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OrissaPOST

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 220 | www.orissapost.com | BHUBANESWAR | WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11 | 2020 | 12 PAGES | ₹4.00

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

Party doesn't have a culture of blaming the leadership. We blame EVM instead.

BIHAR THRILLER

NDA scrapes through

THE RJD, THE OPPOSITION ALLIANCE'S SPEARHEAD, OVERTAKES THE BJP AT THE TOP OF THE TABLE BY WINNING 60 SEATS AGAINST BJP'S 54

AGENCIES

Patna, Nov 10: Bihar Assembly elections looked too close to call Tuesday night with the ruling NDA maintaining a slender edge over the RJD-led Grand Alliance, winning 93 seats and leading in 31 others.

The RJD, the opposition alliance's spearhead, overtook the BJP at the top of the table, clinching 60 seats and its nominees winning 26 seats. The BJP has won 54 seats and is leading in 19 others. NDA partner JD(U) has won 32 seats and is leading in 11 places, in a major slide for the party that had won 71 seats it won in 2015 Assembly polls in alliance with the RJD. The VIP has won four seats while the HAM has won in three seats and was leading in one. The NDA has 93 seats, just seven more than the Grand Alliance. RJD's co-traveller, the Congress, has won 14 seats and its nominees are leading in five seats while Left parties have pocketed 12 seats and are leading in four others.

If the current trend continues, the NDA could scrape through the halfway mark -122 required for a simple majority, but there could be many a slip between the cup and the lip with the opposition alliance rapidly closing the gap. Not only has the RJD edged past the BJP in terms of numbers but also garnered more votes. While the saffron party has polled 19.39 per cent votes, the RJD clinched 23.43 per cent.

Alliance/Party	Wins	Leads
TOTAL ASSEMBLY SEATS - 243		
NDA	93	31
BJP	54	19
JD(U)	32	11
Others	7	1
MGB	86	25
RJD	60	16
INC	14	5
Left	12	4
OTHERS	7	1
Simple majority - 122		

ECI figures as of 11.30 pm

Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi's AIMIM is emerging as a surprise package, winning four seats and leading in one. It had won a seat in a by-election in Bihar earlier. It has made significant inroads in the Seemanchal region which has a large presence of Muslim voters. Given his pathological aversion to the BJP, Owaisi could be more than willing to lend a helping hand to the Grand Alliance if it falls short of a majority by a few seats. The LJP, down in the dumps itself, appeared to have contributed its bit to the unimpressive showing of the JD(U), damaging its prospects in at least 30 seats, according to the latest trends.

Chirag Paswan's party, which walked out of the NDA in Bihar just ahead of the poll, is set to fare abysmally as it has neither won nor is leading in any seat despite polling 5.63 per cent of the 2.70 crore votes counted so far.

JD(U) spokesperson KC Tyagi told PTI in New Delhi that a "sinister" campaign was run against Nitish Kumar as part of a "conspiracy". "Apne bhi shamil the aur begane bhi (Our own also harmed us along with the outsiders)," he said, without taking any names.

He, however, expressed confidence that Kumar will become the Chief Minister again, noting that top BJP leaders including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah have made it clear that he will head the government if the ruling NDA retains power. Bihar BJP president Sanjay Jaiswal voiced similar views in Patna when he said in Patna "the issue has been cleared by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and party chief JP Nadda much before the elections".

As the contest looks like going down to the wire, Abdul Bari Siddiqui, a former Bihar RJD chief, and party supremo Lalu Prasad's Man Friday Bhola Yadav lost from Keoti and Hayaghat seats in Darbhanga respectively. Senior Bihar minister Vijendra Prasad Yadav of JD(U) won from Supual, and Niraj Singh Babloo of the BJP, a cousin of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, whose mysterious death became an election issue, retained the Chhatapur seat. Tejashwi Yadav has won from Raghopur defeating Satish Kumar of the BJP but an official confirmation is awaited.

Islamists behead 50 in Mozambique

AGENCIES

Maputo, Nov 10: Militant Islamists have decapitated more than 50 people in Cabo Delgado province in the north of Mozambique, police say. The militants have been carrying out brutal attacks in the province since 2017. Islamist militants have attacked several villages in Cabo Delgado province in northern Mozambique in the past few days, beheading more than 50 people, state media and police said Monday.

"They set the houses on fire and then hunted down people who had fled into the woods and began their macabre action," a police officer told a press conference. Witnesses told local media that the militants had driven residents of one village onto a football pitch before murdering them there. The militants also reportedly abducted women and children. Cabo Delgado province has been in the grips of a rebellion for around three years.

BJD retains Tirtol, snatches Balasore

SWARUP KUMAR DAS
Balasore Assembly seat

BIJAYA SHANKAR DAS
Tirtol Assembly seat

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 10: The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) has yet again proved that it is invincible in Odisha. The ruling party won both Balasore Sadar and Tirtol Assembly seats with a huge margin. The BJP remained second in both the seats while the Congress came out third.

The BJD's Swarup Kumar Das won the Balasore seat with a margin of 13,351 votes against BJP's Manas Kumar Dutta who got 70,746 votes. Manas is the son of former BJP MLA late Madan Mohan Dutta whose demise led to the bypoll. Congress's Mamata Kundu lost deposit with only 4,983 votes.

Similarly, the BJD won Tirtol seat with a margin of 41,703 votes. The party's Bijaya Shankar Das, son of former Titrol legislator Bishnu Charan Das, secured 88,310 votes against 46,607 votes polled by his nearest rival Rajkishore Behera of the BJP. Congress's Himansu Bhushan Mallick got 28,778 votes and secured third position in the by-poll.

With the loss of the Balasore seat, the total strength of the BJP in the State Assembly came down to 22 while the ruling party's strength went up to 114 in the 147-seat Assembly.

BJD President and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik thanked the people, especially women, of Balasore and Tirtol for blessing his party with votes during the pandemic. Stating that it is a victory of the people, Naveen said his party is committed to the development and wellbeing of them. The CM also thanked the uncounted party workers for reaching out to people and winning their hearts.

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5th IPL crown for Mumbai Indians

AGENCIES

Dubai, Nov 10: Mumbai Indians (MI) continued their dominance in the IPL as they claimed their fifth title in the cash-rich T20 league after overpowering Delhi Capitals (DC) by five wickets in the final, Tuesday.

Chasing 157, MI were off to a flying start – courtesy openers Quinton de Kock (20) and skipper Rohit Sharma (68). The duo added 45 runs in four overs. After De Kock's dismissal, Rohit carried the momentum forward. MI had to deal with a few hiccups at the back end of the chase, but with Ishan Kishan (33 n o) at the crease, the Mumbai outfit comfortably crossed the line with eight balls to spare.

Earlier, DC were reduced to 22/3 in the fourth over after winning the toss and opting to bat first. However, skipper Shreyas Iyer (65 n o) and Rishabh Pant (56) helped their team post 156/7. Trent Boult (3/30) and Nathan Coulter-Nile (2/29) were brilliant with the ball for Mumbai Indians.

leisure

MILEY CYRUS POSES NUDE FOR VIJAT MOHINDRA'S PHOTO SESSION

Singer Miley Cyrus did a nude shoot for a photography book by Indian American fashion photographer Vijat Mohindra. Cyrus wore a blonde wig and used some flowers to cover her modesty. She posed with her arms folded across her chest, looking into the camera, reports *dailymail.co.uk.*

BEYONCE'S DAUGHTER TURNS NARRATOR FOR AUDIOBOOK

Blue Ivy Carter, daughter of Beyonce and Jay-Z, will narrate the audiobook for *Hair Love,* which is based on an Oscar-winning short film by Matthew A. Cherry. Cherry announced the news on Twitter with a clip that samples the four-minute long audiobook.

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

Okay, you feel like Midas, says Ganesha. But remember, all that glitters is not gold. You must spend some time with your loved ones to make them happy. Also, you need to acknowledge those who contributed to your success. If you have kids, it's time to be their Santa Claus!

TAURUS

Dark clouds may keep the sunshine from getting through to your window today, says Ganesha. Negative thoughts and apprehensions may cloud your judgement further. You will look to your family and friends to help you get past today. A loved one may play the pivotal role in changing your fortunes and your mood in the evening, predicts Ganesha.

GEMINI

Your emotions will cloud your reasoning today, portends Ganesha. You may find refuge in activities related to religion. Money lenders and those in retail business will find their cash registers ringing. Hard work, however, continues to be an important tool for success.

CANCER

You are honest and straightforward, and today will be no different. It's just that you can be too straight at times, leaving those around you embarrassed. Early in the day, small things may bother you in a big way. You may get involved in big financial transactions. You will get due appreciation for your efforts at work.

LEO

Resist that urge to pop a pill and call in sick, because no matter how much you wish, escaping from reality is not the way to go, says Ganesha. Yes, there are chances that you shall remain in a pensive mood today with a multitude of thoughts fighting to occupy space inside your head. Work shall be a constant feel-good area as you share valuable moments with your peers, and progress as expected.

VIRGO

Signs are that the day will be bright, rewarding and thoughtful as well. Keep in mind that doomsday is still a long way off. Planetary motions indicate better things to come with each new day. Keep the banners of hope flying, says Ganesha.

LIBRA

Optimism and a positive mindset are second to your nature today, says Ganesha. So carry it with you wherever you go. You may tend to be slightly overcautious at work, but that will only protect you. Today seems to be one of those days when you can't stop worrying about your career prospects.

SCORPIO

You will radiate kindness and care today, says Ganesha. Quarantine yourself from worries at work. Open your heart to loved ones today. Ganesha expects your social skills to set the ball rolling at some social-do today.

SAGITTARIUS

All prim and proper, today you dress up to grab eyeballs. You are surrounded by glitteratti when you attend a social function today. Your effective communication skills will be like icing on the cake and work wonders. Bask in the limelight, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN

The profundity of relationships will intrigue you, luring you to delve deeper into them, says Ganesha. Your strong persuasive power will help clear many misunderstandings that may have cut a rift in your relationship with your sweetheart in the past. At work, you will garner the support of your colleagues and subordinates for mutual goals, but at the same time, be wary of your competitors who may try to outdo you, warns Ganesha.

AQUARIUS

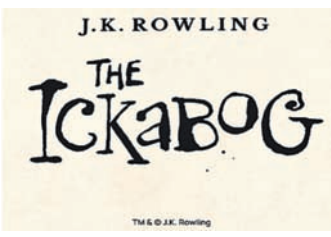
When the going gets tough, the tough gets going! You will find your way through the storm, that too with a smile on your face. While you will be trying to manage your responsibilities on one hand, you will be pleasing everyone around with your wit and humour on the other. Your capability to handle and endure difficulties will say plenty about your character.

PISCES

A day where you will be on your toes, you will find yourself constantly on the move, keeping up with the numerous demands of the workplace in your quest to control the workings of your department or business. Chance encounters with remote relatives are in the offing, says Ganesha.

Eight Indian kids among illustrators in Rowling's new fairytale

'The Ickabog' is set in the kingdom of Cornucopia where everything was perfect - except for the misty Marshlands to the north which, according to legend, were home to the monstrous Ickabog.



NEW DELHI: JK Rowling, the creator of the phenomenal *Harry Potter* series has made history of sorts in the literary world by not only presenting a wondrous and absolutely believable fairytale with her latest offering, *The Ickabog,* but also by firing the imagination of young readers worldwide with 18,000 responses to a competition (for the seven-to-12 age-group) to illustrate the book.

Eight Indian children are among the 34 from five countries who made the final cut for the book, released Tuesday.

Not only have these tweens made their debut on the international stage but are bound to strive for greater heights and also inspire their peers to emulate them whenever given the chance.

The Indian winners are Aron, Indrashis, Aria (all aged seven), Meghashree, Divyanshi (eight), Radhya (nine), Divymaan (10) and Sai Prasad (11) and are naturally quite ecstatic. Their surnames and cities of residence were not revealed as this is not permissible in respect of minors under British laws, the publisher, Hatchette Children's Group, said.

"The only good news during this lockdown", "Thanks to the almighty", "an adorable moment", "boom", "motivated and encouraged" is how some of them reacted.

The other winners are from the UK (12), Australia (six), New Zealand and Ireland (four each).

The idea for *The Ickabog* - the word derives from Ichabod, meaning 'no glory' or 'the glory has departed', and this will become clear once you've read the story - came to Rowling while she was still writing *Harry Potter.* She wrote most of a first draft in fits and starts between Potter books, intending to publish it after *Harry Potter* and the *Deathly Hallows* the final novel of the series.

The Ickabog is set in the kingdom of Cornucopia that was once the happiest in the world. It had plenty of gold, a king with the finest moustaches you could possibly imagine, and butchers, bakers and cheesemongers whose exquisite foods made a person dance with delight when they ate them. Everything was perfect - except for the misty Marshlands to the north which, according to legend, were home to the monstrous Ickabog.

AGENCIES

some of the illustrations by the children inside the book

MRUNAL refuses to get pigeonholed

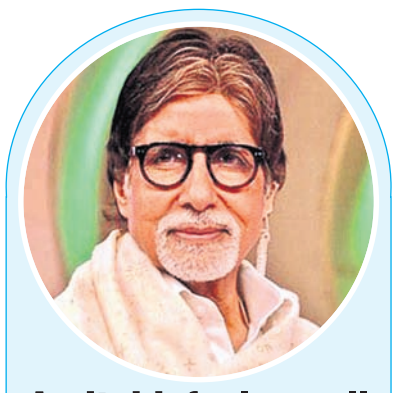
MUMBAI: Actress Mrunal Thakur has said that no one should be able to define her abilities or have a set idea of her capabilities.

"With the changing landscape of content today, what really helps actors is their range. A filmmaker shouldn't be able to associate you with any particular type. Fluidity and versatility are crucial for any artiste working in this day and age. With the set ideas of heroes and heroines and villains gone, we are all competing for an audience's attention equally," said the Super 30 actress.

She thinks it's important to explore various genres, stories and characters.

"I consciously don't repeat myself and that often leads to letting go off some great stories. But it's a careful process of choosing that I don't get stereotyped. I refuse to get pigeonholed. Doing the same character or similar ones could easily end up in saturation," added the actress.

Mrinal made her mark with roles in *Super 30* and *Batla House* while she has *Jersey* opposite Shahid Kapoor and *Toofan* co-starring Farhan Akhtar ready to hit the screens. IANS



Amitabh feels small before young talents

MUMBAI: Amitabh Bachchan is in awe of new upcoming talent in Hindi film industry, and says he feels helpless and small in front of them.

"I am so fortunate to be living in this era when the opportunity is (to) witness the mightiest of talents invade the screen – well now of the TV and not the theatres - and leaving one stunned by their brilliance," Big B shared on his blog.

"The writing, the filming the camera work, the exploitation of the regions in the Country never seen before ... and then the most natural of performances explode before you and .. and .. and ... you feel so small and inadequate," he added.

On the work front, Big B has experimented with different genres and stories, and explored new realms. He will be seen in Nagraj Manjule's *Jhund,* the Emraan Hashmi co-starrer *Chehre,* and Ayan Mukerji's action fantasy drama *Brahmastra,* co-starring Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt, Mouni Roy and Telugu superstar Nagarjuna. IANS

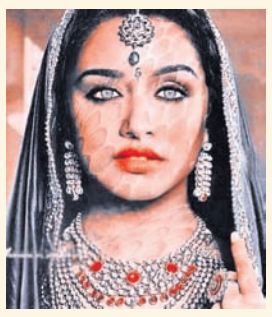
Shraddha shares fan artwork for *Nagin*

MUMBAI: Shraddha Kapoor took to Instagram and shared fan artwork created for her upcoming film *Nagin.*

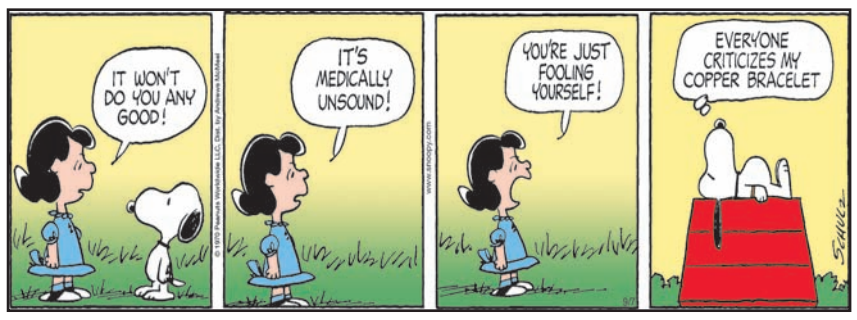
"Sharing a few of the many mind blowing artworks and edits that you all have created with so much effort and love for #NAGIN??They've made my heart overflow with gratitude. Thank you guys so much," she wrote alongside the image, which currently has 444K likes on the photo-sharing website.

The actress has been signed for a three-film franchise based on the popular teleseries *Nagin*, to be directed by Vishal Furia and produced by Nikhil Dwivedi.

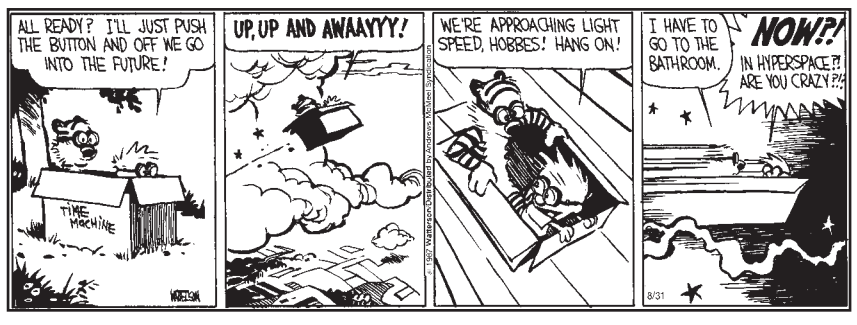
Essentially a love story, the makers plan to have spectacular Visual FX. The date of the release is yet to be finalised. IANS



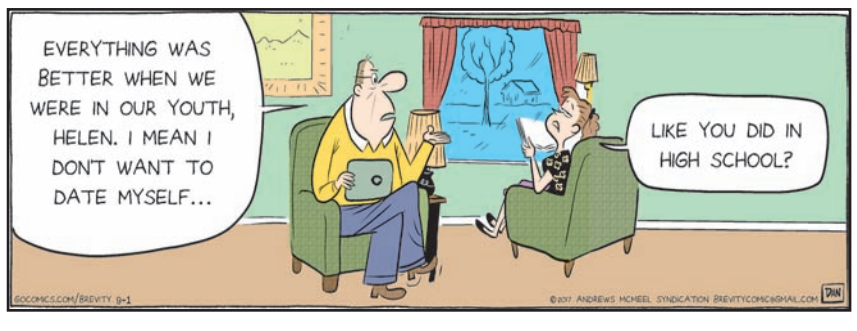
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBES

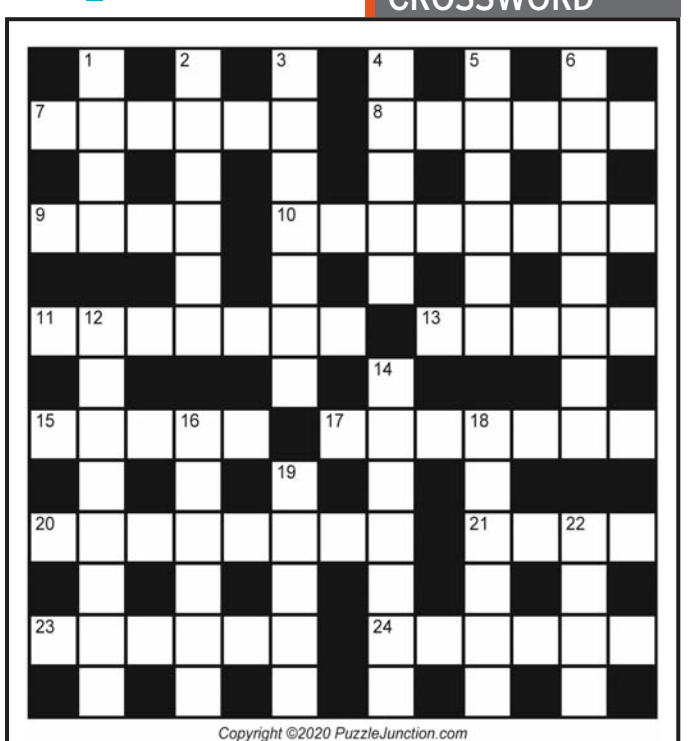


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



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Across
7 Auto mover
8 They're fit for a queen
9 Island near Java
10 Xylophone relatives
11 Spa treatment
13 Salad oil holder
15 Rapids transit
17 Gaffes (3-4)
20 More or less
21 Like a crone
23 Butt against
24 Rotisserie

Down
1 Greek salad cheese
2 Modes of transportation
3 Peacock's pride
4 Rubberneck
5 Produce producer
6 Capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina
12 Large snake
14 Tuxedo accessories (3,4)
16 Spotted wildcat
18 Bligh's boat
19 Geneva's river
22 Elders' teachings

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

SUDOKU

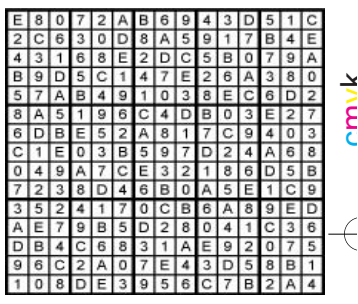
To solve the Sudoku puzzle, each row, column and box must contain the numbers 0 to 9 and the letters A to E.

