" in the country from neighbouring Belgium this weekend.

Frontline healthcare staff, people over the age of 80 and care home workers will be among the first to get the vaccine as part of Phase 1 of the programme from Tuesday, which was approved for rollout by the UK's independent regulator earlier this week.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) had declared the jab, which claims to offer up to 95% protection against COVID-19, is safe for human use against the novel coronavirus after "rigorous" checks.

"This coming week will be an historic moment as we begin vaccination against COVID-19," said UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock.

"I urge everybody to play their part to suppress this virus and follow the local restrictions to protect the NHS while they carry out this crucial work," he said.

The minister added that the government is doing everything it could to overcome "significant

challenges" to ensure care home residents are vaccinated as soon as possible after they were also cleared for Phase 1 by the UK's Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), as those at the highest risk of death from the deadly virus.

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) said that NHS staff are working through the weekend for the first vaccinations to take place from Tuesday across 50 shortlisted hubs in the first wave. More hospitals will start vaccinating over the coming weeks and months as the programme ramps up.

Patients aged 80 and above who are already attending hospital as an outpatient, and those who are being discharged home after a hospital stay, will be among the first to receive the "life-saving jab".

Hospitals will also begin inviting over 80s in for a jab and work with care home providers to book their staff in to vaccination clinics.

Some media reports indicate that Queen Elizabeth II, 94, and her 99-year-old husband, Prince Philip, are likely to be among this group.

Any appointments not used for these groups will be used for healthcare workers and all those vaccinated will need a booster jab 21 days later.

US election was rigged in favour of Biden: Trump

AGENCIES

Washington, Dec 6: A defiant Donald Trump is showing no signs of surrender and has reiterated yet again his unsubstantiated allegations of widespread voter fraud, claiming at his first post-poll rally in Georgia that he won a "rigged" US presidential election that he lost.

Trump alleged Saturday that the last month's US election was rigged in favour of his Democratic opponent Joe Biden, who is now the President-elect.

"They cheated and they rigged our presidential election, and they're gonna try to rig this election too," Trump told his cheering supporters at the rally in Georgia where he campaigned for his Republican candidates for the Special Senatorial elections.

Trump began by falsely claiming he won Georgia in the presidential race. The state has already certified its election results, declaring Biden the winner.

Trump claimed he won an election that he lost.

"If I lost, I would be a very gracious loser. If I lost, I would say I lost and I would go to Florida and



I would take it easy," Trump said at the rally.

Trump was a resident of New York. After becoming the president, he moved his residence from New York to Florida.

Thousands of his supporters, not only from Georgia but also from the neighbouring states, as far as California and Ohio, came to hear his speech.

This was Trump's first public rally after he lost the election and Biden was declared as the President-elect.

"I think they say that if you win Florida and if you win Ohio, in history you've never lost an election. This has got to be a first time - but the truth is they were right, we've

They cheated and they rigged our presidential election, and they're gonna try to rig this election too

DONALD TRUMP | US PRESIDENT

never lost and we're winning this election," Trump said.

He urged his supporters to go out and vote for the January 5 Senate elections in Georgia.

"You must go vote and vote early starting December 14. You have to do it. They cheated and they rigged our presidential election, but we will still win it. We will still win it. We'll still win it. And they're going to try and rig this election, too," he said. "If you don't vote, the socialists and the communists win. They win. Georgia patriots must show up and vote for these two incredible people. They are two of the finest people you will ever meet," he said.

The cheering crowd frequently erupted into chants of "stop the steal" and "fight for Trump."

"This election was rigged, and we can't let it happen again. Your governor could stop it very easily if he knew what the hell he was doing. He could stop it very easily," he claimed.

DEEP INSIDE



A diver wearing Santa Claus costume swims in a large fish tank during an underwater performance at Sunshine Aquarium in Tokyo, Japan

'Global Covid cases cross 66mn mark'

AGENCIES

Washington, Dec 6: The overall number of global coronavirus cases has crossed the 66 million mark, while the deaths have surged to more than 1.52 million, according to the Johns Hopkins University.

In its latest update Sunday, the University's Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) revealed that the current global caseload and death toll stood at 66,460,498 and 1,527,972, respectively.



Mass evacuation in Frankfurt as WWII bomb is defused

AGENCIES

Berlin, Dec 6: Nearly 13,000 residents were evacuated in Frankfurt Sunday as experts defused an unexploded World War II bomb, local emergency services said.

The 500-kilogramme (1,100-pound) British bomb had been found on a construction site in Germany's financial capital on Thursday, the emergency services said. A 700-metre (half-mile) evacuation radius was set up in the west of the city centre in an area that included a number of old people's homes, heating and internet infrastructure and facilities of the Deutsche Bahn national rail operator.

The work was expected to continue into the evening because of coronavirus restrictions, the au-



thorities said.

Some 75 years after the war, Germany remains littered with unexploded ordnance, often uncovered during construction work.

