



ITALY TO INDIA

Italian model and actress Giorgia Andriani dreams to make a career in the Hindi film industry

LEISURE P2



COVID-19 GRIPS CHINA

China witnesses a record number of Covid-19 cases for the third consecutive day, with infections surpassing 35,000

INTERNATIONAL P10



INDIA LOSE TO AUSSIES

Akashdeep Singh's hat-trick goes in vain as India lose to Australia in the first hockey Test of the five-match series

SPORTS P12



SKIING WONDERLAND: Tourists enjoy at the Gulmarg ski resort in Jammu and Kashmir, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

Jagannath Express to be rolled out before Rath Yatra: Vaishnav

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 26: To promote Jagannath culture, Indian Railways will introduce Jagannath Express under the Bharat Gaurav train project before next Rath Yatra, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said Saturday.

Briefing media persons here, Vaishnav said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has a vision to showcase India's rich cultural heritage and magnificent historical places to the people of India and the world through the railways.

Accordingly, the Ramayan Express was first launched under the Bharat Gaurav trains (theme-based tourist circuit trains), he said.

Now, the Jagannath Express will be launched under the project to promote the rich Jagannath culture. The design of the train and the Jagannath circuit has been finalised. The service will be launched just before next year's Rath Yatra, the minister said.

Vaishnav also said that his ministry is going to launch the Vande Bharat Express train service in Odisha soon.

Commenting on the introduction of metro train service in Odisha, he said, "It can be done after getting a complete proposal from the state government. Till now, no proposal has been received from Odisha."

Stating that Odisha is going to witness a complete transformation in the railway sector, the minister said, tenders for transformation of 28 stations have been awarded.

MORE ON P3

PSLV places Oceansat, 8 other satellites into orbit

AGENCIES

Sriharikota, Nov 26: The India Space Research Organisation's trusted workhorse PSLV Saturday successfully injected an Earth Observation Satellite and eight other co-passenger satellites in multiple orbits, calling the mission 'unique'.

PSLV-C54 successfully placed the Earth Observation Satellite (Oceansat) and eight other customer satellites into sun-synchronous orbits, ISRO said.

"PSLV-C54/EOS-06 Mission is accomplished. The remaining satellites have all been injected into their intended orbits," it said in a tweet. The mission, which was PSLV's 56th flight, is said to be one of the longest ones undertaken by the Bangalore-headquartered space agency.

Calling the mission 'unique,' ISRO chief, S Somanath said for the first time scientists have used two orbit change thrusters (OCTs) in the PSLV rocket to change orbits.

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Elgar case accused Anand Teltumbde walks out of jail

AGENCIES

Mumbai, Nov 26: Scholar-activist Anand Teltumbde, an accused in the Elgar Parishad-Maoist links case, was Saturday released from the Taloja central prison in Navi Mumbai a day after the Supreme Court rejected the the National Investigation Agency's (NIA) plea challenging his bail.

Teltumbde, 73, who spent two-and-a-half years behind bars in the case, walked out of the jail around 1.15 pm. He was happy, he told waiting media-persons. "I am happy after being released from prison after 31 months. It is obvious, but the sad thing is that this is the fakest case and it put us behind bars for years," Teltumbde added. Friday, the apex court dismissed the NIA's plea challenging the Bombay High Court's order giving bail to Teltumbde. He was released after the completion of bail formalities a day later. Teltumbde is the third of the 16 accused arrested in the case to be released on bail.

Poet Varavara Rao is currently out on bail on health grounds while lawyer Sudha Bharadwaj is out on regular bail.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Please ensure I will not be punished under the new fake review rules, sir.

WEATHER	
	BHUB CTK
TEMP MAX	29.9°C 28.0°C
TEMP MIN	14.5°C 15.0°C
Humidity	65% 71%
Rainfall	Nil Nil
Forecast	Mainly clear sky

Remove GST on kendu leaf: Naveen to Centre

Kendu leaf, a minor forest produce, is the financial backbone of about eight lakh leaf pluckers, binders, and seasonal workers of Odisha, the Chief Minister wrote in the letter to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 26: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Saturday urged the Centre to withdraw GST being imposed on kendu leaf trade in the interest of livelihoods of about eight lakh poor people.

Patnaik dashed a letter to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, barely three days after announcing a special package for the welfare of kendu leaf pluckers.

"Imposition of GST (18%) on kendu leaves is adversely affecting the trade. As a result, it affects the livelihoods of kendu leaf pluckers, binders, and seasonal workers and the implementation of social security and welfare schemes for them," the Chief Minister said in the letter.

Patnaik said kendu leaf, a minor forest produce (MFP), is the financial backbone of about eight lakh leaf pluckers, binders, and seasonal workers of Odisha and they mostly belong to the tribal community and poorest of the poor of the society.

He said tribals collect the leaves as part of their right defined under



the Scheduled Tribals and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006.

"They have the rights to procure and sell these products," Patnaik mentioned in the letter.

Patnaik November 23 had announced a special package for the people engaged in kendu leaf trade. They were included under the state government's flagship Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY).

The Opposition BJP, however, termed Patnaik's move as politically

motivated and aimed at wooing the tribals of Padampur Assembly constituency where by-election will be held December 5.

The BJP in a statement said that Odisha government has not raised the issue relating to imposition of 18 per cent GST on kendu leaf in the GST Council Meeting. "Let Patnaik announce waiver of 9 per cent GST on kendu leaf which his government is getting as share from the central tax," said Leader of Opposition Jay Narayan Mishra.

BJP promises UCC, anti-radicalisation cell

AGENCIES

Gandhinagar, Nov 26: The ruling BJP Saturday released its manifesto for the upcoming Gujarat Assembly polls and promised to implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) and also create an 'anti-radicalisation cell' to identify and eliminate potential threats as well as sleeper cells of terrorist organisations and anti-India forces.

The party's other promises include creation of "20 lakh employment opportunities" and taking the state's economy to USD one trillion in the next five years.

The manifesto was released at the state BJP headquarters by party president JP Nadda in the presence of Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and state unit chief CR Paatil.

The annual cover under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (Ayushman Bharat) being doubled per family from ₹5 lakh to ₹10 lakh, and girls getting free education from 'KG to PG' (kindergarten to post-graduation) are among other promises in the manifesto.

"We will ensure complete implementation of UCC in Gujarat as per recommendations of a state government committee. We will



GUJARAT POLLS

also create an anti-radicalisation cell to identify and eliminate potential threats, and sleeper cells of terrorist organisations and anti-India forces," said Nadda.

The Gujarat government had announced October 29 that it would form a committee for the implementation of the UCC. The decision was taken in a Cabinet meeting that day.

The state will see two-phase Assembly polls December 1 and 5, while the votes will be counted December 8. It is witnessing a three-cornered fight with the BJP, the Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party in the fray.

Over 40 acres of Srimandir land sold in 2 years: Minister

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 26: Over 40 acres of land of Lord Jagannath located within the state has been sold during the last two years, Law Minister Jagannath Saraka informed the Assembly Saturday.

In a written reply to a question of BJP legislator Kusum Tete, Saraka said the land of Srimandir has been sold during the financial year 2020-21 and 2021-22.

Out of the total 60,426.943 acres of temple land identified in 24 of the 30 districts within the state, the temple administration could prepare a final Record of Rights (RoR) of 38,061.892 acres of land.

Similarly, the 12th-century shrine also has 395.252 acre of landed properties in six other states, the Minister said.

In another written reply to BJD MLA Soumya Ranjan Patnaik, the Minister said that 3767 revenue miscellaneous cases have been filed in different tehsils to correct the record of 10,808.584 acres of temple land. The cases are under consideration in courts of the concerned tehsildars, he said. The state government has been writing letters to the concerned tehsildars and sub-collectors for speedy disposal of the cases.

Saraka also informed the House that a total of ₹134.65 crore has been earned from the temple land resources during the last five years and the amount has been deposited in the temple fund.

Mahendragiri hill now a biodiversity heritage site

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Nov 26: The Odisha government has declared the Mahendragiri hill in Gajapati district as a biodiversity heritage site to preserve local habitats rich in plants and animal life.

"The government has been pleased to declare an area of 4250 hectare of Mahendragiri covering two reserve forests (Idongiri and Mahendra) in the district of Gajapati under forest division of Paralakhemundi as the second biodiversity heritage site of Odisha," read a notification issued by the Forest, Environment & Climate Change department.

Mandasaru Gorge area, spread over 544 hectares in Kandhamal district is Odisha's first such heritage site, notified in 2016.

The state government has declared the new biodiversity heritage site on the recommendations of the Odisha Biodiversity Board. Mahendragiri hill, located 1000 metre above mean sea level, is one of the biologically, ecologically and archaeologically important mountain ecosystems in Odisha.

As per the notification, the hill ecosystem acts as a transitional zone between flora and fauna of Western Ghats and the Himalayan biogeographic zones making the region an ecological estuary of genetic



diversities. With increased altitude, the hill complex demonstrates several micro climatic conditions like tropical shola, tropical semi-evergreen, tropical moist-deciduous

and tropical dry deciduous. The diversified vegetation with rich floral diversity represents 40 per cent of the reported flora of Odisha. A total of 1,358 species of plants

including 1,042 species of angiosperms under 122 families, 60 species of pteridophytes, 104 species of bryophytes, 53 species of lichens and 72 species of macro-fungi and two species of gymnosperms occurring in the hill ecosystem.

In terms of botanically curious plants, 44 species of orchids, eight species of insectivorous plants and more than 300 species of medicinal plants are found in the mountain area. The hill is an abode of 20 species of threatened medicinal plants ascertained by Foundation for Revitalisation of Local Health Tradition, Bangalore.

Out of 154 threatened plant species identified for Odisha, at

least 60 species are reported to occur here which is ascertained from various scientific publications. The faunal diversity of the hill consists of 388 species of animals which include 27 species of mammals, 165 species of birds, 60 species herpetofauna (23 species of snakes, 15 species of amphibians, three species of turtles, 19 species of lizards), 100 species of butterflies and 36 species of moths.

The hill is also home to ancient temples of Kunti, Bhima, Arjuna and Yudhishtir which come under the coverage of Antiquate Monument Archaeological Remains and Sites Act 1958 and draws nearly one lakh devotees every year.

leisure



KIM FEELS VIOLATED AS KANYE LET OUT HER EXPLICIT IMAGES

Reality television star Kim Kardashian is doing some digging in response to claims that her ex-husband Kanye West showed nude photos of her to former employees. "She feels violated and terrified", sources said.

LINDSAY CAN'T WAIT TO SPEND CHRISTMAS WITH HER HUSBAND

American actress-singer Lindsay Lohan is eagerly waiting celebrating Christmas with her husband, financier Bader Shammam with whom she tied the knot with earlier this year. She said, "I love the Christmas season and can't wait to spend it this year with my husband, new niece, and with all the family".



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

There are chances that there will be some disappointing moments today, foretells Ganesh. Your own recklessness may well be the cause. Ganesh says it's good to take inspiration from seniors once in a while.

TAURUS

Love will come knocking at your door today, predicts Ganesh. Your wits are likely to remain very lively in the afternoon. A romantic mood will ignite your evening, as you please yourself by showering attention on near and dear ones, says Ganesh.

GEMINI

An auspicious and progressive day awaits you. You will reflect on the problems at the work-place as well as on the home-front. You will try to understand the emotions that lie behind the troubles brewing at home and will try to resolve them. It is a good day to start new ventures in partnership with someone, says Ganesh.

CANCER

The day begins with worship and havan. In the evening, guests will throng your house for a celebration. You will feel sad as your trusted ones will not give you a vital clue or some important information promptly.

LEO

You are facing turbulent times, despite of your hard work. Obstacles to progress are commonplace and should not tie you down. You need to keep working hard and sooner rather than later, the fruits of your labour will fall into your lap, says Ganesh.

VIRGO

Good luck will put you up against some friendly ghosts from some bygone era. The afternoon brings with it some wonderful marriage prospects and you will consider them with an open mind. However, Ganesh warns you to be extra careful when making decisions regarding advanced education.

LIBRA

Ganesh says do not have blind faith in your relatives and friends and always remember even your enemies will prove beneficial to you in the long run. There may be people who are jealous of your reputation and may try to put a dent in it. You may want to go further with matters relating to your heart and will be able to spend the evening with your beloved.