			A			8	E	7		D	2	B		
1									A	B			6	E
5	4	D	7							E			9	
	0	7		9				C				4		
	C									5	3	8	1	
7	9	6		4		D	1		8					0
		A		8									B	
					3		2		D		9			
	E					B			3	2	5			
0	3								C				E	
	8						6						7	A
		9		6		0	A		E		1			2
		0	9	C		7		B				5		
					4						8		D	
	A	5	D		E			2		0		9	3	

SOLUTIONS

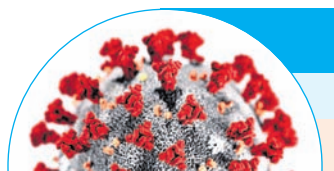
CROSSWORD

SUDOKU



NOBLE GESTURE

Dry ration being distributed among artistes from various districts by Tech Mahindra Foundation at Baramunda High School campus in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	5,14,51,429	3,62,23,540	12,72,394
India	85,92,421	79,59,081	1,27,108
Odisha	3,03,780	2,91,137	1,454

Revenue collection grows despite Covid

CHIEF SECRETARY ASIT TRIPATHY DIRECTS OFFICIALS TO FOCUS ON LIVELIHOOD AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 10: Despite Covid-19 adversities, the state was able to bring the finances back on track as revenue collection has increased by 2.27 per cent during April-October period of current financial year over the corresponding period of the last fiscal.

Revenue generation from both own tax and non-tax sources by end of October this year stands at Rs 25,571.42 crore as against Rs 25,002.84 crore during April-October of previous financial year – a growth of 2.27 per cent.

COURSE CORRECTION

Tax collection from all sources increased by 2.27% till Oct as compared to the corresponding period of the previous fiscal

The total revenue generated from non-tax sources up to October of FY 2019-20 was Rs 7533.26 crore which increased to Rs 92,96.60 crore till October end of the current financial year

Budget expenditure has crossed Rs 51,000 crore by the end of October this year with highest utilisation of around Rs 26,000 crore in social sector

This was revealed at the all-secretaries meeting held under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy here, Tuesday.

The total revenue generated from non-tax sources up to October of FY 2019-20 was Rs 7533.26 crore which increased to Rs 92,96.60 crore till October end of the current financial year. Hence, the total collection from non-tax sources during the period registered a growth of 23.41 per cent.

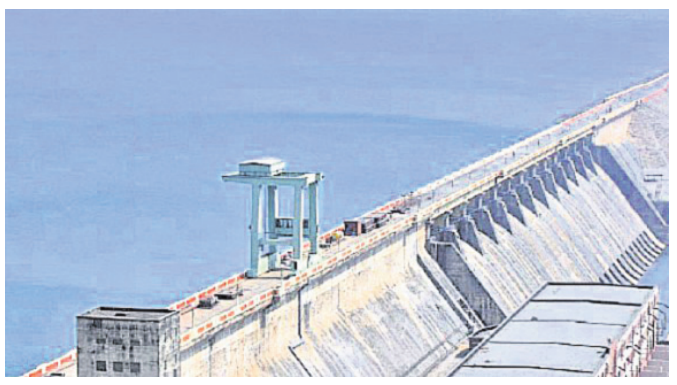
Similarly, the budget expenditure has crossed Rs 51,000 crore by the end of October this year with highest utilisation of around Rs 26,000 crore in social sector.

Reviewing fiscal performance of various departments up to October 2020, the Chief Secretary directed the departments concerned to focus on speedy implementation of the livelihood and infrastructure projects.

Further, Tripathy asked the departments of Water Resources, Rural Development, Works, Housing & Urban Development to prioritise identified strategic projects and complete those within the scheduled time. He assured the departments that there would be no dearth of funds for project implementation. Development Commissioner Suresh Chandra Mohapatra said, "Projects worth around Rs 20,000 crore are being implemented under Odisha Mineral Bearing Areas Development Corporation (OMBADC) and District Mineral Fund (DMF). Those projects be expeditiously completed and commissioned for providing services to the people."

All administrative departments asked to furnish their budget input by December end for preparation of Annual Budget for FY 2021-22. Covid observers were advised to review Covid-compliant behaviour, winter preparedness, treatment facilities in government hospitals and implementation of livelihood sector programmes during their visit to respective districts during this month.

Thrust on green energy to meet future needs



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 10: With an aim to meet the future energy needs, the state government has decided to enhance production from green energy sources.

Holding a high-level meeting in digital mode, Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy Tuesday asked Odisha Hydro Power Corporation (OHPC) to explore the possibilities of enhancing power generation from existing dams without having issues like submergence, land acquisition and displacement.

The state has made significant strides in production of green energy. Power production from hydro sources has increased from 695 megawatt (MW) in the financial year (FY) 2010-11 to 854 MW in FY 2019-20.

In addition to this, power generation from non-conventional renewable energy (RE) sources has increased from 664 MW in FY 2019-20 to 1,079 MW in FY 2020-21. Tripathy asked the officials to enhance the power generation from RE sources to 1,500 MW by FY 2021-22.

It may be pertinent here to mention that the Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission (OERC) has set renewable purchase obligation (RPO) of the state at 11 per cent for the year 2021-22. With achievement of the targeted 1,500 MW from RE sources, the total production from renewable sources will cross this RPO obligation of the state.

SUSTAINABILITY MATTERS

The Chief Secretary directed officials to ensure quality power supply to rural and industrial sectors

Power production from hydro sources has increased from 695 megawatt (MW) in the financial year (FY) 2010-11 to 854 MW in FY 2019-20

Power generation from renewable energy sources has increased from 664 MW in FY 2019-20 to 1,079 MW in FY 2020-21

GRIDCO was asked to adopt more effective commercial strategies for sale of available power

Reviewing the progress in power production from different sources, the Chief Secretary directed the officials to ensure uninterrupted quality power supply to rural and industrial sectors. He directed the GRIDCO to adopt more effective commercial strategies for sale of available power.

Industry and Energy departments were asked to motivate new industrial units to source energy from GRIDCO with assurance of timely and quality power supply.

GRIDCO Managing Director Trilochan Panda said, "The total power generation reached 3,489 MW during last financial year, including 2,468 MW from thermal, 854 MW from hydro and 167 MW from non-conventional renewable sources."

The average annual demand of the state is said to be around 3,200 MW. With expansion in rural electrification and industrialisation, the energy demand is likely to go up in coming years. Keeping this in view, a target has been set by the GRIDCO to generate 4,300 MW of power during the current fiscal.

PM to unveil I-T tribunal office today

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Nov 10: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the newly constructed office-cum-residential complex of Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) at Cuttack through videoconferencing, Wednesday.

ITAT president Justice PP Bhat said that the Prime Minister will inaugurate a state-of-the-art office-cum-residential complex of ITAT at Cuttack at 4:30pm Wednesday and the inaugural function will be virtually attended by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Union Law and Justice Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, Union Petroleum, Natural Gas and Steel Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Chief Justice and Judges of Orissa High Court, among others.

Justice Bhatt said that the ITAT, Cuttack has been functioning from rented premises since 1970 and has jurisdiction for appeals arising from Odisha.

"The inauguration of this complex will help Cuttack Bench of ITAT imparting justice to the needy. With the e-Court facility provided in the new building with good connectivity facility, the Cuttack Bench will be able to hear and dispose of even the appeals pending with other benches in the Kolkata Zone

The ITAT has been functioning from rented premises since 1970 and has jurisdiction for appeals arising from Odisha

The Cuttack Bench will now be able to hear and dispose of even the appeals pending with other benches in the Kolkata Zone

which are presently non-functional such as Ranchi, Patna and Guwahati," Justice Bhat said.

The ITAT president also said that an e-Coffee Table Book on ITAT along with an e-Book on 'Reforms in Direct Taxes since 2014', will also be released on the occasion.

According to the Law ministry, the newly-built office-cum-residential complex of ITAT, Cuttack is spread over an area of 1.60 acres of land allotted by the state government free of cost in the year 2015. The total built-up area of the office complex is 1938 sq mtrs over 3 floors including, inter alia, the spacious court room, ultra-modern record room, well-equipped chambers for the Members of the Bench, library room, well-equipped modern conference hall, with sufficient space for the litigants, bar room for Lawyers and Chartered Accountants, the ministry said.

KALIPUJA AHEAD

An artisan gives finishing touches to a clay idol of Goddess Kali at Ranihaat Puja mandap in Cuttack, Tuesday

3 aides of D-brothers held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Nov 10: The CDA Sector-2 police Tuesday claimed to have arrested three aides of notorious Dhalasamanta brothers on charges of seeking extortion from sand ghat leaseholders and private contractors.

The accused have been identified as Ranjita Biswal of Deulasahi, Ranjit Singh of Chandini Chowk and Suchitra Ranjan Mahapatra of Mansinghpatna. Police also seized Rs 1 lakh from the residence of Dhalasamanta brothers.

According to police, Ranjita and Suchitra were controlling the crime syndicate of jailed Dhalasamanta brothers. The duo was involved in tender fixing and extortion in the Silver City.

Police claimed that Ranjita and Suchitra had sought extortion from a sand ghat leaseholder of CDA Sector-11 area recently. The duo along with Ranjit reached the sand ghat Monday night and terrorized the leaseholder and hurled expletives at him. However, the trio tried to flee the spot when a police team led by inspector Bijayini Singh reached the sand ghat. Police managed to capture Ranjit. Later, police arrested Ranjita and Suchitra, sources said.

'Mo Bus' brings laurels to state

POST NEWS NETWORK

hubaneswar, Nov 10: For the second time in a row, 'Mo Bus'—an ambitious city bus service managed by the Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT)— bagged the first prize for 'innovations undertaken in urban transport during Covid-19' at the 13th Urban Mobility India (UMI) conference held online, an official said Tuesday.

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) hosts the UMI conference every year to award top performing city bus companies under different categories. CRUT had received the first prize for 'Best City Bus Service Project' under the 'new initiative' category at the conference that was held in Lucknow last year.

"After evaluating the measures taken by various bus companies across the country in the wake of the pandemic, the national jury at the UMI conference conferred the first prize on CRUT for 'innovations undertaken in urban transport during Covid-19', Monday," said a CRUT official. MoHUA Secretary Durga Shankar Mishra gave away the award to CRUT managing director Arun Bothra while praising the agency for its innovative methods so as to keep commuters safe during the pandemic. Senior officials of various city bus companies from across the country attended the virtual conference.

The trophy conferred on CRUT

The national jury conferred the first prize on CRUT for 'innovations undertaken in urban transport during Covid'

Bothra said, "We're thrilled to receive UMI award two times in a row. This will motivate us to provide better services to the commuters while taking all precautions."

OSCPCR notice to 5

Bhubaneswar: The Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (OSCPCR) Tuesday directed five persons including the managing director of Odisha Television Ltd to appear before it for a hearing in connection with the alleged gang-rape of a minor girl here during lockdown. They have been served notices to appear before the OSCPCR November 18, 2020.

NGT suspends illegal sand mining in River Baitarani

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 10: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has ordered suspension of an illegal sand mining along Baitarani river in Jajpur district.

The order came after a petition was filed by Sarat Chandra Mohapatra in the tribunal citing gross violation of environment norms and threats to the river and nearby villages. An NGT-mediated committee formed to inspect the site also had given adverse reports against the errant miner.

In its written order, the tribunal said, "Having regard to the above facts and circumstances, we are of the view that the sand mining has not been carried out in accordance with law. For this reason, we direct the miner to cease further mining operation until appropriate clearances are obtained."

The tribunal has also asked the government committee constituted through the NGT order to find out defiance of established rules in terms of adequate approvals from the State Pollution Control Board (SPCB). It also asked the panel to penalise the errant miner in case the allegations come true and violations of Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) norms are established.

"The Committee shall further examine as to whether the lessee had obtained 'Consent to Operate' from the State PCB for the period commencing from 28.03.2016 until now or till such date mining was being undertaken," it said.

The order also added, "If it is found that 'Consent to Operate' had not been obtained or if obtained, its validity had expired, appropriate action in accordance with law be taken against the lessee for recovery of environmental compensation for carrying out illegal sand mining to be assessed as per the guideline prepared by the CPCB."

The aggrieved petitioner had told the NGT that the miner had been deploying excavators for sand mining when permission was only for manual mining. It was also alleged the miner had been undertaking excessive mining and also mining outside the legally allotted areas. It was also alleged that due to the activities of the miner, the flow of the river was obstructed and diverted while mining activities were also done close to embankment in violation of the norms. The government inspection committee said that the errant miner was a habitual offender.

NORMS THROWN TO WINDS

The aggrieved petitioner had informed the NGT that the miner had been deploying excavators for sand mining when permission was only for manual mining

It was also alleged the miner had been undertaking excessive mining and also mining outside the legally allotted areas

MARKET WATCH

	INDEX		VARIATION
BOURSES	SENSEX	43277.65	↑ 680.22
	NIFTY	12631.10	↑ 170.10
CURRENCY	DOLLAR	74.75	↑ ₹0.06
	EURO	87.71	↓ ₹0.45
BULLION	GOLD	₹50,379	↑ ₹631
	SILVER	₹62,030	↑ ₹1,176

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	30.7°C	31.5°C
TEMP MIN	17.4°C	16.4°C
Humidity	94%	72%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Partly cloudy sky

Cold wave grips many parts of state

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 10: Cold wave condition gripped many places across the state with 11 places recording minimum temperature below 15 degrees Celsius, Tuesday.

Bhubaneswar Meteorological Centre director HR Biswas said three places Sonepur, Phulbani and Daringibadi have recorded a minimum temperature of below 10 degrees Celsius. A minimum temperature of 9.2 degrees Celsius was recorded at Sonepur which became the coldest place of Odisha while the night temperature at Daringibadi was 9.5 degrees and Phulbani was 9.8 degrees, he said.

The other places which recorded temperature below 15 degrees Celsius are—Koraput (10.6), Angul (10.8), Bhawanipatna (11), Keonjhar (14), Bolangir (14), Talcher (14.3), Jharsuguda (14.4), Baripada (15),

Vendors selling woollen garments at Unit-I market in Bhubaneswar

Besides, the twin city of Cuttack and Bhubaneswar registered minimum temperatures of 16.4 and 17.4 degrees Celsius respectively.

The night temperature is likely to fall by 3-4 degrees C at many places in interior Odisha during next 24 hours and it will be near normal thereafter.

The Met department said light to moderate rainfall in some places of south coastal Odisha, Kandhamal, Rayagada, Koraput, Malkangiri and dry weather is very likely to prevail over the remaining districts of the state, Wednesday.

Similarly, a few places of Malkangiri, Koraput, Rayagada, Gajapati and Nabarangpur districts may experience light shower, November 12.

nCoV cases drop to triple digits after 110 days

With 987 new cases, Odisha's coronavirus caseload stands at 3,03,780; 13 fresh deaths push the coastal state's virus toll to 1,454

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Nov 10: After a gap of around 110 days, the number of fresh infections reported daily across Odisha dropped below 1,000 Tuesday as 987 more persons tested positive for Covid-19, taking the state's caseload to 3,03,780, an official of Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department said.

The state also registered 13 deaths which pushed the coastal state's coronavirus death toll to 1,454, said the official.

Odisha's new Covid-19 positive cases on a day have dropped below 1,000, for the first time since July 20, the official pointed out.

"This has been possible due to the dedicated efforts of COVID Warriors who continue to work tirelessly in the field every day," the H&FW department said.

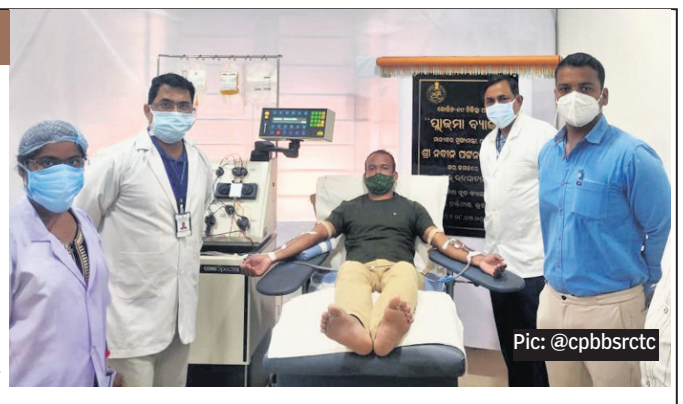
Of the new cases reported from 29 of the 30 districts, 572 have been reported from different quarantine centres, while the remaining 415 were local contact cases.

STATISTICS SO FAR

Sundargarh reported the highest number of 107 new cases. The other 28 districts reported less than 100 fresh cases

Of the fresh fatalities, three each were from Mayurbhanj and Sambalpur while Khurda and Sundargargh reported two casualties each. One each died in Balasore, Bargarh and Keonjhar

The state's positivity rate stands at 6.04



A police personnel donates plasma at Capital Hospital in Bhubaneswar

THE STATE HAS SO FAR REPORTED 1,454 FATALITIES OF WHICH KHURDA ALONE ACCOUNTED FOR 254 DEATHS, FOLLOWED BY GANJAM AND CUTTACK AT 232 AND 120 RESPECTIVELY

ODISHA HAS SO FAR CONDUCTED TESTS ON 50.27 LAKH SAMPLES, INCLUDING 43,409 MONDAY

Sundargarh reported the highest number of 107 new cases. The other 28 districts reported less than 100 fresh cases, said the official, adding that Khurda and Cuttack, which have been registering high cases over the past few months, have reported 86 and 85 cases respectively in the past 24 hours.

Taking to Twitter, the H&FW department said, "Regret to inform the demise of thirteen #COVID19 positive patients while under treatment in hospitals."

Of the 13 fresh fatalities, three each were from Mayurbhanj and Sambalpur districts while Khurda and Sundargargh reported two casualties each. One each died in Balasore, Bargarh and Keonjhar, the data released by the department said.

The state has so far reported 1,454 fatalities of which Khurda district alone accounted for 254 deaths, followed by Ganjam (232) and Cuttack (120).

This apart, 53 Covid-19 positive patients have also died in the state, but the government attributed the cause of their deaths to some other disease, said the official.

The state has so far conducted tests on 50.27 lakh samples, including 43,409 Monday. The state's positivity rate stands at 6.04, added the official.

Meanwhile, another 1,448 Covid patients recovered in Odisha, taking the total recoveries to 2,91,137.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, on the other hand, commended N Damburu Reddy from Kotharasingi of Ganjam for donating plasma multiple times after recovering from Covid-19.

Such noble acts of many Good Samaritans helped save precious lives, Patnaik said.

Assembly session on weekends too: Patro

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubanbeswar, Nov 10: The Winter Session of the Odisha Legislative Assembly is now all set to work even on weekly holidays to complete its 40-day marathon session amid the COVID 19 threat.

Odisha Assembly Speaker Surjya Narayan Patro Tuesday held a press conference and informed the media about the plan of the House to conduct its fifth Assembly Session. The Speaker said that adequate measures will be taken to prevent COVID 19.

"Fifth session of Odisha Assembly will start from November 20. This will be a 40-day affair and will go on till December 31. The Assembly will also work on Saturdays and Sundays. The proceedings will go on like a normal day on these two days too," he said.

As per the plan, the Supplementary Budget will be moved November 20. The Appropriation Bill will be taken up in the Assembly November 29. The Speaker assured taking all measures for prevention of COVID 19. "Starting from November 17, all legislators, employees, secretaries, personal assistants and the media persons will undergo COVID 19 testing. Only people with negative reports will be entertained inside the premises," he said.

Only one person from one newspaper will be allowed to enter the premises while two from TV channels would be accommodated. "If needed, the recording of the proceedings of the House could be shared with the media persons. BMC will be roped in for testing of COVID-19. If on any day, any person has any symptom, he would be taken for an antigen test as the testing team will be present on the campus on all working days," Patro said.