Earlier this year, experts defused seven World War II bombs found on the future location of Tesla's first European factory, just

outside Berlin. Sizeable bombs have also been defused in Cologne and Dortmund this year.

In 2017, the discovery of a 1.4-tonne bomb in Frankfurt prompted the evacuation of 65,000 people - the largest such operation since the end of the war in Europe in 1945.

UN urges Lebanon to ensure safety, security of peacekeepers

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Beirut, Dec 6: The UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has called upon the Lebanese authorities to ensure the safety, security and freedom of movement of its peacekeepers.

The remarks made by UNIFIL spokesperson Andrea Tenenti on Saturday came after a large group of civilians stopped a convoy in Kawthariat Al-Sayad village in southern Lebanon, while it was returning to its base inside the mission's area of operation, reports Xinhua news agency.

He added that civilians confiscated the equipment of the UNIFIL's patrol, prompting the Lebanese army to rush to the area and take control of the situation.

Tenenti noted that the UNIFIL's convoy was able to leave the village, but the equipment was not returned to peacekeepers.



Originally, the UNIFIL was created by the Security Council in March 1978 to confirm Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, restore international peace and security and assist the Beirut government in restoring its effective authority in the area.

The deployed number of personnel as of October stands at 11,165.

The top contributor of personnel is Indonesia (1,254), followed by Italy (1,070), Ghana (877), Nepal (871) and Malaysia (827).

CHINA DISMISSES 'WOLF WARRIOR DIPLOMACY' CHARGE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, Dec 6: China has sought to dismiss the use of the term "Wolf Warrior diplomacy", which is used to describe confrontational rhetoric by its diplomats to ward off criticism on a host of issues, calling it yet another version of "China threat theory" being floated by Beijing's critics.

Obviously, the "Wolf Warrior diplomacy" is actually another version of the "China threat" theory and another "discourse trap," whose purpose is to prevent China from fighting back, Vice Foreign Minister Le Yucheng said in the first official reaction to the widely-used phrase among international diplomats and media to highlight Beijing's aggressive posturing.

Chinese diplomats were once known for their low-key approach in dealing with complex domestic and global issues. But their style changed in recent years as Beijing battled increasing global adversity on issues like coronavirus, which became a pandemic after emerging from Wuhan, allegations of mass internment camps in Xinjiang and imposition of national security law in Hong Kong.

Critics also say the change in style is fuelled by the pursuance of aggressive nationalism by the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) under the leadership of President Xi Jinping.

Le said that as a responsible major country, China has always been a defender of the interna-



China has no choice but to stand up in defence of our national interests and dignity, as others have come to our door and meddle in our internal affairs and abuse us

LE YUCHENG | VICE FOREIGN MINISTER, CHINA

tional order, a contributor to global governance and a provider of international public goods.

It was a time when there seemed to be less inordinate criticism from the West. But the world and Chinese

diplomats have changed, a write up in the CPC's aggressive tabloid Global Times said.

"In some Westerners' eyes, Chinese diplomats are now engaged

in 'Wolf Warrior' style diplomacy, named after a 2015 Chinese patriotic action film and its 2017 sequel. The change seemingly has made the West feel challenged," it said.

The term was coined from the 2017 Hollywood Rambo style Chinese action film "Wolf Warrior 2".

Le, a former Ambassador to India, dismissed such labels as misunderstandings

China's diplomacy, stressing that China has always been a country of etiquette, valuing harmony, and never taking the initiative to provoke

others, nor running to the door of another's house to pick a quarrel.

"China has no choice but to stand up in defence of our national interests and dignity, as others have come to our door and meddle in our internal affairs and abuse us," Le was quoted as saying by the official media here while addressing a think-tank forum Saturday.

Le said the allegation by some people that China has made enemies all around the world with aggressive diplomacy is not true.

"We have always made friends and forged good relationships. It is precisely certain big countries which have pressured other countries to take sides with 'my way or no way' choice", he said.



Banks will likely adopt technologies such as mobile, cloud, remote access out of the need to sustain business during the pandemic and thrive thereafter
MUNJAL KAMDAR | PARTNER, DELOITTE INDIA

MODI TO INAUGURATE INDIA MOBILE CONGRESS

PM Narendra Modi will inaugurate the 4th India Mobile Congress which is scheduled to start from December 8, according to industry body COAI. The 4th edition of the three-day telecom industry event will be held online for the 1st time due to the COVID-19 pandemic



of the day quote

Diversified group Raymond, which has its majority business interests in textile and apparel sectors, is "cautiously optimistic" about recovery amid the COVID-19 pandemic
GAUTAM HARI SINGHANIA | CHAIRMAN AND MD, RAYMOND

We are expecting a big push from the Finance Minister for the entire healthcare sector in the 2021-22 Budget. In our comprehensive pre-Budget memorandum, we have submitted how expenditure on development and the related aspects of vaccine manufacture should be liberally given tax incentives
DEEPAK SOOD | SECRETARY GENERAL, ASSOCHAM

