



CANDID CONFESSION

Actor Arshi Khan has admitted that she had her lip augmented in the past

LEISURE P2



KARNA GOES UP WAY

Karnataka is all set to table a Bill to ban cow slaughter on lines of Uttar Pradesh

TWO STATES P7



US CURBS ON CHINESE BABUS

The US will impose sanctions on Chinese officials over their role in disqualifying elected Oppn legislators in HK

INTERNATIONAL P10

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Opposition is way behind our govt. They are organising a bandh today, we did it six months ago so successfully that most parts are still shut

State supports bandh today

ALL STATE GOVT OFFICES TO REMAIN SHUT TUESDAY DUE TO THE BHARAT BANDH

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 7: Extending solidarity with the 'Bharat Bandh' called by farmers, labourer outfits and some political parties in the state including the Congress and the AAP, the state government Monday ordered closure of its offices across the state Tuesday.

All education institutions will continue to remain shut due to Covid-19. Besides, shops, commercial establishments, public transportation, auto service and railway services are likely to be affected by the bandh. The Federation of All Odisha Traders Association (FAOTA) will support the protest. "We are supporting the bandh and all shops in the state will remain closed tomorrow," said Sudhakar Panda, general secretary of FAOTA.

Stating that his party will lend full support to the bandh, Congress's state unit president Niranjan Patnaik said, "Except for the BJP and the BJD, all other parties and organisations in Odisha will support the farmers' cause. We have instructed our workers in districts to observe the bandh peacefully. Apart from the district headquarters, the party will stage protests at all important places across the state."

BJD spokesperson Sasmit Patra said, "It is important to resolve all the issues of farmers and remove their apprehensions. The BJD is hopeful that the outstanding issues can be resolved through sincere dialogue and



CENTRE IN DOCK

Farmers, labourers and many political parties including Congress back the nationwide bandh

Though BJD is not directly supporting the bandh, all state govt offices to remain closed

OPSC postpones Odisha Civil Services Mains exam to Jan 2, 2021 while OMC puts off online CBT till further notice

we look forward to the talks between the Union government and the farmer groups December 9.

BJD has always been demanding doubling of Minimum Support Prices as suggested by the Swaminathan Committee, he said, adding the party will continue to do so for the benefit of

SPs ASKED TO REMAIN ALERT

BHUBANESWAR: The Superintendents of Police of all 30 districts in the state have been asked to remain alert in view of the nationwide Bandh called by various farmer organisations Tuesday. Many political parties including the Congress in Odisha have already declared their support to the Bandh. Speaking to Orissa POST, YK Jethwa ADGP (law and order) said, "We have reviewed the law and order situation, police arrangements and all other preparedness across the state ahead of the Bandh. All the SPs have been asked to remain alert and to take adequate measures to avoid any untoward incident during the protest Tuesday. We have ordered the range DIGs to supervise the whole police preparedness under their jurisdictions. Armed police forces will be deployed at sensitive spots to keep the law and order in control." Meanwhile, Commissioner of Police Sudhanshu Sarangi said around 30 police platoons will be deployed at important places to handle law and order situation in the capital city, In Cuttack, around 10 platoons will be deployed during Bandh. Sarangi further revealed that the organizers had assured the police to observe the protest peacefully.

OPSC has postponed the Odisha Civil Services Mains examination to January 2, 2021 while the OMC postponed the online computer based test (CBT) for recruitment of various non-executive posts till further notice.

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Petrol, diesel prices up for 6th day in row

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 7: Petrol and diesel prices rose for the sixth day in a row Monday as rates went up by 26-30 paise per litre.

Petrol price was hiked by 30 paise per litre and diesel by 26 paise, according to a price notification of oil marketing companies.

Rates for petrol in Delhi rose to ₹83.71 per litre, from ₹83.41 while diesel price went up from ₹73.61 to ₹73.87 per litre. This is the sixth straight day of price hike and the 15th increase in rates since November 20, when oil companies resumed daily price revision after nearly two-month hiatus. Rates are now at the highest level since September 2018.

In 18 days, the petrol price has gone up by ₹2.65 per

PRICES IN BHUB	
PETROL:	₹84.35 (+0.30)
DIESEL:	₹80.48 (+0.29)

litre and diesel rate has risen by ₹3.41. The rate increase follows international oil prices rising by a third from lows in October-end. Brent crude oil is nearing USD 50 per barrel mark on hopes that COVID vaccines would lead to demand recovery.

Prior to the November 20 hike in rates in India, petrol prices had been static since September 22 and diesel rates hadn't changed since October 2. In Mumbai, petrol price rose to ₹90.34 per litre from ₹90.05, while diesel rates went up from ₹80.23 to ₹80.51. Rates vary from state to state depending on the incidence of local sales tax or VAT.

PANIGRAHI DENIED BAIL

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 7: The Khurda ADJ court Monday rejected the bail plea of Gopalpur MLA Pradeep Panigrahi here. Earlier, the SDJM had rejected Panigrahi's application for bail and sent him to a 14-day judicial custody December 3.

The crime branch of the state police arrested Panigrahi for his alleged involvement in the job fraud allegations lodged with the cyber police station by Tata Motors. He was arrested (case no 26/20) under various sections like 419, 420, 467, 468, 469, 471, 120-B of the IPC and Sec 66 C/66 D of the IT Act. As per the charges, Panigrahi allegedly collected money from various youths from Gopalpur on behalf of Akash Pathak, son of suspended IFS officer Abhay Kant Pathak.

Notably, Tata officials have lodged a complaint with the crime branch's cyber cell accusing Akash of duping several job aspirants on the pretext of providing them with jobs in the company. Pathak allegedly duped 67 persons from Gopalpur by impersonating as the Managing Director of Tata Motors and Panigrahi allegedly acted as a front to help him dupe people.

PRIVATE BUS FARES GO UP

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 7: In sync with the steep rise in fuel prices, private bus owners increased bus fares once again in the state.

The fares of ordinary and express buses have been raised by one paise per kilometre and by two paise per kilometre for deluxe and AC deluxe buses. Ticket prices of ordinary, express, deluxe and AC deluxe buses went up to 73 paise, 76 paise, 107 paise and 129 paise per km, respectively.

It may be mentioned here that fuel prices have remained at two years' high after the latest hike. According to the automatic mechanism system, bus fares are increased by one paise for every Rs 2 hike in the fuel prices. On July 1, the private bus fares were increased by two paise per kilometre for ordinary and express buses and four paise per kilometre for deluxe and AC deluxe buses.

GOVT SPEEDING UP SHOT REVIEW

AGENCIES

New Delhi/Bangalore, Dec 7: India is accelerating its review of coronavirus vaccines developed by Pfizer Inc and AstraZeneca for emergency use, a senior government official said Monday as the world's second-most affected country struggles to contain the outbreak.

The government is pinning its hopes for mass supply of the vaccine on Serum Institute of India, the world's largest vaccine producer by volume, which Monday lodged the first formal application for emergency use approval for AstraZeneca Plc's COVID-19 vaccine.

Pfizer had already applied for emergency use approval for its vaccine in India, the official said, declining to be identified. "We are in the process of reviewing. It is an accelerated reviewing process, which is there for Serum too," the government official said. "It is the need of the hour. We have to review at the earliest." The world's second-most populous country with over 1.3 billion people has 9.68 million infections, while more than 140,000 people have died of COVID-19. Lockdowns imposed to contain the spread of the virus have plunged the economy into one of its worst downturns in decades.

Serum Institute CEO Adar Poonawalla tweeted that the move



APPROVAL SOON

Serum Institute of India lodges first formal application for emergency use approval for AstraZeneca Plc's COVID-19 vaccine

AstraZeneca, Pfizer and Moderna Inc are among the drugmakers seeking advanced approvals for their vaccines

to apply for emergency use "will save countless lives," but did not give any other details. The company declined to reply to Reuters' follow-up questions about the process.

AstraZeneca, Pfizer and Moderna Inc are among the drugmakers seeking advanced approvals for their vaccines, which are increasingly being seen by governments as the only way to stop a pandemic that will soon complete a year since it was first reported in China.

AstraZeneca's vaccine, called "Covishield" by SII, has less stringent storage requirements and is expected to be easier to distribute and faster to scale up.

JOY RIDE



Tourists take a boat ride on the Ganga river as seagulls fly over, in Varanasi, Monday

PTI PHOTO

Covid warrior doc dies in hotel room

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Dec 7: A doctor, who worked at a COVID-19 hospital at Ranki area in Keonjhar district, was found dead in a hotel room in this town Sunday afternoon.

According sources, the deceased was identified as 55-year-old Asha Charan Majhi from Jamda village under Bahalda police limits in

Mayurbhanj district.

Majhi was sleeping in his hotel room with its door open. The hotel staff grew suspicious when he did not respond to their calls for a long time. The man was ascertained to have died.

The owner of the hotel informed about the mishap to local police. On being informed, police reached the hotel and recovered the

body of the deceased. Later, the body was sent to Keonjhar district headquarters hospital (DHH) for post-mortem.

Police have registered an unnatural death case and launched investigation. The exact cause of the death of the doctor can be ascertained only after post-mortem report comes in, a police official said.

No UG/PG exams before classroom teaching resumes

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 7: The state government Monday said that the conduct of examinations for undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) students will be considered after the resumption of classroom teaching and completion of syllabi.

Higher education secretary Saswat Mishra, in a letter to vice-chancellors of the state-run universities and principles of all government and non-government colleges, said due to prevailing Covid-19 pandemic related dislocations, the academic session has been badly affected. Though online classes are continuing, most of the students are unable to get the benefits of such online teaching due to various reasons, the letters reads.

"Therefore, at present it is not desirable to hold examinations only on the basis of online teaching. Conduct of examinations should be desirable only after resumption of teaching in physical mode and completion of syllabus by such classes," said the letter.

Earlier, the higher education department had allowed reopening of laboratories at higher educational institutions across the state. "The higher educational institutions are permitted to open laboratories only for research scholars, MPhil and PG students in science and technology streams requiring laboratory/experimental works," the department said in a letter. The department also directed the universities and colleges to follow the state government's Covid-19 guidelines and protocols properly.

The higher education department in July had asked the universities and degree colleges to start online classes and had issued guidelines for the higher educational institutions regarding this. As per guidelines, teachers shall form WhatsApp or e-mail group of students, not exceeding 32 in one group. They shall provide soft copy of notes/textbooks/reference books/good PPTs/recommended lectures (of self or others) to students either through WhatsApp or e-mail for study at home," the guidelines issued by the department had said.

However, due to poor internet connectivity in many areas the students, especially of rural areas got no online education.

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	45426.97 ↑ 347.42
NIFTY	13355.80 ↑ 97.30
DOLLAR	74.06 ↑ ₹0.18
EURO	89.64 ↓ ₹0.24
GOLD	₹49,199 ↑ ₹27
SILVER	₹62,970 ↓ ₹843

WEATHER		
BHUB	CTK	
MAX	31.7°C	32.4°C
MIN	17.6°C	16.4°C
Humidity	96%	86%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Fog/mist in morning, later clear sky

Trump throttles up pace of federal executions

AGENCIES

Chicago, Dec 7: As Donald Trump's presidency winds down, his administration is throttling up the pace of federal executions despite a surge of coronavirus cases in prisons, announcing plans for five starting Thursday and concluding just days before the Jan 20 inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden.

If the five go off as planned, it will make 13 executions since July when the Republican administration resumed putting inmates to death after a 17-year hiatus and will cement Trump's legacy as the most prolific execution president in over 130 years. He'll leave office having executed about a quarter of all fed-



Not since the waning days of Cleveland's presidency in late 1800s has the US executed federal inmates during a presidential transition

eral death-row prisoners, despite waning support for capital punishment among both Democrats

'WRONG' RECORD

The latest five executions will cement Trump's legacy as the most prolific execution president in over 130 years

The plan breaks a tradition of lame-duck presidents deferring to incoming presidents on policy about which they differ so starkly

and Republicans. In a recent interview with The Associated Press, Attorney General

William Barr defended the extension of executions into the post-election period, saying he'll likely schedule more before he departs the Justice Department. A Biden administration, he said, should keep it up.

"I think the way to stop the death penalty is to repeal the death penalty," Barr said. "But if you ask juries to impose and juries impose it, then it should be carried out."

The plan breaks a tradition of lame-duck presidents deferring to incoming presidents on policy about which they differ so starkly, said Robert Durham, director of the non-partisan Death Penalty Information Center. Biden, a Democrat, is a death penalty foe, and his spokesman told the AP that he'd work to end the death penalty when

he is in office.

"It's hard to understand why anybody at this stage of a presidency feels compelled to kill this many people ... especially when the American public voted for someone else to replace you and that person has said he opposes the death penalty," Durham said.

"This is a complete historical aberration." Not since the waning days of Grover Cleveland's presidency in the late 1800s has the US Government executed federal inmates during a presidential transition, Durham said.

Cleveland's was also the last presidency during which the number of civilians executed federally was in the double digits in a year, with 14 executed in 1896.



LETITIA WRIGHT DELETES HER SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

Black Panther actress Letitia Wright deleted her Instagram and Twitter accounts after being trolled for sharing Covid-19 anti-vaccine video. "Sorry, this page isn't available," read her old Instagram account, which had 2.1 million followers.

PARTON WANTS BEYONCE TO DO COVER OF HER ALL-TIME HIT JOLENE

Singer Dolly Parton says she would love Beyonce to do a cover of her iconic track *Jolene*. "Jolene has been recorded more than any other song that I have ever written. So, I've always hoped somebody might do someday, someone like Beyonce," Parton said.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Your ability to let go things will reflect in your personal as well as your professional life. Today could be a significant day for you, and Ganesha advises you not to forget your special abilities. Make good use of them so that others too can benefit.

TAURUS
You will be very sensitive about the image you project socially and professionally. Ganesha sees you treating this very seriously and doing everything you can to make this right impression.

GEMINI
You need to break free from the shackles of your daily routine. Trying to finish all your tasks as per your schedule will give rise to unnecessary worry. To manage your time creatively is the best way to beat the stress.

CANCER
Your social prestige will go up. People will praise your personality traits and try to emulate you. You will be a role model, too. Ganesha feels that this will be highly profitable day for you.

LEO
Your pride and self-confidence will help you to excel in whatever task it is that you take up today. Other people will also praise you. You will buy new clothes and other possessions that you have been desiring since a long time, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
You will be faced with serious financial problems today. You may even have to pay through your nose to get what you desire. Later in the evening, you might accomplish some short-term goals. Ganesha predicts that some vital business agreements will end your day in high spirits.

LIBRA
Ganesha says today you will use your mental competency to complete all your work on time. You may not give complete attention to your family as you will be spending time in the office or at work. Your extraordinary intelligence will be showcased at work today.

SCORPIO
Be vigilant; keep your eyes and ears open for all the events happening around you, says Ganesha. Your intuition is trying to tell you something, trust it. Think and act positively, the rest would fall in place.

SAGITTARIUS
Determined and dedicated, that's what you are when it comes to work. Well, this may even find you amidst heaps of files and loads of work. No wonder you become a workaholic. You are likely to enjoy during the latter half of the day. Have a fun-filled evening!

CAPRICORN
Opportunities don't knock on the door twice. Today, you'll answer the door and utilise the opportunity to the most, predicts Ganesha. Positive results will be visible and you'll stand a chance to overtake your competitors.

AQUARIUS
You have changed your approach towards life from materialism to mysticism. Your friends and family members are pleasantly surprised to see this change. Later on the day, you may plan to visit a temple or other religious places, foresees Ganesha.

PISCES
You are striving hard to influence your destiny. You are not going to kneel down without a fight against heavy odds. With persistent efforts you will succeed in achieving your goals. While victory is a given, hard work will be necessary. In brief, today will be a challenging day for you, says Ganesha.

Ira takes a 'break' by dipping into a pool

Mumbai: Ira Khan, daughter of actor Aamir Khan, has shared a stunning picture in a bikini on Instagram.

In the photo (inset), Ira is seen getting out of a pool dressed in a black and yellow bikini.

"I have a lot to do. In terms of social media commitments and non-time-bound-but-the-sooner-the-better commitments. But sometimes you need a break. For yourself. And first you need to fulfill your commitments to yourself. And now I'm back to work. Thanks for waiting," Ira



wrote alongside the image.

In another picture she shared, she is seen lying in a bathtub and reading a book.

Ira and Junaid are Aamir's children from his first wife Reena Dutta. Ira stepped into showbiz making her directorial debut last year with the stage production of Euripides' play *Medea*.



Arshi admits getting lip filler

Mumbai: Actress Arshi Khan has admitted that she has got lip filler

job done, adding that Rakhi Sawant took her to the doctor.

Arshi and Rakhi have entered the Bigg Boss 14 house as new challengers. In the weekend episode, Rakhi and Arshi were seen digging out their past and challenging each other to tell the truth.

Superstar host Salman Khan made them play a game where Arshi and Rakhi revealed truths about each other. During the task, Arshi

Bigg Boss 14

admitted to having got a lip filler done. She joked that Rakhi took her to the surgeon, and that the latter has gone for full-body surgery.

To this, Rakhi declared she got botox job done, confessing that she steals toiletries from hotels.

Arshi was also seen mocking Rakhi's marriages, and shared that she has heard he is a 'takla' (baldie). Rakhi retorted saying she has been married thrice.



'I could have been more careful'

Mumbai: Actor Varun Dhawan Monday confirmed that he has contracted the novel coronavirus while shooting for a project. He says his spirits are high and he is taking each day at a time.

Varun shared the news with a picture that has him talking to friends on video call during his isolation.

"VITAMIN FRIENDS...So as I returned to work in the pandemic era I have contracted covid-19," he wrote with the picture.

"All precautions were taken by the production but still nothing is certain in life especially not covid-19. So please be extra careful I believe I could have been more careful. I see the get well soon messages and my spirits are high taking each day at a time... thank u," the actor added.

Varun was shooting in Chandigarh for Raj Mehta's upcoming film *Jug Jugg Jeeyo* when he contracted the virus. Several reports have stated that Neetu Kapoor as well director Mehta have also tested Covid-19 positive.

Anurag kidnaps Sonam, Anil searches for daughter!



Anil Kapoor, in a trailer, calls Anurag Kashyap a 'wannabe Tarantino' and 'biggest fraud in the film industry'

Mumbai: The trailer of AK vs AK dropped Monday, and the chaotic video shows Anurag Kashyap playing a director who kidnaps Sonam Kapoor, whose father is an actor desperately searching for the daughter. As the search is on, the director films the incidents on camera.

The trailer comes just a day after Anurag and Anil's 'Twitter war' over awards and recognition.

The trailer begins with Anil and Anurag fighting during an interview. Things get

heated up and Anurag ends up throwing a glass of water on Anil's face. Then he kidnaps Anil's daughter Sonam. Anil gets 10 hours to search for his daughter but there are rules that he has to follow. As Anil hits the streets searching for his daughter, the director captures everything on camera.

During a virtual press conference Monday, Anurag and Anil released two more trailers of the Vikramaditya Motwane directorial.

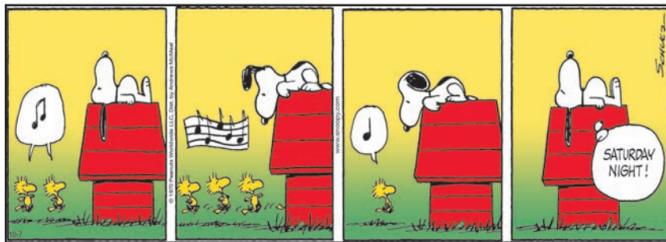
The one unveiled by Anil shows him making fun of Anurag's work and calling Anurag 'biggest fraud in the industry' and a 'wannabe Tarantino'.