"We'll take a call on repeat of the COVID testing for all after a few days. The entire assembly will be sanitised everyday with the help of BMC," he said.

Security to be tightened at jewellery shops in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 10: The Commissionerate Police will put in place adequate security arrangements at jewellery shops here in a bid to avoid any untoward incident and ensure compliance of Covid-19 norms during Dhanteras, Friday.

Speaking to OrissaPOST, DCP Umashankar Dash said that the city police have identified various clusters of such stores where extra police force will be deployed to ensure strict compliance with Covid-19 guidelines. As many as 15 platoons of police force will be posted at different places of the city for law and order during Dhanteras and Diwali. Dash also warned of stern action against jewellery stores found flouting Covid-19related guidelines. The officers in charge could also close the shop for few hours in case it gets crowded on Dhanteras day.

Now, passengers can lodge FIR in train

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Nov 10: Train passengers during journey can now lodge a zero FIR and seek action, a senior official said Tuesday.

Usually, passengers have to get down in midway to register a report of theft or other criminal incidents. It also happens that the passengers reach the destination and file a complaint, where a case is registered under zero head and then the case transfer to concern GRPS on point of jurisdiction for further course of investigation. It often takes months to reach at concerned jurisdictional GRPS.

Now there will be no such problems for travelling passengers as they can lodge FIR with escort party of GRP/RPF at their earmarked berths.

Train Escorting RPF/GRP personnel have been provided with FIR Forms to assist passengers enroute without breaking their journey to lodge FIR. This will provide relief to the passengers and they will not have to cancel the journey to register an FIR.

Altogether, 100 special trains over East Coast Railway jurisdiction will be escorted by security personnel. These include 25 regular special trains in UP directions, 26 in Down directions and 24 festival special trains in UP directions and 25 in Down directions.

General Manager, East Coast Railway Vidya Bhushan directed security officials both at headquarters and at divisions to ensure strict action against the anti-social and criminal activities in railway premises and during train journey.

SAFETY FIRST

Passengers can lodge FIR with escort party of GRP/RPF at their earmarked berths

This will provide relief to the passengers and they will not have to cancel the journey to register an FIR

Train Escorting RPF/GRP personnel have been provided with FIR Forms to assist passengers enroute without breaking their journey to lodge FIR

Altogether, 100 special trains over East Coast Railway jurisdiction will be escorted by security personnel

MISSION ENCROACHMENT-FREE CITY

An excavator deployed by BDA pulls down an illegal structure as part of a demolition drive between Aigania and Damana Squares in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

DIFFERENTLY-ABLED FRIENDLY FACILITIES

Programme to sensitise officials

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 10: Several officials involved in the construction and retrofitting of government offices to make them barrier free for the differently-abled would now be trained by a central agency to adhere to the prescribed norms of the Central government.

The construction works to make offices barrier free for the differently able were started by the Ministry of Social Justice in 2016 and selected public buildings in Odisha were also chosen to be compliant to those designs.

However, the ministry noted that the photographs and details furnished by the states revealed that several such constructions and retrofitting works were not in compliance with the Accessible India campaign norms and the audit report conducted by the ministry before starting the exercise across the state.

Owing to the violations of the compliance, the engineers and other people involved in the works from the government would not undertake the training and sensitisation programme online from Ghaziabad-based institutions.

The State department of Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) which has been looking after the Accessible India campaign scheme has now directed the engineers working with the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation, Water Resources Department and others to attend the programme to ensure the public buildings are made friendly to the differently able as per the recommendations of the government and audit reports.

The Ministry had earlier written to the Chief Secretary and informed about the deviations in design and construction works and asked the states including Odisha to take course correction measures. The works of construction were undertaken by the ministry's Accessible India Campaign.

The campaign has planned to undertake massive exercise across the country to make public buildings, railway stations and airports accessible to the differently-abled. Prior this, audit reports of all selected public buildings and others were prepared.

Cyber fraudsters dupe man of ₹3L

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 10: Cyber criminals have duped a government employee of around Rs 3 lakh on the pretext of providing him loan recently.

The victim was identified as Sarat Kumar Sahoo of Derabis area in Kendrapara district. Sahoo works at the Indira Gandhi National Open University's regional centre here.

According to sources, the victim received a phone call from fraudsters who identified themselves as the representatives of Bajaj Finance Company. They informed Sahoo that his loan request has been sanctioned by the company. One of the callers also asked Sahoo to share his bank account related information and documents like voter ID, Adhar and Pan Card. Accordingly, Sahoo sent all the details on a WhatsApp number messaged to his mobile number by the accused.

Sahoo sent the details on a WhatsApp number messaged to him by the fraudsters and got duped

However, Sahoo was shocked to receive several messages after a couple of days regarding the withdrawal of money to the tune of Rs 2, 96,500 from his IDBI account. He immediately contacted the bank authorities who informed him that the miscreants had withdrawn the money through five online transactions using his bank details.

Chandrasekharpur police started investigations into the matter after registering a case on the basis of the complaint lodged by Sahoo.

KiiT Int'l School develops learning software

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 10: KiiT International School has developed its own Learning Management Software – KiiTIS edpronto – to ensure better e-learning for the students due to absence of classroom learning owing to the pandemic.

Speaking on the unique cloud system, school chairperson Mona Lisa Bal, "As soon as the country went under a lockdown and students were unable to attend school, we were determined not to compromise on the quality of education they used to receive at the school."

She further added, "Since the introduction of KiiTIS edpronto, many of our students have become self-responsible and are submitting their assignments on time. This is because the system sends them reminders for submission and students get gold stars in the system beside their name when they maintain deadlines."

State schools shine in nat'l ranking

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 10: Odisha-based schools secured top ranks in the national ranking survey conducted by Education World in association with Centre for Forecasting and Research Pvt. Ltd.

In the day-cum-boarding school ranking category, SAI International school secured top rank, while in government day schools category, Odisha Adarsh Vidyalaya in Hatiota, Ganjam district got fifth rank and Odisha Adrash Vidyalaya in Patharchepa, Bolangir district got fifth rank in boarding school category.

The survey rates and ranks the country's top 2,000 schools in six main and twelve sub-categories – Day: Co-ed, Boys and Girls, Day-cum-boarding; Boarding: Co-ed, Girls and Boys; International: Day, Day-cum-boarding and fully residential. It also rates and ranks India's best Special Needs; Private Budget and Government schools.

To conduct the 2020-21 EWISR survey, a market research and opinion polls company Centre for Forecasting and Research Pvt. Ltd constituted a sample respondents database of 11,368 individuals including school principals, teachers, educationists, fees-paying parents in SEC (socio-economic category) 'A', and senior school students in 28 major cities and education hubs across India. The sample respondents were persuaded to rate India's most well-known 2,000 primary-secondary schools on 14 parameters* of education excellence.

"We believe the comprehensive EWISR league tables will enable parents to choose the most suitable day schools for their children and also provide institutional managements insights into ways and means to continuously raise teaching learning-standards for the greater good of the community and country," says Dilip Thakore of EducationWorld.

The 14 parameters of education excellence on which the schools were ranked are - Academic reputation, competence of faculty, individual attention to students, leadership management quality, digital readiness, safety and hygiene among others.

Unique campaign

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 10: A group of socially conscious and road friendly citizens have rolled out a donation drive to support people affected by COVID-19 pandemic.

As a part of their campaign 'Road Ashram', the team is travelling along the borders of India, covering nearly 25,000 km and 30 states, in about 60 days in a modified car.

The team has travelled along the China and Nepal borders in Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. In Sikkim they met with eminent and influencing citizens including BhaichungBhutia. They travelled up to India-Bhutan border in Jaigaon, West Bengal.

Presently, the team is approaching Guwahati where they will put up tonight and again resume their journey on Friday. The Road Ashram volunteers Siddhartha Dutta, AhmerSiddiqui and NehaChaturvedi are scheduled to arrive in Bhubaneswar November 10.

2 illegal sawmills raided; timber, equipment worth ₹25L seized

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balipatna, Nov 10: Officials of Khurda forest division and state Vigilance raided two illegal sawmills under Balipatna range and seized timber and equipment worth around Rs 25 lakh, Tuesday.

The officials seized several equipment including 50.00 CFT teak timber, power driven motor, cutters, sanders, drill machines and two tractors from the illegal units located at Dhanahara and Denga in Balipatna area.

A total of six cases have been registered under the Orissa Sawmill and Sawpit (Control) Act, 1991 and the investigation is on, said a Forest department official. No arrest could be made as nobody claims the ownership of the mills.

Locals said that the mills had been operating in the locality illegally for the last couple of years.

Forest officials had received information regarding smuggling of precious timbers in Balipatna area.

Acting on the tip-off, the officials raided the two sawmills and made the seizure. The officials said that all the seized materials were handed over to DFO, Khurda which has been received by Range Officer Balipatna.

The Forest officials have launched a manhunt for the real owners of the two sawmills. Senior officials including ACF Bishnu Charan Behera and Balipatna Range Officer Jaykrushna Das and Khurda Range Officer Asit Kumar Mishra were present during the raids.

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Murram mafia killing Udayagiri

While the admin has turned a blind eye, hundreds of trucks carry extracted murram and boulders to various construction sites in the district from this famous Buddhist site

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chandikhole, Nov 10: Famous Buddhist site Udayagiri located amidst a cluster of hills, called Asiha in Jajpur district, usually is a huge draw for tourists, both for domestic and abroad, but these work of nature are facing threat from illegal murram extraction, a report said.

The report highlighted that for the last several months, murram, a minor construction mineral, is being mined from Manduka, Dhaudiapada and Chandi hills. Murram quarrying has been destroying the hills, which are adding to the beauty of the Buddhist site.

Locals expressed concern over such illegal activities detrimental to the hills contributing to the tourism sector. These hills are under Darpan tehsil.

There is 2,600 acres of forest land as part of the hills. The government has spent lakhs of rupees towards plantation in some of these hills. However, murram mafia has been clearing trees to make space for mineral extraction. Every day, hundreds of trucks have been engaged to transport extracted murram and boulders to various construction sites in the district. Some conscious citizens pointed out that the government has made laws stricter to check exploitation of minor minerals, but such illegal mining of the minor minerals in the hills is reverse in reality.

Owing to rampant murram mining, huge craters have been created on these foothills. On the other hand, it is alleged that murram mining still goes on in collusion with some officials of the administration. The administration is not taking action on the people involved in such illegal mining around Udayagiri, the report said.

On one side of the hill range is Udayagiri Buddhist site and on the other is Satyapira Peetha, a shrine promoting Hindu-Muslim harmony.

On another side is the shrine of Sohalpua Maa Thakurani. Not to forget Sidhha Gumpa hill there which is also a crowd-puller. The government has spent crores of rupees for the development of these places, but allowing illegal murram extraction has left many an eyebrow.

It is alleged that mafia keeps on extracting murram in the area at night in a bid to ward off glare of the administration and supply the mineral to various places of Jajpur, Kendrapara Jagatsinghpur and Cuttack where construction of roads and repair of breaches are going on in full swing. As such illegal murram mining goes on unbridled; the government has been losing crores of rupees as revenue.

It may be noted here that the special task force of the Crime Branch had earlier raided Manduka hill after getting tip-off about illegal murram mining. After this raid, murram mining has been brought to a halt for some days, but now it is back to square one.

Local intellectuals say, as of now no official visit the places and mafia has been carrying out its activities easily. They have demanded immediate steps on such mineral extraction on the hills, which is key to maintain ecological balance in the region as well as acts as natural protector of the Buddhist site.

They demanded stern action against the murram mafia.

When contacted, Darpan tehsildar Baranedyu Mohanty said, "We have been carrying out raids at different times, but they are keeping vigil along the roads on the arrival of officials. Whenever we go near the mining sites, no vehicles or people are found."

In these pictures, we can see how the mafia is operating at the place. It is alleged that murram mining is going on in collusion with some officials of the administration

FOR OPTICS

A special task force of the Crime Branch had raided Manduka hill after being tipped-off about illegal murram mining

After this raid, murram mining was brought to a halt for some days, but now it is back to square one. Locals say as of now no official visits the site and so, mafia has been carrying out its activities easily

GANJAM WILL RELOOK ON SCHOOLS' MERGER

FACED WITH OPPOSITION: GANJAM TO MAKE A FRESH ASSESSMENT ON MERGER OF SCHOOLS, SAYS COLLECTOR

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur, Nov 10: The district administration in Ganjam plans to make a fresh assessment on the merger of schools following stiff opposition by guardians on the issue, a report said, Tuesday.

In view of these developments, the block development officers (BDOs) in various blocks have been directed to make a fresh assessment of the schools in their respective areas which will be merged with the nearby schools, informed Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange, Tuesday. The BDOs will have to make an assessment of which of the schools need to be merged and which not, the Collector added. Further decision on this issue will be taken after receiving the reports of the BDOs, the Collector added.

According to the guidelines, the schools having less than 20 students will be closed down. Moreover, the schools located within 1 km distance from these schools with 40 students will also be merged.

Sources said 42 schools in Patrapur block, 17 in Aska, 11 in Beguniapada , 22 in Belguntha, 12 in Berhampur, 41 in Bhanjanagar, 15 in Buguda, 15 in Chhatrapur, 32 in Chikiti, 22 in Dharakote, 34 in Digapahandi, 12 in Ganjam, eight in Hinjili, 27 in Jagannathprasad, 11 in Kabisuryanagar, 22 in Khallikote, 22 in Kukudakhandi, 42 in Patrapur, 12 in Polsara, nine in Purusottampur, 17 in Rangeilunda, 11 in Sanakhemundi, 11 in Sergad, five in Sorada have been decided to be closed down and merged with nearby schools.

Reports said that the state government has ordered for closure of the schools with fewer enrollments and merge these with nearby schools. The state Mass Education department has released a guideline on the basis of which the respective district administration can work on the merger of schools in their district. The district education department has decided to close down 433 schools and merge them with nearby schools on the basis of this guideline. The district education department decided accordingly and sent a report in this regard to the district Collector seeking his approval.

However, this decision sparked sharp resentment among the residents in various parts of the district which has only intensified over the time. The guardians and local public representatives have staged protests in their respective areas which are intensifying with each passing day. The agitators are meeting the BDOs and the Collector and submitting memorandum demanding withdrawal of the order.

FILE PHOTO

Angry guardians stage a sit-in in front of a school which is on the closure list in Chhatrapur, Tuesday

While 42 schools in Patrapur block face closure, Berhampur has 12 such schools

In total, the dist edu dept has decided to close down 433 schools and merge them with nearby schools

CHOCK-A-BLOCK

As expansion of NH-49 in Keonjhar is in progress, the road routinely sees heavy traffic jam owing to mineral-laden vehicles plying on it

OP PHOTO

2 ARRESTED OVER ₹2CR GST FRAUD

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, Nov 10: Acting on allegation of another GST fraud to the tune of Rs 2 crore in Deogan block of Bolangir, police started an investigation into the case and arrested two persons.

Reports said, GST fraud to a tune of Rs 1 crore was alleged against a farmer named Rabindra Bhoi of Ghantamal village under Saintala block. A fake company had been floated in the name of Rabindra. Later, Sales Tax officials had visited his house and investigated the matter. However, Rabindra had lodged an FIR with the Saintala Police station.

Police officials arrested two people identified as Gayatri Jaiswal and Birendra Jaiswal of Tikrapada. They were grilled as they are suspected to be mastermind behind the crime. Police are trying to find out other accomplices in this racket.

On the other hand, the Sales Tax officials have seized an agreement paper of the house rent lease signed with the owner Sabita Rana of Sarasmal village under Deogaon block. The officials have detected that a fake transport company has been opened at the address to evade GST as Sabita has already made it clear that she has not made any such agreement nor any such company is functioning at her house.

Good news for Angul slum-dwellers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, Nov 10: Following the direction of the Odisha government, Angul Municipality authorities have started an aerial survey in the civic area to provide houses to the slum-dwellers as per 'Odisha Land Rights to Slum Dwellers Act, 2017'.

The municipality authorities have decided to provide all the facilities to the slum dwellers including pucca house, 24 hours drinking water, toilet, electricity and roads by 2021.

Sources said there are a total of 13 slums in Angul town including Muslim Sahi, Rajkishorepada, Nakhara Sahi, Dolamandap Sahi, Jayananda Marg, Hakimpada Hapi, Radharamanpada, Soubhagyanagar, Bharat Nagar, Sweeper Colony, Harijana Sahi, Jabardasti Padia and a slum behind Women's Autonomous College.

There are a total of 2,612 households in the above slums. From the total households, 365 households have already been given the Land Right Certificates.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. O-541

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
R.W.S.&S. DIVISION, SUNDARGARH
E-mail: rwss.sng@gmail.com
"e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE
Bid Identification No. RWSS(SNG) - 19/2020-21

1. Name of the Work : Piped Water Supply Scheme to ESI Hospital at Kanshbahal under Rajgangpur Block in the District of Sundargarh.
2. Total Number of Work : 01 No. (One)
3. Estimated Cost : Rs.40,05,926.00
4. Class of Contractor : A & B
5. Period of Completion : 11 Months

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender Online for Bidding	
		From	To
Executive Engineer, RWSS Division, Sundargarh	RWSS (SNG): 19/2020-21	09.11.2020	24.11.2020 upto 5.00 P.M.

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "www.tendersodisha.gov.in". Subsequent corrigendum if required shall be appeared in the website only.

Sd./- Executive Engineer
RWS&S Division, Sundargarh
OIPR-25009/11/0001/2021

EAST COAST RAILWAY

(1) Tender No. MCSW-Sanitation-20-21-08
Name of Work : SANITATION AND GUARDING OF TRAINING CENTRE CUM INSPECTION BUNGALOW, SUBORDINATE REST HOUSE & PREMISES INCLUDING GYMNASIUM AND CLEANING OF TOILETS, COMMON AREAS, SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER CHAMBERS & ADJACENT COMMON AREAS IN WORKSHOP COMPLEX AND CLEANING OF TOILETS, COMMON AREAS, ROOMS & CHAMBERS IN ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING AT CARRIAGE REPAIR WORKSHOP, MANCHESWAR.
Advertised Value : ₹ 59,11,323.44, EMD :₹ 1,18,200.00, Completion Period of the work : 24 Months.

(2) Tender No. MCSW-Coachclean-20-21-09
Name of Work : CLEANING OF COACHES AT CARRIAGE REPAIR WORKSHOP, MANCHESWAR.
Advertised Value : ₹ 39,63,751.50, EMD :₹ 79,300.00, Completion Period of the work : 24 Months.

Bidding Start Date : 12.11.2020 (For Sl. No.1), 13.11.2020 (For Sl.No.2),
Date and time of closing of tender: At 1500 hrs of 26.11.2020 (For Sl.No.1), At 1500 hrs of 27.11.2020 (For Sl.No.2)
Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.
Complete information including E-tender documents of the above E-tender is available in website : http://www.ireps.gov.in.

Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer, Carriage Repair Workshop, Mancheswar
PR-345/L/20-21

Guardians are fuming as 233 Sambalpur schools face closure

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Nov 10: Faced with abysmally low enrolment of students, 233 primary and upper primary schools are all set to be closed from the current academic year in Sambalpur district. On the other hand, guardians have expressed their displeasure over the issue, a report said.

Following a government order, block education officers have prepared a report on schools with low students' strength and submitted a list of 233 to the government. The officials are also receiving complaints on school closure from various areas. "We will study and look into those areas again from where the parents are coming and complaining about school closure," said district education officer Minarani Mandal. Mainly complaints are coming from blocks like Naktideula, Jujumara and Manewar. In some cases, schools do not have required number of students, but locals demand to continue the school, the report added.

In many areas, villagers have opposed the move stating that dalit students are studying in these schools and there is no educational institution within one km radius in those areas.

It may be noted here that enrolment of students in government primary schools has been declining considerably, exposing the poor functioning of education system in the district. It is alleged that mushrooming of private schools, delay in supply of free uniforms and textbooks and shortage of teachers in primary schools have hit enrolment in government schools.

The block level officials have been asked to relook the cases where there are complaints by guardians. They were asked to assess the number of students, infrastructure and distance of the school from the villages. On the basis of their report, the district level board of the department may consider the cases.

The DEO said that if necessity arises, the state government will be recommended for cancelling the closure order of the schools.

Will another 137 schools in Sonepur face closure?

SONEPUR: While over 100 schools have already been closed, closure notices hang on 137 more primary schools in the current year, here in the district.