SCORPIO

At work, you will be able to solve many jigsaw puzzles that are pending since a long time. Also, you feel the love in the air; passionate about your soul mate, you try to express your intense feelings today. Prospective candidates may consider marriage proposals, predicts Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS

You seem to be impressed by the handicrafts and plan to take it up as your business. You are a family person and give much attention to your loved ones. You may be smitten by love-bug as passion and intimacy give rise to romance.

CAPRICORN

The first half of the day is not a favourable time to launch anything. If you have already planned a launch, try to postpone it to the second half of the day, feels Ganesh. If you are adamant to launch the product as per the schedule, be ready to face the consequences.

AQUARIUS

You are ambitious. But, flexibility is a virtue you lack and it may hamper your chances to succeed, feels Ganesh. Learn to let go for a larger scheme of life otherwise you may have to regret later on. Consider pros and cons of every situation and proceed ahead with caution.

PISCES

Today there will be some turbulence on the personal front. Due to outside interference you will not be able to concentrate on work or find the time to think and make the necessary decisions. In such situations it might be better to express your candid opinion rather than keep quiet and suffer.

Malaika recreates Zeenat's iconic song



Mumbai: Malaika Arora is back with a new glamorous dance number in Ayushmann Khurrana's film 'An Action Hero'. Titled 'Aap Jaisa Koi', the song also has a cameo by the latter. However, the song has a very different vibe from Zeenat Aman's original song from the 1980 film.

The song has been recreated by Tanishk Bagchi and the modified lyrics have been re-sung by Zahrah S Khan and Altamash Faridi. However, the song falls short of Malaika's earlier hit dance numbers like 'Munni Badnam Hui, Anarkali Disco Chali' or 'Hoth Rasiley'. Tanishk Bagchi had earlier defended himself saying that his recreated songs have brought fame for the singers of the original. He said in an interview, "You don't even know the name of Jedha Nasha's original singers (Amar Jalal and IP Singh). You only know my name because I have recreated it. However, this step of recreating the song window is for these people to come out in the mainstream". AGENCIES

Rashmika finds herself at receiving end

Mumbai: Rashmika Mandanna is one of the popular stars in South and Hindi film with back-to-back hits like 'Pushpa' and 'Goodbye'.

Rashmika was recently in the headlines as Kantara star Rishab Shetty subtly hinted at refusing to work with her. However, the actress was trolled for not being grateful to her roots. A video of Rashmika refraining from naming the production house that gave her a break went viral. The production is Paramvah Studios, co-founded by her ex-partner and actor Rakshit Shetty, a dear friend of Rishab Shetty.

Along with love, Rashmika always faces trolling. A few days ago, she was trolled for saying she hasn't watched the blockbuster film Kantara yet. The actress also reacted to the rumours and penned a heartfelt note on her Instagram saying that it's heart-breaking and quite demoralizing.

AGENCIES

Giorgia on her journey from Italy to India



Mumbai: Italian model and actress Giorgia Andriani, who is also actor-producer Arbaaz Khan's love interest, dreams to make a career in Hindi film industry. Hailing from Italy to make a name for herself in B-Town, Giorgia has come a long way.

When asked to shed some light on her shift, Andriani said, "It was actually a long journey because I am from Italy. I moved to Germany. I was there for one and a half years. Then from there, I moved to Spain. At the age of 20, I started thinking about what to do in this useless life".

Elaborating on her career plans, Giorgia added, "I had always wanted to be a director. So I moved to London where I studied filmmaking and cinematography. Then I started working on some Hindi film projects behind the cameras, in production as an AD or as a local support from London and I was just like - hey wait a minute I can relate to these people so much and I've always in life followed my guts. So I thought I just want to see India."

AGENCIES

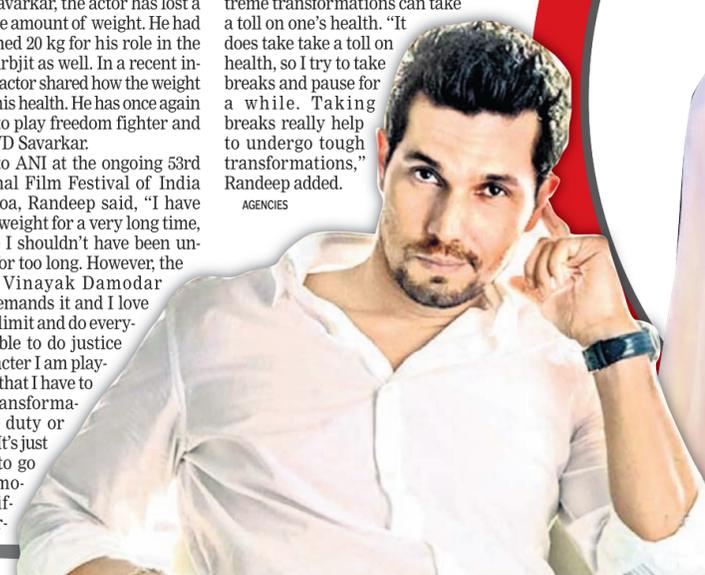
Savarkar biopic takes toll on health: Randeep

Mumbai: Actor Randeep Hooda has shed weight for the screen once again. For his upcoming biopic of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, the actor has lost a considerable amount of weight. He had famously shed 20 kg for his role in the 2016 film 'Sarbjit' as well. In a recent interview, the actor shared how the weight loss affects his health. He has once again shed 18 kg to play freedom fighter and politician VD Savarkar.

Talking to ANI at the ongoing 53rd International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa, Randeep said, "I have been underweight for a very long time, and I agree I shouldn't have been underweight for too long. However, the biopic on Vinayak Damodar Savarkar demands it and I love to push my limit and do everything possible to do justice to the character I am playing. It's not that I have to undergo transformation out of duty or something. It's just that I like to go through emotions of different characters. This kind of training makes me feel closer to the character".

He admitted that such kind of extreme transformations can take a toll on one's health. "It does take a toll on health, so I try to take breaks and pause for a while. Taking breaks really help to undergo tough transformations," Randeep added.

AGENCIES



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

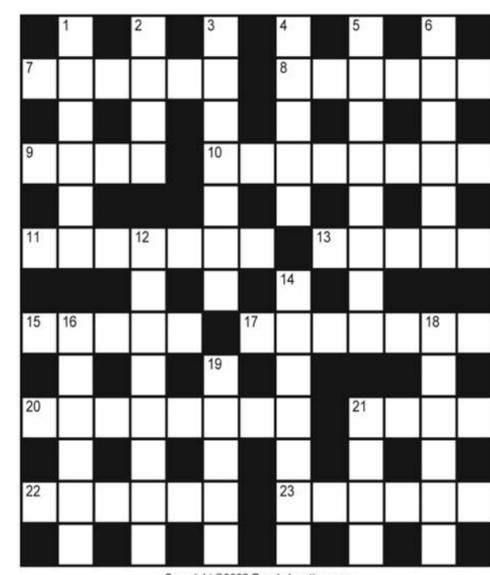


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Zodiac symbol
 - 8 Shrew
 - 9 Long story
 - 10 Moonstone, e.g.
 - 11 Sweet Italian wine
 - 13 Colourful parrot
 - 15 Brownish gray
 - 17 Souvenir
 - 20 Sleep disorder
 - 21 Hefty volume
 - 22 Like an angler's tale, maybe (4,2)
 - 23 Nerve cell
 - 24 Seed structure
 - 25 Queensland's capital
 - 26 Large lizard
 - 27 Stays behind
 - 28 Trojan hero and Dido's love
 - 29 Musical times
 - 30 Marsh bird
 - 31 Impact sound
- Down**
- 1 Naval unit
 - 2 Three-toed bird
 - 3 Creamy chocolate candy
 - 4 Seed structure
 - 5 Queensland's capital
 - 6 Large lizard
 - 12 Postulated
 - 16 Trojan hero and Dido's love
 - 18 Musical times
 - 19 Marsh bird
 - 21 Impact sound

SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU

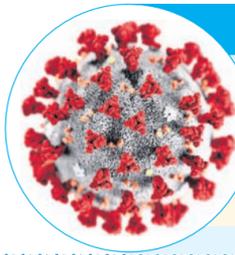
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



TAKING PLEDGE

I&PR director Indramani Tripathy administers oath to the employees of the department at Soochana Bhawan, Saturday, as part of observance of Constitution Day



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	64,58,07,425	62,43,79,099	66,35,646
India	4,46,71,219	4,41,35,216	5,30,608
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204



ON WARPATH: Members of Odisha Government Outsourcing Employees' Federation staged a protest at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar, Saturday, seeking removal of outsourcing system and regularisation of their services

₹5,600cr Central aid to bridge digital divide in Odisha: Min

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Nov 26: Union Minister for Railways Ashwini Vaishnav Saturday said the Centre has allocated ₹5,600 crore to digitally connect about 7,600 unconnected villages in Odisha. Besides, 5G service will be introduced in Odisha in the first phase itself. All these initiatives will help boost the digital economy in the state, he added.



Stating that Odisha is going to witness a complete transformation in the railway sector, he said, tenders for transformation of 28 stations have been awarded. Railway projects worth ₹55,941 crore have been sanctioned for the state, of which projects worth around ₹4,000 crore have been sanctioned during the last seven to eight months, Vaishnav said.

Tenders for transformation of 28 railway stations have been awarded

Railway projects worth ₹55,941cr have been sanctioned for the state

it doubled and then increased the allocation by four times. Now, in the current financial year, Odisha got ₹9,734 crore for development of railways," he said.

During the Congress regime, railway lines of total length of only 25 to 26 km were constructed each year in Odisha. However, railway tracks of 180 km were laid in the last financial year and this year, so far, 238 km has already been completed in the state, the minister added.

Farmers' plight: Din in House continues

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 26: State Assembly Saturday witnessed a noisy scene during a debate on an adjournment motion on farmers' issues.

While BJP has not participated in the debate protesting absence of the minister, Congress targeted the state and Union governments over the token system for procurement of paddy, delay in release of input subsidy and crop insurance claims to the drought-hit farmers.

Bringing an adjournment motion, the Congress members raised different issues of the farmers in the House and slammed both state and Centre.

In the absence of the Cooperation minister Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak, Panchayati Raj minister Pradip Amat replied to the adjournment notice.

Rejecting Amat's reply, BJP members rushed to the well of the House and staged a sit-in protest. Later, they walked out

Narasingha Mishra. Replying to the motion, Panchayati Raj minister Amat said that the token system has been made to provide transparency in paddy procurement as the payments are also being made online.

Due to the objections of the insurance companies regarding the crop cutting experiment, there is a delay in disbursement of crop insurance, he explained. Amat further said that various departments of the state government have already written 14 to 15 times to the central government regarding crop insurance, but to no avail.

has not notified the affected areas, crops damaged and the number of farmers affected due to the calamity, Saluja said.

"The state government has announced input subsidy keeping an eye on the Padmapur by-election. Why did the government remember input subsidy so late?" he asked.

Criticising the Centre for the crop insurance scheme, Saluja said that the farmers should have got the assistance by July 31, alleging that crores have been swindled from the scheme.

Though BJP members have also issued the notice, they did not take part in the debate. It proved that both the BJD and BJP are not interested in resolving the issues of farmers and they have only indulged in blame games to exploit the farmers, said Congress legislature party leader

Rejecting Amat's reply, BJP members rushed to the well of the House and staged a sit-in protest. Later, they walked out

Narasingha Mishra. Replying to the motion, Panchayati Raj minister Amat said that the token system has been made to provide transparency in paddy procurement as the payments are also being made online.

Due to the objections of the insurance companies regarding the crop cutting experiment, there is a delay in disbursement of crop insurance, he explained. Amat further said that various departments of the state government have already written 14 to 15 times to the central government regarding crop insurance, but to no avail.

Seek HC views on western Odisha bench, SC told

The CAC submitted that it had made representation to the HC for expeditious submission of its views with respect to establishment of HC bench in western region

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Nov 26: The Central Action Committee (CAC) of all Bar Associations of western Odisha pleaded the Supreme Court to issue directions to the Orissa High Court to submit its views in respect of establishment of a permanent bench

in the Western region of the state at Sambalpur.

The CAC submitted its affidavit in the apex court in response to the application filed by Orissa High Court against the abstention of work by advocates. The CAC cited the February 2020 order of the SC wherein, CAC said the SC had asked the advocates to resume work and the larger issue will be considered after that. The CAC submitted that it had made representation to the HC for expeditious submission of its views with respect to establishment of HC bench in western region. It was further stated that on the queries of Odisha MPs on the issue, the Union Law Ministry had informed in 2020 that it hadn't received any proposal from the state.