Our strategy is to create a full portfolio of premium across segments and across engine capacity. Towards this, we already launched XPulse and Xtreme in the 200cc and 160cc segment, respectively. Over the next few years, we will continue to fill this portfolio with more and more new models
NIRANJAN GUPTA | CFO, HERO MOTOCORP

Take 'strict action' against Amazon: CAIT asks ED

CAIT ALLEGED THAT AMAZON'S INVESTMENTS IN INDIA ARE IN VIOLATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE MANAGEMENT ACT, 1999

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 6: The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) has asked the Enforcement Directorate to immediately punish Amazon for the brazen violations of FEMA Act, Rules and Regulations by imposing maximum penalty of 3 times the value of the illegal investments of ₹48,500 crore - a penalty of ₹1.44 lakh crore.

In a letter to Sushil Kumar, Special Director, Enforcement Directorate, CAIT alleged that Amazon's investments in India are in violation of the provisions of Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 ('FEMA Act') and the Rules and Regulations.

"Amazon.com Inc. ('Amazon') is one of the world's biggest global corporations, having unbridled access to financial and information resources. Amazon has been operating in India since 2012. Amazon, in every one of its investments and businesses in India, has been brazenly and flagrantly violating the laws, rules and regulations of this Country causing untold misery to crores of small traders (by resorting to predatory pricing) who are sought to be protected by the FDI Policy and the FEMA Rules and Regulations," CAIT said.

CAIT alleged that Amazon, through Amazon Seller Services Private Ltd ('Amazon India') and other wholly owned subsidiaries and benamis, have been carrying on multi brand retail trading (inventory-based model of e-commerce)



merce) in the garb of marketplace-based model of e-commerce in complete violation of FDI Policy, Press Notes and FEMA Act, Rules and Regulations. CAIT said Amazon has apparently invested under the automatic route in Future Coupons Private Ltd (FCPL), a promoter company of Future Retail Ltd (FRL), a listed company engaged in MBRT business.

It questioned that how the above investment is only a 'perception' but not the truth, how by shareholders' agreements Amazon is exercising 'control' over FRL, how the Control Rights of Amazon over FRL have never been publicly disclosed; Not disclosed to DPIIT or ED, how Amazon has mis-represented its in-

vestment in FCPL to the Competition Commission of India (CCI) for securing CCI approval and how Amazon is now publicly claiming that it has 'control rights' over FRL to such an extent that it can prevent a scheme of arrangement of FRL to re-organize its business and sell the retail business to Reliance. "Amazon has material control rights which are not available to even an ordinary shareholder of FRL - The law prohibits a non-resident from acquiring even ordinary rights as shareholders without Government approval which is a blatant and flagrant violation. The order of the arbitrator puts paid to any claims of Amazon otherwise," CAIT alleged.

FDI equity inflows into India cross \$500bn milestone

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 6: Foreign direct investment (FDI) equity inflows into India crossed the USD 500 billion milestone during April 2000 to September 2020 period, firmly establishing the country's credentials as a safe and key investment destination in the world.

According to the data of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), the inflows during the period stood at \$500.12 billion.

About 29% of the FDI came through the Mauritius route. It was followed by Singapore (21%), the US, the Netherlands, Japan (each 7%), and the UK (6%).

India received \$144.71 billion from Mauritius and about \$106 billion from Singapore during the period under review.

The other big investors have been from Germany, Cyprus, France and Cayman Islands.



Since 2015-16, FDI inflows have been recording significant growth. In that fiscal, the country received \$40 billion FDI, an increase of 35% over the previous year. In 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20, the investments stood at \$43.5 billion, \$44.85 billion, \$44.37 billion and \$50 billion, respectively.

The key sectors which attracted the maximum of these inflows include services segment, computer software and hardware, telecommunications, trading, construction development, automobile, chemicals, and pharmaceuticals.

GST COMPENSATION

Centre's formula gets nod from all states



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 6: All the 28 states and three union territories with legislature have decided to go for the Centre-suggested compensation formula to meet the revenue shortfall arising out of the GST implementation. Jharkhand, the only remaining state, has now communicated its acceptance of Option-1 given by the Centre.

All the three union territories with Legislative Assembly who are members of the GST council have already decided in favour of Option-1.

The Central government has set up a special borrowing window for the states and union territories who choose Option-1 to borrow the amount of shortfall arising out of GST implementation.

The window has been operationalised since October 23 and the Centre has already borrowed an amount of ₹30,000 crore on behalf of the states in five instalments and passed it on to the ones who chose Option-1.