Guardians in various areas have strongly opposed the move and demanded that schools to be allowed to run as usual.

People of Babupali under Bainika blocks have demanded a relook on the closure order of the schools.

Manoranjanpur School was closed from the current academic session. The students there will have to trek 3 km daily to study at Babupali. Kids will run risk of crossing a main road and a big distance. We are worried over the future of our children after closure of the school, said residents of Manoranjanpur.

They submitted a memorandum to Collector Monisa Bannerjee in this regard.

Representative pic

We will study and look into those areas again from where the parents are coming and complaining about school closure

MINARANI MANDAL| DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER, SAMBALPUR

SURYO FOODS & INDUSTRIES LIMITED
CIN: L05004OR1989PLC002264
Extract Of Financial Results For The Quarter and Half year Ended On Sep. 30, 2020.
Key Numbers of Financial Results (Rs. in Thousands)

Sl. No.	Particulars	Quarter Ended 30.09.2020 (Un-Audited)	Quarter Ended 30.06.2020 (Un-Audited)	Quarter Ended 30.09.2019 (Un-Audited)	Half Year Ended 30.09.2020 (Un-Audited)	Half Year Ended 30.09.2019 (Un-Audited)	Year Ended 31.03.2020 Audited
1	Total Revenue from Operations	-	-	5,990	-	15,582	15,583
2	Net Profit / (Loss) (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	(1,161)	(1,300)	(5,359)	(2,461)	(5,073)	(6,546)
3	Net Profit / (Loss) before Tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	(1,161)	(1,300)	(5,359)	(2,461)	(5,073)	(6,546)
4	Net Profit / (Loss) after Tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	(1,161)	(1,300)	(5,359)	(2,461)	(5,073)	(6,387)
5	Total Comprehensive Income [Comprising Profit / (Loss) after tax and Other Comprehensive Income after tax]	(1,161)	(1,300)	(5,359)	(2,461)	(5,073)	(6,387)
6	Equity Share Capital	39,600	39,600	39,600	39,600	39,600	39,600
7	Earnings per share (of Rs.10/- each) Basic & Diluted (Rs.)	(0.29)	(0.33)	(1.35)	(0.62)	(1.28)	(1.61)

Notes :
a) The above financial results of the Company for the quarter and half year ended Sep. 30, 2020 have been audited and recommended by the audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors of the Company in their respective meetings held on 10th November, 2020.
b) The above is an extract of the detailed format of Statement of Audited Financial Results for the quarter and half year ended on Sep. 30, 2020 filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obilgation and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Statement of Audited Financial Results for the quarter and half year ended on 10th Nov, 2020, are available on the website of the Stock Exchanges - www.bseindia.com as well as on the website of the Company - www.suryofoods.com.

By order of the Board
For Suryo Foods & Industries Limited
Sd./- Amarendra Dash
(Chairman and Managing Director)
DIN - 00583036

Date : 10th November, 2020
Place: Bhubaneswar

> Trust the divine power, and she will free the godlike elements in you and shape all into an expression of divine nature.
>
> SRI AUROBINDO

Comma + 'La'

If you add "la" ~ the French feminine equivalent of the English article "the" to "comma", the combination makes the US Vice President-elect! This is how Kamala Harris' campaign itself sought to guide the Americans how to pronounce her name correctly after President Donald Trump taunted her by pronouncing her name in a mocking, bizarre way to denigrate her before his supporters at election rallies. Thousands of supporters of President-elect Biden's running mate wore T-shirts on which was embossed this "guidance" in response to the male chauvinism bordering on racism that Trump and his followers laced their campaign with.

Trump made a point of deliberately mispronouncing Harris' name: "By the way, Ka-MAHH-lahh will not be your first female president," he said, stretching out the second and third syllables like a taunt, to the crowd of jeering supporters. Many other key campaigners of Trump continued their Harris-bashing in the same vein. Georgia Sen. David Perdue opened his speech at a rally with these words: "KAH'-mah-lah? Kah-MAH'-lah? Kamala-mala-mala? I don't know. Whatever." The crowd roared with laughter.

This is the climate of gender or racial discrimination and hatred that characterised the Trump Presidency and Kamala Harris' historic elevation to the position of Vice President-elect is, in a way, being viewed not only as a triumph of woman power, but also gender equality. In fact, her victory comes at a time when women leaders are emerging as equal partners in shaping the destiny of many countries. Only a few weeks back, New Zealand's newly elected Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern appointed the country's first indigenous female foreign minister Nanaia Mahuta. She is a Maori and she wears with pride a "moko kauae", a traditional tattoo, on her chin just as Harris prides herself in the correct pronunciation of her name.

Ardern's parliament looks set to be one of the most diverse in the world. Almost half of that country's lawmakers will be women and significantly higher than the global average of 25 per cent.

Iceland has already hit global headlines with the Cabinet of Prime Minister Katrín Jakobsdóttir comprising five women against six men, making it the second-most gender-balanced cabinet in Icelandic history.

The misogynist stand of Trump as exhibited in his deliberate distortion of pronunciation of Kamala Harris' name triggered a flurry of protest by women in the USA, reports Los Angeles Times. Hundreds of people responded, many recounting their own experiences with unusual names in schools and in the workforce. "It built a nice core of anger that erupts when I see stuff like this and makes me see red," wrote Irvine resident, Dan Chiappe, 53. The Peruvian native's birth name is Danilo Chiappe, pronounced Dah-KNEE-low Kee-YAHP-eh.

"It's not just a word. It's your name," said Danilo Chiappe, a psychology professor, stating further that "Your name is an intrinsic part of your identity."

The Narendra Modi-government is now veering round to the normal diplomatic trajectory of congratulating the President-elect and Vice President-elect of the USA.

BJP leaders saw the Indian origin of Kamala Harris as a window of opportunity to make amends for Modi's open support to Trump and strengthen Indo-US relations under the Biden dispensation.

PM Modi tweeted: "Heartiest congratulations @KamalaHarris! Your success is pathbreaking, and a matter of immense pride not just for your chittis, but also for all Indian-Americans. I am confident that the vibrant India-US ties will get even stronger with your support and leadership."

Unfortunately for India's leaders, Kamala considers herself more Black than Indian. She was born in the US, her father was Jamaican and mother Indian, married to an American and certainly considers herself a pure bred American. It is quite childish to assume that Kamala would have any feelings for India or Indians. It is important that Indians do not get misled into thinking she will, in any manner, be pro India.

The truth is that the Democrats are highly critical of the Modi government's bifurcation of Kashmir and the abrogation of Article 370. Earlier in October 2019, Kamala Harris said in response to a question on human rights violation in Kashmir and restrictions imposed, including curfews and communication blackout : "We have to remind the Kashmiris that they are not alone in the world. We are keeping a track on the situation. There is a need to intervene if the situation demands."

She also stood by fellow Indian-origin Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal when External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar refused to attend a meeting in the US over her participation. Jayapal had earlier moved a resolution on the Kashmir issue in the House of Representatives. Now the situation may get even more precarious since the role played by PM Modi during Trump's campaign is getting highlighted.

WISDOM CORNER

> We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.
>
> ALBERT EINSTEIN

> Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal.
>
> HENRY FORD

> The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting.
>
> SUN TZU

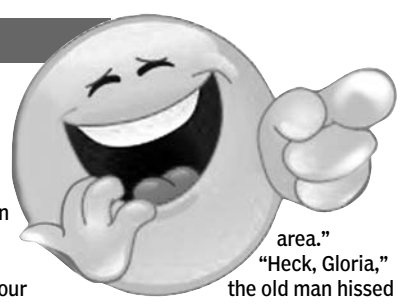
WORDSWORTH

Valetudinarian

A valetudinarian is unduly anxious about his health. The everyday word for this condition might be thought to be hypochondriac, but there's a subtle difference: the hypochondriac thinks he's always ill, but the valetudinarian takes great care to ensure he never is. This polysyllabic and literary term is a good choice at times when it is desirable not to seem too unkind. In November 2004, the word appeared in an obituary of the football writer Arthur Hopcraft in the Independent: "Fastidious, set in his ways and prematurely balding, Hopcraft had an air of the valetudinarian bachelor about him from a relatively early age." The word appears in the language in 1703, in the third volume of William Dampier's A New Voyage Round the World. Dampier was an extraordinary explorer, map-maker and buccaneer; a couple of years after he published this volume he commanded a privateering voyage during which Alexander Selkirk, the model for Robinson Crusoe, was marooned. He wrote: "Many of our English Valetudinarians have gone from Jamaica ... to the I. Caimanes ... to live wholly upon Turtle that abound there". (He's referring to the Cayman Islands, these days famous more as a refuge for the money of the reclusive rich than for sick people.) A writer in the Gentleman's Magazine in 1787 remarked that: "Everyone knows how hard a task it is to cure a valetudinarian." The word is from Latin valetudinarius, in ill health.

LOL

We could have been here sooner



An elderly couple were killed in an accident and found themselves being given a tour of heaven by Saint Peter. "Here is your oceanside condo, over there are the tennis courts, swimming pool, and two golf courses. If you need any refreshments, just stop by any of the many bars located throughout the area."

"Heck, Gloria," the old man hissed when Saint Peter walked off, "we could have been here ten years ago if you hadn't heard about all that stupid oat bran, wheat germ, and low-fat diets!"

FOCUS INDO-US TIES

NATIONAL INTERESTS FIRST

Dr Anil K. Singh

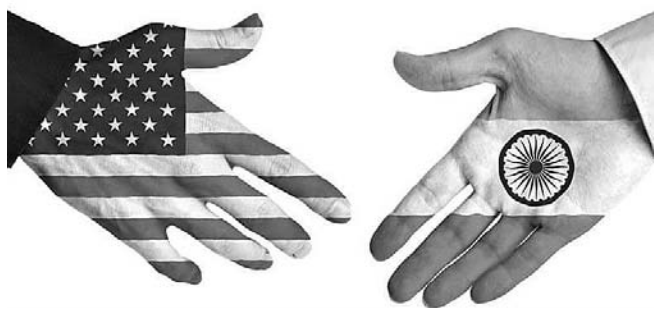
THROUGHOUT THEIR ELECTION CAMPAIGN, BIDEN AND HARRIS EMPHASISED ON FURTHER CONSOLIDATING TIES WITH INDIA

With 290 electoral votes in his favour, compared to 214 secured by incumbent President Donald Trump, decks have been cleared for Joe Bidden and he has been declared president-elect. He is set to be sworn in as the 46th President of the United States on 20 January 2021, irrespective of the outgoing President's machinations of not accepting the verdict and trying to obstruct smooth transition of power on one pretext or the other. Biden in his acceptance speech has emphasised on the priorities to be addressed by his administration.

Challenging tasks are ahead for Biden administration, both domestically and externally. Apart from addressing the pandemic, the president-elect is confronted with the herculean task of unifying a divided American society, toning up the health of an ailing economy, winning the confidence of America's allies, ensuring increased participation of the US in the activities of the United Nations, especially by rejoining the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and WHO.

Recent couple of decades have witnessed that change of regime either in New Delhi or in Washington has little to do with the ongoing relations between India and the US as the relations are not based on whims and fancies but on stark geopolitical and geo-economic realities and convergence of respective national interests. From Clinton administration to Trump administration, relations between New Delhi and Washington have progressed satisfactorily and odds arising occasionally have often been sorted out through bilateral channels from time to time.

Biden, who served as Vice President under Obama administration, has already given a good account of his inclination towards improving American ties with India. At the time of approval of the historic Civil Nuclear Deal between the US and India, Biden, then leading the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, had said that if Washington and New Delhi became closer friends then the world would be a safer place. Again in 2013, when he visited India in his capacity as Vice President, he had termed US-India partnership as the defining relationship of the 21st century. Biden's nomination of Kamala Harris as his running Vice President mate raised high hopes in India that a Biden-Harris administration would build on the rich legacy of US-India friendship. Throughout their election campaign, Biden-Harris emphasised on further consolidating ties with India. Reacting to Trump's calling India 'filthy' in the context of air pollution in the final presidential debate, Biden said that it was not "how you talk about friends and it's not how you solve global challenges like climate change." Retweeting on November 7, his op-ed in the latest issue of ethnic India West weekly, Biden wrote: "Kamala Harris and I deeply value our partnership and put respect back at the centre of our foreign policy." Undeniably, these high hopes are well placed; nonetheless these have to be appraised at the face value of grim ground realities pervading currently in different sectors.



Recent couple of decades have witnessed that change of regime either in New Delhi or in Washington has little to do with the ongoing relations between India and the US as the ties are not based on whims and fancies but on stark geopolitical and geo-economic realities and convergence of respective national interests

India's record on human rights, transfer of high-tech, China and H-1B visa issue are the major vexing issues that experts think will be major factors deciding the future course of Indo-US relations. Both Biden and Harris have been vocal about India's record on human rights, especially in the wake of the developments in Kashmir, suppression of dissent within the country and in regard to ongoing protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). Biden in his Agenda for Muslim-American Community had criticised the CAA along with NRC as inconsistent with the country's long tradition of secularism.

Undoubtedly, India has for long maintained that the situation in Kashmir is an internal affair, not for mediation by outside powers and even declined outgoing President Trump's mediatory offers on many occasions; nevertheless, as some experts have opined, that going by public statements and policy statements, both Biden and Harris have seemingly pointed out that their administration could entail the likelihood of holding India to account over its activities in Kashmir.

Biden's Agenda for Muslim-Americans, which is available at his campaign website, says: "In Kashmir, the Indian government should take all necessary steps to restore rights for all the people of Kashmir and restrictions on dissent, such as preventing peaceful protests or shutting or slowing down the Internet, weaken democracy." Harris has seemingly been more outspoken when she said in October 2019: "We have to remind Kashmiris that they are not alone in the world. There is a need to intervene if the situation demands." One can hope that such an aggressive approach may not be adopted by Biden-Harris administration with regard to human rights in India.

China is going to be a major decisive factor in shaping up the Indo-US relations. On an average, almost every American administration has been reluctant to transfer high-tech defence technology to India unlike it did in the case of China in the past. If the Biden administration attempts to normalise relations with China resulting in easing of sanctions, the probability of transfer of high-tech defence technology to India from Washington would become dim. However, this possibility is ruled out by some experts who argue that the new administration would focus on human rights situation in China as well. Nevertheless, India needs to convince the Biden administration about its genuine strategic requirements to procure defence equipment and related technology for its own requirements.

The issue of H-1B visa is of immense significance for specialised and technically skilled workforce. Usually, 85, 000 H-1B visas are issued annually by the US government and almost three-fourth of all such visa holders in the US are from India. Many observers of Indo-US relations opine that negotiations over work visa have been an important part of the ties at large and when in June this year Trump administration suspended H-1B visa for the rest of the year, and subsequently, again in October the administration announced scrapping the lottery system in place to receive an H-1B visa that was to be replaced with a mechanism that accorded priority to the highest-paying jobs, Indian IT sector companies expressed concern over such moves.

Biden has promised not only to lift Trump's freeze, but also announced to go a step further in reforming the temporary visa system. His promise of granting citizenship to thousands of Indians in the US is a welcome move.

The pattern of Indo-US relations is dictated by strategic and geo-economic national interests of each side and given the current situations at the regional and global levels, both countries are destined to move forward in providing fresh dynamism to international peace and security, strengthening of democracies taking the world to a new trajectory of stability and prosperity.

The writer is a senior journalist.

IN JEST THIS

Kamala Harris achieves many firsts

Melvin Durai

ALL THE MALE CHAUVINISTS WHO VOTED FOR TRUMP IN 2016 BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T WANT TO SEE A FEMALE PRESIDENT ARE NO DOUBT PRAYING HARD FOR BIDEN'S HEALTH

At the turn of the century, if you had told a random group of Americans that over the next two decades, they would elect a president named Barack Hussein Obama, whose father was from Kenya, and a vice president named Kamala Devi Harris, whose mother was from India, they would have wondered what you had been drinking. Something rather strong, undoubtedly.

Both Obama and Harris have made history in America, with Obama serving as the first African-American president, and Harris soon to become not just the first female vice president, but also the first African-American and first Indian-American vice president, among several other firsts.

What are these other firsts? Well, Jamaicans take pride in the fact that her father is from Jamaica, making her the first Jamaican-American vice president. Tamils take pride in the fact that her late mother was Tamil, making her the first Tamil-American vice president. And Tamil Brahmins take pride in the fact that her mother was a Tamil Brahmin, making her the first TamBram vice president, not to mention the first TamBram-Jamaican vice president. (Kamala's mother, Shyamala Gopalan, apparently followed an obscure Brahmin rule of conduct: "Marry a Jamaican and your daughter will make everyone proud!")

Needless to say, the American media had a little trouble keeping up with all these firsts. One TV network simplified things considerably by calling her simply the "first person of color to be elected vice president of America."

"Person of color" is an interesting term. In my estimation, Donald Trump is the most colorful president America has ever had. Not only does he use colorful language, his skin tone is closer to orange than white.

Another inclusive term that many people are using these days is BIPOC. It's an acronym that stands for "black, Indigenous and people of color." Kamala Harris is the first BIPOC vice president, and soon to be the subject of a Bollywood biopic.

Harris will also be the first HBCU graduate to become vice president. HBCUs are "historically black colleges and universities." Harris graduated from Howard University, an HBCU in Washington, D.C., before heading to law school at University of California, where she learned how to interrogate suspected criminals and Republicans.

The election of Harris to the second highest position in America means that her husband, Douglas Emhoff, has also achieved a significant first. He is about to become the first Second Gentleman of the United States. The country has had numerous First Ladies (wives of the president) and Second Ladies (wives of the vice president), but never a First or Second Gent.

Unlike India, which elected its first female leader more than 55 years ago, America has yet to put a woman in the top job. Hillary Clinton came close four years ago, so close that Bill Clinton was already planning his first project as a First Gent: promoting literacy in America by reading his autobiography "My Life" to all the White House interns.

Hillary was the first woman to become a presidential nominee of a major party in America. Two other women were vice-presidential nominees before Harris, but she is the first to be on a winning ticket. As vice president, she will be next in line to become president if Joe Biden is unable to fulfill his duties, for health reasons or otherwise. All the male chauvinists who voted for Trump in 2016 because they didn't want to see a female president are no doubt praying hard for Biden's health.

At 78, he is the oldest president in U.S. history, but I hope he's able to serve two terms. After that, Harris will get a chance to run for president again. If things go well, she will move into the White House in 2029, achieving another series of firsts and touching off celebrations all over America, India and Jamaica.

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 HERE . NOW
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Himself to blame

Sir, Donald Trump admirers will be sad. Of the 44 Presidents of the USA, Trump became only the 11th incumbent who failed to retain his seat. Trump was one of the most, if not the most, controversial presidents ever in US history. Without having enjoyed an office in the government, Trump trudged along as only he could. Brash and calculative, sticking to one stand was never the man's forte. His belligerence was a treat for his supporters but an eye sore for his detractors. Known to shift his stance like no other president before, Trump was more than a match to his critics in international diplomacy. Some firm domestic decisions apart, his childish demeanor towards sensitive socioeconomic issues perhaps nailed him. The repeated reference to 'Chinese virus', and an abject failure in handling the pandemic, in the last part of his term made his chances of retaining office only a remote possibility. What he thought as a dogged determination was construed by others as nothing more than a fetish for sensation, and quite a few of them were right. In hindsight, by threatening to go to court if he were to lose, even before the first ballot was cast, Trump, it is felt, gave his gut feeling away, and he was on the back foot straight away.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA (MAHARASHTRA)

The China question

Sir, Joe Biden's win in the US Presidential election brings into question the new administration's outlook towards China. Biden has always positioned himself as a critic of China. He even called Xi Jinping a 'thug' over his treatment of Uighurs in Xinjiang. Though Biden is an advocate of non-violence, in the case of China he is likely to take a tough stand. He may not undo the current consensus that a more forceful and confrontational approach is required to deal with China. People are eager to know how Biden acts on the issues of tariffs and Taiwan. Unlike Trump, Biden may rope in allies and build a consensus. The US acknowledges the fact that competition with China transcends the South China Sea. It realises that it has to go into competition with China involving technology, ideology and economy. Biden had promised that he would meet Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama at the earliest and this act may infuriate China. It is difficult to assume whether or not the US will return to the Trans Pacific Partnership or begin reducing tariffs on Chinese goods. It is certain that there will be a US government-backed campaign to take on China in high-tech areas such as Artificial Intelligence, quantum computing, 6G and so on.