"It is crystal clear that the Odisha government has not yet submitted a comprehensive proposal only because of non-submission of the views of the High Court till date," the CAC submitted.

Despite several representations right from the year 2006, the High Court has completely ignored to give its view on the aforesaid issue till date," the CAC submitted.

The CAC further submitted that the Union Law Ministry promptly accepted the recommendation of the state government and made a request to the High Court of Orissa for giving their views and also for submission of a comprehensive proposal as required under law in the issue of establishment of Bench in the Western Region of Odisha. "The Central government thereafter has made repeated requests thereby reminding to the High Court of Orissa for submission of its view. However, no steps have been taken by the Hon'ble High Court. The matter is pending before the High Court for their consideration in the full court," the CAC submitted.

The Supreme Court will hear the matter November 28.

Man nabbed for fake pharmacy certificate

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 26: A man Saturday landed in police net after trying to avail pharmacy licence by producing forged certificates. The accused identified as Arun Lal Jain, 40, is a resident of Sindhekelia in Bolangir district.

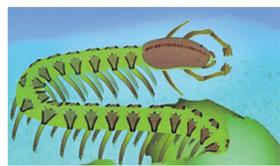
Commissionerate Police has started an investigation in this regard to nab the persons behind the fake certificate racket.

"One Arun Lal Jain has submitted necessary documents at the Drugs Controller office for his pharmacy licence certificate to pen a medical shop at his native place. During the verification of documents by the Pharmacy Council, they found the pharmacy, conduct and CLC certificates were forged. So, the registrar-cum-secretary Sunita has sent an official letter to police and registered a case in this regard," said an official.

Investigating into the case (454/22), Saheed Nagar police arrested Jain and produced him before the court here Saturday. The accused was later sent to judicial custody. The accused has named one Pintu, who allegedly prepared the forged certificates. Probe is on.

0.5bn year old fossilised brain of sea creature defies textbooks

Strausfeld and Frank Hirth, a reader of evolutionary neuroscience at King's College London, provide the first detailed description of *Cardiodictyon catenulum*, a wormlike animal preserved in rocks in China's southern Yunnan province



tailed description of *Cardiodictyon catenulum*, a wormlike animal preserved in rocks in China's southern Yunnan province.

Measuring barely half an inch (less than 1.5 cm) long and initially discovered in 1984, the fossil had hidden a crucial secret until now: a delicately preserved nervous system, including a brain.

Cardiodictyon belonged to an extinct group of animals known as armoured lobopodians, which were abundant early during a period known as the Cambrian, when virtually all major animal lineages appeared over an extremely short time between 540 million and 500 million years ago.

Lobopodians likely moved about on the sea floor using multiple pairs of soft, stubby legs that lacked the joints of their descendants, the euarthropods - Greek for "real jointed foot."

Today's closest living relatives of lobopodians are velvet worms that

live mainly in Australia, New Zealand and South America.

"This anatomy was completely unexpected because the heads and brains of modern arthropods, and some of their fossilised ancestors, have for over a hundred years been considered as segmented," Strausfeld said.

"From 1880s, biologists noted the clearly segmented appearance of the trunk typical for arthropods, and basically extrapolated that to the head," Hirth said. "That is how the field arrived at supposing the head is an anterior extension of a segmented trunk."

"But *Cardiodictyon* shows that the early head wasn't segmented, nor was its brain, which suggests the brain and the trunk nervous system likely evolved separately," Strausfeld noted.

The findings also offer a message of continuity at a time when the planet is changing dramatically under the influence of climatic shifts.

"At a time when major geological and climatic events were reshaping the planet, simple marine animals such as *Cardiodictyon* gave rise to the world's most diverse group of organisms - the euarthropods a" that eventually spread to every emergent habitat on Earth, but which are now being threatened by our own ephemeral species," said the researchers.

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Government Of Odisha
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ONLINE PAYMENT FOR HOLDING TAX

Scan for more information

It is for information of all the citizens owning property under the jurisdiction of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation that under Govt of Odisha's 5T initiatives, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation has provided online facility for payment of Holding Tax. Hence, all property owners under the jurisdiction of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation are requested to pay their Holding Tax through online portal i.e., <https://www.bhubaneswar.me>. The step wise procedure for making the payment of Holding Tax, is mentioned below.

PROCESS

Step | 1

Login to <https://www.bhubaneswar.me>

Step | 2

Click on Citizen Services

Step | 3

Click on Property Tax Service

Step | 4

Click on Pay Property Tax

Step | 5

A login dialogue box will appear asking for a user ID and Password. If not available, click on Create Account otherwise one can login as Guest.

Step | 6

Fill in the Ward Number & Holding Number and then Click on Submit

Step | 7

Go to bottom of display page and Click on Proceed to Pay Button

Step | 8

Enter Mobile No. & E-Mail ID and Click on Make Payment

Step | 9

Click on Proceed to Pay

Step | 10

Choose the Payment Mode

Step | 11

After completion of the Payment, a receipt shall be generated

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Fossils of a tiny sea creature that died more than half a billion years ago may compel a science textbook rewrite of how brains evolved.

A study published in Science has revealed a 525-million-year-old fossil of a tiny sea creature with a delicately preserved nervous system, solving a century-old debate over how the brain evolved in arthropods, the most species-rich group in the animal kingdom.

"To our knowledge, this is the oldest fossilised brain we know of, so far," said Nicholas Strausfeld, a Regents Professor in the University of Arizona's Department of Neuroscience.

Strausfeld and Frank Hirth, a reader of evolutionary neuroscience at King's College London, provide the first de-

EOW TO PROBE MISSING BMC RECORDS



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 26: The Lokayukta has directed the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Crime Branch to probe mysteriously missing 428 work case records and vouchers of around Rs 54 crore of the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC).

The Lokayukta while hearing a plea by Binayak Rath has also asked the EOW to submit the report within three months. The next hearing on the case has been posted to February 27, 2023.

According to sources, the issue was exposed by the local fund audit reports presented to BMC during the financial years from 2011-12 to 2016-17. The local fund audit officials repeatedly raised objections in their reports about non-submission of 538 work case records by the BMC staff between 2011 and 2017.

Rath, after learning about objections, wrote several reports to the BMC official seeking their response to the missing of files. Later, he filed a complaint with Lokayukta in 2019 seeking its intervention in the issue.

Subsequently, Lokayukta closed the case instructing the director of Local Fund Audit to do a special probe as the BMC commissioner assured full cooperation in January 2020.

However, the reluctant officials of engineering sub-section of BMC failed to submit all the necessary documents for the special probe. The Local Fund Audit later informed the ombudsmen that it failed to complete the special audit as the officials produced only 110 documents out of the 538 work case records.

When Rath found that nothing was materialized on ground despite Lokayukta's order, he again approached the Lokayukta requesting it to accept his petition in 2021. On the other hand, several engineers and other officials while appearing before Lokayukta tried to dodge the responsibility by passing the bucks. Finding no other way, a miffed Lokayukta instructed the EOW to probe the missing work case records involving a purported fraud of Rs 54 crore.

Bhub Bar members obstruct judicial work

When the judicial officers and staff tried to enter the building, about 300 to 400 advocates obstructed them by raising slogans

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Nov 26: The Orissa High Court has apprised the Supreme Court that the Bhubaneswar Bar Association held strike November 25 and obstructed entry of judicial officers to the court to press for their demands of shifting of the high court and declaring Bhubaneswar a district.

The HC filed an affidavit in the apex court through advocate Sib Sankar Mishra stating that on November 25, the Bar members had gathered in hundreds and were raising slogan on their agenda. When the judicial officers and the staff approached the court gate to enter the building, about 300/400 advocates obstructed them by raising slogan. The police personnel reached there at about 11:00am and again in their presence the judicial officers and staff tried to enter into the court premises under the protection of the police personnel but the Bar members ob-

structed them and not allowing them to enter the court building.

It was further submitted that no prior intimation was given to the district judge by the members of the Bar Association regarding such picketing. The violent obstruction by the members of the Bhubaneswar Bar Association under the leadership of the Executive Body and Steering Committee has resulted in obstruction and interference in conduct of the judicial work by the judicial officers, the affidavit reads.

The Orissa HC also submitted that the District Bar Association Jeypore has decided to withdraw their earlier resolution of June this year regarding abstention of court work for last two days of every month.

Significantly, the Supreme Court will hear the matter November 28. Earlier, the Supreme Court had November 14 directed the agitating advocates to withdraw the strike and resume work.



UP IN ARMS: Members of Samyukt Kisan Morcha staging a rally at PMG Square in Bhubaneswar seeking fulfillment of their various demands, Saturday OP PHOTO

Primary teachers' stir in City today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 26: Lakhs of primary school teachers from across the state will stage a massive stir here Sunday to protest against the recent 'unfair' move of the state government to regularise around 57,000 contractual employees by repealing the Contractual Appointment Rules 2013 for Group B, C and D posts that has left them in the lurch.

The teachers under United Primary Teachers' Federation, Odisha Secondary School Teachers Association and Odisha School College Teachers and Employees' Coordination Committee will gather at Mahatma Gandhi Marg here, Sunday, to raise their voice against the alleged discrimination of the state government and threatened that the protest will continue until their demands are met.

The teachers alleged that the primary teachers who were em-



ployed prior to 2013 are deprived of the benefit of six notional increments, promotion and inclusion of six years in service period. They also demanded salary as per Seventh Pay Commission under Central scale, implementation of old pension scheme for all the employees engaged since 2005. They even threatened to boy-

cott the Class X summative assessment - I that is scheduled from this week, if their grievance is not heard.

Previously, around 18,000 teachers have been agitating here alleging that the benefit is not being passed on to them despite serving as contractual employees for years.

AIIMS holds workshop on organ transplant

Bhubaneswar: 17 people die each day waiting for an organ transplant. Every ten minutes another person is added to the transplant waiting list. A single donor can save 8 lives and a deceased donor programme is need of the hour, said the experts attending a workshop on 'Awareness on Organ Donation' organised by department of Surgical Gastroenterology, AIIMS Bhubaneswar Saturday. Apart from raising awareness among the public, the speakers highlighted the aspects of organ transplant like choosing appropriate donor and recipient, organ allocation, need of grief counselling and comprehensive clinical care, which can further expedite the process of organ transplantation in the country as well as in the state. The one-day workshop was organised at the AIIMS in association with National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO).

SAI International School observes Int'l Youth Day

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 27: Students of SAI International School celebrated International Youth Day Saturday.

Organized by the core members of the Going Global Club, SAI International School celebrated International Youth Day Saturday at Pal Heights, Bhubaneswar, after 2 long years of the pandemic, with overwhelming participation from a tight-knit team with over 60 students in the Organizing Committee who ran a gala event.

Bedazzled with cultural performances, an intriguing gamut of games, cogent poetry, compelling speeches, impactful dance performances, skits and t-shirt giveaways, it grabbed the attention of every passer-by, and most certainly inspired a lot of people to step up for the theme followed this year, "My



Body, Not Your Business".

The event was given a warm start-off by the Secretary of Going Global, Anvesha Raypitam, who spoke about the values of Going Global in her speech. It was followed by intriguing games & cultural performances, including a lively band performance that left every viewer awestruck and rejuvenated, and dances that de-

scribed the reason the youth had stood up for.

The striking dance and drama team from SAI International School put forth impactful acts and witty-crafted sketches, as agents of change in the world. It was a beautiful display of art and talent put forth by the students.

The students were incessantly interacting with the audience,

speaking to them about the theme, asking their opinions, and sharing theirs, pertaining to the focal point of the theme this year, so that they come up with ideas which all can be introduced into their societies and cultures to further promote the ideals of cultural diversity and internationalism. The students also gave T-shirts as giveaways to people in the audience to further promote the theme of this year.

Expressing her sentiments on this event, Silpi Sahoo, Chairperson, SAI International Education Group, said, "I'm elated to see SAI students come together after two long years of pandemic and join hands across generations to break down barriers, and work as one to achieve a more equitable, just and inclusive world for all people, fostering critical goals and celebrating International Youth Day this year."

Utkal's 80th Foundation day today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Nov 26: Utkal University will celebrate its 80th Foundation day Sunday, informed the university authority at a press conference organised Saturday at the Syndicate Hall in the New Administrative Building of the varsity.

The campus has been cleaned, sanitised and decorated with colourful lights. "The ongoing effort and determination in education, research, technology, and other areas has made the university to aspire for NAAC A++ status," said the vice-chancellor Sabita Acharya while also adding that "as the NAAC committee is likely to visit the campus anytime now, we are absolutely ready for the physical assessment process."