Now Jharkhand will also receive funds raised through this window starting from the next round of borrowing. The next instalment of ₹6,000 crore will be

The Central government has set up a special borrowing window for the states and union territories who choose Option-1 to borrow the amount of shortfall arising out of GST implementation

released on December 7. Under the terms of Option-1, besides getting the facility of a special window for borrowings to meet the shortfall arising out of GST implementation, the states are also entitled to get unconditional permission to borrow the final instalment of 0.50 per cent of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) out of the 2 per cent additional borrowings permitted by the Centre under the Atma Nirbhar Abhiyaan May 17. This is over and above the Special Window of ₹1.1 lakh crore. On receipt of the choice of Option-1, the Centre has granted additional borrowing permission of ₹1,765 crore to Jharkhand (0.50 per cent of the state's GSDP).

SHORT TAKES

Dabur, Marico spat over claims on honey

New Delhi: Two leading homegrown rival FMCG brands Dabur and Marico are in an open spat with each other over claims regarding their honey brands and have taken the matter to advertising regulator ASCI. Dabur on Sunday said it is filing a complaint against rival Marico before the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) for claiming its Saffola Honey sample being passed through the NMR test.

Everstone snaps up pharma firm Calibre

Mumbai: Singapore-headquartered, India-focused private equity firm Everstone Capital has acquired a controlling stake in Calibre, a specialty ingredients player focused on pharma, nutrition and personal care segments, in a reported ₹1,000-crore deal. Mumbai-headquartered Calibre, founded in 1984 by Ranjit Bhavnani in Gujarat, is a leading specialty ingredients player in the iodine derivatives, persulfates and perchlorates segments.

ICAR bags global award

New Delhi: India's agri-research body Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) on Sunday said it has bagged the prestigious 'International King Bhumibol World Soil Day Award' from the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for raising awareness about importance of soil health among all stakeholders.

Cargo traffic falls for 8th month

New Delhi: Adversely impacted by COVID-19 pandemic, India's top 12 ports witnessed a considerable decline in cargo traffic for the eighth straight month in November, according to ports sector industry body IPA. Cargo traffic at 12 major ports that are under the control of the Centre dropped by 10.53% to 414.30 million tonnes (MT) during April-November period of the current fiscal compared to 463.05 MT during April-November of the last fiscal.

RECOVERY FLIGHT

Airlines gear up to deploy more capacity as traffic rises



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 6: Rising passenger numbers have lifted the prospects of India's Covid battered airline sector, as industry players rush to augment capacity, increase hiring and scale up operations.

In terms of numbers, the domestic passenger traffic has gradually risen from 30,000 on May 25 to 2.52 lakh November 30.

The Centre has allowed airlines to deploy up to 80 per cent of their pre-Covid flight capacity.

Besides, the capacity augmentation has also lifted the stock prices of listed airlines.

The sector was heavily dented by Covid-19 outbreak and the subsequent lockdown as passenger air services were suspended from

March 25 till May 25. Asked about the readiness to deploy more capacity, Willy Boulter, Chief Commercial Officer of IndiGo, said: "We are certainly ready and preparing to deploy 80 per cent of our previous capacity in the domestic market."

"We look forward to getting back to 100 per cent in due course, early in 2021. So far demand has been robust and we believe it will continue to grow steadily. We remain very confident in the longer term future of Indian aviation."

Recently, the airline major resumed operating 1,000 daily flights.

These flights are to and from 59 domestic and six international destinations. They include scheduled commercial operations and air bubble flights.

NCLAT directs ArcelorMittal to pay ₹1,300cr for using slurry pipeline

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 6: The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has stayed the order directing ArcelorMittal to pay corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP) cost of almost ₹1,300 crore to Odisha Slurry Pipeline Infrastructure (OSPI) till December 15, 2020 for using its assets.

According to the report, the appellate tribunal said that as an ad-interim the operation of the impugned order as regards making of payment by the appellant, ArcelorMittal, to 'OSPI' by December 15, 2020 shall remain stayed till next date of hearing. The matter is listed for admission (after notice) January 22, 2021 at 12:00 noon.

Apart from other issues raised in this appeal, the impugned order dated 10th November, 2020 passed by the Adjudicating Authority (National Company Law Tribunal), Ahmedabad Bench Court No.1 holding that the usage charges for the use of slurry pipeline for running the Corporate Debtor as going concern during the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process pe-



According to the report, the appellate tribunal said that as an ad-interim the operation of the impugned order as regards making of payment by the appellant, ArcelorMittal, to 'OSPI' by December 15, 2020

riod of the Corporate Debtor are IRP costs and directing the Appellant to make the payment of IRP costs

to 'OSPI' by December 15, 2020 is assailed as being absurd.

Senior counsel representing the appellant submitted that in terms of the impugned order, the Appellant has been directed to make payment of aforesaid charges as IRP costs to an entity which had not claimed it during the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process of 'ESIL' or even thereafter. Reference in this regard has been made to the submissions of the Resolution Professional before the Adjudicating Authority.