Venu GS, KOLLAM (KERALA)

Punjab revokes 'general consent' to CBI

West Bengal, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh had already withdrawn the 'general consent' to the agency

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Nov 10: The Congress-led government in Punjab has revoked its general consent to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for probing cases in the state, joining several other non-BJP ruled states that have carried out a similar move.

The states such as West Bengal, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh had already withdrawn the 'general consent' to the CBI.

According to the state government notification issued November 8, a prior consent of the Punjab government will be required by the CBI, which comes under the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, to investigate any case in the state.

"In exercise of the power conferred by section 6 of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946 (Central Act No 25 of 1946), the Government of Punjab hereby withdraws the general consent accorded to the members of the Delhi Special Police Establishment, anytime herein before," as per the notification issued by the Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Home Affairs and Justice.

"In view of revocation of all previous general consents issued earlier, prior consent of the Government of Punjab shall be required, hereinafter, on a case-to-case basis for investigation of any offence or class of offences under section 3 of the aforesaid Act, by the Delhi Special Police Establishment," it further said.

The Punjab government had earlier withdrawn consent from the CBI for investigating the 2015 sacrilege incidents there after the state assembly had passed a resolution in this regard in 2018. Later, it handed over the probe into incidents of desecration of religious texts to the special investigation team (SIT) of the Punjab police.

Meanwhile, BJP national general secretary Tarun Chugh took exception to the step of revoking general consent, saying there was apparently no provocation to do so.

It seems the Amarinder Singh government is scared that various "mafia gangs" working in the state, mostly under the "patronage" of the Congress leaders, do not come under the CBI investigation, he alleged.

"We all know how a large number of mafia gangs are operating in sand mining, drug peddling and illicit liquor distribution. The entire state has been converted into a mafia state where the police was deliberately turning a blind eye to such nefarious operations. It seems that the Congress government has found an escape route by shutting the doors on the CBI," said Chugh in a statement.

The chief minister wants the mafia raj to continue in the state, which is why the consent to CBI has been withdrawn, Chugh said.

Goa CM meets Union mins amid opposition to central projects

Sawant is under pressure from nearly all opposition parties over fears of the state becoming a 'coal hub'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Panaji, Nov 10: Facing protests over fears of Goa becoming a 'coal hub' through ongoing central projects related to laying of double rail tracks and widening of roads, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant met several Union Ministers to discuss related issues over the last two days.

Sawant is under pressure from nearly all opposition parties and civil society groups over the two projects, which critics say would be used to facilitate increased transportation of coal through Goa to Karnataka's steel industry at the cost of axing nearly 50,000 trees in protected forests in and around Mollem village in South Goa.

A 400KVA power project coming up near Mollem has also faced opposition.

Among the Union Ministers whom Sawant met during his two-day visit to Delhi were Union Minister of State for Tourism Prahlad Singh Patel, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister for Railway Piyush Goyal, Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Mansukh Mandaviya, among others.

"Met Mandaviya in New Delhi today. Conveyed sentiments of people of Goa regarding coal handling. He has assured to look into the matter," Sawant said in a statement.

After meeting Gadkari Tuesday, Sawant said that he had discussed various issues related to pending and proposed National Highway projects in the state and also "conveyed the apprehensions of people regarding the highway expansion on Anmod Ghat (Goa-Karnataka border)".

Sawant's visit to Delhi comes days after his assurance that he would obtain a written communication from authorities concerned, that the existing coal imports in Goa, which is to the tune of 14-15 million tonnes, would not be increased in future on completion of the projects.

Coal dust pollution in the port town of Vasco and nearby areas has been an issue of major concern in the state.

Is Punjab facing an economic blockade?

PUNJAB'S ECONOMY IS FACING DERAILMENT WITH THE CENTRE VIRTUALLY APPLYING BRAKES TO GOODS TRAINS TO THE STATE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chandigarh, Nov 10: Punjab's economy is facing derailment with the Centre virtually applying brakes to the goods trains to the state.

It is already facing acute power shortage with cuts lasting up to five hours in many parts following shutting down of all five thermal facilities owing to running out of coal stocks in the wake of non-plying of goods trains in the state for over a month now.

The 'economic blockade' has again brought to focus the much debated issue of Centre-state relations, which some point to a federal breakdown.

The bone of contention between the Congress-ruled Punjab, where the BJP has just two lawmakers in the 117-member Assembly, and the BJP-led Central government is the amended farm laws passed by the state to counter the Central farm laws.

Reacting to this development, Bharatiya Kisan Union President Balbir Singh Rajewal informed in a recent tweet that, "Modi government silently imposed economic blockade of Punjab. Lawyers please study if it is possible in democracy?"

Officials told IANS the trains have been suspended in Punjab since September 24 with farmers starting the rail blockade campaign against the farm laws.

Reiterating his assurance of smooth and safe goods train movement, Chief Minister Amarinder Singh Saturday spoke to Union Home Minister Amit Shah for his intervention to ensure early resolution of the issue.

As his party MPs failed to end the impasse, the Chief Minister spoke to Shah to discuss the situation and assured him that there were no law and order concerns to prevent resumption of the services for facilitating supply of essential commodities in Punjab and neighbouring states, including Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir, all of which were suffering colossal losses due to the continued suspension of trains.

Amarinder Singh assured that all tracks had been cleared by farmers for movement of freight trains. The situation on the ground was totally peaceful and conducive to safe transportation of goods, he apprised the Home Minister, an official statement said.

Slamming its previous ally, SAD President Sukhbir Badal has blamed the Centre over the virtual economic blockade imposed on Punjab. In a tweet, Badal said: "Strongly condemn the Central government for not resuming train services to Punjab despite all railway tracks having been cleared." "It's deplorable that agitating farmers are being treated as enemies of the state. Centre shouldn't try to use heavy handed tactics against them."

Saying the Centre has virtually imposed an economic blockade on Punjab, Badal minced no words in taking a jibe at his bete noire and the Chief Minister by saying, "The CM held a one-hour 'protest' in Delhi solely for photo ops. Why didn't he meet the Railways minister or the PM? Rather than standing beside the farmers, Amarinder Singh is colluding with the Centre to ensure farmers don't get any relief."

"This is an incredible level of vindictiveness of the Centre towards a state to undermine federalism," a Cabinet minister privy to the development told IANS. "Is the BJP planning an economic blockade for Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh too as they have done the same?" he asked.

Firing potshots at the Punjab Chief Minister, BJP national President J.P. Nadda last week expressed concern over the continued suspension of goods trains by the Indian Railways and hit back with an open letter, holding Amarinder Singh 'fully responsible' for the current impasse.

"The Government of India is very keen to run trains in the state of Punjab, but unfortunately you are not performing the role that is expected of you and your government in the state of Punjab," Nadda wrote.

With only 1.57 per cent of the country's total population, Punjab contributes 40 per cent to the national food pool.

BATTLE OF 'SUPREMACY'

In the battle of 'supremacy', the situation in Punjab has turned literally grim, admit government functionaries

They say snapping of rail links severely impacted the electricity generation and shortage of urea and diammonium phosphate (DAP) have badly hit the sowing of wheat during the Rabi season

The requirement of urea in the state is 13.5 lakh tonnes, whereas the availability is almost nil. Likewise, against the requirement of six lakh tonnes of DAP its availability is just marginal

Before the snapping of rail links, the state was loading around 30-35 rakes per day. As per the government estimates, the movement of foodgrains has been too hit. A total of 10 lakh tonnes of foodgrains has got affected

CENTRE INVITES FARMERS' BODIES FOR TALKS NOV 13

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Nov 10: The Centre has invited Punjab farmer bodies protesting against its farm laws for talks November 13 in Delhi.

An invite from the Secretary, Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, has been sent to farmers' organisations for talks with Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and Railway Minister Piyush Goyal.

Bharatiya Kisan Union (Rajewal) president Balbir Singh Rajewal said farmers' organisations have received an invitation.

A farmer leader said they have called a meeting of representatives of unions November 12 to discuss the strategy.

Farmers of Punjab have been demanding that the new farm laws of the Centre be repealed

Punjab BJP chief Ashwani Sharma has welcomed the decision of the Centre. Last month, representatives of several farmers' organisations from Punjab had walked out of a meeting called by the Union Agriculture Ministry over the new farm laws and had accused the government of adopting "double standards" with no minister present to hear them out. Farmers in Punjab have expressed apprehension that the new laws would pave a way for the dismantling of the minimum support price system, leaving them at the "mercy" of big corporates.

They have been demanding that these new laws be repealed. Farmers had resorted to a "rail roko" agitation and staged sit-ins outside some shopping malls, toll plazas and outside residences of BJP leaders. The train services in Punjab have been suspended since September 24, when farmers started their "rail roko" agitation against the central laws.

While farmers have lifted their dharnas from rail tracks for the resumption of freight trains, the Centre wants movement of passenger trains as well with complete security.

SHROUDING SMOG

Vehicles ply on a road amid low visibility due to smog on the outskirts of Amritsar, Tuesday. PTI PHOTO

Woman lecturer booked for FB post

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Panaji, Nov 10: The Goa Police Monday booked a law college lecturer on charges of allegedly outraging religious sentiments through a Facebook post, days after a complaint was filed against her by one Rajiv Jha for allegedly slandering Hindu religion.

According to Superintendent of Police (North Goa) Utkrisht Prasoon, a First Information Report has also been filed against Jha, a resident of Ponda town in South Goa, for allegedly intimidating Shilpa Singh and outraging her modesty through social media posts.

"The above said accused person with a Facebook profile in the name of Shilpa Surendra Pratap Singh knowingly uploaded a post on Facebook account in the public domain with deliberate and malicious intention and outraged the religious feelings of the complainant, thereby insulting religious beliefs, and committing an offence under Section 295 of the IPC," read a First Information Report filed by Ravi Jha at Panaji police station.

The FIR follows accusations made against Singh, that her controversial Facebook post criticised conservative traditions in Hinduism and Islam by making objectionable references to the practice of wearing a mangalsutra and donning a burkha respectively.

"Jha has also been booked under sections 504 (insult), 506 (criminal intimidation) and 509 (outraging modesty) of the IPC based on the complaint filed by Shilpa Singh," Prasoon also said.

In her complaint, Singh had accused Jha of intimidation, outraging her modesty, and also inciting a lynch mob against her through Facebook posts.

Amaridner orders 30,000 Covid tests a day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Nov 10: Amid projections of a second coronavirus wave hitting Punjab, Chief Minister Amarinder Singh Tuesday directed the Health and Medical Education Departments to maintain levels of testing at 30,000 a day.

He also ordered amendment in rules to enable direct recruitment of super specialist doctors to meet the shortfall of the medical staff. Chairing a high-level virtual meeting to review the pandemic situation in the state, the CM asked Chief Secretary Vini Mahajan to work on amending the rules for ensuring direct recruitment in super speciality departments to prevent weakening of response to the coronavirus pandemic.

The chief minister directed the departments concerned to ensure that at least 25,000 RT-PCR and 5,000 Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT) are conducted every day, according to a release.

As on Tuesday, the count of coronavirus cases in the state is 1,38,485 with the death toll at 4,358.

"The current decline in cases, notwithstanding, the situation remains grim with a second wave expected to hit the state," he said, stressing the need to strictly follow all safety protocols.

He directed DGP Dinkar Gupta to crack down on those not wearing masks or adhering to social distancing norms.

The CM underlined the need to focus on potential super spreaders.

The government employees must be tested routinely and with schools and colleges opening up, it is important to make proper schedules and enhance the number of mobile teams for testing, he said.

Expressing concern over the high mortality rate in the state, the chief minister asked the medical experts team headed by Dr K K Talwar to evolve effective strategies to tackle the problem.

While overall number of cases had declined in the state, 11 districts have shown increase in positivity rate in the past four weeks.

The districts where the positivity rate has increased are Rupnagar, Bathinda, SAS Nagar, Faridkot, Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Mansa, Amritsar, Moga, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar and Sangrur.

Currently, 1,600 patients are in home isolation in the state, the statement said. D K Tiwari, Secretary, Medical Education and Research, said the positivity rate in Punjab had remained below two per cent since October 11.

In terms of deaths, those over 60 years of age constituted about 35 per cent of total deceased while those with co-morbid conditions were 82.4 per cent of the total deaths reported from November 1 to 7, he said. As on Tuesday, the count of coronavirus cases in the state is 1,38,485 with the death toll at 4,358.

SECOND SEROSURVEY IN THIRD WEEK OF NOV

Chandigarh: Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh Tuesday gave the go-ahead for the second serosurvey to be conducted across a larger sampling area to assess the spread of coronavirus in the state. The survey will be conducted in a random sample of 4,800 people among the general population in the third week of November, with the results expected to be released by the end of the month, an official release said here.

At a virtual COID-19 review meeting, the chief minister agreed with health experts on the need to find the extent of spread of SARS CoV-2 outside the containment zones, in contrast with the first serosurvey that was conducted in August in five containment zones across five districts. The first survey conducted in one containment zone each in Patiala, SAS Nagar, Ludhiana, Jalandhar and Amritsar had found 27.8 per cent seroprevalence. "The second survey will include a random sample of 120 clusters (60 villages and 60 urban wards) from 12 randomly selected districts, with 40 adults to be selected randomly from each cluster," the release said.

The BJP in this by-poll has given hints about the future polls. The party candidates in the by-elections are leading over their nearest rivals in the range of 17,000 to 32,000

YOGI ADITYANATH | UP CHIEF MINISTER

AZIM PREMJI TOPS EDELGIVE HURUN INDIA PHILANTROPHY LIST 2020

Wipro's Founder-Chairman Azim Premji and his family have topped the EdelGive Hurun India Philanthropy List 2020 with contribution of ₹7,904 crore

Quote of the day

I heard BJP leaders saying in unison (on TV) that only Nitish babu will be the Chief Minister. Nitish babu should thank Shiv Sena for that. Not keeping promises will not happen in Bihar because the Shiv Sena has shown in Maharashtra what can happen if word is not kept

SANJAY RAUT | SHIV SENA LEADER

Tejasvi Surya, instead of making ridiculous statements, run to a mirror right now to figure out who the real fascists are. It's your bosses at BJP who have destroyed this country with their autocracy and politics of hate since 2014

NUSRAT JAHAN | TRINAMOOL MP

Let your (Kamala Harris) tenure bring more laurels to America and herald the pride of Tamil heritage to the world

MK STALIN | DMK PRESIDENT

BJP poised to sweep 40 of 59 Assembly seats

THE BJP WON MOST OF THE SEATS IN MADHYA PRADESH, WHILE CONGRESS SURPRISED BY WINNING THE BARODA SEAT IN HARYANA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal/Lucknow/Ahmedabad, Nov 10: The BJP Tuesday was set to sweep the Assembly by-elections held last week with leads and wins in more than 40 of 59 seats across 11 states, including Madhya Pradesh where it was ahead in 19 of 28 constituencies, according to Election Commission trends.

India's ruling party was also poised to bag all the eight seats in Gujarat for which by-elections were held and five of seven constituencies in Uttar Pradesh that went to the polls in the first pan-India electoral exercise in the pandemic.

As the electoral juggernaut rolled and BJP workers, anticipating a win in the Bihar Assembly polls, prepared for celebrations at the party's headquarters in New Delhi, votes were also counted for by-elections in Manipur (five seats), Haryana (one), Chhattisgarh (one), Jharkhand (two), Karnataka (two), Nagaland (two), Odisha (two) and Telangana (one).

If the by-elections spelt a likely big win for the BJP, it seemed dismal for the Congress, particularly in Madhya Pradesh where it could lose big. However, it did have a few scattered wins, including in BJP-ruled Haryana.

MADHYA PRADESH

It's a high-stakes electoral battle, particularly in the central Indian state where the BJP-led Shivraj Singh Chouhan government is locked in a fierce contest with the Congress to save its government.

The BJP won five seats and was ahead in 14 seats leaving the Congress far behind with one win and seven leads, according to Election Commission trends. The BSP, interestingly, had one lead.

Elections were held for 28 seats, the first time that so many by-polls were held together. The BJP has 107 MLAs in the Assembly, with an effective strength of 229, and needs at least eight more MLAs for a simple majority. It will have an easy road to power if the trends hold out. It is a crucial test for Jyotiraditya Scindia, who quit the Congress with his loyalist MLAs to join the BJP, toppling the Congress-led Kamal Nath government.

GUJARAT

The BJP held sway over the party-ruled state with three wins and five leads – on the verge of bagging all eight seats – and the Congress trailing. As party workers broke into celebrations and burst firecrackers at its headquarters in Gandhinagar, Chief Minister Vijay Rupani told reporters his party's performance was a "trailer" for the upcoming elections to local bodies and the 2022 Assembly polls.

Rupani said voters had rejected the "negative campaign and activities" of the Congress.

UTTAR PRADESH

Of the seven seats, the ruling BJP was ahead in five and the Samajwadi Party in two. Barring Malhani, which was with the SP, the other seats were in the ruling BJP's kitty.

MANIPUR

According to Election Commission trends, the BJP had won three seats and was leading in one with an Independent being voted unopposed in one. The by-elections were necessitated by Congress MLAs in four seats resigning from the Assembly and quitting the party to join the BJP.

KARNATAKA

The ruling BJP won both the seats for which by-elections were held, wresting Sira from the JD(S) and Rajarajeshwari Nagar from the Congress. It created history by recording its first ever victory in the Sira assembly segment Dr C M Rajesh Gowda winning with a margin of over 12,000 votes.

In R R Nagar, N Munirathana emerged winner with a margin of over 58,000 votes against his nearest Congress rival Kusuma

JHARKHAND

The state's ruling coalition retained both Dumka and Bermo, the former going to the JMM and the latter to the Congress, said Joint Chief Electoral Officer Hiralal Mandal. Earlier in the day, BJP's Lois Marandi was leading in Dumka over Basant Soren, Chief Minister Hemant Soren's brother.

HARYANA

In a big win for the Congress, its candidate Indu Raj Narwal defeated the BJP's candidate, Olympian wrestler Yogeshwar Dutt, in the Baroda Assembly seat in BJP-ruled Haryana. The Congress retained the seat with Narwal winning by over 10,000 votes, said officials.

CHHATTISGARH

The state's ruling Congress was ahead in the by-election to the Marwahi seat that was necessitated due to the death of Janata Congress Chhattisgarh (J) MLA and former Chief Minister Ajit Jogi.

TELANGANA

The BJP was leading in the Dubbak Assembly constituency, which witnessed a three-cornered contest between the ruling TRS and opposition BJP and Congress.

NAGALAND

The National Democratic Progressive Party bagged the Southern Angami-I seat in Kohima while an Independent candidate was leading in the Pungro-Kiphire Assembly segment in Kiphire district. The elections were necessitated following the deaths of the sitting legislators Vikho-o Yhoshu and T Torechu.

BY-POLL COUNTING

BJP state president VD Sharma and party supporters react during counting of votes for Madhya Pradesh Assembly by-polls in Bhopal, Tuesday

PTI PHOTO

Assam minister booked for false claim on FB

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Nov 10: A case was registered against powerful Assam minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for allegedly promoting enmity between different groups by making "false statements", days after he claimed on social media that AIUDF supporters raised "Pakistan Zindabad" slogans at the Silchar airport, police said Tuesday.

The case was lodged on the basis of a complaint filed by the Congress on Monday at the Bhangagarh police station in Guwahati, they said.

Sarma and a brigade of BJP leaders slammed the supporters of AIUDF president Badruddin Ajmal November 5, alleging that they had raised "Pakistan Zindabad" slogans at the Silchar airport, but the opposition party refuted it and said the BJP twisted the "Aziz Khan Zindabad" slogan.

"A case was registered under relevant sections. We will investigate the matter as per the law," a senior police official told this news agency.

Another official said that the case has been registered under IPC Sections 153A (promoting enmity between different groups) and 511 (attempting to commit offences punishable with imprisonment for life or other imprisonment).

"These sections will be read with Section 67 (publishing or transmitting obscene material in electronic form) of the IT Act," he added.

The slogans were raised as Aziz Ahmed Khan, the AIUDF MLA from Karimganj South constituency, was accompanying Ajmal, a Lok Sabha MP, at the airport in Silchar in the linguistically and religiously sensitive Barak Valley.

SHORT TAKES

Two held for illegal sand mining

Noida (UP): Two people allegedly involved in illegal sand mining have been arrested in Uttar Pradesh's Greater Noida, police said Tuesday. The duo was held on Monday evening while they were transporting the sand from Samaana canal near Khurshedpur village in Jarcha police station area, they said. Those held have been identified as Bullan alias Gulfaam and Rohit, both residents of Karonda village in Jarcha, a police spokesperson said. The accused have been booked under provisions of the UP Minerals (Prevention of Illegal Mining, Transportation and Storage) Rules, 2018, the spokesperson said.