Speaking about the major achievements of the university, the VC said that the efforts to make the university campus fully digital



are bearing results as its helping enhance the quality of education and research. The Center for Innovation and Incubation (CII), established in the year 2018, has witnessed many students and entrepreneurs for ming successful startups, she added.

Among others, registrar Avaya Kumar Nayak, warden of hostels Prabodha Kumar Hota were also present at the press meet. On the 80th Foundation day celebrations, a special programme will be organised at the Maharaja Krishnachandra Gajapati (MKCG) auditorium. Acharya will preside over the event in which the Executive Director of AIIMS, Bhubaneswar Ashutosh Biswas will be the chief guest.

Int'l wildlife conference boosts protection for sharks

An international wildlife conference moved to enact some of the most significant protection for shark species targeted in the fin trade and scores of turtles, lizards and frogs whose numbers are being decimated by the pet trade.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, known by its initials as CITES, ended Friday in Panama.

Along with protections for over 500 species, delegates at the United Nations wildlife conference rejected a proposal to reopen the ivory trade. An ivory ban was enacted in 1989.

"Good news from CITES is good news for wildlife as this treaty is one of the pillars of international conservation, imperative at ensuring countries unite at combating the global interrelated crises of biodiversity collapse, climate change, and pandemics," said Susan Lieberman, the vice president of international policy at Wildlife Conservation Society.

"Many of the proposals adopted here reflect there is ongoing over-exploitation and unsustainable trade, and escalating illegal trade, and some are due to complex interactions of other threats reducing species populations in the wild, including climate change, disease, infrastructure development, and habitat loss," she added.

The international wildlife trade treaty, which was adopted 49 years ago in Washington, DC, has been praised for helping stem the illegal and unsustainable trade in ivory and rhino horns as well as in whales and sea turtles. But it has come under fire for its limitations, including its reliance on cash-strapped developing countries to combat illegal trade that's become a lucrative USD 10 billion-a-year business.

One of the biggest achievement this year was increasing or providing protection for more than 90 shark species, including 54 species of requiem sharks, the bonnethead shark, three species of hammerhead shark and 37 species of guitarfish.



One of the biggest achievement this year was increasing or providing protection for more than 90 shark species, including 54 species of requiem sharks, the bonnethead shark, three species of hammerhead shark and 37 species of guitarfish

Many had never before had trade protection and now, under Appendix II, the commercial trade will be regulated. Global shark populations are declining, with annual

"The shark species are threatened by the unsustainable and unregulated fisheries that supply the international trade in their meat and fins, which has driven extensive population declines," Rebecca Regnery, senior director for wildlife at Humane Society International, said

deaths due to fisheries reaching about 100 million. The sharks are sought mostly for their fins, which are used in shark fin soup, a popular delicacy in China and else-

where in Asia.

"These species are threatened by the unsustainable and unregulated fisheries that supply the international trade in their meat and fins, which has driven extensive population declines," Rebecca Regnery, senior director for wildlife at Humane Society International, said in a statement. "With Appendix II listing, CITES Parties can allow trade only if it is not detrimental to the survival of the species in the wild, giving these species help they need to recover from over-exploitation."

The conference also enacted protections for dozens of species of turtle, lizard and frogs including glass frogs whose translucent skin made them a favourite in the pet trade. Several species of song birds also got trade protection.

"Already under immense ecological pressure resulting from habitat loss, climate change and disease, the unmanaged and growing trade in glass frogs is exacerbating the already existing threats to the species," Danielle Kessler, the US country director for the

International Fund for Animal Welfare, said in a statement.

"This trade must be regulated and limited to sustainable levels to avoid compounding the multiple threats they already face."

But some of the more controversial proposals weren't approved. Some African countries and conservation groups had hoped to ban the trade in hippos. But it was opposed by the European Union, some African countries and several conservation groups, who argue many countries have healthy hippo populations and that trade isn't a factor in their decline.

"Globally cherished mammals such as rhinos, hippos, elephants and leopards didn't receive increased protections at this meeting while a bunch of wonderful weirdos won conservation victories," Tanya Sanerib, international legal director at the Center for Biological Diversity, said in a statement.

"In the midst of a heart-wrenching extinction crisis, we need global agreement to fight for all species, even when it's contentious."

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FILLIP TO TOURISM IN KEONJHAR

Major facelift for Kanjhari, Salandi dams in the offing



POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Nov 26: Kanjhari dam under Sadar block and Salandi dam under Hatadihi block in this district are all set to get a facelift soon to attract more and more visitors.

The two sites which are known for their tourism potential will be developed at an expense of ₹2 crore under reservoir peripheral development scheme.

The funds will be spent to build a museum and a children's park each in these two sites. The matter came to the fore during a meeting of the District Tourism Development Committee held here, Tuesday.

Funds will be spent to build museum, children's park, walkways, picnic platforms, welcome gates and toilets in these two sites

to help in drawing more tourists to these two dam sites.

Notably, thousands of tourists visit the Kanjhari and Salandi dams every year during the tourist season to unwind themselves and spend some quality time away from the din and bustle of city life. The landscape provides an interesting scenario for picnickers and holidayers.

However, they feel let down due to lack of any amusement facilities and other services. The administration had built a park near the Kanjhari dam several years ago but it is now lying abandoned in a dilapidated condition due to lack of proper upkeep. Moreover, the tourists face a lot of inconvenience owing to lack of toilets at the two sites.

Children will get facilities for games and amusement at the park while visiting tourists will be able to watch the serene beauty of the reservoirs at these two places. The added infrastructures are expected



BASKETBALL TOURNEY: A player tries to shoot the ball during a match of district level basketball tournament, inaugurated at Permit ground in Balasore, Saturday

Dust pollution raises Joda locals' hackles

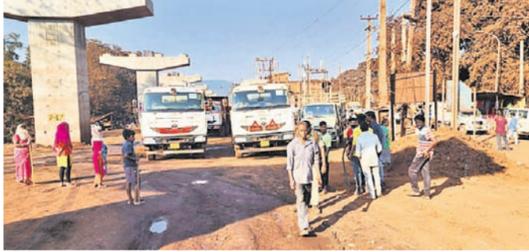
POST NEWS NETWORK

Joda, Nov 26: Hundreds of residents including women staged protests and blocked the main road in Joda town of Keonjhar, Saturday over the severe air pollution caused by dust particles during operation of mineral-laden vehicles.

They have long been demanding routine sprinkling of water on the roads so as to suppress the dust particles and keep them from polluting the ambient air. A construction company has been engaged to build a flyover. When the trucks of the company operate carrying construction materials, they raise the dust. Dust particles settle on and inside the houses along the route. People are suffocated due to polluted air owing to floating dust particles.

"Hundreds of trucks carrying minerals run on the route, raising

ANGRY RESIDENTS BLOCK THE ROAD



the dust. The ambient air is always too hazy to the extent that one can't see another even from close proximity during the day time. "Though we had drawn attention of the Joda municipality and the construction agency towards the dust pollution, no step was taken to address the problem," said Rajesh Patra and Deepak Patra, two locals.

As nothing was done, locals too blocked the road. They relented after an official of the construction agency assured the agitators of sprinkling water thrice a day on the route.

Besides, Palaspanga-Bamebari road is another lifeline for mineral transportation in the district. Thousands of trucks, tippers and

dumpers laden with iron ore operate on this route on a daily basis.

Locals said, the road is in bad shape and full of craters, because heavy vehicles operate over years with authorities paying no heed to its routine maintenance.

Owing to plying of trucks on this route, dust particles are floating about in the ambient air, causing severe pollution in a number of villages. People living in these villages along this route are allegedly suffocated with the dust pollution.

As the administration is doing little to sort out the dust pollution issue, resentment is brewing among locals. Upset over the unresolved issue, sarpanch of Kandarapasi Sabitri Nayak, ward members and villagers had recently apprised Collector Ashish Thakare about the issue in a letter. They warned of agitation if the issue is not resolved in seven days.

3 held over firecracker mishap that injured 40

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kendrapara, Nov 26: Three people were arrested in connection with the mishap at the firecracker show in Kendrapara district in which 40 people sustained burn injuries, police said Friday.

Those arrested were identified as Arakhit Mallick, Chintu Das and Bharat Chandra Mallick. They are the organisers of the firecracker show, which was held Wednesday in Balia market in Kendrapara Sadar police station area without any permission, police said.

The firecracker show was held illegally on the Cuttack-Chandbali Road, blocking vehicular traffic, during the immersion processions of Kartikeswar idols, they said.

Those arrested were booked under IPC sections 337 (causing hurt by act endangering life or personal safety of others), 338 (causing grievous hurt by act endangering life or personal safety of others) and 286 (negligent conduct with respect to explosive substance), police said.

"More persons will be arrested in the case. A special team has been constituted to nab them," said Pabitra Moharana, the inspector of Kendrapara Sadar police station. The organisers had not obtained permission for holding such an event on the road," he added.

NHRC moved over ragging of student in Silk City school

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Nov 26: A case was filed before the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) over the alleged ragging of a student at a private residential educational institution in the city, Saturday. Rabindra Kumar Mishra, a social activist has filed the case before the NHRC demanding its intervention. Mishra has also prayed for stringent action against the accused in his petition.

Notably, ragging continues unabated in the educational institutions in the city as reports of a Class VI student being allegedly subjected to ragging and harassment by his seniors at a school in the Silk City surfaced Friday.

The seniors allegedly tortured the

boy mentally and physically. His mother informed the school authorities twice or thrice but to no avail. She even lodged a complaint with the Childline authorities. Two members of the Childline visited the institution and counselled the students.

The school authorities promised to them that no student will be subjected to ragging from now onwards.

However, the kid again faced harassment in the hands of some seniors. Left with no option, the boy's mother lodged a complaint with the hostel warden and the principal of the institution and later at Gosaninugaon police station.

Police registered a case and launched an investigation.

Woman leader held with brown sugar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur Road, Nov 26: Excise sleuths arrested a woman leader of a particular political party as it seized 30 gram brown sugar from her possession, Saturday.

The breakthrough came during a raid by the excise sleuths in the town. The accused was identified as Jhuma Patra, the president of ward no-19 of the concerned political party. One of the sleuths posing as decoy customers purchased the contraband from her when others in hiding raided her house and arrested the woman leader.

A mobile team of the excise department and excise police personnel Samir Mohanty, Dillip Kumar Nayak and Satyanarayan Pradhan of the Dolipur excise police station participated in the raid. It is alleged that for last several months, drug peddling has been increasing in parts of Jajpur, neighbouring Bhadrak and Balasore, despite police and special squads of the excise department carrying out raids.

Red banner hung in Paikamal

Paikamal: While electioneering for the bypoll to the Padampur Assembly seat is heating up, Maoists have hung a banner on trees near Nisani Devi temple at Maguramal Chhak, 6 km from Paikamal, Saturday. Following the appearance of the Maoist banner, locals were panicked. Police suspect that the Red rebels might have hung the banner Friday night under the cover of darkness. Police have seized the banner. The written text on the banner is not legible, it was said. Due to electioneering, leaders of political parties, ministers and officials have been commuting on this route. Maoist banner appearing along this busy route has raised questions on police security in the area.

Strawberry farming taking baby steps in Kandhamal



POST NEWS NETWORK

Phulbani, Nov 26: The Horticulture department, Odisha Livelihood Mission, and the Watershed department have jointly initiated a pilot project to push strawberry farming in Kandhamal district in order to financially empower the women SHGs.

Cultivation of this fruit will be expanded in a phased manner in other pockets of the district.

Reports said, climatic condition in most parts of Kandhamal is chilly and suitable for strawberry farming. Usually, the type of climate where temperature hovers between 15 to 25 degree is the best suitable for strawberry farming, according to experts.

A decision was taken to commence the fruit farming as a pilot project in Phulbani and later to be expanded in seven places under six blocks. Till date, strawberry saplings have been planted in three blocks while preparation was kicked off for three other blocks. Next, saplings will be planted in the earmarked area.

Collector Asish Iswhar Patil had earlier held discussion with the officials of the Horticulture department to take up farming of some new cash crop in Kandhamal.

Considering the suitable climatic condition in the district, strawberry farming was finally decided to be taken up. Later, Odisha Livelihood Mission and Watershed department joined their hands to make it happen.

Such a project is aimed at financially empowering the women of Self-Help Groups (SHGs). The women SHGs were encouraged to be part of the initiative.