Renault steps in to empower the specially-abled

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 6: Renault India, with the objective of celebrating the indomitable spirit of the specially-abled and differently-abled members of society, will be offering the concessional GST rate of 18%, as directed by Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Heavy Industries.

Renault will further enhance the benefits by offering additional special segment discounts through its entire dealer network in the country. This initiative honours the resilience and positive attitude of the specially-abled members of society in challenging the adversities and turning them into opportunities.



Under the scheme, all the Renault India dealerships will offer concessional GST rate and internal corporate discounts to specially-abled customers.

The potential impact of Brexit without a 'trade deal'

REUTERS

London/Brussels, Dec 6: Britain and the European Union sought on Sunday to strike an elusive trade deal, with failure likely to end with trade in chaos, markets tumbling and a huge economic price to pay.

Here are some of the potential pressure points of a no-trade deal after five years of Brexit crisis.

STERLING

Investors and banks have predicted that a deal will eventually be done, so a no-deal would hit sterling, according to major foreign exchange traders.

The shock referendum result on June 24, 2016 sent the pound down 8% against the US dollar, its biggest one-day fall since the era of free-floating exchange rates began in the 1970s.

That was nearly double the 4.3% drop on Sept. 16, 1992, when financier George Soros "broke the Bank of England" after his bets against the pound were instrumental in the currency's exit from the European Exchange Rate Mechanism.

TRADE

Overnight Britain would lose zero-tariff and zero-quota access to the European Single Market of 450 million consumers.

Britain would default to World Trade Organization (WTO) terms in its trade with the 27-state bloc, making it in effect as distant to its biggest trading partner as Australia.

Britain would impose its new UK global tariff (UKGT) on EU imports while the EU would impose its common external tariff on UK imports. Non-tariff barriers could hinder



trade, with prices predicted to rise for consumers and businesses.

Borders risk disruption, especially the main crossing points, with shortages of certain foods possible as Britain imports 60% of its fresh food.

Any disruption would be felt most

keenly by sectors that rely on just-in-time supply chains, including autos, food and beverages. Other sectors likely to be affected would include textiles, pharmaceuticals, and chemical and petroleum products.

The EU is Britain's biggest trading partner, accounting for 47% of

its trade in 2019. It had a trade deficit of 79 billion pounds (\$106 billion) with the EU, a surplus of 18 billion in services outweighed by a deficit of 97 billion pounds in goods.

THE ECONOMY

A no-trade deal would wipe an extra 2% off British economic output in 2021 while driving up inflation, unemployment and public borrowing, Britain's Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) has forecast.

The OBR said tariffs under WTO rules and border disruptions would hit parts of the economy such as manufacturing that were emerging relatively unscathed from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The long-term hit could be costly for both Britain and the 27 remaining EU members. Germany, Europe's biggest economy, is Britain's biggest EU trading partner.

CITY OF LONDON

London, the world's international financial capital, is largely ready for Brexit as a trade deal was never going to cover Britain's most globally competitive industry.

While most banks and investors have found ways to navigate Britain's departure from the bloc, the long-term impact of an acrimonious Brexit would be unpredictable and the EU would likely try to grab more market share from the City of London.

London is the centre of the world's \$6.6 trillion a day foreign currency markets, accounting for 43% of global turnover. Its nearest EU competitor, Paris, accounts for about 2%.

The British capital is also the global centre for euro trading, a potential headache for the European Central Bank.

DHAWAN, PANDYA FASHION SIX-WICKET VICTORY AS INDIA WRAP UP T20I SERIES AGAINST AUSSIES

Indian Thunder Down Under



MAN OF THE MOMENT: Hardik Pandya (left) celebrates with Shreyas Iyer after securing the series win Sunday for India against Australia

Chahal's feat

Sydney: Leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal has equalled fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah's record for picking the most number of wickets for India in men's T20 Internationals. Chahal (1/51 in four overs) dismissed Steve Smith in the second T20 game here Sunday. It took his overall tally of T20I wickets to 59. While Bumrah has taken 50 matches to scalp 59 wickets, Chahal has taken just 44 games to pick the same number of wickets, with best figures of 6/25. Off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin comes third in the list with 52 wickets from 46 T20I games. Chahal had taken three wickets in the first T20 game after replacing Ravindra Jadeja as a 'concussion substitute'. The leg-spinner played a major role in India's win

Starc ruled out of T20I series

Sydney: Australian pacer Mitchell Starc has pulled out of the remainder of the T20 series against India due to an illness in his family. Starc arrived here Saturday, but the 30-year-old pacer soon left the team bubble after learning about a family illness. "There is nothing in the world more important than family and in this case Mitch (Starc) is no exception," Australia head coach Justin Langer said in a statement, Sunday. "We will give Mitch all the time he needs and welcome him back into the squad with open arms whenever he feels the time is right for him and his family," Langer added. It is not clear whether Starc will join the team before the first Test.