Three shell firms detected in UP

Bareilly: The Uttar Pradesh Commercial Taxes Department has unearthed three shell firms involved in bogus sale of mentha oil, an official said Tuesday. Of these three bogus firms, two were from Bareilly and one from Shahjahanpur, the official said. Additional Commissioner of enforcement team RK Pandey said 18 firms in Shahjahanpur and Bareilly were probed by the department.

6 men booked under POCSO Act

Pondicherry: Six men have been booked under the POCSO Act for allegedly sexually abusing five minor girls in their farm, police said here Tuesday. The children were sold to a man last month by their parents and kept as bonded labourers in their farm, where they were sexually abused, Senior Superintendent of Police Pritikhsha Godara told reporters. Acting on information, the Child Welfare Committee first rescued two of them last month and the others some time later, she said.

One held for transporting beef

Thane: A 37-year-old tempo driver has been arrested for allegedly transporting beef worth ₹6 lakh in Maharashtra's Thane district, police said Tuesday. Acting on a tip-off, a police team laid a trap at Bhiwandi bypass on Sunday and intercepted the vehicle, sub-inspector M M Pawar of Bhiwandi taluka police station said. A total of 5,000 kg of beef worth ₹6 lakh was seized from the tempo.

CM aspirant Pushpam Priya bags fewer votes than NOTA

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Patna, Nov 10: Pushpam Priya Chaudhary, 28, a London School of Economics (LSE) alumnus, who had floated her own political outfit 'Plurals Party' and declared herself a contender for the Bihar Chief ministerial post, suffered a blow Tuesday after trends of the Bihar Assembly results showed her trailing from both the Assembly seats she contested from.

Chaudhary has contested from the Bankipur Assembly constituency in Patna district and the Bisfi seat in Madhubani district where she had merely received a few votes on both the seats. On the Bisfi seat, she had managed to bag fewer votes than 'None of the Above' (NOTA) option.

Priya had managed just 121 votes coming in third position on the Bankipur Assembly seat when reports last came in while three-time BJP MLA Nitin Naveen was leading with 2,385 votes followed by Congress candidate Luv Sinha, son of actor-turned-politician Shatrughan Sinha.

From the Bisfi seat, Pushpam had managed just 49 votes when reports last came in. From this seat BJP candidate Haribhushan Thakur is leading with 5,541 votes while RJD MLA Dr. Fayaz Ahmad had got 3,383 votes according to counting trends. Pushpam Priya has bagged less than NOTA votes from this seat. Nearly 181 votes have been cast as NOTA as per the current poll results. At present, 9,802 votes have been counted on this seat.

Pushpam Priya is the daughter of former JDU MLC Vinod Chaudhary. She had created a stir by declaring herself as a CM candidate in newspapers before the Bihar elections. She had formed a party called 'Plurals' and fielded engineers, doctors, social activists, teachers, professors as her candidates on several seats and herself contested from two seats. But she has failed to create an impact in the minds of the electorate it appears, since she has been trailing on both the assembly seats.

JUBILATION

A man lights fireworks as villagers gather to celebrate the victory of US Vice President-elect Kamala Harris in Painganadu near the village of Thulasendrapuram, where Harris' maternal grandfather was born and grew up in Tamil Nadu

REUTERS PHOTO

By-poll results: A warning for UP Oppn

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Nov 10: The results of the by-elections for seven Assembly seats are a strong message for Opposition parties in Uttar Pradesh.

The message is for an over-confident Samajwadi Party that aspires to return to power 2022, for the Bahujan Samaj Party that continues to take its Dalit vote bank for granted and, especially, for the Congress that remains directionless.

Despite having harped on multiple issues – from Corona to Hathras – in the past few months, the opposition parties failed to make a single dent in the BJP's following. The BJP retained all the six seats that it held before the by-elections and remains fighting fit for the next assembly elections.

UP CM Yogi Adityanath re-established his position as an undisputed leader in the state and his following among the people. The biggest advantage for the BJP was the fact that the party took the by-elections seriously and deployed all its energies and organization in fighting the polls. Adityanath and state BJP president Swatantra Dev Singh vigorously campaigned even during the pandemic and all ministers and party leaders were deployed in the constituencies for campaigning.

In contrast, Akhilesh Yadav of Samajwadi Party, Mayawati of BSP and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra of Congress chose not to campaign for their respective parties.

It was left to local leaders to carry forward the campaign which went in all directions except the right one. The SP managed to retain the Malhani seat but was given a huge challenge by an independent candidate, Dhananjay Singh.

The Samajwadi Party put up a brave front and party leader Anurag Bhadauria said, "We will try harder again. We are not going to give up."

UT'S FIRST DDC ELECTIONS

POLITICAL ACTIVITY PICKS UP PACE IN J&K

ELECTIONS FOR DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL IN J&K WILL BE HELD IN EIGHT PHASES STARTING NOVEMBER 28

AGENCIES

Jammu, Nov 10: Political activity has gained momentum in Jammu and Kashmir in the past few weeks, particularly after the announcement of District Development Council (DDC) elections.

On November 4, J&K Election Commissioner KK Sharma and Chief Electoral Officer Hridesh Kumar announced that DDC elections will take place in the Union Territory in eight phases starting from November 28.

Since then, hectic political parleys are taking place in the winter capital Jammu.

On Thursday, PDP chief and vice-chairperson of the 'People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration' (PAGD) Mehbooba Mufti arrived in Jammu city to meet her party leaders and workers along with participating in the PAGD meeting.

Many organisations staged protests against the former J&K CM over her recent controversial remarks on the national flag. Black flags were shown to her outside the Jammu airport by protesters Thursday. National Conference (NC) president and Chairperson of the Gupkar Alliance, Farooq Abdullah and NC vice-president Omar Abdullah reached Jammu Friday. Soon after their arrival, the father-son duo visited the party office in Jammu where they addressed NC workers.

In their address, the two former J&K Chief Ministers launched a scathing attack on the Modi government and the BJP and vowed to fight for the restoration of Article 370 and 35A.

On Saturday, the Gupkar Alliance leaders met at Farooq Abdullah's Jammu residence where they also held consultations with various delegations. There were protests against PAGD leaders in Jammu Friday as well. Many social and political organisations alleged that the Gupkar Alliance was trying to impose a "communal and anti-national agenda" in J&K.

After the day-long meeting of the Gupkar Alliance Saturday, PAGD spokesperson Sajad Lone briefed the media in presence of other PAGD leaders and announced that the newly-formed alliance would contest the DDC elections.

"PAGD has unanimously decided that we would fight these elections unitedly. Despite the abruptness of timing, all of a sudden, they spring a surprise, to finish everything in one month. But this space is too scared to be left for the invaders to invade," Sajad Lone, People's Conference chief said.

The poll boycott by the NC and PDP had given a walkover to the BJP in the panchayat elections in the Kashmir valley and as a result, the saffron party managed to install its Panches and Sarpanches at various places in the valley.

Many political observers feel that the decision of the Kashmir-based political parties to fight the forthcoming DDC polls is to prevent the BJP from winning these elections in the valley.

BJP releases first list of candidates

Meanwhile, the BJP has started gearing up for the DDC elections and has announced the first list of its candidates. On Monday, BJP announced the names of 35 candidates for DDC elections in the Jammu region and 37 candidates in the Kashmir valley.

"This time it would be BJP versus the Gupkar gang. The fight would be between nationalists and anti-nationalists. PDP insulted the national flag. They will get a befitting answer from the people of J&K. We will work as per the mantra of PM Modi, 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas and Sabhka Vishwaas'. We are fully confident that we will emerge victorious in DDC elections," J&K BJP chief Ravinder Raina said.

Today is their (BJP's) time and tomorrow, our time will come. The same thing will happen to them (BJP) what happened to Trump (who lost the US presidential election last week)

MEHBOOBA MUFTI | PDP PRESIDENT

GOLD, SILVER COINS OF VAISHNO DEVI SHRINE RELEASED

Gold and silver coins in the name of the Vaishno Devi shrine have been released ahead of Diwali for devotees worldwide. J&K Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha released the coins for millions of devotees

quote of the day

We are today operating in a very complex, uncertain and a very volatile environment. There are small and big battles raging nearly in every region of the world. Therefore, we all need strong armed forces if we have to defend ourselves

GEN BIPIN RAWAT | CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF

I have written a letter to Union Home Minister Amit Shah to ask all states to compulsorily lodge an FIR on every complaint by a crime victim on the lines of the decision taken by his government

ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER

Today is Nandigram Dibas - the 13th anniversary of the barbaric massacre in the name of new dawn. My homage to all those who lost their lives due to political violence across the world

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

SHORT TAKES

2 terrorists killed in Shopian

Srinagar: Two terrorists have been killed in an ongoing encounter between terrorists and security forces in South Kashmir's Shopian district Tuesday, officials said. "The two terrorists killed in Kutpora have not been identified yet. Operation is going on," police said. The gunfight took place after the security forces cordoned off the area at dawn and launched a search operation on the basis of specific information about militant presence.

4 children killed in mudslide

Bhopal: Four children died and two others were injured Monday in a mudslide near a drain, police said. Seven children, aged between seven and 12 years, had gone nearby place to dig out yellow mud to colour homes for Diwali, police official Rajesh Singh Badhoriya said. Six of them were extracting mud when loose soil caved in, trapping them, Badhoriya said. On seeing the mudslide, the seventh boy ran to a village nearby and informed people who in turn called the police, he said.

Man chops off woman's nose

Jalaun (UP): A jilted lover allegedly chopped the nose off a 40-year-old woman in Uttar Pradesh's Jalaun district, police said Tuesday. The incident occurred Monday morning over a dispute, Orai police station in-charge Sudhakar Mishra said. The woman was rushed to a hospital, where her condition is stated to be stable. The woman was married, but living alone for the past five years due to a dispute and the man was forcing her to marry him, police said.

Pak violates ceasefire again

Jammu: Pakistan used small arms and mortars Tuesday to target Indian positions on the Line of Control (LoC) in three Sectors of Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district. Defence Ministry spokesman Colonel Devender Anand said that around 10.30 a.m., Pakistan indulged in firing and shelling along the LoC in Shahpur, Kirni, and Qasba Sectors. Since the beginning of this year, Pakistan has been violating with impunity the bilateral ceasefire agreement signed by the two countries in 1999.

China building new tunnels at Doklam

China's move, which comes amid the stand-off with India in eastern Ladakh, aims at all-weather access to Doklam

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Nov 10: Despite the ongoing military-level talks between Indian and Chinese armies to defuse tension in eastern Ladakh, latest reports say that the dragon has once again stepped up its road construction activity in the Doklam plateau. According to reports, China's activities aim at ensuring all-weather access in the region, which witnesses a 70-day stand-off between the two neighbouring countries in 2017.

A satellite image from October this year indicates that Chinese construction workers have extended the length of a 'tunnel' on this stretch to 500 metres. Military experts hinted that China's goal is clear – it wants to ensure that road access to the Doklam plateau remains unrestricted throughout the winter months. It is worth mentioning here that the Doklam plateau is completely snowed under during the winter months making access to the place a challenge.

In fact, both China and Bhutan claim the Doklam plateau as their territory. Since India backs Bhutan's claim, the Indian soldiers had crossed the Sikkim border in June 2017 to stop the construction of a road by the Chinese near the "Chicken's Neck" – a thin strip linking India to the country's north-eastern states.

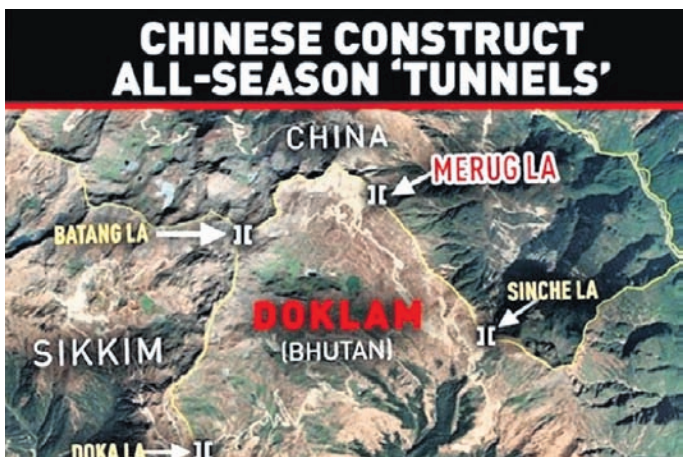
China's move to ensure access to the 'disputed territory' comes at a time when New Delhi and Beijing are in the middle of a stand-off in eastern Ladakh, where Chinese soldiers made incursions at several stretches across the contested Line of Actual Control (LAC), which is considered the de facto border between the two countries.

Incidentally, eight rounds of military talks between Indian and Chinese armies notwithstanding, there has been no inclusive disengagement plan, which New Delhi and Beijing have agreed to and the extraordinary military stand-off appears set to continue through the winter months.

At the same time, it is now clear that China has expanded its roadmap in the Doklam plateau that lies between Sikkim and Bhutan.

India too has stepped up its road construction activity in the region to ensure that its forces in the region can be reinforced quickly.

On the other hand, China has more than doubled its total number of air bases, air defence positions and heliports near the Indian border over the last three years, said a Stratfor report – a leading global geopolitical intelligence platform. "When completed, the infrastructure will provide support for an even greater intensity of Chinese operations in the region," the report said.



Access into Doklam comes through 4 key passes – Doka La, Batang La, Merug La and Sinche La. PHOTO COURTESY: GOOGLE EARTH

India, China to hold 9th round of talks

NEW DELHI: The military delegates from India and China are likely to hold talks for the ninth time this week to resolve the border disputes in Eastern Ladakh, as both countries during the eighth round of dialogue had constructive exchange of views on disengagement. The eight Corps Commander level talks between both the countries took place November 6. Though the talks ended in a deadlock, both countries agreed to maintain dialogue and communication through military and diplomatic channels, take forward the discussions, and push for the settlement of other outstanding issues, so as to jointly maintain peace and tranquillity in the border areas. The Indian Defence Ministry issued a statement last Sunday in which it stated that the two sides had a candid, in-depth and constructive exchange of views on disengagement along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Western Sector of India-China border areas.

TN journalist hacked to death by 'drug dealers'

AGENCIES

Chennai, Nov 10: A television journalist in Tamil Nadu's Kancheepuram district was hacked to death Sunday, allegedly by a gang of drug dealers who suspected that he had alerted the authorities about them, police said. Four men have been arrested in connection with the murder, police said Tuesday.

Isravel Moses, 27, was called out of his house Sunday evening and hacked to death, police said. His family initially thought the attackers were his friends. The accused are part of a gang involved in alleged sale of encroached land and selling drugs around a local lake, police said. "Moses had not telecast any news report on this issue," an officer said.

The father of the victim, Gnanaraj, has alleged the district police did not take any action on his son's complaint that his life was in danger.

Police, however, denied the charge. "We did not receive any such information from him. This murder is purely due to personal vengeance and land issue," D Shanmugapriya, the district police chief, said. Senior journalist, Bharathi Tamizhan, has slammed the police over the allegation.

Moses had received death threat after he reported on anti-social activities including sale of *ganja* in areas under Somangalam police station limits. His murder has happened amid inaction by police., his father alleged.

Delhi's air quality at worst levels this year

The poor air quality has led residents to complain about stinging eyes, sore throat and breathlessness

REUTERS

New Delhi, Nov 10: Air quality in India's capital deteriorated to its worst this year Tuesday prompting a social media barrage of residents complaining about stinging eyes, sore throat and breathlessness in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic.

Delhi's overall air quality index, which measures pollutants including PM2.5 particles, rose to 488, its highest level in a year, according to government data. That was up from 477 on a scale of 500 Monday.

The data showed the deadly particulate matter PM2.5, which can cause cardiovascular and respiratory diseases such as lung cancer, also reached its highest levels since November 2019 and stood 30 times over the World Health Organization's safe limit.

It comes as Delhi, suffering a "third wave" of coronavirus infections, is facing one of the worst spells of pollution in years, partly due to crop waste fires in neighbouring states and local emission from vehicle exhausts.

"About 85% of households in Delhi had at least one person complaining of difficulty in breathing, among other symptoms," said Sachin Taparia, founder of LocalCircles.

The privately held community social media platform surveyed nearly 6,000 families November 6-9 on the impact of air pollution.

Pollution in New Delhi had almost disappeared earlier this year, when the government imposed a nationwide lockdown to contain the coronavirus, but has been returned since the government began lifting restrictions at the end of August.

Authorities have banned the sale and use of firecrackers ahead of the Diwali festival in a bid to curb pollution, but environmentalists have called on the government to do more.

"Delhi's air has turned hazardous. Coal plants around Delhi need to be shut down immediately along with construction activities," said Vimlendu Jha, the founder of non-profit Swechha.

Officials and businesses worry that a halt in industrial activity could hurt an economy only just bouncing back from a record slump in the second quarter.

SAFAR, India's main environment monitoring agency, has forecast severe conditions over the next 24 hours due to stagnant winds and rising humidity levels, which trap pollutants longer.

BRAVEHEART

Captain Shivan Singh of Army Service Corps, engulfed in fire, comes out of a tunnel after breaking the world record for longest ride through a tunnel of fire at ASC centre in Bangalore, Tuesday PTI PHOTO

PM sends clear message to Xi, Imran

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 10: In a stern message to China and Pakistan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi while addressing the SCO summit Tuesday said there should be respect for each others' sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In his speech at the eight-member Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit, held virtually, Modi also hit out at those making repeated attempts to "unnecessarily" bring bilateral issues to the SCO in violation of the bloc's foundational principles, in an oblique reference to Pakistan raising the Kashmir issue in its past meetings.

The remarks by Modi came in the backdrop of the Sino-India border row in eastern Ladakh and China's contentious Belt and Road connectivity project, as also Pakistan's support to cross-border terrorism against India. The Prime Minister made the comments in the presence of Chinese President Xi Jinping, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan, Russian President Vladimir Putin and other top leaders of the influential grouping. Putin chaired the summit.

This is for the first time Modi and Xi have come face-to-face, albeit virtually, since the border standoff between India and China began in eastern Ladakh in early May.

"India believes that to enhance connectivity, it is important that we move forward by following the core principle of respecting each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity," Modi said while referring to New Delhi's involvement in International North South Corridor project, development of the Chabahar port and Ashgabat agreement.

The International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC) is a 7,200-km-long multi-mode transport project for moving freight among India, Iran, Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia and Europe.

Ashgabat agreement is a transport agreement among several Gulf and Central Asian countries which is aimed at creating a transit corridor to spur trade and investment. India has been supporting the project.

SCO SUMMIT

38,074 new nCoV cases, 448 deaths in past 24 hours

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Nov 10: India Tuesday reported 38,074 new coronavirus cases, taking the total number of cases to 85,91,731. The death toll has reached 1,27,059 with 448 new deaths reported in the last 24 hours, as per the Union Health Ministry.

The total number of active cases now stands at 5,05,265 after a decrease of 4,408 in the last 24 hours.

Total recovered cases are at 79,59,406 with 42,033 new discharges in the last 24 hours.

India Monday reported 45,903 new coronavirus cases.

Seventy-nine per cent of the 45,903 new Covid-19 cases reported on Monday were from 10 states and UTs, with Delhi overtaking Maharashtra and Kerala by reporting 7,745 infections in a span of 24 hours to become the largest contributor to the single-day infections, the Union Health Ministry said on Monday.

Delhi had earlier overtaken Maharashtra and Kerala November 7 also.

The city had reported the highest daily new cases, also its highest tally so far with 7,745 new cases. The national capital is followed by Maharashtra with 5,585 cases and Kerala with 5,585 cases, the ministry said on Monday.

"New daily cases continue to trend downwards with the success of Jan-Andolan promoting Covid appropriate behaviour." the ministry said.

Indian researchers developing vaccines against Covid-19, HIV

SCIENTISTS AT THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE REPORTED THE DESIGN OF A "HEAT-TOLERANT" COVID-19 VACCINE CANDIDATE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Nov 10: Indian Institute of Science claimed Tuesday that researchers led by Raghavan Varadarajan, Professor at IISc's Molecular Biophysics Unit, are working towards developing effective vaccine strategies against two viruses: SARS-CoV-2 and HIV.

In two studies published in the past week, they reported the design of a "heat-tolerant" Covid-19 vaccine candidate and a rapid method to identify specific regions on the HIV envelope protein that are targeted by antibodies, which can help design effective vaccines, an IISc press release said.

The studies were published in the Journal of Biological Chemistry and the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences respectively, according to Bangalore-based IISc.