A patch of two acre of land each has been leased out to SHGs at Manikeswari under Raikia block, Bataguda under Baliguda block and a place near Daringbadi.

In a patch of two acres, 20,000 saplings have been planted. All the saplings have been grown through tissue culture method and brought from Pune after floating a tender. Next week, saplings will be planted at Miniar Jarkipada, Tudipaju under Phulbani, Ratang under Phiringia block and Shankarakhol under Chakapad block.

The Watershed Mission has leveled and developed the land under MGNREGS by engaging scores of job card holders.

If members of the SHGs want to work under MGNREGS, they will be provided, it was stated. The Horticulture department has made provision of drip irrigation and provided the SHGs technical support.

Odisha Livelihood Mission has provided ₹5 lakh as assistance to a patch of 2 acre.

Strawberry farming will be done on 14 acres at seven places in the district. A total of ₹35 lakh has been provided to gram panchayat level federation.

As for the farming, Santosh Kumar Rath, the district programme manager of the Odisha Livelihood Mission said that people and officials are happy over the new farming initiated in the district. "After three months, plants will bear fruits. If the harvest is encouraging, more focus will be given on such farming ideas in the days to come," he added.

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Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of The Puri Urban Co-operative Bank Ltd. under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notices calling upon the borrowers/guarantors to repay the amount plus interests, costs & incidental expenses thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice. The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers/guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **POSSESSION** of the properties described here-in below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules. The borrowers/guarantors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of the **The Puri Urban Co-operative Bank Ltd.** for the amount plus interests costs & incidentals expenses thereon.

PURI BRANCH / Name and address of the Borrowers / Guarantors	Amount Outstanding as on Specified Date	Date of Demand / Possession Notice	Description of the Immovable Properties
Borrower : Mr. Hemanta Kumar Samsal, S/o.: Sri Madhab Samal, At: Lokanath Road, Nilachakra Lane, Dist.: Puri / Guarantors: 1) Sri Narayan Maharana, S/o: Sri Dasarath Maharana, 2) Sri Ratnakar Sahoo, S/o: Charan Sahoo, Both are At: Lokanath Road, Baseli Sahi, PO./Dist.: Puri.	Rs. 7,80,282/- as on 31.05.2019 + interests, costs and incidental expenses thereon	29.06.2019 / 30.09.2022	Equitable Mortgage of property situated at Dist.: Puri. SRO: Puri, PS.: Puri Town Thana, PS. No. 03, Revenue Village: Mangalahat, Puri, Hal Khata No.:400/233, Plot No.: 150/1196, Area: Ac.0.020 Dec., standing in the name of Mortgagor: Sri Hemanta Kumar Samal, S/o.: Sri Madhab Samal, Bounded by: North: Road, South: Seller, East: Seller, West: Raghunath Sahoo
Borrower: Sri Priyajeet Mahapatra, S/o.: Late Gopinath Mahapatra, At/po.: Chadanga Sahi, Badu Mahapatra Jaga, Dist.: Puri-752001 / Guarantors: 1) Sri Baidhar Panda, S/o : Sri Lokanath Panda, At: Gudia Sahi, PO./Dist.: Puri, 2) Taluchha Janardan Mahapatra, S/o: Taluchha Ramakrushna Mahapatra, At: Harachandi Sahi, PO./Dist.: Puri.	Rs. 50,72,816/- as on 30.04.2018 + interests, costs and incidental expenses thereon	29.05.2018 / 30.09.2022	Equitable Mortgage of property situated at Dist.: Puri, SRO: Puri, Tahasil no.: 605, PS.: Puri Sadar Thana, PS. No.: 78, Revenue Village: Sipasarubaili, Hal Khata No.: 80, Hal Plot No.: 354(P), Area: Ac.0.0413 Dec., standing in the name of Mortgagor: Sri Priyajeet Mahapatra, S/o.: Late Gopinath Mahapatra, Bounded by : Nort: Road, South: Sweeper Path, East: Basti Plot: 400, West: Rev. Plot : 174.
Borrower: Sri Jagannath Mahapatra, S/o.: Sri Gobinda Ch. Mahapatra, At: Taluchha Sahi, Near Machhahata, Dist.: Puri, Odisha / Guarantors: 1) Sri Gobinda Ch. Mohapatra, S/o. Lt. Artatrana Mohapatra, 2) Smt. Laxmi Debi, W/o: Gobinda Ch. Mohapatra, Both are at PO.: Manikarnika, Taluchha Sahi, Dist.: Puri.	Rs. 8,02,425/- as on 30.06.2015 + interests, costs and incidental expenses thereon	19.08.2015 / 30.09.2022	Equitable Mortgage of property situated at Dist.: Puri, SRO: Puri, Tahasil: Puri Tahasil No: 650, PS.: Puri Town Thana, PS. No: 10, Revenue Village: Manikarnika Sahi, Puri, Hal Khata No.: 449, Hal Plot No.: 747, Area: Ac.0.018 Dec., standing in the name of Mortgagor: Sri Gobinda Ch. Mahapatra, Bounded by: North: Artatrana Behera, South: Gouri Panda & Purna Ch. Badapanda, East: Road, West: Raghunath Mohapatra.

Place: Puri, Date: 26.11.2022

Sd/- Authorised Officer, The Puri Urban Co-operative Bank Ltd.

“Do not look behind, look always in front, at what you want to do - and you are sure of progressing.”
THE MOTHER



Spent Political Capital

The BJP government went into 2019 with a lot of energy and momentum. The electoral victory in May that year was decisive and rewarded the Prime Minister with more seats than he had secured in 2014. With the confidence of that mandate, and the idea that the people were with him on change, he began to spend the political capital he had earned. For one year, till June 2020, this continued and then it ran out of steam.

In this period of 12 months things happened, and much of the aftermath still remain with us. Let us look at how things unfolded.

On 25 July the triple talaq bill was passed in the Lok Sabha. The Supreme Court had already invalidated it earlier, but now it was made a criminal offence. This was accompanied by a series of ‘freedom of religion’ laws in BJP states banning marriage between Hindus and Muslims. These were against what was called love jihad.

A few days after that, on 5 August Article 370 was undone. This was a special moment for the BJP. On 31 August, the final National Register of Citizens was published by Assam, which had begun the process of jailing those who could not prove their ancestors had been in the state before 1971. Another triumphal moment for the BJP came a few weeks after that, on 9 November. The Supreme Court delivered the Ayodhya judgement and handed the full site over for the temple, capping a three decade movement from the BJP. The next month, on 9 December, the Citizenship Amendment Act was passed in the Lok Sabha. Readers will recall that the Home Minister had promised that it was one claw of a two-part pincer. The other being a nationwide NRC.

The peak arrived a few weeks after that with the visit of then US President Donald Trump in the Narendra Modi stadium in Ahmedabad. This was possibly the point after which the agenda seems to have been exhausted. A nationwide movement against the CAA came with global outrage at what India was doing. The pogrom in Delhi during the presidential visit showed how little control there was even in the capital.

The next month came the national lockdown which some said was the world’s most severe. It didn’t change the trajectory of COVID infections in India. A few weeks after that was the terrible sequence in Ladakh where we lost 20 soldiers and which altered the national security dynamic of India by default, shifting focus from the west and against Pakistan to the east. We do not know, and even the Foreign Minister says he is baffled, why China did what it did. On 5 June, one year after the victory came the last attempt at big change: the farm laws ordinance. The protest against them stalled the government’s momentum.

In Kashmir, having gutted Article 370, the BJP didn’t appear to know what to do next. It still doesn’t appear to know. Kashmir is the only part of South Asia to not have an elected government. It is three years since Article 370 went and four years since its Assembly was dissolved. Violence is not lower than it was in the few years before 2015 and we have seen the minority Pandits protesting about the way they have been treated.

The laws targeting minorities ran into trouble because they were not passed without application of mind. This month, a legal website ran this headline: “Madhya Pradesh Freedom Of Religion Act HC finds provision requiring inter-faith couples to declare conversion before Collector ‘Prima Facie Unconstitutional.’” Gujarat High Court also sent a judgment against the law there.

The farm laws were undone with an apology from the Prime Minister after the largest mass mobilisation this country has seen. The CAA law is now three years old but the government for some reason cannot implement it. The talk of a nationwide NRC has ended.

Finally, even on the economy, not much was possible on the positive side after this period. The government’s data showed that GDP growth slowed across nine quarters, meaning for two years and three months, beginning January 2018. The arrival of COVID and the hit the economy took masked the damage it had already sustained. The reason Bangladesh overtook India in per capita GDP was not only because India mismanaged the pandemic. Our neighbour had been catching up since 2015 and it was inevitable that unless India did something remarkable to turn around its trajectory it would be left behind, and it was. Unemployment data from the government shows joblessness has been at record highs for four years.

The BJP’s 2019 manifesto said one of the indicators of its governance was the improvement in India’s position on the World Bank’s Doing Business (previously ease of doing business) rankings. Unfortunately, this ranking was discontinued in 2020 after some countries were found manipulating the process to improve their scores.

There is not much to show on governance after that one year burst of activity. The second wave finished off any credibility on that front and it was for a reason that even someone as fond of publicity as the Prime Minister did not appear in public for 20 days.

The listlessness shows in endless political campaigning conducted without much reference to performance, only to charisma. The past is not spoken about though it has not gone away and indeed even demonetisation is being heard by the Supreme Court now though the BJP wants it to be forgotten.



Aakar Patel

The past is not spoken about though it has not gone away and indeed even demonetisation is being heard by the Supreme Court now though the BJP wants it to be forgotten

WISDOM CORNER

- “The fear of death follows from the fear of life. A man who lives fully is prepared to die at any time.” **MARK TWAIN**
- “Youth is happy because it has the ability to see beauty. Anyone who keeps the ability to see beauty never grows old.” **FRANZ KAFKA**
- “Be thankful for what you have; you’ll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don’t have, you will never, ever have enough.” **OPRAH WINFREY**

WORDSWORTH

Culprit

This is a common word with a strange genesis, arising out of an old legal abbreviation, compounded by popular etymology. When England was conquered by the Normans at the Battle of Hastings, French became the language of the law. It remained in use among lawyers even after the language of the courts changed to English in the fourteenth century, latterly in a stylised and degenerate form called law French. Fragments of law French survive even to this day in parliamentary proceedings. Culprit is another survivor. The records are sparse, but the usual explanation goes like this: if a prisoner in a medieval court pleaded not guilty to the charge, the prosecutor would respond with the words, Culpable: prest d’averer nostre bille, which may loosely be translated as “We believe him to be guilty and I am ready to prove the charge.” This was recorded in the court rolls as cul prest or cul prist. The two key words are culpable and prest. The former remains in English in the sense “deserving of blame,” ultimately from Latin culpa, blame or fault. Prest is Anglo-Norman, meaning “ready”, which survived in English until the eighteenth century, but which has become prêt in modern French (as in prêt à manger, ready to eat, or prêt à porter, ready to wear). The abbreviation cul prest became modified down the years and was somehow misunderstood very late on in the history of law French to be the way that the accused was to be addressed. It turns up first in the record of the trial in 1678 of the Earl of Pembroke for murder; he was asked: “Culprit, how will you be tried?”

FOCUS SOCIAL MEDIA

FACEBOOK FAILING SCRIBES



While these platforms have become de facto extensions of independent newsrooms, the considerations that drive their decision-making remain a mystery



Arzu Geybullina

OFTEN, TECH PLATFORMS’ CONTENT-MODERATION DECISIONS SEEM OPAQUE AND ARBITRARY

January 29, 2018, the prominent Berlin-based Azerbaijani news site Meydan TV had its Facebook page hacked for the first time. The attackers removed all admin accounts, deleted all content, and removed nearly 100,000 followers. The next hack took place May 10, 2019. This time, all of the content on Meydan TV’s Russian-language Facebook page was removed, along with two weeks’ worth of content on the site’s Azerbaijani Facebook page. The third hack, which occurred June 18, 2020, resulted in Meydan TV losing all of its Azerbaijani-language Facebook content going back to 2018.

Following these attacks, Meydan TV tried in vain to restore the removed content. But repeated attempts to communicate with Facebook were met with an automated response. Eventually, owing to third-party intervention by Access Now’s Digital Security Helpline, executives connected with a Facebook representative, who could not even provide them with clear answers about the hacks or share any details regarding the perpetrators’ identity. “These attacks prevented us from doing our job,” Meydan TV head Matt Kasper told me.