The third trailer released by Anurag has him saying that film is a director's medium. Anil is also seen asking Anurag to make a film with him, but he does not seem to be interested in working with 'Anil uncle'.

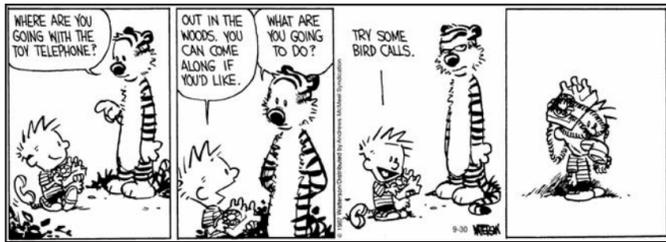
The film will release on Netflix on December 24.



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

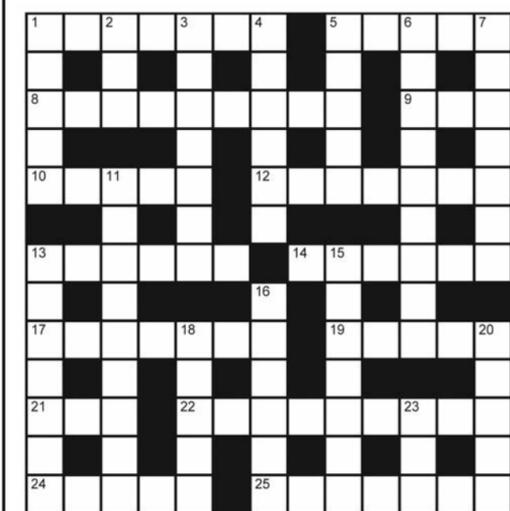


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 Scourges of the sea
- 5 Line from the heart
- 8 Decorative designs
- 9 Behold
- 10 Woody plant
- 12 Sweetened red wine
- 13 Avoided
- 14 Way off

Down

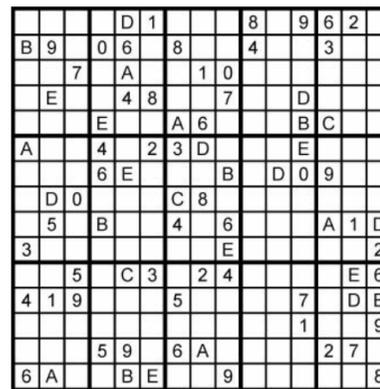
- 17 Bordelaise ingredient
- 19 Cupid's projectile
- 21 Gullible one
- 22 Sommelier's tool
- 24 Fills up
- 25 Tranquillised
- 1 Compo fruit
- 2 Dead letters?

3 Sewing need

- 4 Court game
- 5 Illegal firing
- 6 Artificial lake
- 7 Garden-variety
- 11 Star's walkway (3,6)
- 13 Stops
- 15 Passed, as time
- 16 Baby birds?
- 18 Shoestrings
- 20 Impressed
- 23 Furrow

SUDOKU

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

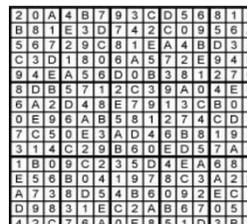


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

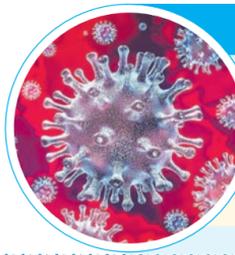


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



LORD'S PRATHAMASTAMI

Devotees, led by servitors of Lord Madhav Jew Temple in Niali, reach Puri Monday with offerings like new clothes, sweets and fruits for the Srimandir deities on the occasion of Prathamastami Tuesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	6,75,12,016	4,67,00,455	15,43,921
India	94,99,710	89,31,798	1,38,159
Odisha	3,21,564	3,16,447	1,778

SIT findings won't be admissible in court: BJP

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 7: Launching a scathing attack on the state government for ordering an SIT probe into the alleged murder of minor girl 'Pari' of Nayagarh district, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Monday said that there is no place for probe by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) under CrPC. Even, the findings of the SIT will not be admissible in a court.

Intensifying its ongoing protest over the issue, the state unit of BJP Monday staged a demonstration near the Raj Bhawan here demanding a CBI probe into the incident and expulsion of minister Arun Kumar Sahoo from the Cabinet.

Senior BJP leaders including state president Samir Mohanty, Leader of Opposition PK Naik, Lekhashree Samantasinghar and Prithviraj Harichandan joined the protest meet. Later, a delegation of BJP submitted a memorandum in Raj Bhawan, addressing Governor Ganeshi Lal.

"Even though four months have elapsed to the brutal murder of the little girl 'Pari' in Nayagarh district, the police have not arrested the accused, which is very unfortunate," said Mohanty.

"The parents of Pari have also

PROTEST OVER PARI 'MURDER'

Intensifying its ongoing protest over 'Pari' issue, the state unit of BJP Monday staged a demonstration before Raj Bhawan here demanding a CBI probe into the incident and expulsion of Higher Education Minister Arun Kumar Sahoo from the Cabinet

Senior BJP leaders including state president Samir Mohanty, Leader of Opposition PK Naik, Lekhashree Samantasinghar and Prithviraj Harichandan joined the protest meeting. Later, a delegation of BJP submitted a memorandum in Raj Bhawan, addressing Governor Ganeshi Lal



BJP activists staging a dharna outside Raj Bhawan, Monday

named the accused as Babuli Nayak, who has close links with the minister. Therefore, we demand removal of the minister. We also demand a CBI probe into the incident as the state police cannot ensure a fair probe," the BJP leader said.

"Our protest has entered the fourth day in Nayagarh. We will continue it for an indefinite period if our demands are not fulfilled," he warned. Joining the protest in Nayagarh, another BJP leader and

former DGP Prakash Mishra raised questions over the ongoing probe by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) into the case. Mishra said as per the provisions under the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), criminal investigation can only be carried out by a police station. Even when the Crime Branch or CBI conducts an investigation, they function as a police station, Mishra claimed.

"There is no place for an SIT under CrPC. In this case, the SIT has

been formed by pulling officers from different departments. SIT head Arun Bothra is currently serving as the MD of OSRTC and he is not working in Odisha Police. He doesn't even have the powers of police. How will he investigate?" questioned Mishra.

"Even, the findings of the SIT will not be admissible in a court. Therefore, we are demanding CBI probe into the case," he said.

Accusing BJP for politicising the

State should provide ₹10L compensation to Pari's parents: OSCPCR

The Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (OSCPCR) here Monday recommended the state government to give Pari's parents ₹10-lakh compensation. Speaking to media, Sandhyabati Pardhan, chairperson, OSCPCR, revealed that Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik will soon make an announcement in this regard. She also stated that OSCPCR is assessing the increasing number of missing children incidents in the state and the reasons behind poor tracing by Odisha Police. Pradhan also said that the local police should be pressurized by the district administration to find the missing children.

issue, BJD vice president Debi Prasad Mishra said, "An SIT probe is going on under the leadership of Bothra. Everybody knows Bothra is a sincere officer. He has sought 15 days to make a considerable progress in the investigation. I don't understand why the opposition is in a hurry,"

5T Secy takes stock of Ekamrakshetra projects

Pandian directed the senior officials to expedite rehabilitation of shopkeepers, who will be affected by the projects



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 7: Secretary to Chief Minister (5T) VK Pandian visited the Lingaraj temple here early Monday morning to take stock of the progress of various development projects being undertaken in Ekamrakshetra.

Pandian directed the senior officials, who were present at the spot, to expedite rehabilitation of shopkeepers, who will be affected due to the projects. Besides, he emphasised on development of alternate roads at the earliest and speed up cleaning of debris.

Works Secretary Krishan Kumar, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Commissioner Prem Chandra Chaudhary and

other senior officers were present on the occasion. It may be recalled that the project which has been started as a 5T initiative is progressing well. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik also visited the project last week and expressed satisfaction over the progress.

His efforts were appreciated by the servitors, who expressed their gratefulness for the development of Ekamrakshetra. During the visit, Naveen had promised to bring an Act in line with Shree Jagannath Temple Act to facilitate development of the area.

The state government has planned to invest ₹700 crore for the redevelopment of the 11th century Lingaraj temple and its surroundings.

Sura Baba of Trahi Achyuta ashram dies



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 7: Self-styled and controversial godman Sura Baba alias Surendranath Mishra of Trahi Achyuta ashram at Jhinti Sasan on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar breathed his last Sunday night while undergoing treatment at a private hospital here.

Mishra was admitted to hospital as he was not keeping well for the last couple of months. He was suffering from multiple ailments.

Mortal remains of Mishra were taken to Trahi Achyuta ashram where his followers have been paying their last respect. His body will be cremated in the backyards of the ashram in Khurda district.

Notably, the godman and his two sons were arrested by Balipatna police August 31, 2015. He was accused of land grab, exploiting women and criminal intimidation, including other serious charges.

The Trahi Achyuta ashram chief was released from Jharpada Special Jail December 2, 2017. He was lodged in Jharpada Jail for over two years following his arrest.

Noted author Manoj Das recovering

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 7: The health condition of noted Indian author from Odisha Padma Bhushan Manoj Das has improved, said his nephew's wife Dr. Ranjita Das Monday.

This good news has brought a sigh of relief to the literary fraternity, hundreds of readers and Das's ardent admirers across the state who had been praying for his early recovery.

The writer was admitted to a hospital in Puducherry after his health condition deteriorated December 4 owing to old age related ailments. Das was also admitted to a hospital earlier, nearly three months ago, when he had developed a fracture in his hand after he fell down.

"By God's grace and all the prayers from his well-wishers, he is doing fine in the hospital. Not only his own daily chores, but he is searching for us and taking stock of our health conditions as well," said Dr. Ranjita.

Notably, Das writes both in Odia as well as in English language. He was felicitated with the prestigious Padma Shri award in 2001 and Padma Bhushan in 2020.

WILD BOAR UNLEASHING TERROR CAUGHT IN PURI

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, Dec 7: Residents of the Pilgrim city who were under the grip of fear after a wild boar attacked people and injured six of them seriously Sunday heaved a sigh of relief as the animal was caught Monday.

According to Forest department officials, the incident of a wild boar being spotted in Puri town and also inflicting injuries to people occurred for the first time in the town. These wild boars are often seen in Brahmagiri area in the district.

The wild animal had somehow strayed into the town Sunday. It first attacked two women, identified as Urmila Nayak and Rohini Nayak,

of Sarada Devi Sahi. Four others of the locality had sustained injuries in the boar attack.

The same boar was spotted at Chhapan Chowk on Lokanath Road Monday as well. The panic-stricken people were busy doing their morning chores when the boar came out of a bush, unleashing a reign of terror. People started running helter-skelter.

Some people gathered courage and united against the boar. It was when they gave it a chase carrying lathis and shouting at it, it retreated and went into a drain.

Later, Forest department officials and fire fighters reached the spot and carried out an operation. The boar was caught after an hour-long operation.



2 held with 100 cell phones

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 7: The Commissionerate Police Monday arrested two miscreants and recovered over 100 stolen mobile phones from their possession.

The accused have been identified as Sanjay Gadnayak and Lipun Sahu of Khamar village in Angul district. Both work under a prominent contractor in Angul.

According to sources, Lipun and Sanjay accidentally found a box containing 91 mobile phone sets near their village Khamar. As many as four boxes each containing equal number of cell phones were being transported to Rourkela from Bhubaneswar by a bus September 5, 2019. Without informing the owner of the boxes, City Commercial Services at Kharavel Nagar here,



The arrested duo and the seized mobile phones

or the police, the duo kept the sets with them for more than six months.

Later, they started selling the sets to different employees of the construction firm. Police during tracking came to know that most of the sets were sold in Dhenkanal and Angul areas. Subsequently, police arrested

the duo and recovered around 82 phones from Puri, Khurda, Jajpur, Dhenkanal and Angul districts.

This apart, police also arrested six other snatchers and recovered 120 mobile phones from them. Police sources said that the persons who had brought the stolen mobile phones will be questioned too.

CHRISTMAS AHEAD



A roadside vendor puts up Christmas decorative items for sale near Unit-I market in Bhubaneswar, Monday

Fishermen catch rare fish in Cuttack

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Dec 7: Fishermen Monday caught a rare fish weighing 58 kg alive in their fishing net from Mahanadi River at Gopinath under Badamba block in Cuttack district.

According to sources, the fishermen had ventured into the river early Monday morning when a rare fish got entangled in their net, giving them a surprise of a lifetime. They brought it back to the village. Curiosity-stricken villagers gathered to catch a glimpse of the fish.

The fishermen were indecisive as to what they would do with the fish. Some suggested the fish be let go in its natural habitat.



Notably, a fisherman from Chandanipal of Dhamra in Bhadrak district had caught a Ghol fish commonly known as 'Teleia' October 2. The fish, which was weighing 22kg, had fetched him ₹1,43,000 when he sold it off to a West Bengal trader. Fish of such variety is also considered a prize catch for its fins, which are used by pharmaceutical companies to make dissolvable stitches.

Poor show by BMC in treating stray bulls: Reports

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 7: The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has treated only 43.51 per cent of stray bulls it had treated in the year 2016-17.

As per the data shared in the Assembly last week, the BMC has treated only 560 stray bulls this year as compared to 2016-17 when 1,287 bulls were treated - the highest in last four years. Furthermore, while expenditure incurred on treatment of 572 bulls in 2017-18 was only ₹2.15 lakh, it went up to ₹14.47 lakh this year. Likewise, in 2018-19, a total of 630 bulls were treated with an expenditure of ₹5.6 lakh. However, 1,083 bulls were treated with an expenditure of ₹5.7 lakh in 2019-20.

"The figures indicate that while on paper expenditure has increased



immensely, it isn't being utilised for betterment of the animals. Bulls and other bovines in the city are increasingly being subjected to road

mishaps and sustain severe injuries. However, there are a very few organisations to look after them," said Sushant Mohapatra,

ALTHOUGH THE CIVIC AUTHORITY CLAIMED TO HAVE SPENT ABOUT ₹10.60 LAKH FOR FEEDING STRAY DOGS AND BULLS IN BMC AREA, ANIMAL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS STATED THAT MANY BULLS AND COWS HAVE LOST THEIR LIVES DUE TO LACK OF FOOD

THE CIVIC AUTHORITY, UNDER ANIMAL WELFARE PROJECTS OF THE BMC, HAS BEEN RUNNING A CATTLE WELFARE CENTRE AT JAMUKOLI

spent about ₹10.60 lakh for feeding stray dogs and bulls in BMC area, animal rights activists stated that many bulls and cows have lost their lives due to lack of food.

It needs to be mentioned here that the civic authority, under animal welfare projects of the BMC, has been running a cattle welfare centre at Jamukoli. Spread over a land of about eight acres, the centre has a grazing ground and water supply and about 40 sheds that can house about 150 animals at a time.

Speaking on the issue of higher expenditure and lesser number of bulls being treated, a senior BMC official clarified, "Owing to Covid-19, we were able to treat less number of bulls. However, we had formulated plans to feed them and do their treatment on-site rather than bringing back to the centres which shot our expenditure."

MTEch students from Odisha picked for int'l project

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 7: Kaustubh Wadekar and Ritesh Reddy Seri, both third year Integrated MTEch Chemical Engineering students of the Institute of Chemical Technology Odisha Campus Bhubaneswar were recently selected for a highly competitive international project by the Joint Institute of Nuclear Research, Russia (JINR).

JINR, like the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) and International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER), is an international intergovernmental organisation, a world famous scientific centre that is a unique example of integration of fundamental theoretical and experimental research in Nuclear, High Energy Physics and other allied sciences.

Only 26 participants from over 12 countries have been selected for various projects under this programme after a rigorous selection procedure by JINR. Kaustubh and Ritesh have been selected for the project "Optimization of the solid ISOL method for volatile reaction products of heavy ion beam reactions".

7 more deaths push state's nCoV toll to 1,778

ODISHA REPORTS 368 FRESH COVID-19 CASES IN 24 HOURS, TAKING THE CASELOAD TO 3,21,564

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 7: State's Covid-19 tally mounted to 3,21,564 Monday, after 368 fresh cases were reported, while seven more fatalities pushed the death toll to 1,778, a senior Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department official said.

The new infections were reported from 26 of the coastal state's 30 districts.

Khurda district, comprising state capital Bhubaneswar, registered the highest of 49 fresh cases followed by Sundargarh (45) and Angul (30), said the official.

Four districts—Boudh, Gajapati, Nabarangpur and Subarnapur—did not report any new Covid-19 case during the last 24 hours, the official pointed out.

Taking to Twitter; the H&FW de-



Ignoring social distancing norms, people demonstrate at PMG Square in Bhubaneswar, Monday

partment said, "Regret to inform the demise of seven Covid positive patients while under treatment in hospitals."

Cuttack, Balasore, Jagatsinghpur;

Puri and Sundargarh accounted for the deaths since Sunday, the official said.

A total of 53 other Covid-19 patients have also died due to co-

IN NUMBERS

Khurda registered the highest of 49 fresh cases followed by Sundargarh (45) and Angul (30)

Cuttack, Balasore, Jagatsinghpur, Puri and Sundargarh accounted for the deaths since Sunday

Odisha has so far conducted over 61.81 lakh sample tests including 38,231 Sunday

The positivity rate stands at 5.2 per cent

morbidity, said the official. The state has thus far conducted over 61.81 lakh sample tests, including 38,231 Sunday. The positivity rate stands at 5.2 per cent.

HITTING THE STREETS



People under the banner of 'Odisha Power Distribution Franchise Engineers' Association' demonstrate at PMG Square in Bhubaneswar, Monday, demanding regular employment for engineers, who once worked under CESU franchise, at TPCODL

'State govt has total control over private schools' fees'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Dec 7: The state government has full control over the fee structures of private schools, stated the Parents' Association through a reply affidavit submitted at the Orissa High Court, Monday.

Replying to the government's affidavit stating having no control over private schools, the association stated that private schools should consult with the government before increasing fees.

Counsel for the petitioner, Bibhuti Bhushan Choudhury, said, "In the last affidavit submitted by the State Government, it expressly mentioned that they have no control over fees in private schools. However, we have submitted a reply today refuting their claims."

"As per the resolution brought by the State Government on September 23, 1996, private schools come under

Section-9 of the same resolution empowers the government to cancel the NOC of the school if it does not comply with the State government," he added.

"We submitted a pray before the court to issue directions to the government to take action against the erring schools. The court was satisfied with our arguments and will take a decision December 10," he further added.

It is pertinent to mention here that the government December 2 had told the High Court that it is not legally empowered to intervene in the reduction of the tuition fees in private schools during the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

In its affidavit submitted before the court, the state government stated that the government has no specific provisions for fixation of fee structure of different unaided private schools.

SSB directed to fill vacant lecturer posts

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 7: The higher education department Monday wrote a letter to the State Selection Board, Odisha for conducting recruitment examinations to fill up post of lecturers (DP post) in non government aided colleges of the state.

Surendra Kumar Panda, joint secretary, state government, in a letter to Secretary of State Selection board directed the board to conduct recruitment examination for filling up of 973 posts of lecturers in various subjects in non-governmental aided colleges of the state.

A candidate should possess a Master's degree in the concerned subject with at least 55 percent. The selection shall be on the basis of written test, career assessment and viva voce test. The age limit is 42 years.

ODMeMUN concludes



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 7: The three-day long ODMeMUN-2020 of ODM the educational group came to an end Sunday. This is the third edition of MUN to be conducted by ODM Educational Group and the first-ever virtual one. The event was inaugurated by the chairman, S Minaketa, who wished the 400 participants a great learning experience.