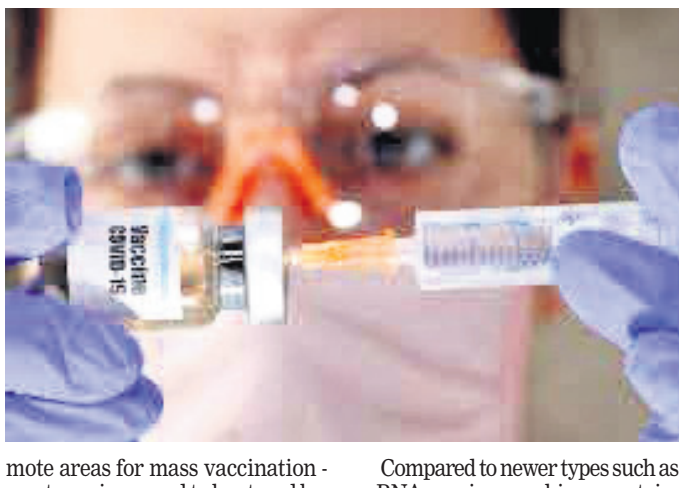
The Covid-19 vaccine candidate contains a part of the spike protein of the novel coronavirus called the Receptor Binding Domain (RBD) - the region that helps the virus stick to the host's cell.

It is being developed by Varadarajan's lab in collaboration with Mynvax, a startup co-founded by him and incubated at IISc, as well as several other institutes.

"When tested in guinea pig models, the vaccine candidate triggered a strong immune response", the statement said.

"Surprisingly, it also remained stable for a month at 37°C, and freeze-dried versions could tolerate temperatures as high as 100°C," it said.

Such "warm" vaccines can be stored and transported without expensive cooling equipment to remote areas for mass vaccination - most vaccines need to be stored between 2-8°C or even cooler temperatures to avoid losing their potency, the statement further said.



Compared to newer types such as mRNA vaccines, making a protein-based vaccine like this can also be scaled up easily in India where manufacturers have been making similar vaccines for decades, IISc said.

There is another difference between the vaccine candidate being developed by Varadarajan's team and many other Covid-19 vaccines in the works – it only uses a specific part of the RBD, a string of 200 amino acids, instead of the entire spike protein.

The team inserted genes coding for this part via a carrier DNA molecule called a plasmid, into mammalian cells, which then churned out copies of the RBD section.

They found that the RBD formulation was just as good as the full spike protein in triggering an immune response in guinea pigs, but much more stable at high temperatures for extended periods - the full spike protein quickly lost its activity at temperatures above 50°C, according to the statement.

"Now we have to get funds to take this forward to clinical development", Varadarajan said.

This would include safety and toxicity studies in rats along with process development and GMP manufacture of a clinical trial batch, before they are tested in humans.

"Those studies can cost about ₹10 crore. Unless the government funds us, we might not be able to take it forward", he added. The second study focused on HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, a disease for which there is no vaccine despite decades of research.

The teams, which included researchers from multiple institutes, sought to pinpoint which parts of the HIV's envelope protein are targeted by neutralising antibodies - the ones that actually block virus entry into cells, not just flag it for other immune cells to find.

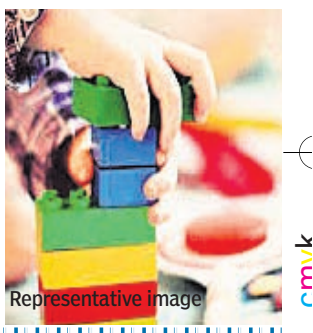
international

We have two registered vaccines in Russia, and the trials have already confirmed that the vaccines are safe, there are no side effects, and they are efficient. A third vaccine is in the pipeline

VLADIMIR PUTIN | RUSSIAN PRESIDENT

MATTER OF CONCERN

Some young children have forgotten how to eat with a knife and fork and others have regressed back into diapers as the pandemic and related school closures take a toll on young peoples' learning, the UK education watchdog said



Representative image

quote of the day

I look forward to deepening UN-US ties & working together towards a safer & more prosperous world

VOLKAN BOZKIR | TURKISH DIPLOMAT

I declare that today I will leave the presidential palace and go to my home

MARTIN VIZCARRA | PERUVIAN PRESIDENT

The departure of the brother and the friend, the great fighter Saeb Erekat, represents a big loss for Palestine and for our people

MAHMOUD ABBAS | PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

New political turmoil in Peru

Lima: Peru tumbled into political turmoil Tuesday as anger mounted over a vote by Congress to oust the country's popular president over his handling of the pandemic and unproven allegations of corruption years ago. Thousands poured on to the streets of Peru's capital Monday night to protest President Martín Vizcarra's removal, vilifying lawmakers and demanding their resignations. Several politicians not in Congress denounced the ouster as a disguised coup. Some said any new incoming president should be considered illegitimate.

Iran pardons 157 detainees

Tehran: Iran pardoned 157 people held on charges stemming from their alleged participation in antigovernment protests, the country's judiciary announced Tuesday, the biggest such release of those swept up in the harsh crackdowns Judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Esmaili told reporters that the people freed had been imprisoned for "spreading propaganda against the system" and taking part in several waves of protests that challenged the government over the last three years.

State of emergency declared in Utah

Washington: Due to an unabated surge in the number of new coronavirus cases, Utah Governor Gary Herbert has declared a two-week emergency in the US state. In an effort to stem the spread of the virus, Herbert has declared a series of measures, including limiting casual social gatherings to household-only; putting all athletic and intramural events on hold; and a state-wide mask mandate in public where six feet of physical distancing is not possible, reports *Xinhua* news agency.

Floods in Mexico

Mexico: Floods in Mexico's Gulf coast state of Tabasco have forced about 9,000 people to evacuate and left nine people dead, officials said Monday. The Interior Department estimated about 150,000 people were affected by the flooding, either because of damage to homes or crops or to displacement.

Jordan holds poll

Amman: Jordanians began voting Tuesday to elect a new parliament in the country that has long been a close Western ally in a volatile region and is now struggling to contain a coronavirus outbreak.

AG GIVES NOD TO FRAUD PROBES

Trump for months before the election made repeated claims without providing evidence that results would be marred by fraud and has kept up those unfounded allegations over the past week

REUTERS

Washington/Wilmington, Nov 10: President Donald Trump will push ahead Tuesday with long-shot legal challenges to his loss to Democratic President-elect Joe Biden in last week's election, as Republican officials at the state and federal level lined up behind him.

Pennsylvania Republican state lawmakers plan to call for an audit of the results in the state that gave Biden enough electoral votes to win, the day after U.S. Attorney General William Barr told federal prosecutors to look into "substantial" allegations of irregularities.

Trump for months before the election made repeated claims without providing evidence that results would be marred by fraud and has kept up those unfounded allegations over the past week. Judges have tossed out lawsuits in Michigan and Georgia, and experts say Trump's legal efforts have little chance of changing the election result. But Congress's top Republican, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, on Monday lined up behind Trump, saying that he was "100% within his rights to look into allegations of irregularities," without citing any evidence.

The dispute is slowing Biden's

work in preparing for the work of governing, as a Trump appointee who heads the office charged with recognizing election results has not yet done so. Biden on Saturday secured the more than the 270 votes in the Electoral College needed to win the presidency. He also led Trump in the popular vote by 4.6 million votes on Tuesday morning as states continued to count the remaining ballots.

BARR MOVE PROMPTS RESIGNATION

Barr's directive to prosecutors prompted the top lawyer overseeing voter fraud investigations to resign in protest. Barr told prosecutors on Monday that "fanciful or far-fetched claims" should not be a basis for investigation and his letter did not indicate the Justice Department had uncovered voting irregularities affecting the outcome of the election. But he did say he was authorizing prosecutors to "pursue substantial allegations" of irregularities of voting and the counting of ballots. Richard Pilger, who for years has served as director of the Election Crimes Branch, said in an internal email he was resigning from his post after he read "the new policy and its ramifications". The previous Justice Department policy, designed to avoid interjecting the federal government into election campaigns, had discouraged overt investigations "until the election in question has been concluded, its results certified, and all recounts and election contests concluded."

Biden's campaign said Barr was fueling Trump's far-fetched allegations of fraud.

NASA CHIEF NOT READY TO CONTINUE UNDER JOE BIDEN

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

San Francisco, Nov 10: NASA administrator Jim Bridenstine has no intention to continue in his current position even if asked by the Joe Biden administration, said a media report.

In an interview to AerospaceDaily, Bridenstine said a new chief of the US space agency under the new administration would be in the best interest of America's space exploration programme.

"The right question here is 'What's in the best interest of NASA as an agency, and what's in the best interest of America's exploration program?" Bridenstine was quoted as saying in the interview on Sunday. "You need somebody who has a close relationship with the President of the U.S. ... somebody trusted by the administration, including OMB (Office of Management and Budget), National Space Council, National Security Council. I think I would not be the right person for that in a new administration," he said.

When President Donald Trump nominated the former Republican Congressman to lead NASA in 2017, many lawmakers opposed the idea of a politician heading the US space agency. The Senate, however, confirmed him in April 2018, with lawmakers voting along party lines, The Verge reported.

Suu Kyi wins parliamentary seat

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Yangon, Nov 10: Aung San Suu Kyi, Chairperson of Myanmar's ruling National League for Democracy (NLD), has won a seat in the House of Representatives (Lower House) for the next parliament in the recently-held general elections, the Union Election Commission (UEC) said Tuesday.

Suu Kyi, the current State Counsellor of Myanmar, competed in Yangon's Kawmhu constituency against rival candidates from the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), the Union Betterment Party, United Nationalities League for Democracy, Phalon-Sawaw Democratic Party and one independent runner, reports *Xinhua* news agency.

A total of 5,639 candidates including 1,106 candidates from the ruling NLD party and 1,089 from the USDP vied for the 1,117 parliamentary seats in Sunday's election.

As of Tuesday morning, 47 representatives have been elected to Parliament at three levels and the NLD secured 44 parliamentary seats including 12 in the Lower House, eight in the House of Nationalities (Upper House) and 24 in the regional or state parliaments so far, according to the UEC's result announcement. The USDP won three seats -- one in

The 2020 general elections are the third election under the country's 2008 Constitution

the Lower House and two in the regional or state parliaments so far. Suu Kyi, the 75-year-old Nobel laureate, had contested a seat in the Lower House in Kawmhu township in the 2012 by-election and 2015 general elections. The ruling NLD party won an absolute majority of parliamentary seats in the last general elections November 8, 2015, and has been running the government since 2016.

The 2020 general elections are the third election under the country's 2008 Constitution.

'Melania may seek divorce from Trump'

Melania Trump, a Slovenian model, is Donald Trump's third wife and they have one son, Barron, who is 14 years old

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New York, Nov 10: First Lady Melania Trump is planning to divorce President Donald Trump, British media outlet Daily Mail has reported quoting a former White House aide.

The newspaper said that according to Omarosa Manigault Newman, "Melania is counting every minute until he is out of office and she can divorce." She added that "if Melania were to try to pull the ultimate humiliation and leave while he's in office, he would find a way to punish her", the tabloid said. It said that according to Newman, the first couple's marriage is over.

Melania Trump, who came down with Covid-19, cancelled one election campaign meeting with Trump after her recovery, leading to questions about the status of their relationship as well as her health. But she addressed campaign meetings in North Carolina on the final days before the election. Newman, a reality TV star, was a senior adviser to Trump and director for the office of public liaison before she was fired by Trump's former chief of staff John Kelly. In a show of solidarity with Trump, Melania tweeted Sunday:

"The American people deserve fair elections. Every legal - not illegal - vote should be counted. We must protect our democracy with complete transparency." Politico said that despite the tweet, she has "been urging the president to think seriously about an exit strategy".

Quoting sources that it said were briefed on the discussions between them, Politico said that Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner had joined her in making the request to Trump.

BRAVING THE ODDS

Soldiers cling to a boat to cross a flooded street after passage of Storm Eta, in La Lima, Honduras REUTERS

Armenia, Azerbaijan agree to end fight

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Yerevan (Armenia), Nov 10: Armenia and Azerbaijan announced an agreement early Tuesday to halt fighting over the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan under a pact signed with Russia that calls for deployment of nearly 2,000 Russian peacekeepers and territorial concessions.

Nagorno-Karabakh has been under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia since a 1994 truce ended a separatist war in which an estimated 30,000 people died.

Sporadic clashes occurred since then, and full-scale fighting began September 27. Several cease-fires had been called but were almost immediately violated. However, the agreement announced early Tuesday appeared more likely to take hold because Azerbaijan has made significant advances, including taking control of the strategically key city of Shushi Sunday.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinian said on Facebook that calling an end to the fight was "extremely painful for me personally and for our people." Soon after the announcement, thousands of people streamed to the main square in the Armenian capital Yerevan to protest the agreement, many shouting, "We won't give up our land!" Some of them broke into the main government building, saying they were searching for Pashinian, who apparently had already departed.

NAGORNO-KARABAKH WAR

The agreement calls for Armenian forces to turn over control of some areas it held outside the borders of Nagorno-Karabakh, including the eastern district of Agdam.

Armenians will also turn over the Lachin region, which holds the main road leading from Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia.

The agreement calls for the road, the so-called Lachin Corridor, to remain open and be protected by Russian peacekeepers.

In all, 1,960 Russian peacekeepers are to be deployed in the region under a five-year mandate. The agreement also calls for transport links to be established through Armenia linking Azerbaijan and its western exclave of Nakhcivan, which is surrounded by Armenia, Iran and Turkey.

AFGHAN WOMAN SHOT, BLINDED, FOR GETTING JOB

REUTERS

Kabul, Nov10: The last thing 33-year-old Khatera saw were the three men on a motorcycle who attacked her just after she left her job at a police station in Afghanistan's central Ghazni province, shooting at her and stabbing her with a knife in the eyes.

Waking up in hospital, everything was dark. "I asked the doctors, why I can't see anything? They told me that my eyes are still bandaged because of the wounds. But at that moment, I knew my eyes had been taken from me," she said.

She and local authorities blame the attack on Taliban terrorists - who deny involvement - and say the assailants acted on a tip-off from her father who vehemently opposed her working outside the home. For Khatera, the attack caused not just the loss of her sight but the loss of a dream she had battled to achieve - to have an independent career. She joined the Ghazni police as an officer in its crime branch a few months ago. "I wish I had served in police at least a year. If this had happened to me after that, it would have been less painful. It happened too soon ... I only got to work and live my dream for three months," she told Reuters.

The attack on Khatera, who only uses one name, is indicative of a growing trend, human rights activists say, of an intense and often violent backlash against women taking jobs, especially in public roles. Ghazni's police spokesman confirmed they believed the Taliban were behind the attack .

Pfizer vaccine may not end Asian nations' nCoV concerns

AGENCIES

Tokyo,Nov 10: With tropical heat, remote island communities and a dearth of ultra-cold freezers, many Asian countries aren't betting on Pfizer's experimental vaccine solving their COVID-19 crisis any time soon.

Yet health experts cautioned that the vaccine, should it be approved, was no silver bullet - not least because the genetic material it's made from needs to be stored at temperatures of minus 70 degrees Celsius (-94 F) or below.

Such requirements pose a particularly daunting challenge for countries in Asia, as well as in places like Africa and Latin America, where intense heat is often compounded by poor infrastructure that will make it difficult to keep the "cold chain" intact during deliveries to rural areas and islands.

That is a problem for everyone in the world, given the World Health Organization estimates about 70% of people must be inoculated to end the pandemic, and Asia alone is home to more than 4.6 billion - or three-fifths of the global population. Some Asian countries are prioritising containing the novel coronavirus rather than looking to stockpile vaccines, while others are looking for alternatives to the messenger RNA technology used by Pfizer that requires such ultra-cold storage.

"On the cold chain requirement of -70 degrees, that is a hefty requirement. We do not have such facility," Philippines' Health Secretary Francisco Duque told Reuters. "We will have to wait and see for now," he added. "The technology Pfizer is using is new technology. We don't have experience with that, so risks can be high."

Pfizer told Reuters that it had developed detailed logistical plans and tools to support vaccine transport, storage and continuous temperature monitoring.

"We have also developed packaging and storage innovations to be fit for purpose for the range of locations where we believe vaccinations will take place," it said.

"Vaccine Is Story For Future"

Yet even wealthier nations like South Korea and Japan are managing expectations.

"Storage is going to be a big challenge for us," said Fumie Sakamoto, infection control manager at St. Luke's International Hospital in Tokyo. "I'm not sure how well prepared our government is with regards to main-

Representative image

taining the cold chain. Hospitals in Japan usually do not have ultra-cold freezers, but I think it's high time we started thinking about the logistics for the vaccine."

Japan is among three countries in Asia Pacific that have announced supply deals for the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine. It has signed a deal for 120 million doses, while Australia has secured 10 million doses and China's Fosun has secured 10 million doses for Hong Kong and Macau.

Japan's PHC Corp, which supplies medical freezers, told Reuters that demand had shot up 150% this year and that they were increasing production to meet demand.

Kwon Jun-wook, an official at South Korea's Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA), said it wanted to see how vaccination progressed in other countries first and would thoroughly review its supply chain. The country had recently experienced the problems of cold storage when it had to discard about 5 million doses of flu vaccines because they were not stored at recommended temperatures.

Worst of the pandemic yet to come for US: Experts

Health experts have expressed serious concerns that the US was ill-prepared for the upcoming winter season and the holidays when the Covid-19 pandemic could spiral into its deadliest phase.

As of Tuesday morning, the overall number of global coronavirus cases in the US has increased 10,051,722, while the deaths have surged to 238,201, according to the Johns Hopkins University. The two tallies currently account for the highest in the world, making the US the worst-hit country.

business

Our objective is to empower businesses with a simple, seamless and automated process that helps in streamlining payments and help them with solutions that make business banking simple

VIJAY SHEKHAR SHARMA | CEO, PAYTM

PFIZER SHARES END 3% HIGHER

Shares of Pfizer Limited trimmed most of its early gains to close nearly 3 per cent higher. In early trade, it had zoomed nearly 20 per cent.

Quote of the day

It is heartening to see a sharp recovery of demand to near pre-Covid levels in India aluminium and copper businesses. Novelis too sees a similar rise across segments, except for aerospace

SATISH PAI | MD, HINDALCO INDUSTRIES LTD

I am delighted to welcome Mitsubishi Corporation. TVS SCS has successfully pivoted into new segments and addressed opportunities arising out of COVID

R DINESH | MD, TVS SCS

We are working towards such regulation as we have seen so many companies exiting and leaving their dealer partners in lurch. It will not happen in a day, but we are determined to see it through

VINKESH GULATI | PRESIDENT, FADA

SHORT TAKES

NTPC's project begins operation

New Delhi: NTPC Tuesday said 8 MW solar energy generation capacity at its Auraiya project in Uttar Pradesh has been made commercially operational. The remaining 12 MW solar capacity under implementation is expected to be operational by March 2021. "Consequent upon successful commissioning, 8 MW part capacity of 20 MW Auraiya Solar PV Project at Auraiya, UP, has been declared on Commercial Operation w.e.f. 00:00 Hrs. of 10.11.2020," NTPC said in a BSE filing. Besides, it has 25 JV & subsidiaries stations.

India PC market grows 9.2%: IDC

New Delhi: E-learning and remote working needs have helped the Indian PC market log its biggest quarter in seven years with shipment rising 9.2 per cent year-on-year to 3.4 million units in July-September, as per research firm IDC. The shipment - which includes desktops, notebooks and workstations - stood at 3.1 million units in the third quarter of 2019. Although the commercial segment had very few government and education projects, the consumer segment recorded its biggest quarter ever.

Audi to increase prices from Jan

Mumbai: German luxury car maker Audi Tuesday announced a price increase of up to 2 per cent across its entire model range, effective from January 1 next year. The company has revised prices upwardly in view of the weakening of the rupee and rising input costs, Audi India said in a release. "Ex-showroom price of Audi India models will increase by up to 2 per cent, effective from January 1, 2021, due to currency fluctuations and rising input costs," it said in the release.

Mahindra Q2 net profit falls 88 pc

New Delhi: Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) Tuesday reported a 88 per cent drop in its profit after tax to ₹162 crore for the second quarter ended September 30, hit by lower sales during the period. The auto major had reported a PAT of ₹1,355 crore during the July-September period last fiscal. Revenues of the company, however, increased by 6 per cent to ₹11,590 crore in the second quarter as against ₹10,935 crore in the same period last fiscal, M&M said in a regulatory filing.