Meydan TV’s travails illustrate digital platforms’ vital role in the news ecosystems of authoritarian countries – and platforms’ carelessness about their responsibility. Journalists in Azerbaijan already face numerous offline and online threats, including intimidation and violence, unlawful detentions and arrests, frozen bank accounts, travel bans, legislative bottlenecks, government surveillance, and harassment. Tech platforms’ lack of transparency and their ignorance of national narratives and cultural nuances aggravate the risks facing small newsrooms working under repressive regimes.

Over the past ten years, an unprecedented government crackdown on civil society has caused news producers and consumers in Azerbaijan to rely on digital platforms, particularly Facebook, for news, information sharing, and critical views. The govern-

ment has blocked access to at least ten news websites since 2017, among them several leading outlets, effectively making social media the primary source of independent reporting.

At the same time, the Azerbaijani government has strengthened online repression. By using its monopoly over the country’s information-technology infrastructure, it has disrupted internet access, placed temporary bans on social media services like TikTok, launched DDoS attacks, and used various digital-surveillance tools, including the Israeli spyware Pegasus, to target and censor activists and journalists. The democracy watchdog Freedom House now considers the internet in Azerbaijan “not free.”

In February, Azerbaijan’s government enacted a restrictive media law that makes blocking news sites much easier, thus forcing more outlets like Meydan TV, one of the first websites to be banned in 2017, to rely on social media platforms to reach audiences. But while these platforms have become de facto extensions of independent newsrooms, the considerations that drive their decision-making remain a mystery. Given that journalists are already being silenced by the government, “we do not want to be silenced by the platforms, too,” says Kasper.

Often, tech platforms’ content-moderation decisions seem opaque

and arbitrary. When Meydan TV asked Facebook to remove a fake page that used its logo to target and harass current and former staffers in 2020, the platform refused to intervene because the hoax did not violate its community standards. Meanwhile, the fake page shared the names and pictures of current and former Meydan employees, falsely claiming that the outlet’s “real goal” was to tarnish Azerbaijan’s global reputation on behalf of Armenia. Once again, it took an intervention from a third party to convince Facebook to respond. But while it removed the fake page, Facebook refused to provide details on the hoaxers’ identity, maintaining in an email only that it had taken unspecified “appropriate action.”

This behaviour stands in stark contrast to Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg’s pledges to make his company – now known as Meta – more transparent and more mindful of how bad actors could abuse its platforms. Following a 2017 manifesto in which Zuckerberg highlighted Facebook’s “positive impact” on the world, company executives began to hold monthly meetings with the platform’s “most engaged” user groups to support local communities. But Meta has not shown the same commitment toward countries where authoritarian regimes are restricting civil liberties.

If Facebook is serious about being a positive force, there is no shortage of guidance it can use. Numerous international organisations have suggested similar steps to increase tech platforms’ accountability and transparency. In 2019, an Oxford-Stanford report proposed that Facebook hire more contextually-competent content reviewers, clarify the platform’s decision-making criteria, and establish an external appeals body.

Will Facebook implement these changes? The company’s response to a recent report that examined its content moderation during the 2021 conflict between Israel, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad in Gaza provides an instructive example. The report, which Meta commissioned from consulting firm BSR, found that Facebook harmed Palestinians’ human rights and freedom of expression, owing to policy errors stemming from a “lack of oversight” and insufficient understanding of local Arabic dialect and broader political dynamics. BSR recommended several steps to improve the platform’s moderation practices, such as linguistically compatible algorithms, moderators familiar with local dialects and cultural nuances, and increased oversight of outsourced moderators.

But rather than announce it would reform its policies, Meta responded to the report by asserting that its response “should not be construed as an admission, agreement with, or acceptance” of BSR’s findings or conclusions. Similarly, while the company referred to steps it has taken or plans to take, it also clarified that its response “is not intended to imply that Meta would, or will, take steps regarding” other Meta-owned platforms such as WhatsApp.

That does not bode well for organisations like Meydan TV. By engaging with local news producers and soliciting their feedback on the company’s enforcement policies, Facebook could help protect independent journalism and promote internet freedom. Sadly, it looks like the company has other goals in mind.

The writer is an Azerbaijani columnist.
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SPECTRUM ECONOMY

Not bright but a melancholy spot

With fears of a recession looming large over various countries due to the Russia-Ukraine war, the IMF recently heaped praise on India with its Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva saying that India deserves to be called a bright spot on this otherwise dark horizon because it has been a fast-growing economy, even during these difficult times.

Just a day after IMF’s acclamation, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman claimed that in a world of uncertainties, India is among very few standout performers. The Prime Minister went on boasting that India can show the way when the world is in deep crisis.

Actually, India is not a bright spot but a melancholy spot as in many indicators India is appallingly placed, and GDP growth in a particular year does not reflect the whole story. The GDP of a country is not an indicator of the well-being of people. It is just an indicator of economic activities which can be as dropped up when inequality increases and the rich consume more as private consumption constitutes nearly 60% of GDP.

Even if we scrutinise growth,

it has slowed down and decelerated during the current regime especially due to draconian demonetisation and flawed GST. India has better growth in 2021-22 because of the low base on which it was calculated and due to pent-up demand.

This supercilious claim of India being a bright spot sounds discordant, and preposterous when India is found to be a lower-middle-income country since 2008. What is disconcerting is in terms of per capita GDP, India is placed behind 141 countries and in terms of GDP (PPP), it is ranked below 127 countries. India’s macro-economic position is hobbled by rising inflation, high unemployment, low investment, declining savings, and escalating debt burden. With the rupee breaching 82 to a dollar, economists foresee a doomsday scenario for the Indian currency. About a third of the decline in foreign exchange reserves in India is because of intervention in forex markets to cushion the speed of the rupee’s fall. From the record \$642.4 billion as on September 9, 2021, India’s forex reserves fell to \$524.52 billion for the week ending Oct 21, 2022, the lowest since July 24, 2020.

The RBI’s foreign exchange reserves have declined by more than \$100 billion since Russia invaded Ukraine in late February. India’s loss of foreign exchange is the second biggest depletion among major emerging market peers during the period. In percentage terms, Thailand lost 18.3%, India 13.8%, and Russia 10.5%. India’s exports entered negative territory after a gap of about two years, declining sharply by 16.65% to \$29.78 billion in October, even as the trade deficit widened to \$26.91 billion.

The RBI failed to ensure inflation remains at 4% with a margin of 2% on either side for three consecutive quarters. Inflation reduces the purchasing power of the poor and is a forced tax. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many of those who consider themselves middle class are fighting hard to stay there, and those aspiring to get there will find it harder to do so.

In India, the unemployment rate hit a 45-year record high of 6.1% in 2017-18. Now it is revolving around 8 to 10%. This is much higher than the UK (3.7%), China (3.8%), the US (3.5%), Japan (3%), and Germany (4%). India is home to the largest number of hungry and poor people in

the world. Around 16.4% of Indians are still multi-dimensionally poor.

A study by the World Bank has concluded that nearly 80% of people who slipped into poverty in 2020 due to COVID-19 hailed from India. Similarly, 16.3% of Indians were undernourished in 2019-2021. The proportion of the population that is severely food insecure in the country has risen from 20.3% in 2018-20 to 22.3% in 2019-21. India has a level of hunger that is serious.

India is placed abysmally in all indices. India’s position in Human Development Index is 132 out of 191 countries. In the recent report of the Global Hunger Index, India ranked 107 out of 121 countries with its child-wasting rate at 19.3%, the highest in the world. In the global happiness Index, India is ranked 136 out of 146 countries.

India’s economic model is regressive – it is pro-rich/corporate and anti-people. Actually, the poor are paying more taxes than the rich as proportionate to their income. This model has helped the rich amass wealth while leading to impoverishment of the masses.

The writer is an Odisha-based economist and columnist. Views are personal.



Santosh Kumar Mohapatra

ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT MANY OF THOSE WHO CONSIDER THEMSELVES MIDDLE CLASS ARE FIGHTING HARD TO STAY THERE

Lessons from Indonesia

Sir, It is unfortunate to note that the powerful earthquake that hit Indonesia has killed over 310 people apart from leaving behind a trail of destruction out there. Firstly, immediate help should be extended to those affected. Plus, global forums like the UN should send officials to the earthquake-hit areas to take stock of the situation. Thanks to amazing seas, natural resources and panoramic vistas, Indonesia has always been a tourist attraction. It is really a setback to understand that there have been no advancements or breakthroughs in forecasting natural disasters like earthquakes despite so many such calamities. In this context, the West and Asian countries must come forward to make the most of technology to tackle natural disasters head-to-head. Above all else, governments could do better to encourage all kinds of green activities from expanding green areas to planting trees to facilitating rigorous agricultural activities like growing food crops so as to be able to save Mother Earth.

P Senthil Saravana Durai, MUMBAI

Govt in dock

Sir, The Supreme Court has wrong-footed the Centre, questioning the ‘lightning’ speed in appointing retired bureaucrat Arun Goel as Election Commissioner. It also said that not picking an EC for a six-year term violates the Chief Election Commissioner & Other Election Commissioners (Conditions of Service) Act, 1991. The top court expressed surprise that the Centre shortlisted, accepted and cleared Goel’s name within 24 hours. We believe Goel got the nod ahead of three other short-listed officers.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

Significant surge

Sir, The Sensex mounted the 62,272 peak and showed no signs of faltering. Analysts believe that a low-interest rate regime and the sustained flow of money of high net worth traders and retail investors will keep the flag flying. Amid the buoyant sentiment and increased activity, valuations have reached elevated levels and demand consistent delivery on earnings expectations. Given the rich valuations, one cannot ignore intermittent volatility. However, we expect the positive momentum to continue on the back of improving economic activity and recovery in corporate earnings and it is indeed a good sign. The market had been performing well over the last few quarters owing to huge liquidity, upward earnings cycle, economic revival owing to fading COVID-19 effect and consistent delivery on earnings expectations.

CK Subramaniam, NAVI MUMBAI

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
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national

of the day quote

Merchants of vote and coterie of casteism and communalism are emotionally exploiting certain castes and communities for their selfish political interests

The government is probing the voters' list revision controversy in an impartial manner and any officer or organisation or agency found guilty will be punished

CBI filed the chargesheet. Manish Sisodia's name is not there. CBI has given clean chit to him. CBI and ED were working day and night to frame Sisodia but could not find even an iota of evidence against him

SHORT TAKES

25 students take ill in Andhra

Amaravati: At least 25 children studying in a government school in Andhra Pradesh's Sri Sathya Sai district were taken ill after having food supplied by school authorities under the Mid-Day Meal scheme. The incident occurred in the municipal primary school in Kadiri town of the district. Of the 148 children, 121 had attended classes on Friday. The students complained that food served to them became stale. School principal Lavanya then asked the catering agency to supply fresh food to students. However, before cooking fresh food, the agency provided meals to some students. At least 25 of them took ill.

Cop, his friend molest woman

New Delhi: A 22 year-old woman was allegedly molested by a Delhi Police head constable and his friend in the national capital's Mahendra Park area. According to a senior police official, a police control room (PCR) call regarding molestation by two men was received by Mahendra Park police station on November 18. The woman alleged that head constable Anil (37) and Ravi Sharma (46), both residents of Mahendra Park area, molested her.

Three held for flying drone

Ahmedabad: The central agencies' officers have arrested three youths, who were allegedly flying a drone in a 'No Fly Zone' where Prime Minister Narendra Modi was addressing a public rally at Bavla village in Gujarat's Ahmedabad district, police said. Ahmedabad Rural District Superintendent of Police, Amit Vasava told local media that on Thursday when the Prime Minister was addressing people, a drone was spotted flying at a small distance from the podium, following which a police constable on-duty brought it down.

Teen ends life

Indore: Upset about not being able to speak English fluently, a 17-year-old girl allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself at her house in Madhya Pradesh's Indore city, police said. The incident took place in New Gaurinagar colony late on Friday night, an official said. "Shaili Kumari hanged herself in her room late on Friday night. According to the victim's sister and mother, she was taking coaching to become an air-hostess. As she was weak in English, she was attending English tuitions as well," Hiranagar police station in charge inspector Dilip Puri said.