Shikhar Dhawan set the ball rolling for India with a fine half century

Proud of this T20 series win: Kohli



GOTO MAN: Virat Kohli hugs Hardik Pandya after the game Sunday
PTI PHOTO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sydney, Dec 6: India captain Virat Kohli said Sunday that winning the T20 series against Australia without established players like Rohit Sharma and Jasprit Bumrah meant a great deal to him. He also lavished praise on the marauding Hardik Pandya's 'raw talent'. "Yeah meant a great deal (the series win). We've played as a team in T20 cricket. The fact that we don't have Rohit and Bumrah, our established white ball players in and still doing well makes me happy and I am very proud of this team," Kohli said after India's victory. Rohit has missed the series because of a hamstring injury he suffered during this year's IPL. Bumrah on the other hand has been rested from the T20 matches keeping in mind the upcoming four-Test series against Australia. The India skipper said that with his raw talent, Pandya, who earned the man-of-the-match award for his batting, can become a bankable

I worked on my game during lockdown. It is certainly helping me
HARDIK PANDYA

player for the team in years to come. "The reason for him (Hardik) coming into the team in 2016 was pure ability. He has raw talent. And now he realises that this is his time, the next 4-5 years, to be that bankable player that can win you games from anywhere. His plans are right and I'm glad to see that," Kohli said. "He now realises that this is the time to establish in that (finishing) role and play match-winning knocks for us," added the skipper. Kohli said the players put up a team effort to bounce back in the T20 series after losing the ODI rubber 1-2. "(T)Natarajan was outstanding. Hardik finishing off the game and Shikhar getting that 50, it's a whole team effort," asserted Kohli. "We kept them to a total which we thought was in our grasp with the short boundary," Kohli added.

SCOREBOARD

AUSTRALIA: Matthew Wade run out (Kohli/Rahul) 58, D'Arcy Short c Iyer b Natarajan 9, Steven Smith c Pandya b Chahal 46, Glenn Maxwell c Sundar b Thakur 22, Moises Henriques c Rahul b Natarajan 26, Marcus Stoinis n o 16, Daniel Sams n o 8, Extras: (LB-1, W-8) 9. **Total:** (for five wickets) 194.
FALL: 1-47, 2-75, 3-120, 4-168, 5-171.
BOWLING: Deepak Chahar 4-0-48-0, Washington Sundar 4-0-35-0, Shardul Thakur 4-0-39-1, Natarajan 4-0-20-2, Yuzvendra Chahal 4-0-51-1.
INDIA: KL Rahul c Swepson b Tye 30, Shikhar Dhawan c Swepson b Zampa 52, Virat Kohli c Wade b Sams 40, Sanju Samson c Smith b Swepson 15, Hardik Pandya n o 42, Shreyas Iyer n o 12, Extras: (LB-1, W-2, NB-1) 4. **Total:** (for four wickets in 19.4 overs) 195.
Fall: 1-56, 2-95, 3-120, 4-149.
BOWLING: Daniel Sams 3.4-0-41-1, Sean Abbott 2-0-17-0, Andrew Tye 4-0-47-1, Glenn Maxwell 1-0-19-0, Mitchell Swepson 4-0-25-1, Moises Henriques 1-0-9-0, Adam Zampa 4-0-36-1.

AGENCIES

Sydney, Dec 6: It was the perfect example of 'Indian Thunder Down Under'. India exacted sweet revenge by winning the T20 International series against Australia here Sunday with one game to spare. The Men in Blue won the second game of the three-match series here by six wickets. They had won the first match by 11 runs. Coming after the ODI series loss, this win will certainly give India a lot of confidence ahead of the Test series.

Swashbuckling Hardik Pandya (42 n o, 22b, 3x4, 2x6) finished what Shikhar Dhawan (52, 36b, 4x4, 2x6) had set out to achieve with a scintillating knock. In between, skipper Virat Kohli (40, 24b, 2x4, 2x6) also kept the momentum going as India chased down the victory target of 195 runs with two balls to spare.

Needing 25 of the final 12 balls after scoring 12 in the 18th over, Pandya brought the equation down to 14 in the last over with two fours. The all-rounder then hit two sixes off Daniel Sams in the last over of the innings to seal the match in India's favour. For his histrionics, Pandya was chosen man of the match.

India were off to a sedate start with no boundaries coming in the first two overs. But fours and sixes

rained from the willows of Dhawan and KL Rahul (30) once the duo got their eye in. Rahul capitalised on a free hit by smashing Andrew Tye for a maximum over extra cover, India's first boundary of the innings.

Dhawan got himself a couple of boundaries and a six off Glenn Maxwell as India scored 34 runs in two overs to gain the momentum they were looking for.

Australia got their first breakthrough when Rahul gave a simple catch to Mitchell Swepson at deep point off Tye.

Dhawan was the next to depart top-edging leg spinner Adam Zampa to be caught by Swepson and then

the fielder himself got into the act dismissing Sanju Samson. Sams then dismissed Kohli and India were in a spot of bother. But Pandya saw them through with a cool head and calculated hitting.