The event has seen registered delegates from six countries besides India such as Russia, Uzbekistan, Nepal, Dubai, Nigeria, and Japan. The guest speakers were writer and blogger Aparna Mudi and youth coordinator of PETA Shibani Mishra. The delegates, teachers, parents and students joined the event virtually.

Floral kaleidoscope unveiled in Capital

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 7: An outdoor exhibit floral kaleidoscope was unveiled for public at Regional Science Center here Monday. The interactive exhibit is specially designed to accommodate wheel chaired people along with kids to celebrate social inclusion of specially abled person.

The said exhibit demonstrates the phenomena widely known as reflection of light.

Infinite images are formed in a special device known as kaleidoscope when an object placed inside a triangular prism.

It surely ignites young minds and attracts best brains in science. The program ended with an action packed live show on Fire and Bubbles said, Soumen Ghosh, Project Coordinator of Regional Science Centre.

He said, "Disability inclusion is an essential condition to uphold sustainable development. Worldwide museums and science centres also vow to create inclusive and accessible facility comes under their respective parameter. Regional Science Centre, Bhubaneswar also strives to provide support for people with disability and tries to take steps to break down barriers to inclusion."

For this a new accessible outdoor exhibit Floral Kaleidoscope opened for public Monday.

The small exhibit is specially designed to accommodate persons on wheel chairs simultaneously with kids and adults.

The event was organised with support of Swabhiman, State Information and Disability Centre, Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

THEY MAN TRAFFIC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Dec 7: Student traffic volunteers demonstrate in Cuttack, Monday, to press for fulfilment of their demands

SAHOO ASSUMES CHARGE AS VC OF FM UNIVERSITY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 7: Dinabandhu Sahoo assumed charges as the new vice chancellor of Fakir Mohan University Monday. He was the director of Cluster Innovation Center as well as professor of Department of Botany, University of Delhi.



After joining the university, he addressed both the teaching and non teaching staff and research scholars and urged them to join hands and work together for betterment of university. He highlighted the immediate priority as well as short term and long term vision of the university. Governor Ganeshi Lal November 23, 2020 appointed Dinabandhu Sahoo as vice chancellor of Fakir Mohan University along with five others.



Student traffic volunteers demonstrate in Cuttack, Monday, to press for fulfilment of their demands

OSA donates oximeters to OSMC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 7: Odisha Society of the Americas (OSA) donated 550 pulse oximeters worth ₹8 Lakh to Odisha State Medical Corporation Ltd to assist in the COVID fight.

Cine Actor Sabyasachi Mishra, the goodwill ambassador of the health and wellness group of OSA handed over the oximeters to OSMCL in presence of Managing Director, OSMCL, Yamini Sarangi, IAS and GM, Operations, Saubhagya Ranjan Ransingh.

These certified pulse oximeters will be supplied to designated health care workers who will visit remote areas to ensure proper check-ups at rural Odisha.

Few months ago, the same group had donated an advanced Mobile Covid Testing Van equipped with all modern facilities to Health Department, Govt of Odisha which is helping the swab testing process at various districts.



Health and wellness Group (HWG) Chairman Devashish Ray (USA) informed, "In future, the group has many plans to execute in association with Sabyasachi Mishra, for the betterment of Odisha. We are also forming a global network of Odia physicians working in various countries."

Sabyasachi Mishra informed, "This is another achievement for OSA Health & Wellness Group after the successful delivery of Covid Testing Van. Globally we are connecting for a healthy Odisha."

HWG's Medical Adviser for India Sailil Mohanty said, "The Covid-19 pandemic has forced into individual consciousness the importance of knowing whether or not one has sufficient oxygen dissolved in one's bloodstream. Just like glucometers and blood pressure monitors earlier, the need has now arisen for people to have at home easy-to-use and portable instruments to measure this."

"The simplest way to do so is by using a fingertip pulse oximeter, which measures one's SpO2, which is itself a reasonable approximation to the oxygen dissolved in one's blood as a percentage of the maximum oxygen dissolvable in the same blood. You just place your finger into the grip and read the results off the display," he added.

Oximeters also measure the user's Pulse Rate (PR), in beats per minute, and most also show the Perfusion Index (PI), which is a measure of the pulse strength at the sensor site (the finger in this case).

CLASSIFIED SALE

Sale of Office Furniture, Electronic Items, Air Conditioners and Computers to be held on 10th & 11th December 2020 at World Vision India Office, Flat # 280, Bhoi Nagar, Behind Sahid Nagar Police Station, Bhubaneswar - 751022. Contact Number: 7978717151, 8895124899, 9556924899.

JAIL INMATES TO WATCH 'MORAL' FLICKS SUNDAYS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Dec 7: Jail inmates in the state will soon get an opportunity to watch patriotic and motivational movies Sundays besides enjoying soothing music in their cells every day, officials said.

The facilities are being provided to prisoners as part of the implementation of the 'Odisha Model Jail Manual-2020', said DG (Prisons) Santosh Kumar Upadhaya.

Inmates of the special jail here were the first to get the facilities from Sunday. These schemes will be extended to other prisons of the state gradually, an official said.

Odisha has a total of 91 jails currently housing around 8,000 inmates. "A projector along with a large screen and a sound system has been installed in a room having 100 seating capacity for the enter-

ENGAGING PRISONERS

A turmeric powder processing unit was set up at the female enclosure from where turmeric powder will be produced and sold

Two units for processing mustard oil and wheat will be opened in the female enclosure by the end of March, 2021

A bout 5,000 marigold saplings have been planted on the special jail premises to sell the flower in local market

A rrangements are being made to sell fish and compost manure produced in the jail

A sales counter of the Special Jail in Bhubaneswar will be inaugurated shortly to sell products made in the prison

tainment of prisoners," a senior official of the special jail here said. The official said that patriotic and motivational movies and those with good moral value will be screened every Sunday to make the inmates stress free. Besides, awareness programmes relating to issues on health, human rights, legal aid and others will be shown to the prisoners, the official said.

As part of the reforms, the au-

thorities of the special jail here also installed speakers at various places, on which soothing devotional and spiritual songs will be played to ease stress, anxiety and tension among prison inmates, said the official.

According to the official, many prisoners die by suicide in prisons due to stress and the National Human Rights Commission has suggested that soothing music be played in jails as it may help in preventing such incidents.

Two water purifiers were installed in the female enclosure and the jail hospital, the official said, adding that arrangements have been made so that women prisoners with children and those who are sick are able to keep their cooked food warm for taking at late hours.

A turmeric powder processing unit was set up at the female en-

closure from where turmeric powder will be produced. This will be sold to people and the female inmates will in turn earn some money by engaging themselves in the unit, the official pointed out.

This apart, two units for processing mustard oil and wheat will be opened in the female enclosure by the end of March, 2021.

A sanitary napkin incinerator was also installed in the female enclosure for destroying used napkins, said the official.

About 5,000 marigold saplings have been planted on the special jail premises here to sell the flower in local market. Arrangements are also being made to sell fish and compost manure produced in the jail. A sales counter of the Special Jail, Bhubaneswar will be inaugurated shortly to sell products made in the prison.

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The curious case of 2,700 missing labourers

COVID ASSISTANCE MONEY WORTH AROUND ₹40.74 LAKH HAS BEEN PENDING WITH THE LABOUR DEPT FOR LABOURERS IN SUBARNAPUR

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sonepur, Dec 7: The government has made provision for Covid assistance to daily wagers, but assistance fund to the tune of over ₹40.74 lakh has remained undistributed while the Labour department has failed to trace whereabouts of 2,717 daily wagers in Subarnapur, a report said.

The report added that the district administration has been unsuccessfully trying to locate the labourers whose assistance is pending with the administration.

It is alleged that the labourers who have vanished without coming out to receive their Covid assistance are only on books, it is alleged. They have been registered by the Labour department.

In view of this, the Labour department is left in a quandary.

On the other hand, officials at the block, panchayat and NAC and municipality levels have been trying their best to trace the labourers.

Collector Monisha Bannerjee has written to the BDOs of six blocks, executive officer of two NACs and Subarnapur municipality to immediately disburse the Covid assistance of the left-out labourers.



PHOTO FROM INTERNET

OFFICIALS AT THE BLOCK, PANCHAYAT, NAC AND MUNICIPALITY LEVELS ARE TRYING THEIR BEST TO TRACE THE LABOURERS

SUBARNAPUR COLLECTOR MONISHA BANNERJEE HAS WRITTEN TO THE BDOs OF SIX BLOCKS, EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF TWO NACs AND SUBARNAPUR MUNICIPALITY TO IMMEDIATELY DISBURSE THE COVID ASSISTANCE OF THE LEFT-OUT LABOURERS

They were also directed to prepare a list of labourers who have not received their assistance and send it to the Labour department.

In this situation, the registration of genuine labourers by the Labour department has come under cloud amid allegation that some middlemen have been fraudulently pushing ineligible people into the system as beneficiaries in rural areas. Scores of fake labourers have been grabbing benefits of various

welfare schemes of genuine labourers.

Missing of over 2,500 labourers has left many wondering. It was alleged that even rich people and housewives have managed to register them as construction labourers and been receiving benefits.

The Covid assistance was being provided eight months ago. During the lockdown and shutdown, thousands of labourers and daily wagers had lost their jobs and livelihood,

so, ₹1,500 was allocated for each registered labourer. The district has 60, 841 registered labourers. Accordingly, ₹9.12 crore was provided as assistance.

As the Labour department is understaffed and there was possibility of crowding in banks, the department decided to disburse the assistance at their doorsteps through officials at the grassroots level.

It was learnt that 190 labourers in Sonepur block, 414 in Durguripalli, 68 in Ullunda, 169 in Binika, 758 in Birmaharajpur, 319 in Tarabha, 427 in Tarabha town, 184 in Subarnapur town and 187 in Bainika town have not received their assistance.

As for the pending dues, district Labour officer Dileswar Khakha said that BDOs of six blocks, executive officers of two NACs and Subarnapur municipality have been asked to pay the assistance to the labourers.

"Due to change of the addresses of the registered labourers, there has been a delay on part of officials to pay the assistance. After we get the complete list of the beneficiaries who haven't received the assistance, we will credit their money into their bank accounts," he added.

AILING FEMALE JUMBO DEAD

POST NEWS NETWORK

Deogarh, Dec 7: An ailing female elephant which had been battling for life after falling into a nullah in Biriyam village in Kansar section under this forest range in the district succumbed to its injuries during treatment, Monday.

On being informed, Deogarh ACF (wildlife) Rashmi Chowdhury, ranger Debadutta Nanda and forester Prasanna Kumar Sahu reached the spot and took stock of the animal's death.

Preliminary inquiries indicated that the animal aged about 30 might have died of kidney and liver related ailments, DFO Khyama Sarangi said. Later, the carcass was buried at the spot after veterinarian Satyabrata Mishra conducted a post-mortem.

Reports said that the animal, in search of food, strayed into Biriyam village from the nearby reserve forest and fell into a nullah, November 30. It sustained critical injuries in the process and failed to get up and walk again.

The forest officials led by the DFO Sarangi reached the spot and took stock of the situation.

Later, water was drained out from the nullah by engaging a machine following which a team of veterinarians started treatment of the animal.

Displaced from their lands, now they pray for euthanasia

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kalinganagar, Dec 7: A couple displaced for establishment of an industrial firm here in Jajpur district has written to the district Collector praying for euthanasia, a report said.

The couple identified as Meena and Sambhunath Mohanta, 45, are residents of Kalamatia village under Sarangpur panchayat of Sukinda block. After reports surfaced, the development has evoked sharp reactions from various quarters.

The Covid pandemic has further worsened the situation as a result of which they are finding it hard to arrange two square meals a day

The couple alleged that they were not provided with any financial assistance or rehabilitated after being displaced for the establishment of the industrial firm. In the absence of any financial assistance they are now finding it hard to run their household and passing their time in distress and drudgery.

The Covid pandemic has further worsened the situation as a result of which they are finding it hard to arrange two square meals a day. This has prompted



Sambhunath Mohanta

us to take the path of euthanasia for which we have written to the Collector seeking his approval, the couple said.

They have sent their application to the district Collector through post, December 4 and also submitted its copies to the additional district magistrate (ADM), Kalinganagar.

Reports said that the concerned firm displaced the couple from their homeland for establishment of its plant in 2010. Sambhunath's name was in the survey list but he however was not paid any compensation. Moreover, he was neither rehabilitated nor resettled while his name was not there in the list of displaced persons prepared by the company.

He repeatedly wrote to the Collector, Chief Minister and members of Standing Committee of the state Assembly praying for relief but in vain.

They stuck to their biz and have grown only stronger

Gardening water cans earn these Keonjhar tribals a livelihood, an identity

POST NEWS NETWORK

Champua, Dec 7: No work is big or small. Believing this principle, a tribal community of Balisahi, Sasank village under Razia panchayat of Champua block in Keonjhar district has embraced manufacturing and selling of gardening water cans.

They have been in this business of producing water cans for the last couple of years and, according to them, they have never thought of switching to another occupation as some do when they face problems in their occupation.

Despite being from the lower rung of the society, they have taken up the manufacturing of gardening water cans as their family tradition which has now given them an identity.

They can be seen religiously working all throughout the year except for three months of rainy season. They start working as early as 9.00am and continue till sunset.

Despite the presence of several modern agricultural equipments in markets, this gardening water can has retained its utility.

For manufacturing such cans, they require lead for soldering, rivet, acid, copper and some other materials. A family can manufacture maximum three to four such cans in a day. They then carry their finished products to weekly markets or daily markets. Traders also procure these cans directly from their houses. They sell a can for ₹250 to 300. However, they rue that they are not getting profits as they used to get in the past.

"To manufacture three water cans, five empty oil tins are required. Earlier, we would get an empty oil tin for ₹10 to 15. Now, we are paying two times more. Copper has also become costlier. Yet we are happy with our occupation as it provides earning all throughout the year.

During the rainy season, the demand for gardening water can comes down which is why we stop working during rainy season. But the money we have earned and saved will see us through these three months of lean period," says Manoj Munda, a villager.



FESTIVE FERVOUR



People buy turmeric leaves from a roadside vendor in Keonjhar on the eve of Prathamashanti, which celebrates the birth of the first progeny, Monday

Gemstones worth over ₹1cr seized

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rayagada, Dec 7: Acting on a tip-off on gemstone smuggling, a Special Task Force (STF) of state Crime Branch seized precious gem stones worth over ₹1 crore and arrested a person in this connection, Monday.

The seizure took place during a raid at a house in Jagannath Complex in the town. A five member team of the STF accompanied by Town police station officials raided the house and seized two sacks full of gemstones weighing 151 kg from the dickey of a car (OD18 G 3355). The seized gemstones of various



The seized gemstones

colours and sizes comprises of emerald (panna), ruby (manikya), topaz,

hessonite (gomed) and black diamonds. The market price of these gemstones is stated to be over ₹1 crore.

The sleuths also detained a person, Jitendra Kumar Behera from Bijabandali village under Ambadala police limits in the district. The raided house was of Behera. Behera will be arrested after completion of interrogation, sources said.

Rayagada SP Saravana Vivek M said that Jitendra has been staying in Rayagada town for past three years. A case was registered in the Town police station and further investigation is on.

DOUBLING FARMER'S INCOME

Angul farmers are on a roll

KRISHI VIGYAN KENDRA PLAYING AN INSTRUMENTAL ROLE TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE TARGET

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, Dec 7: Rapid industrialisation in this district has failed to wean away farmers from their profession. Instead of switching over to other means of earning livelihood like working at factories or opening business units, they are still practicing cultivation and earning profits as well.

Giving up traditional methods, they are using modern technologies. This is exactly where the district Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) is playing an instrumental role in implementing the Central government's Doubling Farmers' Income (DFI).

DFI has been operational since 2016-17. The aim and objective of it is to help farmers increase their earnings by two times.

In the financial year 2017-18, the DFI strategy was introduced and is reportedly doing well. Under this, the district Krishi Vigyan Kendra adopted two villages namely Ragudiapada and Talagarh under Angul block. Later, it took up more three villages, one each from Banarpal, Chhendipada and Athmalik blocks.

In the first phase, ten farmers, that is five farmers from Ragudiapada village and five from Talagarh village,



OUAT and KVK officials at an adopted village to take stock of the progress

were given training. The training included modern farming technology, seed disinfection, disease and soil management, organic methods, marketing and crop preservation.

In the initial stages, the farmers were guided through their mobile phones and at times, agronomists also paid visits to them.

Now, the efforts of the farmers and KVK officials are paying dividends.

Listed below are a few success stories of farmers who managed to toil hard and reap rich dividends.

Bibhuti Pradhan, a farmer, is cultivating tomato particularly of Arka Rakshak variety which has a triple disease resistant power along with bottle gourd, cauliflower, cabbage, pointed gourd, bitter gourd and some others on his seven acres of land applying Trellis Drainage System. From October till now, he has carried out a business of Rs2 lakh from selling bottle gourd alone, it was learnt.

Similarly, Mayadhar Pradhan, Kruttibas Biswal, Shantilata Sahu and Saila of Talagarh are growing mush-

rooms, papaya and rearing hens, ducks and ornamental fish. If Shantilata's business is considered, she is learnt to have been selling mushrooms to the tune of ₹1,00,000.

Expressing his satisfaction, Bibhuti said, "We used to grow crops applying the traditional methods. If we are presently growing crops double the volume of what we used to do once, it is only because of KVK's guidance. Besides, knowing about agricultural procedures, we have also learnt how to preserve our crops and market them so that we can have better value for our crops."

When contacted, senior agronomist and head, KVK, Angul, Binita Satpathy said they are working towards presenting Angul as an ideal for others in 2022 when the final DFI report shall have to be submitted. "The farmers are being given training at the KVK and sometimes our scientists are also visiting them. Our efforts are bearing fruits," she added.

According to deputy director, agriculture, Basant Kumar Sahoo, there is a subsidy facility for all the farmers including the ones of adopted villages provided they have identity cards. Identity cards will enable them to avail all sorts of government facilities.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, NABARANGPUR (R&B) DIVISION, NABARANGPUR
e-Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. E.E (R&B)-01/2020-21/NGP
Date: 03.12.2020
No. 4231
No. B-497: Bid Documents consisting of work, Estimated Cost, Cost of Tender paper, EMD, Time of completion, Class of Contractors and the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in Govt. Website i.e www.tendersodisha.gov.in.

- Name of the Work : Civil Construction Work and Electrical work as mentioned in DTCN
- No. of Work : 08 Nos.
- Estimated Cost : Rs. 11.98 lakhs to Rs. 48.90 lakhs
- Period of completion : 3 to 7 Calendar Months
- Date & Time of Bidding : From 11.00 hours of 11.12.2020 upto 16.00 hours of 23.12.2020.
- Last date & time for receipt of bids in portal : 16.00 hours of 23.12.2020.
- Bids received online shall be opened on : 11.00 hours of 24.12.2020
- Name and address of the officer inviting Bid : Executive Engineer, Nabarangpur (R&B) Division, Nabarangpur Further details can be seen from the www.tendersodisha.gov.in. Sd./- Executive Engineer Nabarangpur (R&B) Division OIPR-34143/11/0008/2021

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, BOLANGIR (R&B) DIVISION, BOLANGIR
Mail ID: eePWD.bgr@rediffmail.com, eePWD.bgr@gmail.com
Ph. No.: 06652-232374
e-Procurement Notice
BID IDENTIFICATION No. BGR R&B/13/2020-21
No. 4343
Dtd.03.12.20
1. The Executive Engineer, Bolangir (R&B) Division, Bolangir on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites Percentage rate bid in Single Cover System in ONLINE MODE for Electrical work detailed in the table below from eligible contractors.