Constitutional values like secularism, democracy and federalism are facing serious challenges in the country and hurdles are being created in realising the true federal concept of complacent states, a strong Centre and dynamic local self-governments

PINARAYI VIJAYAN | KERALA CM

WELCOME MOVE

The South Central Railway (SCR) will be operating 38 Sabarimala special trains in December and January to clear the rush of Sabarimala pilgrims



Digvijaya falls during Bharat Jodo Yatra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Manihar (MP), Nov 26: Senior Congress leader Digvijaya Singh fell while taking part in the Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Yatra near Barwaha in Madhya Pradesh's Khargone district on Saturday; the incident igniting a verbal tussle between the opposition party and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party on the condition of the state's roads. Singh was unhurt after he fell while moving towards a roadside restaurant during tea break amid the march and was immediately helped to his feet by Congress workers surrounding him, eye-witnesses said.



"Digvijaya Singh has fallen to the ground four times so far during the Bharat Jodo Yatra. However, he has fallen for the first time in Madhya Pradesh and the reason is the state also has bad roads," All India Congress Committee media in charge Jairam Ramesh told reporters.

Mocking the ruling BJP, Ramesh cited an old statement of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan claiming the roads in MP were better than Washington DC in the United States of America. "Madhya Pradesh's roads are killer roads and not better than those in Washington DC. I have saved myself from falling three times in the state due to bad roads," Ramesh claimed.

Hitting back, BJP leader Narendra Saluja tweeted the video of the incident and said the Rajya Sabha MP fell due to pushing and shoving by Congress workers rather than the road condition.

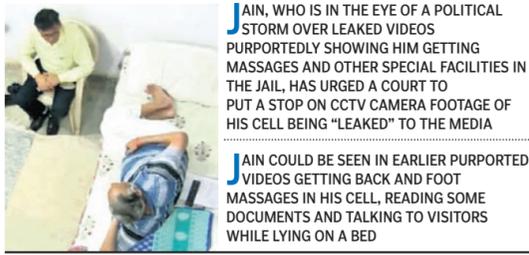
Now, new video shows Jain meeting SP of Tihar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 26: A fresh video showing Delhi minister and Aam Aadmi Party leader Satyendar Jain meeting a superintendent of the Tihar jail inside his prison cell emerged on Saturday.

Jain, who is in the eye of a political storm over leaked videos purportedly showing him getting massages and other special facilities in the jail, has urged a court here to put a stop on CCTV camera footage of his cell being "leaked" to the media. The purported video of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader meeting the jail superintendent was shared on social media by some BJP leaders.

"Have this new video of honest minister Jain. Jail superintendent's attendance in the court of jail minister at 8 pm," Delhi BJP media cell head Harish Khurana tweeted and shared the CCTV camera footage.



JAIN, WHO IS IN THE EYE OF A POLITICAL STORM OVER LEAKED VIDEOS PURPORTEDLY SHOWING HIM GETTING MESSAGES AND OTHER SPECIAL FACILITIES IN THE JAIL, HAS URGED A COURT TO PUT A STOP ON CCTV CAMERA FOOTAGE OF HIS CELL BEING "LEAKED" TO THE MEDIA

JAIN COULD BE SEEN IN EARLIER PURPORTED VIDEOS GETTING BACK AND FOOT MESSAGES IN HIS CELL, READING SOME DOCUMENTS AND TALKING TO VISITORS WHILE LYING ON A BED

Earlier this month, a Tihar jail superintendent was suspended for alleged involvement in providing "special treatment" to Jain, who is in prison since May 31 in a money laundering case registered by the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

Sources had said that the suspended officer, Ajit Kumar, was the superintendent of jail number 7 in the prison complex and was from the DANICS cadre.

Jain could be seen in earlier

purported videos getting back and foot massages in his cell, reading some documents and talking to visitors while lying on a bed. Mineral water bottles and a remote are also seen. In one video, he was seen getting a head massage while sitting on a chair.

BJP leaders had alleged that he was getting massages from a rape accused. It was also alleged by them that Jain was getting facilities inside the jail against rules. The

AAP had earlier said the BJP is trying to malign the image of Delhi Chief Minister and its national convener Arvind Kejriwal ahead of the December 4 Municipal Corporation of Delhi polls as it has no real issues to talk about.

On the message videos, the Kejriwal-led party has said Jain was receiving physiotherapy in the jail. The ED probing the money laundering charges against Jain had claimed in a court that he was getting "special treatment" inside the Tihar jail. It had also presented CCTV footage to substantiate the claim. The agency Tuesday told a Delhi court that it had no role in the alleged leakage of CCTV footage of Jain reportedly getting special treatment inside the prison cell. The jailed AAP minister had filed a plea seeking contempt proceedings against the agency for allegedly leaking the videos to the media.

4 Maoists killed in encounter

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bijapur, Nov 26: Four Maoists, including two women, were killed in an encounter with security forces in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district on Saturday, a police official said. The gunfight took place at around 7.30 am in forest near Pomra village under Mirtur police station limits when joint teams of security forces were out on an anti-Maoist operation, Inspector General of Police (Bastar Range) Sundarraj P said.

The operation involving personnel of the District Reserve Guard (DRG), the Special Task Force (STF) and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), was launched based on the inputs about the presence of Divisional Committee members of Maoists Mohan Katti and Sumitra along with 30-40 colleagues in Pomra-Hallur forest, located over 400 km away from capital Raipur, he said. When a patrolling team of the DRG was in Pomra forest, the gunfight broke out, he said.

Two jawans on poll duty killed in Gujarat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Porbandar, Nov 26: Two jawans of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) were killed and two others were injured after their colleague opened fire over some issue in a village near Porbandar in Gujarat on Saturday evening, officials said.

These jawans belong to a CRPF battalion from Manipur. They were sent here by the Election Commission ahead of the next month's Gujarat Assembly elections, said Porbandar Collector and District Election Officer, AM Sharma. Voting in the Porbandar district will be held December 1 in the first phase.

They were staying inside a cyclone centre in Tukda Gosa village, about 25 km from Porbandar. A jawan opened fire from his assault rifle on his colleagues over some unknown issue on Saturday evening. While two jawans died on the spot, two others were injured.



Students visit an exhibition at the naval dockyard as part of Navy Day celebrations in Mumbai

PTI PHOTO

Assam-Meghalaya border still tense

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati/Shillong, Nov 26: Assam continued to restrict the movement of people and private vehicles to Meghalaya for the fifth consecutive day on Saturday following violence in a disputed area along the inter-state border that led to the death of six people, police said.

On the other hand, Meghalaya has extended suspension of internet services in seven affected districts for another 48 hours from 10.30 am on Saturday. The law and order situation in the affected districts of Meghalaya is, however, slowly returning to normalcy, with shops and commercial establishments in Shillong opening and significant traffic seen on roads. No major incidents were reported in the Meghalaya capital. Only some miscreants burnt tyres on the road in West Jaintia Hills district, a police officer said. Prohibitory orders under Section 144 of CrPC, however, remained imposed in the disputed area amidst heavy deployment of security forces.

Assam police advised people from the state not to travel to Meghalaya apprehending law and



order situation. The travel advisory was issued after violence erupted in Mukroh village early on Tuesday after a truck laden with "illegally felled timber" was intercepted by Assam forest guards.

Six people -- five tribal villagers from Meghalaya and a forest guard from Assam -- were killed in the clashes that followed. "We are asking people from Assam not to travel to Meghalaya at the mo-

ment. But if someone has to go to the neighbouring state due to some emergency, we are asking him or her to go in a Meghalaya registered vehicle," a police officer said. Barricades have been erected since Tuesday in Jorabat area of Guwahati and Cachar district, the two main entry points to the hill state. Commercial vehicles, however, continued to move without

Barricades have been erected since Tuesday in Jorabat area of Guwahati and Cachar district, the two main entry points to the hill state

any restrictions. Transportation of fuel from Assam, which was suspended on Thursday by the Assam Petroleum Mazdoor Union fearing attack on tankers and crew, resumed on Friday following assurance of security by the Meghalaya government.

On the other hand, the Meghalaya government extended withdrawal of mobile internet services in West and East Jaintia Hills, East Khasi Hills, Ri-Bhoi, Eastern West Khasi Hills, West Khasi Hills and South West Khasi Hills for another 48 hours till 10.30 am on Monday, a notification issued by Home Department Principal Secretary Shakeel Ahmed said. The government said that social media and messaging apps could be misused which may lead to a breakdown of law and order.

An organisation, the Hynniewtrep Indigenous Territorial Organisation, has announced it will observe 'Red Flag Day' on Saturday and burn effigies of the chief ministers of Assam and Meghalaya in Shillong. Another organisation, Hynniewtrep Youth Council, said it will also stage a protest in Shillong demanding the arrest of the "erring" Assam personnel.

Farmers across country march to Raj Bhavans

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 26: The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), a body of farmers, Saturday organised mega foot-marches to Raj Bhavans across the country seeking a law on minimum support price (MSP) and other promises which they said were not fulfilled by the Central government.

According to a statement issued by the SKM, the protests were held at 25 state capitals, more than 300 district headquarters and numerous tehsil headquarters.

"Altogether, it is estimated that more than 3,000 protests were held all over India. More than 5 million people came out on the streets to join the 'Raj Bhavan Chalo' or 'March to Raj Bhavan' call of SKM, to register their protest against the anti-farmer BJP-led Central government," it stated.

Gathering of farmers was witnessed in Chandigarh, Lucknow, Patna, Kolkata, Thiruvananthapuram, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bhopal, Jaipur and many other state capitals.

The SKM demands also included implementation of the recom-



mendations made by the Swaminathan Commission, withdrawal of the Electricity Amendment Bill, allocation of land at Singhu border for setting up a memorial for the farmers who died during the protest.

The SKM also demanded dismissal and legal action against Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Ajay Mishra Tani, whose son was accused of running over protesting farmers at Lakhimpur Kheri. On November 26, 2020, the farmers had launched the one-year long 'March to Delhi' protest.

"The nationwide 'March to Raj Bhavans' today on November 26 marks the beginning of the next phase of the farmers' protest," the SKM said.

MCD polls: BJP has max millionaire candidates, claims report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 26: The BJP has the highest number of millionaire candidates in the fray for the December 4 Municipal Corporation of Delhi polls, followed by the AAP and the Congress, according to a report by Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR).

Of the top three richest candidates, two from the BJP and one from the AAP. Three candidates from the AAP have the highest amount of liabilities while two independent candidates have declared zero assets. Another independent candidate, a Congress

nominee and a BSP candidate have the lowest assets, the report said.

It said 162 (65 per cent) out of the 249 candidates analysed from the BJP, 148 (60 per cent) out of 248 from the AAP and 107 (44 per cent) out of 245 candidates analysed from the Congress have declared assets valued more than ₹1 crore.

The report said the average assets per candidate contesting the elections this time is ₹2.27 crore. In the 2017 polls to the civic body, the average assets per candidate for 2,315 candidates was ₹1.61 crore.

Among major parties, the average assets per candidate for 249 BJP candidates analysed is ₹4.04



crore, 248 AAP candidates analysed is ₹3.74 crore and 245 Congress candidates have average assets worth ₹1.98 crore, it said. BJP's Ram Dev Sharma, who is

contesting from the 79-Ballimaran ward, has declared total assets worth over ₹66 crore. Nandini Sharma, who is representing the party from 149-Malviya Nagar

ward, has declared assets over ₹49.84 crore, while Jitender Bansala, AAP nominee from 248-Karawal Nagar, has showed assets worth over ₹48.27 crore in their affidavits.

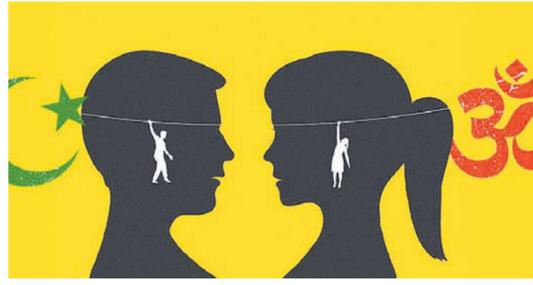
According to the report, 643 (48 per cent) of the candidates have declared liabilities. The AAP's candidates from 53-Rohini-E, 98-Subhash Nagar, 146-Amar Colony -- Kuldip Mittal, Manju Setia and Jitender Kumar -- have the highest liabilities among all the candidates at over 15.43 crore, 10.94 crore and 10.07 crore, respectively.

Out of 1,336 candidates, whose affidavits were analysed by the

ADR, 556 are millionaires. Among the top 10 richest candidates, there are no Congress nominees, while there are five BJP candidates, three AAP candidates and two independents.

This year, 1,349 candidates are contesting the MCD elections, which will be held on December 4. Out of these, 1,336 candidates' self-sworn affidavits were analysed by the ADR and Delhi Election Watch. The ADR was not able to analyse 13 candidates as their affidavits were either badly scanned or complete details were not uploaded on the Delhi State Election Commission website.