Earlier, stand-in skipper Matthew Wade (58, 32b, 10x4, 1x6) led from the front with a blistering half century and powered Australia to a strong total after a fairly commanding performance with the bat. Among other batsmen, only Steve Smith (46, 38b, 3x4, 2x6) could make a useful contribution.

T Natarajan (2/20) was outstanding for India as the others went more than nine runs per over.

WARM-UP GAME AGAINST AUSTRALIA 'A' AHEAD OF TEST SERIES

RAHANE, PUJARA STEADY INNINGS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sydney, Dec 6: Ajinkya Rahane (108 batting, 228b, 16x4, 1x6) geared up for the much-anticipated four-Test series against Australia with an unbeaten century, steering India 'A'

to 237 for eight against Australia 'A' on the opening day of the first warm-up match here Sunday. The Indian Test vice-captain was well supported by Cheteshwar Pujara (54, 140b, 5x4). Rahane who will be India's batting mainstay especially once Virat

Kohli goes for paternity leave after the first Test, shared a 76-run stand for the fourth wicket with Pujara after India A were reduced to 40 for three early on. The Mumbaiकर then added 69 with Kuldeep Yadav (15) to keep India A afloat.

Pujara returning to action after almost nine months struck form right away. He was resolute in defence and he got three boundaries in the fine leg area, two of them in successive

deliveries of James Pattinson (3/58). However, the form of both openers Shubman Gill (0) and Prithvi Shaw (0) will be a cause of concern for the team management.

Pujara was dismissed in the 47th over, caught at leg gully by Marcus Harris (15) to keep India A afloat. Pujara was dismissed in the 47th over, caught at leg gully by Marcus Harris (15) to keep India A afloat. Pujara was dismissed in the 47th over, caught at leg gully by Marcus Harris (15) to keep India A afloat.

BRIEF SCORES
India A 237 for eight (Ajinkya Rahane 108 batting, Cheteshwar Pujara 54, James Pattinson 3/58) vs Australia A. Match to continue

SHORT TAKES

Shuttlers test +ve

New Delhi: Four Indian shuttlers, including Parupalli Kashyap, HS Prannoy and RMV Guru Sai Dutt, have tested positive for novel coronavirus. Doubles specialist Pranaav Jerry Chopra is the fourth player to have been diagnosed with COVID-19. A SAI source said that the three had recently attended Sai Dutt's wedding which took place November 25 in Hyderabad. They got themselves tested upon reaching the Pullela Gopichand Academy for the ongoing badminton national camp where their results returned positive. The players, who are asymptomatic, are currently in isolation.

Century of goals

Paris: Striker Kylian Mbappe came off the bench to score his 100th goal for Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) as the French league leader secured a hard-fought 3-1 win at Montpellier. Mbappe's century of PSG goals - in 137 games - was completed when the 21-year-old turned in a cross from Layvin Kurzawa from close range in the 90th minute. The two other goals for PSG were scored by Colin Dagba and Moise Kean while Steph Mavididi scored for the losers.

ODI cancelled

Cape Town: Two members of the England touring party in South Africa have returned 'unconfirmed positive tests' for COVID-19, the England and Wales Cricket Board said Sunday. Meanwhile the first one-day international was canceled because of a virus outbreak at the hotel where both teams are staying. The ECB did not release any names. The remainder of the tour is now in doubt after the first of three ODIs was already postponed from Friday after a South African player tested positive for COVID-19. AGENCIES

FANS RETURN TO STADIUMS AFTER 8 MONTHS ABSENCE

Easy for Chelsea, Man United

AGENCIES

Manchester, Dec 6: Chelsea and Manchester United enjoyed comfortable wins Saturday in the Premier League as fans returned to stadiums after an eight-month absence.

Chelsea beat Leeds United 3-1 in front of 2,000 spectators at Stamford Bridge while Manchester United fought back from a goal down to win 3-1 at West Ham United - their fifth straight comeback victory on the road - in front of the same size crowd.

Chelsea moved top of the table as they came from behind to beat Leeds United. They were set on their way by a fifth goal in four days from French forward Olivier Giroud.

Giroud marked his first league start of the season by stretching to turn in a whipped cross by Reece James in the 27th minute. That can-



CRUCIAL STRIKE: Kurt Zouma (2nd from left) is all pumped up after scoring a goal for Chelsea against Leeds United, Saturday
PTI PHOTO

celled out a fourth-minute opener for Leeds by Patrick Bamford. Chelsea went ahead in the 61st

minute when Kurt Zouma jumped higher than everyone to power a Mason Mount corner into net and

Christian Pulisic sealed the win in added time.

The win pushed Chelsea up to top spot with 22 points, leap-frogging Tottenham Hotspur and Liverpool who both have 21 and play Sunday. Manchester United moved up to fourth after recovering from a poor first-half display at West Ham.