- Nature of work : Electrical Work
- No. of tender : 1 No. Electrical Work
- Tender Cost : Rs. 6,000/- (Tender paper Cost)
- Class of Contractor : HT (Electrical)
- Date & time of sale & receipt of Bids : From Dt. 10.12.2020, 11.00 A.M. Dt.22.12.2020 upto 5.00 P.M.
- Date of opening of bid : Dt.24.12.2020 at 11.30 A.M.
- The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website <http://tendersodisha.gov.in>. Sd./- Executive Engineer Bolangir (R&B) Division OIPR-34028/11/0012/2021

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION, ROURKELA
SHORT TENDER CALL NOTICE
BID IDENTIFICATION NO. ONLINE-EERKL-13 OF 2020-21
No. O-666

- Name of the Work : Road (Periodical Maintenance)
- Total No. of Works : 3 Nos.
- Approx. Estimated Cost : Rs. 17.02 to 19.50 lakhs
- Class of Contractor : "D" & "C" Class
- Period of Completion : 2 Months
- Type of Tender : Single Cover
- Other details

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender Online for Bidding	
		From	To
1	2	3	4
Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Rourkela	Online- EERKL-13 of 2020-21	10.12.2020, 10.00 A.M.	15.12.2020, 5.00 P.M.

Further details can be seen from the website: www.tendersorissa.gov.in. Sd./- Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Rourkela OIPR-25067/11/0017/2021

ORISSA HYDRO POWER CORPORATION LTD.
OHPCL
O/o. THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, MURAN DAM DIVISION, UPPER INDRAVATI HYDRO ELECTRIC PROJECT
A/P.O.: Khatiguda, Dist.- Nabarangpur, Odisha, PIN - 764085
NOTICE INVITATION FOR BIDS - (NIFB)
Tel. No. 06858-224351, E-mail: esmurandamdivision@gmail.com
Date: 04.12.2020
e-Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. EEMDD-05/2020-21
No. A-336

Sl. No.	Bid Identification No.	Name of Work	Value of Work (in Rs.)	Cost of Bid document including GST @ 18% (in Rs.) Non-refundable	Bid Security (EMD) in Rs.	Period of Completion	Last date & time of Online Receipt of Bids	Class of Contractors
1	EMDD/5/20-21 (1/3)	Roof treatment of valve House main building at Mukhiguda, providing & laying tar-far-fel (BH) in two layers, with 10 Years Warranty. UIHEP, Khatiguda.	25,45,357/- (Excluding GST)	Rs 6000 + GST @ 18% Rs 1080 = Rs. 7080/-	25500/-	Six Calendar Months	Date: 21.12.2020 upto 5.00 P.M.	C & B Class Contractor
2	EMDD/5/20-21 (2/3)	Replacing damaged glass bricks of Valve House at Mukhiguda providing with 6mm +4mm laminated tough glass with fitting and fixing by aluminum angle and channel of Main building of valve house UIHEP, Khatiguda.	25,47,579/- (Excluding GST)	Rs 6000 + GST @ 18% Rs 1080 = Rs. 7080/-	25500/-	Six Calendar Months	Date: 21.12.2020 upto 5.00 P.M.	C & B Class Contractor
3	EMDD/5/20-21 (3/3)	Improvement to TBL road from RD. 11.69 KM to 16.89 KM connecting to right dyke No.4 Benakhamar to Tunnel intake Mahulpatna UIHEP, Khatiguda.	46,41,552/- (Excluding GST)	Rs 6000 + GST @ 18% Rs 1080 = Rs. 7080/-	46500/-	Eight Calendar Months	Date: 21.12.2020 upto 5.00 P.M.	B & A Class Contractor

The Bid documents will be available in the Govt. website <http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in> & in the OHPCL Website: www.ohpccl.com from 11.00 A.M. of dt. 09.12.2020 to 21.12.2020 up to 5.00 P.M. The details of the Tender Documents, terms and conditions please refer our Website <http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in> & www.ohpccl.com.
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, MURAN DAM DIVISION OIPR-32211/11/0004/2021

FOCUS ECONOMY

A FORMIDABLE CHALLENGE



Classical economics did not anticipate coexistence of inflation and recession. When demand is down, naturally prices would go down. But when there are supply shocks, and it reduces the potential growth rate, we face the spectre of simultaneous recession and inflation

Beyond the loss of national income is the loss of jobs. Since ninety percent of the workforce is in the unorganised sector, the workers in this sector work without a formal contract, without health insurance and pension and without other benefits. It is difficult to keep an exact track of the status of this section of the labour force. One source is the weekly employment survey by CMIE, a private organisation. During April, when the lockdown hit was most severe, nearly 122 million people became jobless. That number has come down sharply, and since July the number of unemployed maybe in the range of 28 million. More tellingly many workers may have dropped out of the labour force, especially women, altogether. This will lower the denominator and misleadingly tell us that the unemployment rate is dropping. But what we need to watch for is the labour force participation rate, both for men and women. This is what provides incomes to families. As for the organised sector employees the data from EPFO shows a decline in formal sector employment. CMIE also reported that by July nearly 20 million formal sector, salaried individuals had lost their jobs this year so far. In the preceding quarter some of them may have found new employment, as recruiting picked up.

As a result of the recession year, India's potential growth rate has dropped to 4.5 percent as per the Oxford Economics Research Organisation. This is the medium-term attainable growth rate. But even now as the economy tries to recover from the depths of recession, there are worrying signs of inflation picking up. It is currently close to 7 percent and the outlook is that it will remain high. Food grains and vegetable prices may go down after harvest time, but commodity prices including metals, cement, oil and chemicals are inching up.

Just a week after the GDP data release for the last quarter, the Reserve Bank of India announced its latest monetary stance. The current policy rate, i.e. interest rates at which liquidity is supplied to commercial banks is the lowest it has been. This policy rate is at 4 percent. But even the RBI is worried about inflationary pressure building up. The official statement of the RBI is a study in contrast. On one hand it says it will pursue its accommodative policy as long as necessary to revive economic growth. So, money supply will be high and credit will remain cheap. On the other hand, it is cautious about inflation, and it says GDP momentum is building up. Inflation calls for tightening money supply and recession calls for loosening money supply. The RBI seems to be in a Catch-22 situation.

Meanwhile, too much liquidity is firing up the stock market. To top it all, the large listed companies reported record profits in the July-September quarter.

Classical economics did not anticipate coexistence of inflation and recession. When demand is down, naturally prices would go down, as producers offer discounts, faced with excess capacity. But when there are supply shocks, such as those caused by the pandemic and the lockdown, which reduces the potential growth rate, then we face the spectre of simultaneous recession and inflation. Navigating out of this will need a fiscal stimulus to shore up consumer spending, an investment revival to increase the productive capacity of the economy and a careful management of inflationary expectations. Concomitantly the government will also need to pursue redistribution of income to reduce the widening disparity. This also calls for fiscal prudence to cut wasteful spending, find new revenue through asset sales, mining and spectrum auctions, and build investor confidence. All this will call for the most astute economic and expectations management. It's going to be a busy Budget season.

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

THE BILLION PRESS

Life is life - whatever in a cat, or dog or man. There is no difference there between a cat and a man. The idea of difference is a human conception for man's own advantage.

SRI AUROBINDO



Early Bird

As the world is eagerly and impatiently waiting for a safe and efficacious vaccine for inoculation against COVID-19, the Haryana Health Minister Anil Vij testing positive for the virus just a fortnight after he voluntarily got administered a trial dose of Bharat Biotech's indigenously developed Covaxin raises questions about the rush for getting the vaccination, especially among some VIPs. In their bid to reassure the people at large about a safe antidote and faith in the science, high profile politicians are either announcing their willingness to be 'subjects', i.e., volunteers for one or the other vaccines at different stages of clinical trial or actually getting the shots. Though highly laudable, these experimentations should not be guided by the maxim of desperate situations requiring desperate remedies. This may prove counter-productive. In fact, the VIPs volunteering for getting the shots apparently exhibit their national-cultural traits and political convictions as well. The names are illustrative, indeed. They include a daughter of the Russian President Vladimir Putin, three former US Presidents - Barack Obama, George W Bush and Bill Clinton - and our very own, controversial Haryana minister and BJP leader Vij.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has been clear on the search for the all-important vaccines. It says: "No vaccine has been found as yet. Many potential vaccines for COVID-19 are being studied and several large clinical trials may report results later this year. If a vaccine is proven safe and effective, it must be approved by national regulators, manufactured to exacting standards and distributed."

In sharp contrast to the circumspection shown by the three former US Presidents, while offering to take the shots, Russian President Putin has thrown such precautions to the winds. It sounds like the Cold War competition between the former USSR and the USA over who would be the first to get the vaccine out in the market. President Putin virtually flexed his muscles when he claimed a corona virus vaccine developed in his country has been registered for use and one of his daughters has been inoculated. Speaking at a government meeting Putin recently said that the vaccine has proven efficient during tests, offering a lasting immunity from the corona virus. He emphasized that the vaccine underwent the necessary tests. Russia is the first country to register a corona virus vaccine, even though many scientists in the country and abroad have been skeptical and questioning the decision to register the vaccine before Phase 3 trials that normally last months and involve thousands of people.

Undeterred by such warnings, Putin has ordered the authorities to begin mass vaccinations with the Sputnik V vaccine. "Let's agree on this - you will not report to me next week, but you will start mass vaccination ... let's get to work already," Putin reportedly told Deputy Prime Minister Tatiana Golikova who said large-scale vaccination could begin on a voluntary basis in December.

On the other hand, the three former US Presidents have launched an awareness campaign before the Food and Drug Administration is set to meet to decide whether to authorize a COVID-19 vaccine produced by biopharmaceutical companies Pfizer and BioNtech. This is done in the backdrop of widespread vaccine skepticism in the US that is proving to be yet another setback for public health officials and political leaders to tackle. Significantly, Obama, Bush and Clinton have categorically explained they would take the vaccine even before television cameras "once" it is approved by the country's regulators and top infectious disease expert, Dr Anthony Fauci. "I promise you that when it's been made for people who are less at risk, I will be taking it on TV or having it filmed just so that people know that I trust this science and what I don't trust is getting COVID," Obama said. His two predecessors also echoed him.

A Gallup poll in the USA shows around 42 per cent of the people in that country won't be willing to take the vaccine, while 37 per cent said they won't get it because they felt timeline of its development was rushed. Another 26 per cent said they wanted to wait until they knew for sure that the vaccine is safe.

The Haryana health minister tested positive before he was scheduled to get a second shot of the Bharat Biotech's vaccine on December 18, exactly 28 days after the first one on November 20. Bharat Biotech clarified that the vaccine had been designed to be efficacious only after participants in trials received two doses 28 days apart.

The question may arise why the minister was in such a tearing hurry to be a volunteer. More than anything else, it could be due to his loyalty to his party and he is egged on by the hurry that the government seems to be in to present a vaccine to Indians since clapping and lighting candles seem to have failed in invoking the higher spirits to help the countrymen.

There is no doubt this vaccine will imply huge amounts of the exchequer being drained out. The tearing hurry being demonstrated by the pharmaceutical giants is not due to concern for people dying of the infection. It certainly is to capture the market first and cash in. Eventually, how safe people will be after taking this vaccine is no one's concern. The lookout is for the early bird that gets the worm.



Ajit Ranade

THE TECHNICAL DEFINITION OF A RECESSION IS WHEN THE ECONOMY CONTRACTS FOR TWO SUCCESSIVE QUARTERS. BETWEEN APRIL AND JUNE INDIA'S ECONOMY WENT DOWN BY 24 PER CENT, AND BETWEEN JULY AND SEPTEMBER IT SHRUNK BY 7.5 PER CENT

In the last week of November, the government confirmed that India was officially in a recession, possibly for the first time in modern history. The technical definition of a recession is when the economy contracts for two successive quarters, i.e. three month periods. Between April and June India's economy went down by 24 percent, and between July and September it shrank by 7.5 percent. These compression rates are as compared to the level of GDP one year ago respectively. The first quarter contraction was explained mostly by the severe lockdown ordered by the Central government to tackle the spread of the pandemic. The second quarter continued to be in the negative territory, although this contraction was less than what was feared. At this rate the overall economy will shrink by around 8 to 10 percent overall for this fiscal year. This would translate into a loss of national income of about ₹16 to 20 lakh crore, or between ₹12,000 and ₹15,000 per person. This loss of income is because many services business like hospitality, tourism, travel and retail shops have had to completely shut down.

Lack of demand has also meant the scaling back of production and employment in many other sectors. The most acute pain has been in the informal and unorganised sector, comprising small businesses. The hit to this sector is most severe and will be fully known after a lag, because their data is not automatically captured in the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, as it is for the larger and formal sector companies. Former Chief Statistician of India Pronab Sen has said that the small and medium enterprises (MSME) which contribute 45 percent of the country's industrial output could be affected very badly, resulting in Q3 and Q4 losses of GDP too.

As such, the MSME guaranteed loan package offered by the government has not been fully subscribed, as small businesses are reluctant to take on more loans. They fear bankruptcy. The Mudra loans already given out to small businesses are in danger of turning delinquent and adding to the non-performing loans of the banks.

SPECTRUM RBI POLICIES

Neither good for banks nor economy



Shivaji Sarkar

KEEPING THE RATES LOW MAY BE A "GOOD ACCOMMODATIVE GESTURE" FOR THOSE WHO TAKE LARGE LOANS AND ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE POOR HEALTH OF BANKS

Inflation is rising and would continue to rise for the next one year, says the RBI in the latest monetary policy review but refuses to increase the lending rate. The decision is fraught with risk for the banking sector and the economy as a whole. It is suspected to aid big businesses, as is the case with the farm Bills, triggering the on-going protests.

The monetary policy rates remain unchanged for the third time this year in the bi-monthly monetary policy announced Friday. The repo rate remains at 4 percent. The reverse repo rate, the rate at which the RBI gets funds from banks, stands unchanged at 3.35 percent. This is a surprise.

RBI Governor Shaktikant Das says that it is an "accommodative stance". It cannot be about having lending rates steady EMIs for home, auto or personal loan. That remains the smallest part of the economy. Rate tinkering is always small but that gives the signal of difficult situation. The larger concern is seemingly that of corporate, who do not want any rise in lending rates as the banks of late have been tightening their purses for them in the wake of high NPAs, unfortu-

nately from the large companies. The inflation touched a six-year high in October at 7.61 percent. Future inflation even at 6.8 percent, projected almost a year ahead is also beyond the RBI tolerance rate. Das, however, does not mention why the policy rates should remain low. It seems he is giving the large businesses a signal that for the next one year there would not be any change in rates.

Keeping the rates low may be a "good accommodative gesture" for those who take large loans and are responsible for the poor health of banks. The public sector banks are not in the pink of their health, despite repeated mergers. It only denotes that the banks are no more able to sprint or compete with each other. The large outages due to high lending and poor repayments have put the banking sector in distress.

The Jandhan accounts, many pro-farmer operations like direct benefits and fast changeover to digitals have increased banking costs and losses in addition to the poor repayment. What the country had started as a show-off to the international window has led to severe stress and strain on the banking sector.

The banks are losing almost on all operations, including ATM operations and losses due to digital transactions. The only positive is the interest earnings. This too has been cut by the RBI leading the banks to incur losses continuously leading to poorly manned banks and customer services. This hurts depositors hard.

The private sector banks are getting into not so honest operations. At least the recent RBI direction to the country's largest private sector lender, HDFC Bank, to temporarily halt all its digital launches as well as new sourcing of credit card customers point to a developing serious situation. The step has been taken following various outages the bank faced due to technical glitches in the past two years.

In January 2020, the RBI had levied a fine of ₹1 crore on HDFC for compromising with KYC norms in 39 accounts, which were used for bidding initial public offering (IPO), somewhat reminiscent of the Harshad Mehta stock scam. Transactions carried out through these accounts were found to be disproportionate the declared income of the customers.

As lending rates are reduced,

the bankers get into stress and private bankers apparently indulge in not so ethical practices prescribed by the SEBI. Low lending rates on daily basis facilitate immoral practices at virtually no cost. The public sector banks slip into losses and it is tried to be covered up through mergers. Whether it disguises many critical crises or not are matters of probe.

In such situation, how could all the six members of the Monetary Policy Committee unanimously vote is beyond comprehension. It should have ensued a proper discussion and not decided to continue with the accommodative stance of monetary policy as long as necessary - at least through the current financial year and into the next year - to revive growth on a durable basis and mitigate the impact of Covid-19, while ensuring that inflation remains within the target going forward. They know it well that for the next one year the chance of remaining it contained is virtually not possible.

It still has time to initiate strong measures. The first would be to harden rates to save the banking sector and put the economy on track.

INFIA

WORDSWORTH

Besmitten

You can find 100+ examples online (and even a few in newspaper archives). The examples show people using it naturally, not marking it as a strange or unusual word. On the other hand, you won't find any examples in my collection of historical electronic texts and it's not in any dictionary I've consulted. It obviously means "strongly attracted to (someone)", as in the Palm Beach Post of 12 August 2001: "At home, the practical man's fiancée was equally besmitten with BS Boy inside of three minutes". And it has turned up twice recently in the Guardian, as this from the issue of 13 April 2002: "Dogs have 78 chromosomes - twice the number of human beings - which accounts for their infinite-seeming variety since the first one was found 14,000 years ago, buried with some besmitten pet-owner". Putting all that together, what seems to be happening is that users are unconsciously creating it from smitten by analogy, most probably on the model of beguiled, bedazzled, or besotted, the last of these being very close in sense. They unconsciously know that one function of the prefix be- is to intensify the action of an existing verb or participle, so making besmitten a more powerful version of smitten. What I find intriguing is that be- is almost totally defunct as a word-forming prefix, so that if besmitten really is new, it's a rare beast. Actually, it isn't really new, since besmitten was very common in Old English more than a thousand years ago. However, it went out of use so long ago that modern users are recreating it anew. Is there such a word? Well, logically yes, since there's evidence of its existence. But what you're really asking, I presume, is whether it's OK to use it. I'd be cautious - in conversation or informal writing it would probably pass unnoticed, but in more formal situations you lay yourself open to people classing it as an error rather than as a creative reinvention of an archaic form.

LOL

Blonde at football game

A guy took his blonde girlfriend to her first football game. They had great seats right behind their team's bench. After the game, he asked her how she liked the experience. "Oh, I really liked it," she replied, "especially the tight pants and all the big muscles, but I just couldn't understand why they were killing

each other over 25 cents." Dumbfounded, her date asked, "What do you mean?" "Well, they flipped a coin, one team got it, and then for the rest of the game, all they kept screaming was, 'Get the quarterback! Get the quarterback! Get the quarterback! I'm like, hello? It's only 25 cents!'"



Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Dangers of misinformation

Sir, Over the weekend, Haryana's health minister Anil Vij announced that he tested positive for the coronavirus (Covid-19) leading many to draw connections with his participation in the trials of one of the vaccine candidate. The immediate media coverage and the social media conversations that followed conflated Vij's diagnosis with the trial in a way that suggests that the inoculation of Covaxin from Bharat Biotech is ineffective. In reality, it isn't known whether the minister was given a placebo or the actual inoculation. As per medical experts, even if he did get a shot of Covaxin, it isn't meant to be protective until he gets at least two doses (he got only one) and his immunity has had 14 days after that to build the necessary protection against Covid-19. This is not the first instance in which inadequate information or improper understanding of a scientific process as complex as vaccine development has gained traction on mainstream as well as social media. Earlier, the coverage of a volunteer participating in the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine trial in Chennai amplified allegations that were later disproved. Helped by misleading semantics and a lack of awareness, such conversations around vaccine are prone to misinformation and could erode trust. This problem has been particularly pronounced in the West - recent polls showed only 60% of Americans are willing to take vaccine - although it hasn't taken hold in a country like ours, where most people have seen disease closely.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Make bigamy punishable

Sir, It refers to a group of women having approached to make bigamy for people of all religions punishable under Section 494 of Indian Penal Code (IPC) in tune with UN conventions against bigamy. Presently provisions in Shariat Act exempt Muslims from provisions of section 494 IPC because this Section is subject to applicability of personal law. It is noteworthy many non-Muslims, including a number of celebrities misuse the provision by symbolically adopting Islam just for a day to prevent punishment under Section 494 of IPC Act, thus hurting the rights of the first wife. Central government has already taken steps to remove such evils from Muslim society like banning triple talaq. Bigamy is detrimental for first wives of persons going for bigamy in any religion. Central government should favour the plea in Supreme Court for making Section 494 of IPC applicable to all irrespective of personal laws.

Subhash Chandra Agrawal, NEW DELHI

Cops in UP arrest 10 men under anti-conversion law

REUTERS

Lucknow, Dec 7: Police in northern India have arrested 10 men for allegedly compelling women to change their religion after getting married, using a new anti-conversion law popularly called the 'Love Jihad' law, officials said Monday.

Last month, Uttar Pradesh became the first Indian state to pass a law against forced or fraudulent religious conversions, laying out prison terms for anyone compelling others to convert their faith or luring them into these conversions through marriage.

The anti-conversion law does not name any religion but critics call it Islamophobic for being solely imposed with the objective of preventing 'Love Jihad', which hard-line Hindu groups describe as a conspiracy to convert gullible Hindu women to Islam by misleading them with promises of love and marriage. Officials in Uttar Pradesh, the country's most populous state, said the law will help prevent fraudulent religious conversions and was designed to protect young women.

The federal government and the Uttar Pradesh government are both controlled by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Four senior police officials said 10 men were arrested last week



Protesters hold signs during a demonstration against the anti-conversion law in Uttar Pradesh.

ABOUT THE LAW
Under the new law, a man and woman belonging to different religions will have to give two months' notice to the district magistrate before they get married and they will be given permission if there are no objections.

At least four other states - Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Karnataka and Assam have said that they are planning to bring in similar anti-conversion laws.

Under the new law, a man and woman belonging to different religions will have to give two months' notice to the district magistrate before they get married and they will be given permission if there are no objections. At least four other Indian states - Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Karnataka and Assam have said that they are planning to bring in similar anti-conversion laws.

Karnataka to go UP way to ban cow slaughter

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bangalore, Dec 7: Karnataka Haj, Waqf and Animal Husbandry Minister, Prabhu Chauhan, said Monday that a Bill to ban cow slaughter on the lines of Uttar Pradesh will be placed in the current legislative session.

Speaking to reporters in the Assembly lounge here, Chauhan said that the majority of the people in the country worship cow and everyone must respect their feelings.

"Therefore, we need to have a strong Act to ban cow slaughter in the state. I think Uttar Pradesh has one of the best cow slaughter ban acts in the country and we feel that it would be appropriate to formulate our Act on the model of Uttar Pradesh, which was envisaged by UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath," he said. The minister added that as and when the law is enacted, along with prohibition on slaughter, sale and use of beef and illegal transportation of animals for slaughtering will also be stopped.

Last week, Chauhan was on a tour of Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh to study the cow slaughter ban act. He also met Adityanath to seek his guidance for formulating the "most stringent" anti-cow slaughter legislation. He also gathered information regarding the management of 'gaushalas' (cow shelters).

Uttar Pradesh has one of the most stringent anti-cow slaughter laws in place. According to this law, a person can get a maximum rig-



Cows are kept in a line at a slaughterhouse in Karnataka.

THE COURSE OF LAW

In 2010, the BJP government led by B.S. Yediyurappa had got the controversial Prevention of Slaughter and Preservation of Cattle Bill passed.

It proposed to replace the Karnataka Prevention of Cow Slaughter and Cattle Preservation Act, 1964.

Then the Bill widened the definition of "cattle" and imposed a blanket ban on cattle slaughter, coupled with stringent penalty clauses for violation.

However, the Congress government headed by Siddaramaiah that came to power in 2013 withdrew the Bill that was before the President for his assent.

After the BJP came back to power in the state, several party leaders have been making a pitch to re-enact the anti-cow slaughter law.

ouros imprisonment of 10 years and a fine of up to Rs 5 lakh for violation of the law. "For the first offence, a person can be given a rigorous punishment of one to seven years with a fine ranging from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 3 lakh. For the second offence, the person can be given 10-

year rigorous imprisonment with a fine up to Rs 5 lakh," the law states. Ahead of the 2018 Assembly elections, the BJP had promised in its manifesto to prohibit cow slaughter. The same was reiterated in the recently held state executive meetings in Mangaluru and Belagavi.

'Love jihad' law in next session

Bangalore: The anti-cow slaughter bill will be introduced during the ongoing winter session of the Karnataka legislature, while a law against "love jihad" will be taken up in the next session, State Revenue Minister R Ashoka said Monday. "It has been decided at the government level to enact anti-cow slaughter legislation during this session. Cow is worshipped as god by farmers. There is a special place for cows in Indian culture. To stop the killing of cows we are beginning this law in Karnataka," Ashoka said. Speaking to reporters here, he asserted that it is guarantee that the anti-cow slaughter bill will be cent percent introduced. "No love jihad during this session...In the next session we will remove love jihad," he added. A team of officials led by Animal Husbandry Minister Prabhu Chauhan had recently visited Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat, where anti-cow slaughter law has been enacted, to study about its implementation, aimed at strengthening the bill to be introduced during the session that began Monday. Officials have been directed to gather information regarding an ordinance promulgated in Uttar Pradesh against "love jihad". Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai had said, asserting the state will have a law against such practices. Uttar Pradesh had recently promulgated an ordinance against forcible or fraudulent religious conversions, which provides for imprisonment of up to 10 years.

DOCTORS' DEMANDS



Resident doctors and medical students hold placards and raise slogans during a protest demanding COVID allowance, pending stipend and opening of non-COVID services in medical colleges and associated hospitals, in Bangalore, Monday.

BJP leaders thank LoP for 'helping' to form govt

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bangalore, Dec 7: Karnataka ministers, including R. Ashoka and J.C. Madhuswamy, Monday thanked Leader of the Opposition, Siddaramaiah, for helping the BJP to form the government in the state.

Participating in a debate in the legislative assembly on the flood situation in the state, Karnataka Revenue Minister Ashoka spontaneously responded to Siddaramaiah that the BJP came to power in the state not because of 'Operation Lotus' but due to 'timely help' from Siddaramaiah.

Ashok was responding to Siddaramaiah, who said that he knew all about Ashok's role in 'Operation Lotus'.

'Operation Lotus' is the name given by the Opposition to the BJP's game plan to lure MLAs, and all the MLAs who resigned have been promised ministerial berths and also tickets to contest in the same seats that they had held before they



submitted their resignations. Replying to Ashoka's statements, Siddaramaiah tried his best to wriggle out of the situation by stating that he has always opposed the ideology preached by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and practiced by the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP). He asserted that he has never in his life thought of helping the RSS or the BJP even remotely or ideologically. Joining the debate at this juncture, Karnataka Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister J.C. Madhuswamy said that those who are sitting in treasury benches "know very well that you (Siddaramaiah) will never help the BJP ideologically, but when it comes to personal level, you (Siddaramaiah) go to any level to help your friends irrespective of any party affiliations". Siddaramaiah asked Madhuswamy to produce 'evidence' to even remotely suggest that he helped the BJP to come to power.

SIT TO RECREATE 1984 RIOT SEQUENCES IN KANPUR

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kanpur, Dec 7: The Special Investigation Team (SIT) will recreate the crime scene of the 19 incidents that took place during the anti-Sikh riots in which at least 127 people were killed in Kanpur after October 31, 1984, following the assassination of the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

The SIT was set up after the apex court issued notice to the state government in August 2017 on a petition seeking SIT probe into the riots.

The four-member SIT is headed by retired Uttar Pradesh DGP Atul and other members include retired district judge Subhash Chandra Agarwal and retired additional director (prosecution) Yogeshwar Krishna Srivastava.

SP Balendu Bhusan Singh is its member-secretary.

The state government had set up SIT February 5, 2019, to probe the circumstances leading to the riots.

The SIT members will now visit 19 crime spots with forensic experts and recreate the crime scene along with eyewitnesses.

They will also question locals on the chain of events on and after October 31, 1984.

SIT member-secretary, SP Balendu Bhusan Singh, said: "In order to understand the sequence of events of any crime, its 'nazri naksha' (city map) is an important link. Right now, we are in the process of preparing 'nazri-naksha' of 1984 with regard to 19 cases related to the anti-Sikh riots that broke out in pockets of Kanpur. A number of geographical changes have taken place at the 19 crime spots in the past 36 years. Through 'nazri naksha', we will try to understand the crime spots of 1984 geographically."

He said that the SIT is also trying to contact 56 eyewitnesses as they will be of great help in providing inputs.

The 'nazri naksha' will then be submitted in the court on the lines of submission of chargesheet.

Akhilesh detained while protesting against farm bills

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Dec 7: Police took Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav into custody Monday after party workers led by him broke through a security cordon to sit on a dharna in the heart of the city to oppose the new farm bills.

Yadav was detained for violating section 144 of the CrPc which prevents assembly of five or more people at one spot.

With UP police laying a virtual siege to the area around the Samajwadi Party headquarters here, a defiant Yadav sat on a dharna on the road for some time joined by several party leaders, before he was detained by the UP police and bundled into a police van to remove him from the spot.

"If the new farm laws are intended to help the farmers, then why are they on the warpath? Why is the government so adamant? If farmers don't want the new laws, the government should take these back," he told reporters at the protest site.

TV footage showed police using 'laathis' to push back SP workers. While being whisked away to Eco Garden in the state capital by the police, Yadav said, "This is a dictatorial approach of the BJP. It has blatantly violated the Constitution. There is no coronavirus for the BJP, it is only for the opposition. The BJP can hold meetings and election campaigns anywhere, and for it there will be no coronavirus threat. The government wants to kill democracy on the pretext of coronavirus," he said.

The government is insulting every SP worker, he said, adding that the non-confidence towards the government is increasing and it cannot be saved.



Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav along with party workers participates in a sit-in protest after their vehicles were stopped while on the way to Kannauj, to participate in a march in support of farmers agitation over Centre's farm reform laws, in Lucknow, Monday.

The SP chief was scheduled to go to Kannauj to lead farmers protest there after the party gave a call for a statewide "kisan yatra" against the farm laws on Monday, but he was not allowed to leave his residence and proceeded further.

Yadav said the government should bring laws which can ensure doubling of farmers income, "but the government's intention is not clear".

Soon after his detention, the SP MP wrote to the Lok Sabha Speaker complaining that he was being stopped from going to the pro-

if the new farm laws are intended to help the farmers, then why are they on the warpath? Why is the government so adamant? If farmers don't want the new laws, the government should take these back

AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF

"I am a Lok Sabha MP and national president of the Samajwadi Party. Along with this, I have discharged the constitutional responsibility of an ex-chief minister. To extend support to farmers, my programme was to be held in Kannauj on December 7, and it was declared earlier," he said.

"On the directions of the Uttar Pradesh government, I was stopped from going to the programme. A heavy police force was deployed at my residence on the Vikramaditya Marg. The police took my vehicles in its custody. This undemocratic behaviour is a violation of my rights.

gramme (in Kannauj) "at the behest of the UP government."

This amounts to breach of privileges of an MP," Yadav said.

Earlier Monday, the Uttar Pradesh Police sealed a road near the Samajwadi Party office here and placed barricades on it ahead of Akhilesh Yadav's visit to Kannauj for a 'Kisan Yatra'.

Station House Officer (SHO), Gautampalli, Chandrashekhar Singh said, "Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav was to visit Kannauj for a programme, but the Kannauj district magistrate did not give permission for it. Hence, the portion of the Vikramaditya Marg leading to the SP office has been sealed."

Yadav, a former Uttar Pradesh chief minister, was slated to travel to Kannauj, around 125 km from the Uttar Pradesh capital, for a tractor rally as part of the 'Kisan Yatra' in support of farmers protesting against the Centre's new agri laws and the 'Bharat Bandh' called by them on Tuesday. The 13-km yatra was planned from Thathia to Tirwa.

Reports of SP workers staging protests also came from Baghat, Mirzapur, Varanasi, Bhadohi, Prayagraj and Sonbhadra among other districts of the state.

SP MLC Rajpal Kashyap told PTI that party workers staged protests in each and every assembly constituency of the state. In a tweet, the SP said, "The BJP government is afraid of the 'Kisan Yatra', which are being held against the injustice done to farmers and the anti-farmer laws. Hence, to stop the yatra, it has unleashed atrocities on 'samajwadis'. The police are calling SP workers to police stations and also going to their houses to stop them."

"This is highly condemnable. Farmers and youths will give an answer to the government," it said.



I will comment on Rajinikanth entering politics after he floats his party and announces its ideologies
MK STALIN | DMK PRESIDENT

SUSHIL MODI ELECTED UNOPPOSED TO RS

Senior Bihar BJP leader Sushil Kumar Modi was Monday declared elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha in a by-poll that was necessitated by the death of Union Minister and Lok Janshakti Party founder Ram Vilas Paswan



of the day quote

Protests will also be held in Jharkhand against the central government's conspiracy to reduce the country's owners to labourers. The JMM fully supports Bharat Bandh on December 8

HEMANT SOREN | JHARKHAND CM

The BJP government (at the Centre) should immediately withdraw the farm bills or step down. It should not continue to remain in power after sacrificing the rights of the farmers

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

We need to applaud and appreciate the magnificent efforts of our brave and patriotic soldiers whose heroic achievements in safeguarding the national unity makes us proud to call ourselves as Indian

SHRIPAD NAIK | UNION MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE

5 'TERRORISTS' HELD AFTER ENCOUNTER



Five suspected terrorists brought to PHQ by Delhi Police (Special Cell) after being arrested in a narco-terrorism case, following exchange of fire at Shakarpur (East Delhi), in New Delhi, Monday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 7: Five suspected terrorists, two of whom were allegedly involved in the murder of Shaurya Chakra winner Balwinder Singh in Punjab, were arrested Monday in east Delhi's Shakarpur area after an encounter and have revealed Pakistan spy agency ISI's attempt to link up terror outfits in Kashmir with Khalistan operations, officials said.

According to police, three of the five arrested are from Kashmir, while the rest are from Punjab. Two of the Punjab-based men were involved in the killing of Balwinder Singh in Punjab, they said.

Singh, who received the Shaurya Chakra for fighting militancy, was shot dead in October. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Pramod Singh Kushwah said, "On Monday morning, our team received specific information that two Punjab based criminals were supposed to receive some money from three Kashmiris. On this specific information, five people were arrested after a brief exchange of

- According to police, three of the five arrested are from Kashmir, while the rest are from Punjab
- Three pistols, two kilograms of heroin and Rs 1 lakh cash were recovered from them along with the two cars in which they were travelling

fire from the Laxmi Nagar area in Delhi."

Three pistols, two kilograms of heroin and Rs one lakh cash were recovered from them along with the two cars in which they were travelling, he said.

During preliminary investigation, it has emerged that there was an attempt to link up terror outfits active in Kashmir with Khalistan operatives by Pakistan's ISI, he said.

The three Kashmir-based men were supplying money to the other two to carry out targeted killings. The money was from the sale of drugs. "They were selling drugs and the proceeds were used for financing terror in Punjab," the officer said. Further investigation is on.

Vijayashanti joins BJP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 7: Actor-turned-politician Vijayashanti Monday joined the BJP, a party she had chosen in the late 90s to start her political career before joining other outfits, and asserted that only the saffron party can fulfil the aspirations of the people of Telangana.

Vijayashanti, a very successful Telugu film actor in the 80s and 90s who also acted in a few Hindi movies, had met Home Minister Amit Shah earlier and joined the BJP in the presence of its general secretary Arun Singh, Union Minister G Kishan Reddy and Telangana BJP president Bandi Sanjay Kumar at the party headquarters here. After leaving the saffron party, she had joined the TRS and the Congress. The 54-year-old politician is also a former MP.

Associated with the movement for Telangana's statehood, she said the ruling TRS had failed to fulfil the people's dreams for the new state and alleged that there was rampant corruption in the government headed by Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao.

REMEMBERING MARTYRS



Indian Army personnel perform the ceremonial 'Guard Drill' to honour the martyrs on 'Armed Forces Flag Day 2020', at the 1962 War Memorial in Tezpur, Monday

PTI PHOTO

Gaganyaan launch likely to be delayed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Dec 7: India's first human space flight mission Gaganyaan is likely to be delayed by one year due to the adverse impact from the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) officials.

As per the mandate of Gaganyaan, two uncrewed missions would be undertaken prior to the manned mission. Accordingly, the uncrewed missions were slated for launch in December 2020 and July 2021, and the first manned mission was scheduled in December 2021. "That will be delayed because of COVID," ISRO Chairman, Kailasavadivoo Sivan, said. "We are targeting for sometime next



The Gaganyaan project has the objective of demonstrating human space flight capability to Low Earth Orbit with three crew members in orbit and safely recovering them after the mission

year-end or the subsequent year," he said on the expected time-line for the first of the two proposed un-

crewed missions. The Gaganyaan project has the objective of demonstrating human space flight capa-

bility to Low Earth Orbit (LEO) with three crew members in orbit and safely recovering them after the mission. Bengaluru-headquartered ISRO said last month its heavy lift launcher, GSLV MkIII is identified for the Gaganyaan mission and the process for human rating of this rocket is in progress.

The high thrust solid propellant strap-on boosters S200 play an important role in the human-rated GSLV MkIII. In order to human rate the booster, many new design features have been introduced in the hardware.

The first critical booster segment of the motor case with a diameter of 3.2 metre, 8.5 metre in length and weighing 5.5 tons has been indigenously developed and delivered by L&T to ISRO.

Active caseload falls below 4L

THE TOTAL CORONAVIRUS CASES MOUNTED TO 96, 77,203 WITH 32,981 NEW INFECTIONS BEING REPORTED IN A DAY AND THE DEATH TOLL ROSE TO 1,40,573 WITH 391 NEW FATALITIES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 7: India's coronavirus infections rose to 96.77 lakh, while the active caseload fell below 4 lakh and the recoveries surged to 91.39 lakh, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated Monday.

The total coronavirus cases mounted to 96, 77,203 with 32,981 new infections being reported in a day and the death toll rose to 1,40,573 with 391 new fatalities, the data updated at 8 am showed. There are 3,96,729 active coronavirus infections in the country which comprises 4.10 per cent of the total caseload, the data stated.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 91,39,901 pushing the national recovery rate to 94.45 per cent, while the COVID-19 case fatality rate stands at 1.45 per cent. India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23 and 40 lakh on September 5. It went past 50 lakh on September 16, 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, and surpassed 90 lakh



on November 20.

According to the ICMR, 14, 77, 87,656 samples have been tested up to December 6 with 8, 01,081 samples being tested on Sunday. The 391 new fatalities include 69 from Delhi, 46 from West Bengal, 40 from Maharashtra, 28 from Kerala, 24 each from Haryana and Uttar Pradesh and 20 from Punjab.