'Discourage non-digital payments'

Retired bank employees should not be forgotten; bankers should be a cohesive family such as in defence, says Sitharaman

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Nov 10: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman told bankers Tuesday to only issue Rupay cards as the first option to customers, and also to seed all bank accounts with Aadhar number and, wherever necessary, with the pan card by December this year.

"Rupay should be the only card that you must promote," Sitharaman said in her address as the chief guest at the 73rd Annual General Meeting of the Indian Banks' Association (IBA).

"Make sure the NPCI (National Payments Corporation of India) can become a 'brand India' product. Whenever issuing a card, you must first issue a Rupay (floated by NPCI) card," the finance minister said in her address.

"Indian banks have done a tremendous job, but the financial inclusion drive is not over. I will not be patient to hear that there still exist accounts not Aadhar seeded, and linked with Pan cards wherever needed beyond December 31st. There should not be any unverified account in the system," the finance minister said, while clarifying a few moments later that the deadline could be extended till March next year at the maximum.

Technology should be adopted widely to ensure there is no duplication in booking benefits for the customers, or double encashment of a security. "It should be a fool proof arrangement so that you become a better managed bank," Sitharaman said.

At the same time, the finance minister told bankers that they must "discourage non-digital payments," and "UPI (unified payments interface) should be a common parlance word in banks."

Every customer, from every walk of life and economic background, should be able to access every services of banks digitally, and there should be tailor made services made for customers from every background, the finance minister instructed top bankers. In what may turn out to be a major development for retired bank employees, the finance minister said Indian banks must treat their retired employees the same way as those in defence.

"Being the former Defense Minister, I can advise Indian banks that they must treat their employees the same way defense does. There everyone is treated as one family, be it the servicemen or retired," the finance minister said, while not giving much details on what could be in the offing the coming days.

Seed all accounts with Aadhaar by March: FM

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman asked banks to ensure that all accounts are linked with Aadhaar numbers of respective customers by March 31, 2021. She said the financial inclusion story is not over and banks still have inclusion to carry forward. There are many accounts which are not linked with Aadhaar. "By March 31, 2021, every account should have a PAN where needed and where applicable, and Aadhaar in every one of your accounts, Sitharaman said while addressing the 73rd annual general meeting of the Indian Banks' Association (IBA).

WhatsApp Shopping button now live in India

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Nov 10: Facebook Tuesday made a new shopping button in WhatsApp live globally, including in India, to help people check out available products and make purchases right from a chat.

The tool will make it easier for people to discover a business' catalog so they know what goods or services it offers.

Previously, people had to click into the business' profile to see if the business had a catalog.

"Now, when a person sees the shopping button, which looks like a storefront icon, they will immediately know the business has a catalog so they can browse products and start a conversation about an item they see with just one tap," the company said in a statement.

This will also make it easier for businesses to have their products discovered which can help increase sales.

More than 175 million people message a WhatsApp Business account every day, and more than 40 million people view a business' catalog each month -- including more than 3 million in India.

According to a recent survey, 76 per cent of adults in India said that "I am more likely to do business with/purchase from a company that I can contact via messaging than one that I cannot."

The new shopping button is available now across the world and will replace the voice call button. To find the voice call button, simply tap on the call button to select either a voice or video call. "In the future, we'll make it possible to add items to a cart and check out, all within WhatsApp," the company said last month.

Sensex surges 680 pts to hit record closing

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Nov 10: Equity indices continued to surge for the seventh straight session Tuesday with both BSE and NSE scaling new heights as global investors applauded progress in the development of a coronavirus vaccine which lifted confidence for a faster world economic recovery.

After scaling an intra-day high of 43,316, the benchmark BSE sensex settled 680 points or 1.60 per cent higher at record closing of 43,278; while the broader NSE Nifty finished 165 points or 1.32 per cent higher at fresh peak of 12,631.

Top gainers in the sensex pack included Bajaj Finance, IndusInd Bank, L&T, Bajaj Finserv, SBI and HDFC with their shares rising as much as 8.94 per cent. While Tech Mahindra, HCL Tech, Infosys, Nestle India, Sun Pharma and TCS were the major losers falling up to 5.73 per cent.

On NSE platform, sub-indices Nifty Bank, Private Bank, PSU Bank and Financial Services with their shares gaining as much as 4.11 per cent. Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Hong Kong, Seoul and Tokyo ended with gains, while Shanghai settled lower.

Stock exchanges in Europe were mostly trading on a positive note. Pfizer Inc said its Covid vaccine, developed with German partner BioNTech SE, was more than 90 per cent effective in preventing infection, marking the first successful results from a large-scale clinical trial.

Exports show signs of recovery

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Nov 10: Showing signs of improvement, the country's exports grew 22.47 per cent year-on-year to USD 6.75 billion in the first week of November, mainly driven by healthy growth in pharmaceuticals, gems and jewellery and engineering sectors, an official said Tuesday.

The exports during the first week of November last year was USD 5.51 billion.

Imports in November (1st - 7th) this year too increased by 13.64 per cent year-on-year to USD 9.30 billion as against USD 8.19 billion, the official said.

Imports, excluding petroleum, jumped 23.37 per cent during the week, the official added. Trade deficit during the week stood at USD 2.55 billion. Exports of pharmaceuticals, and gems and jewellery grew 32 per cent to USD 139.12 million and 88.8 per cent to USD 3,360.71 million, respectively.

Similarly, the outbound shipments of engineering goods increased by 16.7 per cent to USD 215.13 million during the week.

Sectors which recorded negative growth include petroleum, marine products and leather goods.

During the period, exports to the US, Hong Kong and Singapore rose by 53.91 per cent, 176.2 per cent and 90.76 per cent, respectively.

The country's export had also recorded positive growth in September but declined 5.4 per cent to USD 24.82 billion in October.

A sudden improvement in exports and a slump in imports, especially from China, have created a shortage of containers for exports, said industry experts and company executives. The waiting time for an access to a container for exporters is now two-three weeks, compared with a maximum of four days earlier, said industry executives.

After contracting for six months in a row, the country's exports grew by 5.27 per cent to USD 27.4 billion in September, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal had said on October. He said this is an indicator of the "rapid recovery" of the Indian economy as it surpasses pre-COVID-19 levels across parameters.

SECTORS WHICH RECORDED NEGATIVE GROWTH INCLUDE PETROLEUM, MARINE PRODUCTS AND LEATHER GOODS

"Make in India, Make for the World: Indian merchandise exports grew 5.27 per cent in September 20 as compared to last year," he said in a tweet. In September 2019, the exports stood at USD 26.02 billion. Since March, the country's outbound shipments were recording negative growth due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant fall in global demand.

Key sectors such as petroleum, leather, engineering goods and gems and jewellery were registering negative growth rates. Commenting on the numbers, Trade Promotion Council of India (TPCI) Chairman Mohit Singla said exports are on the path of recovery as the international market is opening up and buyers have started placing orders. "Food and agri sector will continue to thrust exports as they have done in even the worst of times in the past," Singla added. Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) President Sharad Kumar Saraf said "this was expected due to anti-China sentiments as a lot of orders have come."

CPI LIKELY ABOVE 7 PER CENT AGAIN

REUTERS

Bangalore, Nov 7: India's retail inflation likely stayed above 7% for a second straight month in October as supply distortions led to a surge in vegetable prices, especially of onions, a Reuters poll showed, lowering the chances of further interest rate cuts.

Disruption from the coronavirus pandemic and excessive rainfall in states such as Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh have damaged and delayed the harvesting of onions - a key ingredient in Indian kitchens - alongside other vegetables.

A Reuters poll of 50 economists conducted from Nov. 4-9 predicted consumer prices rose 7.30% last month from a year earlier, a touch lower than September's 7.34% rate.

If realised, it would be above the top end of the Reserve Bank of India's medium-term target range of 2%-6% for the seventh consecutive month, a streak not seen since August 2014.

"Price and tax rigidity in commodities has also added to the boost." Demand remains weak in Asia's 3rd-largest economy, which contracted at the sharpest pace on record of 23.9% in the April-June quarter, as the ongoing pandemic left millions unemployed and resulted in massive pay cuts. India has the second-highest total infections in the world at more than 8.5 million cases.

States likely to cut capital outlay on infra

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Nov 10: Impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic states are likely to cut capital outlay on infrastructure by up to 40 per cent, rating agency ICRA said Tuesday.

States account for 37-40 per cent of the total infrastructure capital expenditure, it said.

The rating agency said major states together had a budgeted capital outlay of over ₹5.7 lakh crore for 2020-21 as against revised estimate of ₹5.1 lakh crore in 2019-20.

However, with COVID-19 severely impacting revenues of state governments, and additional expenditure towards healthcare and public welfare, the capital outlay on infrastructure by states could decline 10-40 per cent in FY2021, ICRA said in a statement.

It said some states could witness a steeper decline depending on the extent of additional borrowings, which is availed.

With COVID-19 and the related slowdown in the economic activities, states are staring at a significant decline in their revenues, which in turn could push them to cut down on discretionary expenditure including deferment of capital outlay. Furthermore, of the ₹111 trillion worth infrastructure investments planned under the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP), about 40 per cent is from state governments.

NIP envisages the state's budgetary outlay on capital investments to be around 1.7 per cent of GDP and states are expected to fund 24-26 per cent of the total expenditure under NIP, the statement said.

Shubham Jain, Senior Vice-President and Group Head, Corporate Ratings, ICRA said while on one hand states will generate lower revenues, they would also need to increase expenditure towards healthcare and social welfare.

Various policy measures in response to COVID-19 could cost over 0.3 per cent of GDP.

Hence, to reduce the impact states are likely to curtail some revenue expenditure as well as capital expenditure. In the past, states had cut their capital expenditure by an average of 0.5 per cent of GDP to meet fiscal deficit targets.

Given the current fiscal position, it is likely that states would cut the capex by a higher proportion in FY2021. However, capex in health and education sectors could increase," Jain said.

To bridge the shortfall, states' unconditional borrowing limit has been raised from 3 per cent of gross state domestic product (GSDP) to 4 per cent of GSDP for 2020-21, the statement said.

States also have the option of availing another 1 per cent of the GSDP, but on completing specified reforms, it added.

DECLINE IN REVENUES

- With slowdown in economic activities, states are staring at a significant decline in their revenues, which in turn could push them to cut down on discretionary expenditure
- Furthermore, of the ₹111 trillion worth infrastructure investments planned under the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP), about 40 per cent is from state governments

BIZ BUZZ

GAIL profit dips 9 per cent in Q2

NEW DELHI: GAIL India Ltd, the nation's biggest gas company, Tuesday reported 8.5 per cent drop in September quarter net profit after losses on gas marketing offset gain made in the gas transportation business. Consolidated net profit of ₹1,068.16 crore, or ₹2.47 per share, in July-September is compared with ₹1,167.58 crore, or ₹2.59 a share, net profit in the year-ago period, GAIL said in a filing to stock exchanges. Turnover slipped 23.7 per cent to ₹14,104.80 crore largely due to lower gas prices during the quarter. GAIL reported a pre-tax loss of ₹334.55 crore on its natural gas marketing business as the pandemic impacted demand. The loss was however lower than ₹614.06 crore pre-tax loss in April-June.

Agrochemical sector revenue to grow

MUMBAI: The agrochemical sector's revenue is likely to grow 12-14 per cent in the ongoing financial year due to a sharp recovery in offtake from domestic agriculture sector and continuing healthy exports, according to a report. Domestic revenue, which accounts for almost half of the sector's revenue, will grow at 10-12 per cent this fiscal as compared with 6-8 per cent growth last fiscal, Crisil Ratings said in a report. The revenue of the ₹47,000-crore agrochemical sector is expected to grow at 12-14 per cent this financial year, following a sharp recovery in offtake from domestic agriculture sector and continuing healthy exports, Crisil Ratings said. Revenue from exports, which rose 15 per cent in last fiscal, is expected to maintain its pace at 13-15 per cent this fiscal, the report added.

Inflow in gold ETFs drop 35 pc to ₹384 cr

NEW DELHI: Gold exchange-traded funds (ETFs) witnessed an inflow of ₹384 crore in October, a drop of 35 per cent from the preceding month, as investors are opting to invest money directly into equities. This also marked uninterrupted inflow for the seventh consecutive month, although the pace of investment into gold ETFs have been trending downwards since July. Such instruments saw an inflow of ₹922 crore in July, ₹908 crore in August, ₹597 crore in September and ₹384 crore in October, data with the Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi) showed. With the latest inflow, net infusion in a gold exchange-traded fund or ETF category has reached to ₹6,341 crore in the first eight months (January-October) of the year.

MI's HIGH FIVE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Nov 10: A peerless Rohit Sharma (68, 51b, 5x4, 4x6) led defending champions Mumbai Indians (MI) to their fifth IPL title with a lopsided demolition of Delhi Capitals (DC) here Tuesday, closing an immensely successful tournament that had to be played in a controlled environment amid the raging COVID-19 pandemic.

If last year's one-run win over Chennai Super Kings was an absolute cliffhanger, Rohit's aristocratic half century made it an anticlimax with MI chasing the target of 157 in 18.4 overs.

Five IPL titles are certain to make Rohit the undisputed 'Numero Uno' player-cum-leader in the IPL Universe. The 'Hit-Man' has given an altogether new meaning to what has one known till now about crushing pain barriers.

There has never been an edition where a team has looked in a different league compared to seven others. As Rohit had said earlier, it's not rocket science but investing in pure match-winners that has given MI such a menacing look.

Rome wasn't built in a day and neither a champion outfit that has now won five titles out of the six finals it has played.

Chasing 157, Rohit and Quinton de Kock (20) added 45 in just four overs before the latter's departure. Rohit then joined hands with Suryakumar Yadav (19) to put together another 45.

MI had to deal with a few hiccups at the back end of the chase, including the wicket of Rohit off an Anrich Nortje (2/25) delivery. But, in-form Ishan Kishan (33 n o) was there to guide MI home comfortably.

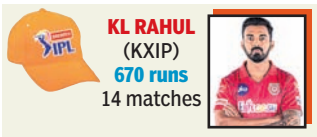
Earlier, DC captain Shreyas Iyer (65 n o, 50b, 6x4, 2x6) and the mercurial Rishabh Pant (56, 38b, 4x4, 2x6) responded to the call of the team on the 'D Day' with contrasting-yet-stylish fifties but MI claimed the early edge by restricting them to 156/7.

The two rising stars of Indian cricket came to the party on the big day, after Trent Boult (3/30) pegged them back at 22/3 inside the Powerplay, adding 96 runs in 11.3 overs for the fourth wicket.

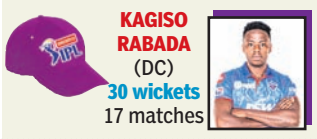
However, MI came back strongly during final five overs as Capitals managed only 45 runs, losing four wickets in the process. Nathan Coulter-Nile (1/29) also bowled well for MI.

BRIEF SCORES

DC 156/7 (Shreyas Iyer 65 n o, Rishabh Pant 56; Trent Boult 3/30, Nathan Coulter-Nile 2/29) **lost to MI 157/5** (Rohit Sharma 68, Ishan Kishan 33 n o; Anrich Nortje 2/25) **by 5 wickets.**



KL RAHUL (KXIP)
670 runs
14 matches



KAGISO RABADA (DC)
30 wickets
17 matches

AWARDS

Most Valuable Player
JOFRA ARCHER (RR)

Emerging Player
DEVDUTT PADIKKAL (RCB)

Fairplay Award
MUMBAI INDIANS

Vietnam out, Saudi in for F1 2021 calender

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Istanbul, Nov 10: Formula One (F1) is planning a record 23 races in 2021, including one in Saudi Arabia, but has dropped its inaugural race in Vietnam.

The April slot for the Vietnamese Grand Prix was listed as 'TBC' on the calendar published Tuesday with no explanation and no mention of Vietnam. The race was scheduled to debut this year but abandoned amid the pandemic.

The other 22 races include the first-ever Saudi Grand Prix, set for November 28 in the Red Sea city of Jiddah, and the return of numerous races which were canceled during the pandemic.

There's no return for the various one-off races at European tracks such as Mugello, Portimao and Imola, which were added as replacements and generally popular with drivers and fans.

The Dutch Grand Prix returns for the first time since 1985, after being canceled this year, and is scheduled for September 5. The season finale remains in Abu Dhabi December 5.

The 23-race calendar is the longest in F1 history. The 2020 calendar originally had 22 races.

Nattakan effort wins applause

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Sharjah, Nov 10: Nattakan Chantam, the lone Thai player in to play in the Women's T20 Challenge, got to face a solitary ball in Trailblazers' three matches. Still, the livewire fielder won all-round applause with an extraordinary dive near the boundary line that saved a certain four against Supernovas in the final that her team won.

Nattakan's jaw-dropping effort was akin to a swimmer's dive in a pool, and she didn't seem to worry one bit about an injury that it might have caused. Chasing an outside edge off Jemimah Rodrigues' bat off a ball from Sophie Ecclestone, 24-year-old Nattakan gave her all to prevent the ball from crossing the boundary line.

That effort, which saved two runs for her team, came in the second over as Supernovas chased Trailblazers' 118 for eight wickets in 20 overs at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium.

The video clip of Nattakan has since gone viral and won praise from many, including contemporary players like England's Kate Cross. "Worth it for this piece of fielding though," Kate wrote while commenting on a tweet that attached the video of Nattakan's effort.

Standing at short third man position, Nattakan sprinted towards the boundary like a 100m sprinter and stopped the ball crossing the rope. And just when she realised that the ball might win the race, Nattakan put a stunning dive near the ropes and flicked the ball back, making a save that stunned many.

Later in the Supernovas' innings, Nattakan took a brilliant catch at cover-point to help dismiss the dangerous Jemimah off spinner Deepti Sharma.

Earlier in the final, when Traiblazers batted, Nattakan got to play the last ball of the innings and was run out for nought. It was perhaps her desire to overcome the disappointment of not getting the opportunity to bat in two earlier matches and getting failing to contribute in the final that motivated her further in the outfield.

Recently, West Indies' Nicholas Pooran had come out with a stunning fielding effort during the ninth match of IPL. In the eighth over of Rajasthan Royals' chase of 224 against Kings XI Punjab, Sanju Samson had played a pull shot off Murugan Ashwin. Pooran, standing at deep mid-wicket, dived full length over the rope to catch the ball.

The West Indian caught the ball while hanging in the air and realising that he wouldn't be able to get back inside the boundary line with the ball, he threw it in – all the while being suspended in thin air – and saved a certain six.

D/N Test to feature spectators

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sydney, Nov 10: Cricket Australia (CA) Tuesday announced that up to 27,000 spectators, which is 50 per cent of the total capacity, will be allowed at the Adelaide Oval for the first ever day-night (D/N) Test between India and Australia, starting December 17.

In a world scarred by the COVID-19 pandemic, cricket matches are being played inside empty stadiums in strict bio-bubbles. However, the series between India and Australia is to feature some spectators.

The Indian team will head to Australia for a full series comprising three ODIs, as many T20Is and four Tests. The tour will begin November 27 with the first ODI in Sydney while the Test series starts December 17 in Adelaide.

"The Adelaide Oval is restricted to 50 per cent capacity, with 27,000 tickets available for each day of the opening day-night Test," cricket.com.au reported.

The Adelaide Test will be the only red-ball game which the India skipper Virat Kohli will feature in before he returns to be with his actor wife Anushka Sharma as the couple is getting ready to welcome its first child in early January.

It will be the first ever Pink Ball Test the two sides play against each other. While Australia have hosted four D/N Tests in Adelaide, India have played one against Bangladesh in 2019.

The Boxing Day Test scheduled to be played between December 26 to 30 at the Melbourne Cricket Ground is restricted to 25 per cent of the total capacity crowd by the Victorian government, while the fourth Test at Brisbane can host up to 30,000 fans, or 75 per cent of its capacity.

"At present, the Victorian Government has approved 25,000 fans for each day of the Boxing Day Test across public, member and corporate tickets. With the improving COVID-19 situation in the city, it is hoped more tickets may be able to be put on sale closer to the time, but this is yet to be confirmed."

The second Test to be played at the Sydney Cricket Ground also has a cap of 23,000 that is 50 per cent of its total capacity.

"The SCG, which will host the traditional Pink Test from January 7 – the third in the Vodafone Test Series – is limited to 50 per cent of total capacity, or 23,000 fans."

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Printed and published by Tathagata Satpathy on behalf of Navajat Printers and Media Pvt. Ltd. and printed at Navajat Printers, B-15 Industrial Estate, Rasulgarh, Bhubaneswar -751010, Odisha;Phone:7894447142(Marketing). Editor: Tathagata Satpathy, RNI No. ORIENG/2011/37159