Czech midfielder Tomas Soucek put the hosts ahead in the 38th minute, turning in at the back post after Declan Rice had headed on a corner.

Portuguese midfielder Bruno Fernandes set up Paul Pogba for the equaliser in the 65th minute, the French midfielder scoring with brilliant side-foot curler from outside the box. Mason Greenwood put United ahead with a superb shot on the turn and Marcus Rashford completed the comeback in the 78th minute with a delicate chip.

3RD DEFEAT FOR STURAT BAXTER'S SIDE IN FOUR ISL GAMES

MFC overcome Odisha FC challenge



ON THE MONEY: Batholomew Ogbeche of Mumbai City scores from the spot against Odisha FC in their ISL game played Sunday
PTI PHOTO

AGENCIES

Bambolim (Goa), Dec 6: Mumbai City FC (MFC) continued their impressive start to the ISL-7 with a 2-0 victory over Odisha FC at the GMC Stadium, here Sunday.

Batholomew Ogbeche (30th) scored from the spot and a header from Rowlin Borges (45th) gave Sergio

Lobera's men their third win in four games. The win sent them top of the table, level on points with ATK Mohun Bagan. For Odisha FC, this was their third loss in four games and only point-less SC East Bengal lie below Stuart Baxter's side.

Mumbai predictably started the game spraying around passes and enjoying ball possession. But it was

Odisha FC who enjoyed the first real chance of the match, in the fourth minute, when Diego Mauricio's freekick clipped the top of the crossbar.

Mumbai's first clear-cut opportunity came in the 18th minute when Ahmed Jahouh found Cy Goddard down the right. Goddard only had keeper Kamaljit Singh to beat but his shot went over the bar.

Twelve minutes later though, Mumbai had their goal. Vignesh Dakshina Murthy's attempted cross from the edge of the box struck Shubham Sarangi's hand and the referee promptly pointed to the spot. Ogbeche stepped up and fired a low shot to the left to put Mumbai ahead.

Hugo Boumous missed a great chance to score in the 43rd minute, firing wide from Bipin Singh's pass. But Mumbai City had their second couple of minutes later: Bipin, again, fired in a great cross into the box which Borges headed past substitute keeper Ravi Kumar.

Barca suffer shock loss against Cadiz

AGENCIES

Cadiz (Spain), Dec 6: Barcelona conceded two embarrassing goals as they suffered Saturday a shock 2-1 defeat away to Cadiz in La Liga. Meanwhile in another game, Atletico Madrid won their seventh successive league game beating Valladolid 2-0.

The Catalans fell behind in the eighth minute when centre back Oscar Mingueza headed the ball towards his own goal and although keeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen got a hand to the ball, Cadiz forward Alvaro Gimenez helped it over the line. Barca drew level in the 57th minute when Cadiz defender Pedro Alcala diverted a Jordi Alba cross into the net. Cadiz restored their lead six minutes later, however, when Alvaro Negredo scored.

In the Atletico Madrid game Thomas Lemar scored with a tight angled shot in the 56th and Marcos Llorente added to the lead after a nice run in the 72nd to keep the club's winning streak in the league.

SUPPORT FOR AGITATING FARMERS

Vijender threatens to return 'Khel Ratna'



Boxer Vijender Singh (wearing a cap) at the Singhu border to show solidarity with the agitating farmers
PTI PHOTO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 6: India's first Olympic medalist in boxing and Congress leader Vijender Singh threatened Sunday to return his 'Khel Ratna' award if the demands of farmers protesting against new agriculture laws are not accepted by the central government. The 35-year-old from Haryana's Bhiwani made an appearance at the protest site of the farmers - Delhi's Singhu border.

"Enough is enough, if the government does not listen to the demands of the farmers, then I have decided that as a show of solidarity, I will return my Khel Ratna," Vijender said Sunday.

"I come from a family of farmers and soldiers. I can understand their pain and anxiety. It is high time that government pays heed to their demands," added the now-turned professional pugilist.

Vijender had won India's first Olympic medal in boxing, a bronze, in the 2008 Beijing Games. In 2009, he also became the first Indian

boxer to clinch a World Championships medal (a bronze). The same year, he was bestowed India's highest sporting honour for his trailblazing achievements. Vijendra had also contested the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, but lost.

"The award definitely means a lot to me but we also have to take a stand for things we believe in," Vijender asserted. "If the crisis is resolved with talks, then we would all be happy," he added.

Earlier, former national boxing coach Gurbax Singh Sandhu, who was in-charge during the Beijing Olympics, had also talked about returning his Dronacharya award if the demands of the farmers were not addressed. Vijender and Sandhu have joined several former sportspersons in extending their support to the agitating farmers.

Among them are Padma Shri and Arjuna awardee wrestler Kartar Singh, basketball player Sajjan Singh Cheema and hockey player Rajbir Kaur both of whom are Arjuna awardees.