A total of 1,40,573 deaths have been reported so far in the country including 47,734 from Maharashtra followed by 11,856 from Karnataka, 11,793 from Tamil Nadu, 9,646 from

Delhi, 8,72 from West Bengal, 7,924 from Uttar Pradesh, 7,033 from Andhra Pradesh, 4,916 from Punjab, 4,081 from Gujarat and 3,337 from Madhya Pradesh.

The health ministry stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities. "Our figures are being reconciled with the Indian Council of Medical Research," the ministry said on its website, adding that state-wise distribution of figures is subject to further verification and reconciliation.

19 quakes felt in Gir Somnath

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, Dec 7: As many as 19 earthquakes of magnitudes in the range of 1.7 to 3.3 were experienced in Gujarat's Gir Somnath district from the wee hours of Monday till morning, officials said.

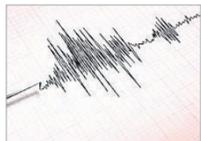
There was no report of any casualty or loss of property, they said. A senior official at the Gandhinagar-based Institute of Seismological Research (ISR) called the phenomena as "monsoon-induced seismicity," generally experienced in a few areas of Gujarat's Saurashtra region after two-three months of heavy rainfall, and said there was nothing to worry about.

Since 1.42 am, 19 quakes, having intensities of 1.7 to 3.3, were recorded with their epicentres in East-North-East (ENE) of Talala in Gir Somnath district of Saurashtra, an official from the ISR said. While most of these quakes were of below 3 magnitude, six were of intensities of more than 3, including a 3.3 magnitude quake recorded at 3.46 am with its epicentre 12 km ENE of Talala in the district.

The latest earthquake, of magnitude 3.2, was felt at 9.26 am with its epicentre 11 km ENE of Talala, the official said. Three of the 19 quakes were of 3.1 magnitude, he said.

"This is a monsoon-induced seismicity. When the monsoon is more than normal, such quakes are felt after two-three months of rainfall," ISR Director Sumar Chopra said. "The frequency varies, but quakes occur generally during this period in Talala in Gir Somnath district as well as Porbandar and Jamnagar, which had earlier experienced similar activity, but it has now subsided," he said.

Recently, similar activities were experienced in Porbandar, which were not seen before, he said. "Rocks in these regions are fractured. When water seeps into the fractures, pore pressure is generated. The rocks are already critically stressed. Water adds to the existing pressure, causing the release of quakes. These are small activities and nothing to worry about," he said.



Avalanche warnings in J&K, Ladakh

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, Dec 7: Snowfall will start from northwest Kashmir, Pirpanjal, Gulmarg, Sonamarg Zojila Drass axis and gradually affect the entire valley, hilly areas of Jammu and some parts of Ladakh especially Kargil, Zaskar and higher reaches of Leh by Tuesday, MeT office said Monday.

Minimum temperatures continued their upward rise on Monday in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh areas as the authorities improved their preparedness to meet challenges posed by heavy snowfall forecast in both union territories.

Avalanche warnings were issued on Monday for people living in avalanche prone higher reaches of Jammu and Kashmir following an advisory by the weather office that moderate to heavy snowfall is likely in the Valley and Kargil district of Ladakh region beginning Monday afternoon.

Vehicles in Srinagar-Jammu highway have been advised to cross Nagrota from Jammu side and Khanabal from valley side before 2 p.m. so that they are not caught up in bad patches of the highway in case of inclement weather.

SC to hear plea for compensation for Emergency 'trauma'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 7: The Supreme Court Monday questioned filing of a plea by a 94-year-old woman for a compensation of Rs 25 crore on account of "trauma" due to the Emergency in 1975 and declaring it "unconstitutional", but later adjourned it to next week for hearing.

A bench headed by Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul and comprising Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and Hrishikesh Roy questioned "what kind of a plea is this" and that too after so many years.

Her counsel then informed the court that the matter would be argued by Senior Advocate Harish Salve, after which the court said

it would hear it next week. "Declare that the proclamation of Emergency vide a notification dated June 25, 1975, as wholly unconstitutional and actions pursuant to the same as illegal and unjustifiable. The petitioner may kindly be compensated to the tune of Rs 25 crore to be recovered from authorities concerned for having participated in the unconstitutional acts," said petitioner Veena Sarin in her plea.

Sarin's counsel also cited Allahabad High Court orders in July last to direct for the payment of rent arrears vis-a-vis her husband's property that was subjected to proceedings during the Emergency. The instant plea said that the petitioner was aggrieved by the "trauma and ha-



arrassment" faced by her and her family, including her now-deceased husband, from June 1975 when Emergency was declared. The plea argued that the free-

A bench headed by Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul and comprising Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and Hrishikesh Roy questioned "what kind of a plea is this" and that too after so many years

The petitioner submitted that she and her husband were compelled to leave the country due to fear that they could be jailed on the whims and fancies of the authorities

The petitioner, who now lives with her daughter in Dehradun, alleged that her husband's gold art business in Karol Bagh and Connaught Place in Delhi was ceased by the authorities concerned and the family threatened

suspended till the end of Emergency 21 months later.

The petitioner submitted that she and her husband were compelled to leave the country due to fear that they could be jailed on the whims and fancies of the authorities.

The petitioner, who now lives with her daughter in Dehradun, alleged that her husband's gold art business in Karol Bagh and Connaught Place in Delhi was ceased by the authorities concerned and the family threatened. Even their properties and valuables were forcibly taken away, she claimed. Sarin said that she single-handedly faced all proceedings initiated against her husband during the Emergency period.



The AAP will hold a peaceful demonstration December 8 in support of the Bharat Bandh called by the farmers at 11 am at the ITO crossing in Delhi

GOPAL RAI
DELHI ENVIRONMENT MINISTER

J&K DDC POLLS: 41.94% VOTES POLLED IN 6 HOURS

Over 41 per cent voter turnout was recorded till 1 pm in the fourth phase of District Development Council (DDC) elections in Jammu and Kashmir Monday, officials said



of the day quote

It is most worrying to see that our farmers are spending nights in cold weather on roads, while the government continues to ignore their genuine demands



ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER

People should willingly take part in the bandh. This will show true support to the farmers. This is not a political bandh though several parties have decided to take part in it



SANJAY RAUT | SHIV SENA MP

The BJP should stop trying to mislead the people and spread misinformation



SITARAM YECHURY
CPI(M) GENERAL SECRETARY

TAKE A CHILL PILL



A tourist enjoying a walk on fresh snow in Tangmarg area of North Kashmir Monday

UNI PHOTO

SHORT TAKES

11 killed in Raj road mishaps

Jaipur: Eleven people were killed and 12 injured in two separate road accidents in Rajasthan Monday, police said. Six people died and two were injured when a jeep in which they were travelling collided head-on with a truck in Churu district. In Bhilwara, a van and a truck collided on Sunday night, killing five people and injuring 10. The injured include four children. The accident occurred near Gausahala roundabout in Jahajpur area when the victims were returning home after attending a wedding in Ajmer. The injured are undergoing treatment at a hospital, the police added.

Brown sugar seized, 3 held

Malda (WB): Three persons have been arrested from West Bengal's Malda district after brown sugar worth around ₹5 lakh was seized from their possession, police said Monday. Acting on a tip-off, a police team apprehended the three from Mahadipur area Sunday evening, they said.

Man kills father

Bulandshahr (UP): A man was killed allegedly by his son following an argument at home in Uttar Pradesh's Bulandshahr district, police said Monday. Senior Superintendent of Police Santosh Kumar Singh said the youth (20), a resident of Devipura locality of Kotwali Nagar area, had a minor argument with his father while eating food Sunday night. In a fit of rage, the angered son hit his father's head with a stone and stabbed him with a knife that killed the father on the spot.

Air crew member hides ₹72.46L gold in overhead bin, held



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 7: An Air India crew member and a catering staff were arrested by the customs officials for allegedly trying to smuggle into the country gold valuing about ₹72.46 lakh at the Indira Gandhi International airport, an official statement said Monday.

The crew, who had come in a flight from London Sunday, after seeing the customs officers had secreted the gold in the overhead bin of the aircraft, it said.

The officers later apprehended the staff of the catering company - M/s Ambassador Sky Chef - and "based on the discussion between the above said crew of Air India and staff of the catering company" recovered four 'kadas' of gold coated with silver colour from the aircraft on the identification of the crew, the statement issued by the customs said.

The total weight of the recovered gold is 1.667 kg, having tariff value of ₹72.47 lakh, it said.

The gold was seized and both the accused were arrested, according to the statement.

"Further, both the above said persons admitted their role in smuggling of 1.5 kg of gold December 3, 2020 from London into India," it said.

Thus, these two persons were directly or indirectly involved in the smuggling of gold to the tune of 3.11 kg (1.5 kg December 3 and 1.667 kg Sunday), the statement added.

SC allows launch event of Central Vista

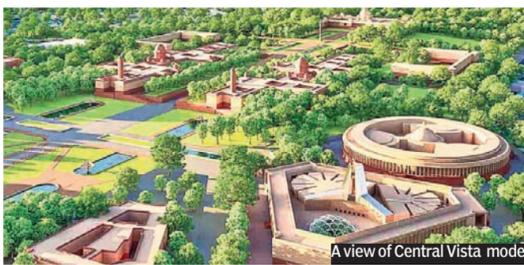
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 7: The Supreme Court Monday allowed the Centre to proceed with the foundation stone-laying ceremony for the Central Vista project December 10 after the government assured it that no construction or demolition work would commence till the apex court decides the pending pleas on the issue.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told a bench headed by Justice A M Khanwilkar that there would be only foundation stone-laying ceremony, and no construction, demolition or felling of trees would be done for the project as of now.

The Central Vista revamp, announced in September last year, envisages a new triangular Parliament building, with seating capacity for 900 to 1,200 MPs, that is to be constructed by August, 2022 when the country will be celebrating its 75th Independence Day.

The common Central Secretariat is likely to be built by 2024 under the project against which various pleas have been filed. Prime Minister



A view of Central Vista model

Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone on December 10 for the new Parliament building and the construction is expected to be completed by 2022 at an estimated cost of ₹971 crore, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla had said on December 5.

"This matter was listed suo moto in view of certain developments. After interacting with the Solicitor General and when the concern of the court was expressed, on instructions, the Solicitor General stated that there will be no construction activity of any nature on the concerned site(s) nor demolition of any structure will be done, in-

cluding the further trans-location of tree(s) will be kept in abeyance, until the pronouncement of judgment in all these cases," said the bench.

"We take that statement on record. In view of the above, we clarify that the authorities would be free to continue with procedural processes without altering the status of the site(s) in question in any manner, including to continue with the scheduled programme of foundation stone-laying on December 10, 2020," the bench, also comprising Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and Sanjiv Khanna, said in its order.

Centre rushes 3-member team to Andhra Pradesh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 7: The Centre is rushing a three-member team of medical experts to Eluru in Andhra Pradesh where a mysterious disease has affected nearly 350 people, the Vice President Secretariat said Monday.

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, who hails from Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh, on Monday spoke with Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan after scores of people including children were hospitalised with an undiagnosed illness.

A Vice President Secretariat statement said the Union Health Ministry has informed that Dr Jamshed Nayar, an associate professor (emergency medicine) from

AIIMS; Dr Avinash Deostawar, a virologist from the National Institute of Virology, Pune; and Dr Sanket Kulkarni, the deputy director and a public health expert from the National Centre for Disease Control, Delhi, are being sent to Eluru.

Those affected complained of dizziness, fainting spells, headache and vomiting.

The vice president was also informed that a poison control team from AIIMS had on Sunday discussed the matter with the doctors at Eluru. Of the 347 affected, close to 200 patients have been discharged from hospital after treatment. Most of the patients were in the age group of 20-30 years, while there were about 45 children who were below the age of 12 years.

Tripura partially reopens schools

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Agartala/Aizawl/Guwahati, Dec 7: After Assam and Meghalaya, schools in Tripura partially reopened Monday after nearly nine months, Education Minister Ratan Lal Nath said.

The Minister said that classes for students of degree and technical colleges and Class X and XII began as they would sit for board examinations in a few months.

"Students have to obtain written permission from their parents or guardians before attending classes. School and college authorities are mandatorily sanitising premises before resuming physical classroom teaching and other academic works. We are yet to decide on resuming other classes. Considering the Covid-19 situa-



tion, we will take a decision about pre-primary, primary and higher education schools," said Nath, who has visited many schools and colleges to oversee academic and other health protocols.

Assam had reopened educational institutions from Class 7 onwards November 2 after more than seven months. Education and Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said in Guwahati that considering the improved

Covid-19 situation, the Assam government has decided to reopen elementary schools - Nursery to Class 6 - from January 1.

He said that the state has also decided on limited reopening of hostels of colleges and universities for final-year students and for residential students of Class 10 and 12 from December 15.

The Meghalaya government has allowed schools in rural areas to reopen from December 1 for students of Class VI onwards, but with the consent of their parents. Schools in urban areas would resume normal classes for students of Class IX to XII only.

In Aizawl, Mizoram Education Minister Lachandama Ralte said that all schools in the state would remain closed till December.

PROUD MOMENT

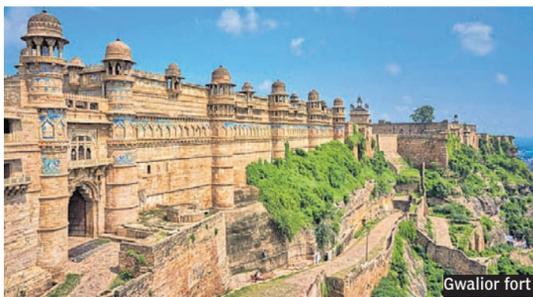
'Gwalior, Orchha in UNESCO world heritage cities list'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, Dec 7: The historical fort cities of Gwalior and Orchha in Madhya Pradesh have been included in the list of UNESCO's world heritage cities under its urban landscape city programme, according to the state government.

An official of the government's public relations department on Monday said tourism experts have termed the inclusion as a major achievement for the state.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), an agency of the United Nations, aims at promoting world peace and security through international cooperation in education, the sciences, and culture.



Gwalior fort

"After getting included in the heritage city list, the face of Gwalior and Orchha will totally change and UNESCO along with the state tourism department will make a master plan for the beautification

of the two places, the official said. A UNESCO team will visit the state next year and after having a look at the heritage properties will prepare a master plan for their development and conservation, he

said. "The project will prove to be an example for South Asia. Under the plan UNESCO will suggest best measures and resources for the development of these places under the Historic Urban Landscape recommendations, the official said.

Gwalior was established in 9th century and ruled by Gurjar Pratihara Rajvansh, Tomar, Baghel Kachvaha and Scindias. The memorabilia left by them is found in abundance in memorials, forts and palaces in the area.

Gwalior is known for its palaces and temples, including the intricately carved Sas Bahu Ka Mandir temple. The Gwalior Fort occupies a sandstone plateau overlooking the city and is accessed via a winding road lined with sacred Jain

statues. Within the forts high walls is the 15th-century Gujari Mahal Palace, now an archaeological museum. Orchha is popular for its temples and palaces and was the capital of the Bundela kingdom in the 16th century. The famous spots in the town are Raj Mahal, Jehangir Mahal, Ramraja Temple, Rai Praveen Mahal, and Laxminarayan Mandir, the official said.

After inclusion in the World Heritage City list, chemical treatment of historic spots like Mansingh Palace, Gujri Mahal and Sahastrabahu Temple will be done so that art inscribed on them will become more visible, the official said. Guards will be posted at these places to welcome tourists as per the Indian traditions, he said.

One dead as BJP workers clash with police in WB

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Siliguri, Dec 7: Police fired tear-gas shells and used water cannons Monday to quell a violent protest called by the Bhartiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) against the Mamata Banerjee government during which a BJP worker died, officials said.

Several protesters and police personnel were injured in clashes. The BJP alleged that a party worker identified as Ullen Ray was "beaten to death" by the police during a baton charge.

The BJP condemned the police action and demanded imposition of president's rule in West Bengal in view of "breakdown of law and order". The party has called a 12-hour bandh in north Bengal

Tuesday. BJP workers were seen fighting pitched battles with police after they were stopped from moving past barricades at two points near branch secretariat Uttarkanya during the rally called to protest the TMC "misrule". The BJYM, the youth wing of the BJP, led by its chief and Lok Sabha member Tejaswi Surya, took out two protest marches claiming the state government had not fulfilled the promises made to the people of north Bengal and that the benefits of welfare schemes had failed to reach the common man. Police used water cannons and burst tear gas shells to stop the protesters from marching to the secretariat and were pelted with stones.

Agitators also set fire to some bamboo barricades.



Until now, none of the (elected) prime ministers have been allowed to complete their constitutional term. Every few years, democracy is attacked and martial law is imposed
NAWAZ SHARIF | FORMER PAKISTAN PM

OVER 60K KOALAS IMPACTED BY DEVASTATING AUSTRALIA BUSHFIRES

More than 60,000 koalas among three billion animals were impacted during Australia's devastating 2019-20 'Black Summer' bushfires, a report from the World Wide Fund for Nature revealed



of the day quote

Singapore will contribute to global recovery by continuing to invest in innovation and working in collaboration with Asia and the world
HENG SWEE KEAT | SINGAPORE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

With Joe Biden's election as the new American President, there are a lot of major opportunities that we as Europe want to take
HEIKO MAAS | GERMAN FOREIGN MINISTER

We believe we can solve the problems of the eastern Mediterranean by not excluding each other but by bringing all the actors together around the same table
RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN | TURKISH PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Global Covid cases cross 67mn

Washington: The overall number of global coronavirus cases has crossed the 67 million mark, while the deaths have surged to more than 1.53 million, according to the Johns Hopkins University. In its latest update Monday, the University's Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) revealed that the current global caseload and death toll stood at 67,009,962 and 1,535,107, respectively. The US is the worst-hit country with the world's highest number of cases and deaths at 14,750,316 and 282,236, respectively, according to the CSSE. I

Kuwait declares parl poll results

Kuwait City: Kuwait's electoral committee announced 50 winners of the 2020 parliamentary elections held in the country's five electoral districts. The elections kicked off Saturday with 326 candidates running for 50 seats. The voting process started from 8 a.m. local time and proceeded until 8 p.m. According to Kuwait News Agency, 567,694 voters were entitled to vote in the elections to choose 50 members to represent them in parliament and the winners will be serving a four-year term as parliament members, Xinhua news agency reported Sunday.

HK police arrest 8 over protest

Hong Kong: Hong Kong authorities Monday arrested eight people in connection with an unauthorised protest at a university campus last month, police and local media said, amid a widening crackdown on dissent in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory. The arrests were reportedly made in relation to a demonstration at the Chinese University of Hong Kong in which over 100 people protested a decision to hold graduation ceremonies online. Such ceremonies are often used as a way for students to express political views.

Indian expat held in murder case

Dubai: A UAE-based Indian expat has been charged with beating a compatriot to death after a heated argument over illegal rented accommodation, according to a media report. The Dubai Court of First Instance Sunday heard the case and charged the 31-year-old accused for assaulting and leaving his compatriot in unconscious condition following an argument after he went to collect rent from the victim.

US to sanction more Chinese officials: Sources

THE MOVE WILL TARGET OFFICIALS FROM THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY AS PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP'S ADMINISTRATION KEEPS UP PRESSURE ON BEIJING IN HIS FINAL WEEKS IN OFFICE

REUTERS

Washington, Dec 7: The United States is preparing to impose sanctions on at least a dozen Chinese officials over their alleged role in Beijing's disqualification of elected Opposition legislators in Hong Kong, according to three sources, including a US official familiar with the matter.

The move, which could come as soon as Monday, will target officials from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) as President Donald Trump's administration keeps up pressure on Beijing in his final weeks in office. President-elect Joe Biden takes over January 20.

The State Department and the White House did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Up to 14 people, including officials of China's parliament, or National People's Congress, and members of the CCP, would likely be targeted by measures such as asset freezes and financial sanctions, two sources said. The US official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said multiple individuals would be sanctioned. A person familiar with the matter said the group would likely include officials from Hong Kong as well as the mainland. The sources did not provide names or positions of those being targeted for sanc-



THE US OFFICIAL, SPEAKING ON THE CONDITION OF ANONYMITY, SAID MULTIPLE INDIVIDUALS WOULD BE SANCTIONED

A PERSON FAMILIAR WITH THE MATTER SAID THE GROUP WOULD LIKELY INCLUDE OFFICIALS FROM HONG KONG AS WELL AS THE MAINLAND

tions. Two sources cautioned an announcement could still be delayed until later in the week.

China's Foreign Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Beijing has previously condemned US sanctions related to Hong Kong, calling it interference in China's internal affairs.

Stock markets in Asia gave up early gains on worries the move may signal a further deterioration in relations between the world's two largest economies.

"One thing that the market has been concerned about is that on his 'Out of office' Trump would look for some retribution on China. So this news speaks to that fear," said Kyle Rodda, market strategist at IG Markets in Melbourne.

Chinese financial stocks traded in Hong Kong fell 2.3% in morn-

ing trade, their sharpest drop in six months amid worries sanctions could be extended to banks.

Washington has already put sanctions on Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam, the territory's current and former police chiefs and other top officials in August for what it said was their role in curtailing freedoms in a crackdown on the territory's pro-democracy movement.

Hong Kong's Beijing-backed government last month expelled four Opposition members from its legislature after China's parliament gave city authorities new powers to

curb dissent. The move triggered mass resignations by pro-democracy opposition lawmakers in the former British colony.

It also raised further alarm in the West. The Five Eyes intelligence-sharing group - made up of Australia, Britain, Canada, New Zealand and the United States - said last month the move appeared to be part of a campaign to silence critics and called on Beijing to reverse course. White House national security adviser Robert O'Brien said in November the expulsion showed the "One Country, Two Systems" formula, under which Hong Kong's autonomy had been promised since Britain handed the territory back to China in 1997, was now "merely a fig leaf" and promised further U.S. action.

That month, the State Department and Treasury Department imposed sanctions on four more Chinese officials in Hong Kong's government and security establishment, barring them from traveling to the United States and blocking any US-related assets they might have.

Hong Kong is expected to be one of Biden's thorniest challenges with China, which will be high on his foreign policy agenda with relations between Washington and Beijing at the lowest point in decades over an array of disputes.

Scientist killed by satellite-controlled machine gun: Iran

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Tehran, Dec 7: A satellite-controlled machine gun with "artificial intelligence" was used in last week's assassination of a top nuclear scientist in Iran, the deputy commander of the Revolutionary Guards told local media Sunday.

Mohsen Fakhrazadeh was driving on a highway outside Iran's capital Tehran with a security detail of 11 Guards November 27, when the machine gun "zoomed in" on his face and fired 13 rounds, said rear-admiral Ali Fadavi.

The machine gun was mounted on a Nissan pickup and "focused only on martyr Fakhrazadeh's face in a way that his wife, despite being only 25 centimetres away, was not shot," Mehr news agency quoted him as saying. It was being "controlled online" via a satellite and used an "advanced camera and artificial intelligence" to make the target, he added. Fadavi said that Fakhrazadeh's head of security took four bullets "as he threw himself" on the scientist and that there were "no terrorists at the scene". Iranian authorities have blamed arch foe Israel and the exiled opposition group the People's



Scientist Mohsen Fakhrazadeh was driving on a highway outside Tehran November 27, when the machine gun "zoomed in" on his face and fired 13 rounds

Mujahedeen of Iran (MEK) for the assassination.

State-run Press TV had previously said "made in Israel" weapons were found at the scene.

Various accounts of the scientist's death have emerged since the attack, with the defence ministry initially saying he was caught in a firefight with his bodyguards, while Fars news agency claimed "a remote controlled automatic machine gun" killed him, without citing any sources.

Negotiations for final Brexit deal kicks off

Both sides acknowledge that "significant differences remain" on three essential points

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Brussels, Dec 7: European Union chief negotiator Michel Barnier on Monday set off one of the most intense days in the long-running Brexit trade negotiations with a pre-dawn debriefing of the 27 member states to see if a deal is still possible with London ahead of the January 1 deadline.

In the evening, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson will have his second phone call with EU Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen in barely 48 hours, to decide whether to pull the plug on an agreement that could cost hundreds of thousands of jobs on both sides and disrupt cross-Channel

EU January 31, it remains within the bloc's tariff-free single market and customs union through December 31. Reaching a trade deal by then would ensure there are no tariffs and trade quotas on goods exported or imported by the two sides, although there would still be technical costs, partly associated with customs checks and non-tariff barriers on services.

At his early morning meeting with EU ambassadors, Barnier assessed his room for maneuvering, since some anxious member states may fear that too much might have been yielded already to London.

If talks continue after Monday, they will be closing in on a two-day EU summit where German



trade for years to come. Both sides acknowledge that "significant differences remain" on three essential points, although there are indications that the disagreements over EU fishing rights in UK Waters after Britain's departure from the bloc becomes a full reality December 31 have narrowed over the past few days.

There remain major issues with legal oversight of any trade deal and standards of fair play that the UK needs to meet to be able to export in the EU. While the UK left the

Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron will be major players.

Germany wants a deal partly because its massive car industry has always found a welcome export market in the United Kingdom. France, meanwhile, has taken the forefront in demanding that UK companies must closely align themselves with EU rules and environmental and social standards if they still want to export to the lucrative market of 450 million people.



Firefighters work next to a car surrounded by flames during a protest against the "Global Security Bill" that right groups say would make it a crime to circulate an image of a police officer's face and would infringe journalists' freedom in France, in Paris

DR ANTHONY FAUCI'S PLEA 'WEAR A MASK' TOPS LIST OF 2020 NOTABLE QUOTES

ASSOCIATED PRESS

New Haven (US), Dec 7: A plea from Dr Anthony Fauci for people to "wear a mask" to slow the spread of the coronavirus tops a Yale Law School librarian's list of the most notable quotes of 2020.

The list assembled by Fred Shapiro, an associate director at the library, is an annual update to "The Yale Book of Quotations," which was first published in 2006. Shapiro said he picks quotes that are not necessarily admirable or eloquent, but rather because they are famous or particularly revealing of the spirit of the times.

- THE LIST
1. "Wear a mask." — Dr. Anthony Fauci, CNN interview, May 21.
2. "I can't breathe." — George

Floyd, plea to police officer, Minneapolis, May 25.

3. "One day - it's like a miracle - it will disappear," President Donald Trump, referring to the coronavirus in remarks at an African American History Month reception at the White House, February 27.

4. "I see the disinfectant that knocks it out in a minute, one minute. And is there a way we can do something like that by injection inside or almost a cleaning?" — Trump, in remarks at a White House Coronavirus Task Force news briefing, April 23.

5. "I will never lie to you. You have my word on that." — White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany, at her first press briefing, May 1.

6. "My most fervent wish is that I will not be replaced until a

new president is installed." — Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, statement dictated to granddaughter Clara Spera, September.

7. "If you have a problem figuring out whether you're for me or Trump, then you ain't Black." — Joe Biden, in an interview with "The Breakfast Club" radio program, May 22.

8. "The science should not stand in the way of this." — McEnany, referring to school reopenings in a news briefing, July 16.

9. "You're a lying dog-faced pony soldier." — Biden, in a remark to student at campaign event, Hampton, N.H., Feb. 9.

10. "We are all Lakers today." — Los Angeles Clippers coach Doc Rivers, in a remark to reporters after the death of Kobe Bryant, Orlando, Fla., January 26.

Biden picks California AG Becerra as Health Secy

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, Dec 7: President-elect Joe Biden has picked California Attorney General Xavier Becerra to be his health secretary, putting a defender of the Affordable Care Act in a leading role to oversee his administration's coronavirus response.

Separately, Biden picked a Harvard infectious disease expert, Dr Rochelle Walensky, to head the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

If confirmed by the Senate, Becerra, 62, will be the first Latino to head the Department of Health and Human Services, a \$1-trillion-plus agency with 80,000 employees and a portfolio that includes drugs and vaccines, leading-edge medical research and health insurance programs covering more than 130 million Americans.



Biden's selection of Becerra was confirmed Sunday by two people familiar with the decision, who spoke on condition of anonymity ahead of a formal announcement anticipated Tuesday. Becerra, as the state of California's top lawyer, has led the coalition of Democratic states defending "Obamacare" from the Trump administration's latest effort to overturn it, a legal case awaiting a Supreme Court decision next year.

US, CHINA DOMINATED ARMS MARKET IN 2019: REPORT

THE US ARMS INDUSTRY ACCOUNTED FOR 61% OF SALES BY THE WORLD'S "TOP 25" MANUFACTURERS LAST YEAR, AHEAD OF CHINA'S 15.7%

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Stockholm (Sweden), Dec 7: The US and Chinese companies dominated the global arms market in 2019, while the Middle East made its first appearance among the 25 biggest weapons manufacturers, a report by the SIPRI research institute said Monday.

The US arms industry accounted for 61 percent of sales by the world's "Top 25" manufacturers last year, ahead of China's 15.7 percent, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. Total sales by the "Top 25" rose by 8.5 percent to \$361 billion, or 50 times the annual budget of the UN's peacekeeping operations.

Six US companies and three Chinese firms were in the top 10, rounded out by Britain's BAE Systems in seventh spot.

"China and the United States are the two biggest states in terms of global arms spending, with companies cut to size," Lucie Beraud-Sudreau, director of SIPRI's arms and military expenditure programme, told this news agency.

The US has dominated the market for decades, but for China - whose companies' sales rose by almost five percent in 2019 - "this increase corresponds to the implementation of reforms to modernise the People's Liberation Army underway since 2015," she said. US companies Lockheed Martin,



Boeing, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon and General Dynamics clinched the top five spots, while China's AVIC, CETC and Norinco held spots six, eight and nine. US group L3Harris Technologies was in 10th place. "Europe remains a bit

dispersed...but if you combine the European companies together you could have European companies the same size" as US and Chinese manufacturers, Beraud-Sudreau noted. Airbus (European, 13th in the ranking) and Thales (French, 14th)

can meanwhile boast of having the strongest international presence - each is represented in 24 countries, ahead of US Boeing.

"European companies are more internationalised" than others, Beraud-Sudreau said. Breakthrough in the Mideast for the first time, a company from the Middle East made it to the "Top 25". EDGE, of the United Arab Emirates, was formed by the consolidation of some 25 defence entities in 2019.

In 22nd spot, EDGE "is a good illustration of how the combination of high national demand for military products and services with a desire to become less dependent on foreign suppliers is driving the growth of arms companies in the

Middle East," SIPRI researcher Pieter Wezeman said in the report. SIPRI also noted that French group Dassault had shot up from 38th to 17th place, boosted by exports of its Rafale fighter jets in 2019.

Meanwhile, two Russian companies were also in the "Top 25", Almaz-Antey in 15th spot and United Shipbuilding in 25th.

Beraud-Sudreau noted that Russian companies were in better shape several years ago thanks to a vast modernisation programme for its military, but business had since "slowed sharply". Sanctions imposed on Moscow after its 2014 annexation of Crimea and a drop in natural gas and energy prices had impacted Russia's economy, she said.

business



There is a justifiable fear that most of the hospitality businesses companies in this industry would be unable to service their financial obligations and eventually slip into the most distressed category

GURBAXISH SINGH KOHLI | VICE PRESIDENT, FHRAI

SENSEX, NIFTY EXTEND RALLY

Benchmark equity indices S&P BSE Sensex and NSE Nifty 50 extended their record-breaking streak to a third straight day Monday. While, the Sensex rose as much as 379 points to hit an all-time high of 45,458.92, Nifty 50 index surged as much as 108 points to hit new record high of 13,366.65



of the day quote

The receipt of these orders (90 units of Komatsu Mining Equipment) from customers across various sectors is a strong indication of the revival taking place in the mining industry, driven by the progressive and supportive policies of the Government of India



SN SUBRAHMANYAM | MD AND CEO, L&T

The automobile industry in Germany had a very good start into the final quarter of 2020. It's an extraordinarily strong increase



THOMAS GITZEL | ECONOMIST, VP BANK

TCS' superbrand status is a recognition of our purpose-driven world view, which entails empowering all our stakeholders and helping them realise their potential. Our sustained investments in R&D and upskilling have made us the preferred growth and transformation partner of our customers in the UK



AMIT KAPUR | COUNTRY HEAD (UK AND IRELAND), TCS

SHORT TAKES

DCB Bank cuts MCLR by 0.18%

New Delhi: Private sector DCB Bank Monday said it has reduced marginal cost of funds based lending rates (MCLR) by up to 0.18% across various tenors. The benchmark one-year MCLR has been cut to 9.67%, the bank said in a release. It was 9.85% earlier. The one-year MCLR is the rate against which most of the consumer loans are priced. The new rates will come to effect from December 8, 2020, DCB Bank said.

RIL, others don't need govt approval

New Delhi: Reliance Industries (RIL) and other producers of natural gas will no longer need the government nod for the gas price if it is arrived at using the new guidelines for the discovery of market price, an official order said. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas last week notified guidelines for the discovery of market prices for domestically produced natural gas through e-bidding.

DLF to invest ₹30 crore

New Delhi: Realty major DLF will invest around ₹30 crore over the next six months to install new air-filtration technology in its office buildings to provide safe environment for employees of its corporate tenants post COVID-19, a senior company official said Monday. The rent collection from its leased office spaces across major cities has been around 97% despite COVID-19 pandemic, DLF group MD-Rental Business Sriram Khattar said.

ICICI launches interoperable app

Mumbai: The second largest private sector lender ICICI Bank Monday launched a new version of its mobile payment app which is interoperable and allows payments and other banking services to customers of any other bank. The latest version of the bank's mobile banking app is called iMobile Pay, through which customers of other banks can link their bank account, generate a UPI ID and start paying, shopping, transfer funds to any bank account or to any other payment apps or digital wallets.

World's largest global entrepreneurship summit kicks off today

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad, Dec 7: Vice President Venkaiah Naidu will Tuesday inaugurate the world's largest entrepreneurship summit being organised by The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE). To be held virtually, the event will continue till December 10, non-stop for 60 hours across global time zones.

TiE, the world's largest network of successful entrepreneurs and professionals, will be hosting the TiE Global Summit 2020 through an online platform due to Covid-19 pandemic as there are travel, and social distancing restrictions the world over. The summit will focus on issues faced and challenged by entrepreneurs, provide a platform for

funding, insights into strategies to grow and scale business with focus on new startup ideas, investments in start-ups, pitching tactics to help startups attract B2B and B2C businesses and scaling strategies to grow their business by 10x.

According to organisers, this is the world's largest entrepreneurs summit ever held. It is expected to have 50,000 attendees. The registrations have already crossed 32,000.

The summit will be attended by over 200 global investors who have potential ability to invest about \$250 to \$500 million to fund the most suitable entrepreneurs.

Union Road Transport and MSME Minister Nitin Gadkari, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Telangana's



IT and Industry Minister KT Rama Rao and former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu will address the inaugural.

Global leaders such as John Chambers, Sir Ronnie Kohan, Jesse

The summit is aimed at bringing together startups, entrepreneurs, global leaders, investors with a strong intent to invest in startups and enhance opportunities for startups across India to get investments worth billions of dollars

MAHAVIR SHARMA | CHAIRMAN TiE GLOBAL

Draper, Gautam Adani, NR Narayana Murthy, Indra Nooyi, Mohandas Pai, Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, Swati Piramal, Rohini Nilekani, Vineet Nayar, Tim Draper, Vijay Sekhar Sharma, Ritesh Agarwal and Sheryl

Sandberg will attend.

Distinguished world political leaders such as the Presidents of Mauritius, and Costa Rica, Nobel laureates including Abhijit Banerjee, and Mohammad Yunus, and spiritual leaders Sri Sri Ravishankar, Sadhguru, Sridharan, Daji Kamlesh Patel, and Bollywood actor Kunal Kapoor will be addressing the summit.

A total of 20,000 entrepreneurs, over 200 investors, 300 global speakers, 10 world leaders, 50 star speakers, successful celebrities, sports persons and spiritual and wellness gurus will be attending the summit. A total of 25 TiE chapters from Americas, Europe, Africa, India, and the APAC will be represented at the summit.

Hindalco to invest ₹730cr to set up new plant in Silvassa



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 7: Aditya Birla group firm Hindalco Industries Monday said it plans to set up a 34,000-tonne aluminium extrusion plant at Silvassa, in Dadra and Nagar Haveli union territory, at an investment of ₹730 crore.

In a regulatory filing, Hindalco said the new plant will service the fast-growing market for extruded aluminium products in the western and southern regions.

Hindalco said the ₹730-crore project in Silvassa signals a big step forward in Hindalco's downstream strategy as the company revives its long-term downstream investment plan.

The company said its intent is to build a larger value-added product portfolio over the next few years.

"This investment indicates confidence in the economic revival, which in turn will grow the demand for downstream value-added products," the company added.

Satish Pai, MD, Hindalco Industries, said: "We are seeing a revival in the economy, with demand picking in the building and construction and automotive sectors. This has given us the confidence to move forward. The Silvassa facility will enable us to service our customers faster, with an offering of high-end quality aluminium products."

VODA IDEA CSR ARM, NOKIA TEAM UP FOR SMARTAGRI SOLUTION



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 7: Vodafone India Foundation, the CSR arm of Vi, in partnership with Nokia has deployed a smart agriculture solution that aims to enhance farming practices and improve productivity of farmers in India.

Vodafone Idea CSR has deployed Nokia's Worldwide IoT Network Grid (WING) solution to equip farmers in the country with precise and practical data to help them achieve better yields, according to a release.

"Deployment of the smart agriculture-as-a-service solution includes soil probes, weather stations, insect traps and crop cameras to help drive productivity of soy and cotton crops," the statement added.

A pilot project, being implemented across 100 locations in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, aims to benefit over 50,000 farmers in the region by enhancing their productivity and income.

"The SmartAgri project aims to enhance the livelihoods of small farmers through sustainable farming approaches, deployment of IoT solutions," it added.

Trade unions lend moral support to farmers' call

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 7: A joint platform of ten central trade unions has extended its moral support to the "Bharat Bandh" call by farmer organisations Tuesday. The unions would not go on strike or abstain from work but support the farmers' agitation.

They would wear black batches while on duty, stage protest after or before working hours and also hold rallies after or before their work schedules. The unions went on a nationwide strike November 26 to protest against the recently passed labour codes as well as farm laws, among other issues.

General Secretary, Hind Mazdoor Sabha Harbhajan Singh Sidhu has said that the joint forum would extend moral support to the farmers' agitation but would not go on strike because a notice is required to be served for the purpose.

However, he said the members of the ten central trade unions would wear black badges, stage protest peacefully and also hold rallies after or before their work schedule. Therefore, work would not be impacted.

The ten central trade unions are Indian National Trade Union



It said from November 27 onwards, workers and employees and their unions have been fully active in holding numerous agitations in solidarity with the ongoing farmers' struggles

Congress (INTUC), All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS), Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), All India United Trade Union Centre (AIUTUC), Trade Union Co-ordination Centre (TUCC), Self-

Employed Women's Association (SEWA), All India Central Council of Trade Unions (AICTTU), Labour Progressive Federation (LPF) and United Trade Union Congress (UTUC).

The Joint Platform of Central Trade Unions and Independent Sectoral Federations' Associations had reiterated their "wholehearted support to the ongoing united struggles of the farmers demanding scrapping of draconian agri laws", as per a joint statement issued Saturday.

It said from November 27 onwards, workers and employees and their unions have been fully active in holding numerous agitations in solidarity with the ongoing farmers' struggles.

China's exports surge on hot demand for PPE

A brisk factory recovery in China from coronavirus shutdowns earlier this year has far outpaced reopenings seen in major trading partners

REUTERS

Beijing, Dec 7: China's exports rose at the fastest pace in almost three years in November, as strong global demand for goods needed to ride out the pandemic landed the world's second-largest economy a record trade surplus.

A brisk factory recovery in China from coronavirus shutdowns earlier this year has far outpaced reopenings seen in major trading partners, many of which are still struggling with outbreaks.

Exports in November rose 21.1% from a year earlier, customs data showed on Monday, the fastest growth since February 2018. It also soundly beat analysts' expectations for a 12.0% increase and quickened from an 11.4% increase in October.

The strong exports come despite the yuan hovering near multi-year peaks against the dollar, which would be welcome news for policymakers concerned about the impact of a weakening greenback on China's trade competitiveness.

Imports rose 4.5% year-on-year in November, slower than October's 4.7% growth, and underperforming expectations in a Reuters poll



for a 6.1% increase, but still marking a third straight month of expansion.

Analysts say improving domestic demand and higher commodity prices helped buoy the reading.

"We believe China's export growth could remain elevated for another several months due to the worsening COVID-19 situation overseas," the note said. However, they noted some signs that demand for these pandemic-related goods was losing momentum.

The firm shipments led to a trade surplus for November of \$75.42 billion, the largest since at least 1981 when Refinitiv records began. It was also wider than the poll's forecast for a \$53.5 billion surplus.

BIZ BUZZ

ABSLI launches Assured Income Plus

Bhubaneswar: Aditya Birla Sun Life Insurance (ABSLI), the life insurance subsidiary of Aditya Birla Capital Limited (ABCL), Monday announced the launch of its new plan ABSLI Assured Income Plus. ABSLI Assured Income Plus offers guaranteed monthly income to fulfill monetary requirements of an individual and their family's recurring needs for up to 30 years while building a financial safety net. This non-linked, non-participating individual savings plan offers several options providing enough flexibility to customise the product as per one's requirements. It comes with two-income benefit options and allows the flexibility of three premium paying term options of 6, 8, and 12 years. While, the Income Only Benefit option (first in the industry) enables customers to fulfill their income needs, the Income Benefit with Return of Premium option helps in creating a legacy for the loved ones, in addition to recurring income.

Cisco to acquire IMImobile for \$730mn

San Francisco: Global networking giant Cisco Monday announced to acquire UK-based software firm IMImobile for \$730 million, with an aim to provide a seamless end-to-end customer interaction management solution. Cisco will pay 595 pence per share in exchange for each share of IMImobile. The acquisition of IMImobile is expected to close in the first quarter of calendar year 2021. The company said that the acquisition would be able to provide an end-to-end customer interaction management solution, and the ability to drive faster and smarter interactions and orchestration through the customer's channel of choice.



Shipping Ministry issues draft guidelines for floating structures

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 7: Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways compiled the draft guidelines for technical specifications of floating structures, with a vision to set up and deploy world-class floating infrastructure all along the coastline and issued the same for public consultation.

According to the report, floating structure because of its inherent advantages, is attractive solution and being encouraged by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways. The benefits of floating jetties over the conventional quay and fixed concrete structures are cost-effective solution.

"Setting up of floating structures is much faster as compared to conventional jetties. Usually, floating structures can be built in



68 months as compared to 24 months for conventional structures. Expansions are easily feasible due to modular construction techniques. It is easily transportable in case of reconfiguring of the port. It provides constant freeboard between jetties and boats," a statement said.

Deployment of floating jetties, especially in locations having a large tidal range, where conventional quay poses problems during low tide periods, is very convenient.

Floating Jetties, at such locations, provide constant freeboard, eases embarkation of ship's stores and straightforward unloading of the fishermen's catch.

The draft guidelines along with proposed Specifications/Schedule of Technical Requirements (SOTR) are issued for seeking the feedback and suggestions from the public. The issuing of draft guidelines and seeking public feedback is a progressive step in the same direction.

US economy to see full recovery before 2022: Survey

AGENCIES

New York, Dec 7: The US economy's growth is likely slowing as 2020 comes to a close, but a growing number of economists expect it to claw back to its pre-pandemic strength by the second half of next year.

That's the view from the latest survey of the National Association for Business Economics. It found that 73% of surveyed forecasters say the economy will return to its pre-pandemic level by late 2021. That's more optimism than they were showing a couple months ago, when just 38 per cent of forecasters said a full recovery could occur before 2022.

Hopes that one or more coronavirus vaccines will roll out soon are

helping drive expectations higher, said the survey's chair, Holly Wade.

Pharmaceutical companies are asking US regulators to allow the use of their vaccine candidates after reporting encouraging data from clinical trials. The hope is that a wide rollout would mean fewer restrictions on businesses next year and more confidence among shoppers and companies to spend more.

If the forecasts are right, it would mark a remarkably quick recovery for the economy following its breathtaking plummet during the spring. When the coronavirus was first spreading and governors around the country ordered businesses to shut down, the US economy shrank by a punishing annualised rate of 31.4 per cent from April through June.



During the summer, as stay-at-home orders were relaxed, the economy exploded higher off that very weak base and grew at an annualised rate of 33.1 per cent.

Now that the easiest gains have been made, economists surveyed by NABE say the economy likely has been growing at an annualised rate

of 4.1 per cent during the last three months of 2020. They expect growth to further slow to an annualised rate of 2.9 per cent during the first three months of 2021.

The main concern going forward, of course, remains the pandemic. Even if a vaccine gets approved quickly, it would be scarce at first

and most people wouldn't be able to get one for a while. In the meantime, soaring COVID-19 numbers are forcing governments around the world to bring back varying degrees of restrictions on businesses.

Economists and investors have been asking Congress and the White House to provide more sup-

port to help carry the economy through what's expected to be a bleak winter.

Momentum on Capitol Hill for a potential deal seemed to have accelerated in recent days, but bitter partisanship has prevented Democrats and Republicans for months from delivering more aid to laid-off workers and industries that have been hit hard by the pandemic.

Slightly more than a quarter of forecasters surveyed by NABE, 27 per cent, said the biggest risk facing the economy is inaction by Washington to offer more financial aid. The only risk cited more often was the pandemic itself, at 57 per cent.

The NABE survey covers a panel of 48 professional forecasters, including from Goldman Sachs and Point Loma Nazarene University.

INDIA EYE

CLEAN SWEEP

PLAYER TO WATCH OUT FOR: Hardik Pandya will look to carry on his form in the third and final T20I, Tuesday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sydney, Dec 7: The series pocketed and their confidence restored, India would eye nothing less than a clean sweep when they take on an Australian side significantly weakened by injury blows, in the third and final T20 International here Tuesday.

Skipper Virat Kohli and his main protagonist of the white-ball leg, Hardik Pandya, will feel a sense of déjà vu given that the script has panned out exactly like 2016 when the team got walloped in the ODIs but came back strongly to rout the Aussies 3-0 in the T20 International series.

After a couple of crushing defeats in the first two ODIs, the Indians have turned a corner starting with the final ODI in Canberra. Even the absence of a white-

ball pro like Ravindra Jadeja didn't have an impact during their convincing six-wicket win in the series-clinching second T20I Sunday.

What will boost the Indian team's morale manifold is the fact that it had the confidence to rest both Mohammed Shami and Jasprit Bumrah, relying on a trio of pacers, who between them haven't played even 40 games collectively.

India's new white-ball sensation Thangarasu Natarajan has had a superb initiation in international cricket with Australian batsmen still finding it difficult to read him.

As Pandya so rightly put it, Natarajan's spell and the 10 runs that Australia failed to score became the difference between winning and losing Sunday.

The difference between India

and Australia during the last game was the batting of the two teams during the middle overs.

D'Arcy Short hasn't looked the part as an opener in the two games and one would expect Marcus Stoinis and Glenn Maxwell to shoulder more responsibility as senior players.

But Australia's thin-on-experience bowlers will have to play out of their skins to stop the Indian juggernaut which has started rolling. A 3-0 win would be the perfect booster shot for it before the all-important Test series.

In case of Australia, while a thrashing would impact them a lot but they would try and look at it from a different perspective – most of their Test specialists will not have the scars of a clean sweep when they take on India under the lights at the Adelaide Oval, starting December 17.

International that India comfortably won by 11 runs.

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Umesh, Ashwin shine for 'A'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sydney, Dec 7: Senior pros Umesh Yadav and Ravichandran Ashwin staked strong claims to be included in India's playing XI for the first Test with impressive performances against Australia A, which scored 286/8 on the second day, riding on Cameron Green's unbeaten century.

Australia now have a 39-run lead after India A declared their innings at 247/9 in the first hour of the second day, with skipper Ajinkya Rahane remaining unbeaten on 117.

With Mohammed Shami and Jasprit Bumrah being automatic choices, Umesh (18-3-44-3), fighting for third pacer's slot, certainly looked more penetrative compared to Mohammed Siraj (19-4-71-2) with the new ball.

The 'Vidarbha Express' removed both rival Test team openers Will Pucovski (1) and Joe Burns (4) in his third and fourth over with the new ball to make initial inroads.

Ashwin (19-2-58-2) also did his Test chances no harm as he reminded old timers of Australian off-spinner of '80's Greg Mathews (hero of 'Madras' tied Test) bowling with his cap on.

Only that Mathews was protecting himself from Chennai heat while Ashwin was reluctant to give it to fellow fielders.

For Australia A, the giant all-rounder Green continued his rich vein of Sheffield Shield form with an unbeaten 114 off 173 that had 10 fours and a six.

He showed good temperament against the Indian attack while adding 104 runs for the sixth wicket with his national skipper Tim Paine (44) after being reduced to 98/5.

Another 49 for the eighth wicket with paceman Michael Neser (33) ensured that Australia A recovered well from a batting collapse.

India started well with the new ball as Umesh maintained a good channel outside off-stump as Pucovski trying to cut a back-of-length delivery gave a simple catch



Umesh Yadav during his run-up while bowling against Australia A

to Shubman Gill at point.

Burns edged one that moved a shade away to wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha behind the stumps. Skipper Travis Head (18) and Marcus Harris (35) then added 55 runs to steady the innings before Siraj got into the act, cleaning up the Australia A skipper in the 21st over.

Siraj, who is also trying to seal a place in the Tests, troubled Harris (35) a lot with semi-new ball before Ashwin ended his stay with Rahane snapping one in the slip cordon.

The experienced off-spinner was again in action in the 31st over when he trapped Nic Maddinson (23) with a delivery that kept straight.

Green and Tim Paine then scripted another recovery act to take Australia A to 186/5 at tea.

After the break, Umesh pep-

pered Paine with bouncers with one hitting him on the helmet. The strategy worked as Paine pulled one only to be brilliantly caught by Prithvi Shaw at backward square leg, ending their 104-run stand.

Siraj then got his second scalp in the 67th over, removing James Pattinson (3) but Michael Neser (33) frustrated India A before being run-out in 80th over.

Green, who was dropped on 24 by Hanuma Vihari in second slip and then on 78 by Wriddhiman Saha, completed his hundred with a four in the 81st over.

BRIEF SCORES
India A 247/9d; Australia A 286/8 (Cameron Green 114 batting, Tim Paine 44; Umesh Yadav 3/44, R Ashwin 2/58, Mohammed Siraj 2/71). Match to continue.

Kane rises to joint 2nd with Kohli

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Dec 7: New Zealand captain Kane Williamson Monday moved up a rung to join his Indian counterpart Virat Kohli at the second spot in the latest ICC Test rankings for batsmen.

On the other hand, West Indies captain Jason Holder conceded his top ICC Test all-rounder's ranking to England star Ben Stokes after an unimpressive outing against New Zealand in the first Test which his team lost by an innings and 134 runs.

Australia's Steve Smith, with 911 points, kept his hold on the pole position in the batting charts ahead of Kohli and Williamson, who hit a match-winning double hundred against the West Indies in Hamilton.

India's Chesteshwar Pujara remained eighth on the list ahead of Stokes (8th) and England captain Joe Root (9th) respectively, the ICC said in a statement. New Zealand opener Tom Latham entered the top 10 at the 10th position. Ajinkya Rahane (11th) and Mayank Agarwal (12th) have both dropped a place each.

Holder bowled 31 wicketless overs during New Zealand innings and had scores of 25 and 8, which



Virat Kohli and Kane Williamson chat during the teams' Test series in New Zealand earlier this year

led to his slight slump in rankings. Stokes, with 446 points, is on top of the list while Holder with 434 is placed second.

India's Ravindra Jadeja maintained his third position with 397 points. His teammate Ravichandran Ashwin dropped a place to be at sixth with 287 points.

Among bowlers, India's Jasprit

Bumrah stayed put at ninth position on the list while Ashwin gained a position to be 11th. Mohammed Shami (joint 13th), Ishant Sharma (17th) and Jadeja (18th) are also in top 20.

India will play Australia in the four-Test Border-Gavaskar Trophy starting in Adelaide from December 17.

Athletes' march towards Rashtrapati Bhavan to return awards halted midway

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 7: Led by two-time Asian Games gold-winning former wrestler Kartar Singh, a few sportspersons from Punjab on Monday marched towards the Rashtrapati Bhavan to return '35 national sports awards' in a show of solidarity with farmers agitating against new agriculture laws but were stopped midway by the police.

Kartar, who was presented the Arjuna award in 1982 and Padma Shri in 1987, was accompanied by Olympic gold-winning former hockey player Gurmail Singh and former women's hockey captain Rajbir Kaur among others. While Gurmail is a 2014 Dhyanchand awardee, Rajbir was bestowed the Arjuna in 1984.

"The farmers have always supported us. We felt bad when we saw that our farmer brothers were lathicharged, roads were closed. Farmers are sitting on streets in bitter cold for their rights," said Kartar, gold medalist in the 1978 and 1986 Asian games. "I am a farmer's son I still do farming despite being IG, Police," he added.

The athletes, who reached Delhi



Kartar Singh, Rajbir Kaur, Gurmail Singh and other sportspersons march towards Rashtrapati Bhavan to return their awards to the President in protest against the new farm laws, Monday

Sunday, began their march from the Press Club of India but were halted near Krishi Bhavan by the police and sent back.

"I would like to request the government to repeal the draconian law. When the entire country was shivering

for the fear of corona, they passed the bill in both houses and got it passed from the President," Kartar said.

"I agree there is a need for change in farm laws but when our children are not happy, the government's priority should be to make

them happy...Why is the government forcibly trying to push the farmers into accepting the contentious bill?" he asked.

The marching athletes claimed to have the support of several Arjuna and other national sports awards winners. Earlier, Khel Ratna awardee and India's first Olympic medal-winning boxer Vijender Singh had also threatened to return the honour in support of the protesting farmers.

Thousands of farmers from Punjab and Haryana are camping at various Delhi border points for over a week, protesting against the new farm laws, which they claim will dismantle the minimum support price system, leaving them at the 'mercy' of big corporate houses.

Farmers' concern is that these laws, aimed at reforming the sector, will eliminate the MSP and mandis that ensure their earning. But the government says the MSP system will continue and the new laws will give farmers more options to sell their produce.

The government is holding talks with farmers, who have called for a 'Bharat Bandh' December 8, supported by various political parties.

Jadeja doubtful for first Australia Test

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 7: Indian all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja is likely to miss the opening Test against Australia owing to the concussion and a hamstring injury that he sustained during the opening T20I in Canberra.

The 32-year-old, who is on the cusp of his 50th Test, is likely to be out for at least three weeks which certainly rules him out of the first Day/Night Test in Adelaide starting December 17.

In case it turns out to be a hamstring tear, it could well rule him out of the second Boxing Day Test in Melbourne from December 26.

"As per ICC's concussion protocols, after any head injury, a player needs to be rested for 7 to 10 days, which effectively rules Jadeja out of the three-day day/night warm-up game at the SCG from December 11," a BCCI source told this agency on conditions of anonymity.

"Therefore, it is next to impossible that the Indian team man-

agement would field Jadeja, without any warm-up game time ahead of the opening Test," the source added.

However, more than concussion, it is understood that the hamstring injury is likely to keep Jadeja out of action for at least one Test if not two.

In fact, one of the on-air commentators, during the second day of the warm-up game between India A and Australia A, said that 'news is Jadeja is out for three weeks' due to concussion.

However, as per BCCI sources, while he is recovering well from concussion, to be fully fit from a dodgy hamstring may just take some time.

Jadeja has been a regular feature whenever India has gone with a single spinner in overseas Test matches.

Jadeja's injury will certainly mean that Ravichandran Ashwin will be the single spinner as he had looked more potent than young left-armers Kuldeep Yadav during the warm-up match against Australia A.

Son, Kane help Spurs gun down Gunners

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, Dec 7: Son Heung-min and Harry Kane combined again as they both scored for Premier League leader Tottenham in a 2-0 victory over Arsenal in the north London derby.

It was a wonder goal from Son that put Spurs in front in the 13th minute. Freed down the left by Kane, the South Korean

cut inside and curled a brilliant 25-yard (meter) strike into the top corner.

Son returned the favor to tee up Kane to smash in from close range off the underside of the crossbar in first-half stoppage time as Tottenham returned to first place.

Son and Kane have now combined for 11 goals this season. "Harry and Sonny are world-class players and, on

the top of what they do, they have a very good sense of the team," Tottenham manager Jose Mourinho said.

"They have a very good sense of the balance that they need and they also do incredible tactical work for the team when the team doesn't have the ball. So top players, amazing."

While Tottenham is unbeaten in 10 games since an opening-day loss, Arsenal has lost six times and is 11 points behind the leaders in 15th place.

"We need to score goals — it is not sustainable," Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta said as the club endured their worst league start since 1981.

"It doesn't matter what we do in other departments if we don't score, we need to put the ball into the net urgently. At the moment it looks like we need a lot to score a goal."

"In terms of the performance, they did everything that I asked them to do. We played the way we had to play this game. All the stats are in our favor, at the end of the day it is about putting the ball in the back of the net."

The win came in front of the first crowd allowed at Tottenham's stadium since March, with the 2,000 tickets restricted to home fans due to ongoing pandemic restrictions.



Reds decimate hapless Wolves

LIVERPOOL: Mohamed Salah scored his ninth goal in 10 Premier League games as Liverpool eased to a 4-0 win over Wolverhampton to keep pace with Tottenham at the top of the table.

Salah seized on a mistake from Wolves defender Conor Coady to put Liverpool ahead soon after. Coady spent too long watching the ball as he prepared to control a high ball with his chest, and Salah stole it from him and scored past Rui Patrício. Coady was awarded a penalty just before halftime when it appeared he had been hit by Sadio Mane as the Liverpool forward tried to clear with an overhead kick. A video review showed there was no contact, however, and the decision was overturned.

Georginio Wijnaldum scored the second goal on the counterattack in the 58th, bearing down on the Wolves penalty area before hitting an unstoppable curling shot into the top-right corner from just outside the box. Joel Matip tightened Liverpool's hold on the game with a towering header from a free-kick. The fourth came when Wolves' Nelson Semedo turned Trent Alexander-Arnold's cross into his own net as he tried to block Mane.