UP anti-conversion law enables police to push BJP's 'love jihad policy'



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Nov 26: It was in mid-2020 that nearly half a dozen cases related to inter-faith relationships gone wrong, were reported in Uttar Pradesh.

Alarmed at the trend, UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath decided to bring in a law that would check such cases and by November 2020, the Prohibition of Unlawful Religious Conversion Act came into force through an ordinance.

The Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Religious Conversion Bill, 2021, was passed after a voice vote in the state assembly in February 2021.

The Act has a provision of up to 10 years imprisonment for a person found guilty under the Unlawful Religious Conversion Act, depending on the seriousness of the offence. Further, the guilty may be fined from Rs 15,000 to Rs 50,000.

In the Act, there is a provision of three to 10 years imprisonment for the conversion of minors and women of the SC/ST community. Under this Act, any couple intending to solemnise an inter-faith marriage has to inform the district magistrate two months before getting married.

According to the law, if the only purpose of marriage is to convert the woman, then such marriages will be considered illegal.

The bill allows action against conversions through marriage, deceit, coercion or enticement.

This, without doubt, gives the police unlimited powers which, going by past history, will in all probability be abused.

It is well known that the police in India have been acting as the hatchet men of the ruling party. What prevents the police from fabricating an intelligence report that a proposed conversion violates the provisions of this law? The onus will then be on the affected party to move the high court and fight a long and expensive legal battle.

Section 12 of the UP law is also 'amusing'. The burden of proof that the conversion was 'lawful' lies on the person who has 'caused' the conversion. They do not bother to ask the person who has converted - his or her opinion does not matter at all. The government

seems to be more interested in prosecuting and harassing the 'convertor'.

According to official sources, in the past two years, more than 500 accused have been arrested after the registration of 291 cases so far in Uttar Pradesh. The trial in all these cases is pending in the courts.

As many as 59 of the total 291 cases are related to the conversion of minors. As per available data, the victims in 150 of the total 291 cases in their statements informed the court that they had been forced to convert.

The maximum number of cases have been registered in Bareilly district.

Significantly, the anti-conversion law is the manifestation of a promise made by chief minister Yogi Adityanath shortly after he took over as UP chief minister.

The chief minister had promised to stop love jihad - a conspiracy theory espoused by right-wing Hindu activists, alleging that Hindu women were being forcibly converted by Muslims through marriage.

The love jihad theory politically suits the BJP which has reaped rich dividends through its Hindutva plank.

Even though there have been reports of Muslims being targeted unnecessarily, the opposition parties have not gathered the courage to raise their voices against the law because they stand the risk of being termed anti-Hindu.

The BJP has played its cards well on the love jihad issue. Police excesses have largely gone unreported because the opposition parties have not touched the subject for the fear of losing out on Hindu votes. Fringe right-wing outfits are taking advantage of the situation by openly targeting the accused - Muslims in this case, says a senior political analyst.

A senior Samajwadi leader, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said that the anti-conversion law was being used to promote the concept of love jihad which has been floated by the ruling BJP.

The police are working as a tool in such cases. Action is immediately taken in such cases and it is only much later that the accused is found to be innocent but, by then, the damage has been done, he said.

J&K ELECTORAL ROLLS 'Clandestine approach to add outsiders'

THE FINAL ELECTORAL ROLLS OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR WERE PUBLISHED FRIDAY WITH THE HIGHEST-EVER ADDITION OF 11.28 LAKH NEW VOTERS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Nov 26: A day after the final electoral rolls of Jammu and Kashmir were published, some experts and political parties Saturday questioned the record addition of over 11 lakh voters to the list, saying it appears that authorities adopted a clandestine approach to add outsiders to the list.

Out of the 11 lakh new voters, 3 lakh are first-time voters. Eight lakh new voters across different assembly segments can change the total vote bank equilibrium in favour of the ruling party, political expert AN Sadhu said.

CPI(M) leader MY Tarigami said non-BJP parties have formed a committee to discuss the issue.

The final electoral rolls of Jammu and Kashmir were published Friday with the highest-ever addition of 11.28 lakh new voters. Taking into account the deletion of names from the electoral rolls, the net increase stood at 7,72,872, a 10.19 per cent increase in registered electors over the draft roll, Joint Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Jammu and Kashmir Anil Salgotra had said.

The release of the electoral rolls paves the way for holding assembly polls in the union territory, the first since Jammu and Kashmir's special status under Article 370 of

the Constitution was abrogated and the state was bifurcated into union territories in 2019.

Political expert Sadhu said this sudden increase in the number of new voters is a matter of concern.

Out of the over 11 lakh new voters added to the electoral rolls, 3 lakh are first-time voters. But what about the remaining over 8 lakh new voters, he asked.

Eight lakh voters in different assembly segments can change the total vote bank equilibrium in favour of the ruling party and affect prospects of regional parties, he added. Sadhu said the authorities appear to have adopted a clandestine approach to add those from outside Jammu and Kashmir to the electoral rolls.

The number of voters added in the latest special summary revision of electoral rolls is much higher than in previous exercises.

According to a Jammu and Kashmir election department statement, 11,40,768 claims were received for inclusion in the electoral rolls and 11,28,672 were accepted. The accepted claims included 3,01,961 in the age group of 18-19, the statement said.

An analysis of the official data showed that 6.55 lakh new voters were added to the electoral rolls of Jammu and Kashmir during the five-year gap between parliamen-

tary elections in 1984 and 1989 and 5.62 lakh between 1996 and 1999 Lok Sabha elections.

As many as 11 lakh voters were added during the 1999-2004 period, 3,80,549 between 2004 and 2009, 4,87,778 between 2009 and 2014, and 6,33,290 between 2014 and 2019.

However, the addition of 11,28,672 new voters in the latest special summary of electoral rolls comes after a period of three years - from 2019 to 2022. The number of new voters added to the electoral rolls ahead of the 1996 assembly elections - conducted after over six years of Governor's rule in the erstwhile state following the eruption of militancy - stood at 4,76,195, the data revealed.

Over 12 lakh new voters were added between 1996 and 2002, 2.96 lakh between 2002 and 2008 and 7.13 lakh from 2008-2014, it showed.

Senior CPI(M) Tarigami said apprehensions raised by remarks of officials about outsiders being added to Jammu and Kashmir's electoral rolls seem to have come true. He was referring to the statement made by former Jammu and Kashmir chief electoral officer Hirdesh Kumar in August that the Union Territory is likely to get around 25 lakh additional voters, including outsiders, after the special summary revision of electoral rolls. "All non-BJP parties have



formed a committee to look into all the issues. We hope to deliberate on these issues soon and come out with our responses," Tarigami said. The Centre, particularly the chief electoral officer, should take all measures to address any apprehensions regarding the process and ensure fairness of the electoral exercise.

The Jammu and Kashmir Congress had spoken in the same vein Friday. Our apprehension that some non-eligible voters have been added from outside Jammu and Kashmir as per announcement appears to be true, Jammu and Kashmir Congress chief spokesperson Ravinder Sharma had said.

Apni Party general secretary Vijay Bakaya said on Saturday that the big jump in the number of voters is because of 2011 being the cut-off date and those eligible to vote over the past 10 years seem to have enrolled. However, the party will deliberate on it, he said.

The Jammu and Kashmir election department also deleted 4.12 lakh voters from the rolls.

A total of 4,12,157 requests for deletion were received, out of which 3,58,222 were accepted and 53,935 were rejected, Joint CEO Salgotra had said. The final electoral rolls have a total of 83,59,771 electors, including 42,91,687 males, 40,67,900 females and 184 third gender, he had said.



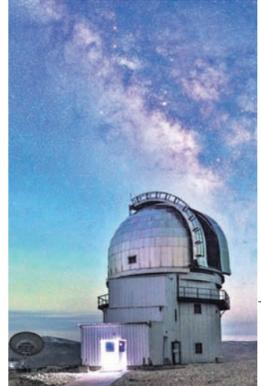
BYOPOLL BONHOMIE: Samajwadi Party leader Dimple Yadav interacts with school students during her campaign for Mainpuri by-elections, Saturday. PTI PHOTO

'Work on India's 1st ever Night Sky Sanctuary in full swing'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Nov 26: The work on India's first-ever Night Sky Sanctuary, being set up by CSIR under Union Ministry of Science & Technology, in Ladakh's Hanle is going on in full swing and shall be complete in over a month's time, an official said Friday.

The Night Sky Sanctuary will attract tourists from across the world over to picturesque Ladakh and also boost astro-tourism in the region. It came out as Jitendra Singh, MoS, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions as Lt. Governor of Ladakh, R.K. Mathur called on him at North Block Friday. The two leaders also discussed a wide range of development related issues pertaining to the Union Territory. RK Mathur apprised the Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh about the Rozgar Mela held October 31 in Ladakh where the UT Administration gave away appointment letters to around 1,000 local youth, furthering the call of PM Narendra Modi to give jobs to the deserving youth of the country. In a unique and first-of-its-kind



initiative, the Department of Science & Technology (DST), has undertaken to set up India's first ever 'Night Sky Sanctuary' in Ladakh. The proposed Dark Sky Reserve will be located at Hanle in Ladakh as a part of Changthang Wildlife Sanctuary. It will boost Astro tourism in India and will be one of the world's highest-located sites for optical, infrared, and gamma-ray telescopes.

Heritage week in Taj city ends but locals oblivious

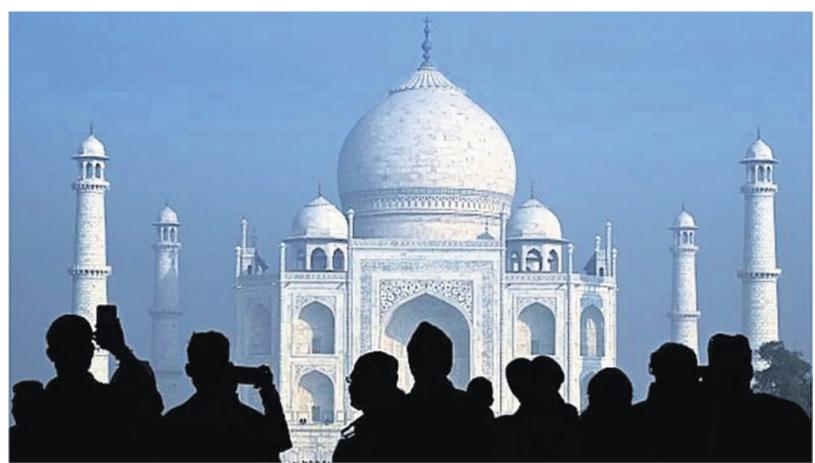
THE 17TH CENTURY MONUMENT OF LOVE -- TAJ MAHAL -- CONTINUES TO ATTRACT LAKHS OF TOURISTS ANNUALLY, BUT THE OTHER LESSER KNOWN MONUMENTS IN THE CITY HAVE NOT BECOME POPULAR

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Agra, Nov 26: The annual ritual of celebrating a heritage week in Agra, by the Archaeological Survey of India, ended without the locals knowing what it meant and why it was celebrated.

Pandit Jugal Kishore of the River Connect Campaign, said, "Most Mughal monuments in Agra, including the Fort and the Taj Mahal, are situated along the river Yamuna which is stinking with pollution. For us Yamuna is the real heritage of Agra, though in a pathetic condition due to continued neglect."

Environmentalist Devashish Bhattacharya said the ASI should have proactively used the opportunity to sensitise the local population about the importance of heritage and the contribution each



citizen could make to conserve our precious heritage. But the ASI did nothing. "They are still dragging their feet in conserving the pre-historic cave paintings, near Fatehpur Sikri, though I have been making concerted efforts for the past five years. They don't realise the urgency. Elsewhere in the city, the heritage structures are not being properly looked after."

Once the tourists have seen the Taj Mahal, they go ecstatic with joy, after a dream fulfilled. A young girl from France said, "Wow! Just like the picture postcard I saw, in fact much more hypnotisingly beautiful than I had imagined." After a series of mudpack 'beauty treat-

ments', the Taj wears a dazzling shine.

"In the soft winter sunshine, flanked by green foliage and the river Yamuna flowing majestically at the rear, the scene is plain heavenly," said a tourist from Tamil Nadu, who saw the monument for the first time.

The monuments in Agra, except for the Taj Mahal, are victims of rampant encroachments, dwarfing the structures. The cultural activists blamed the Archaeological Survey of India for not doing enough to emotionally bond the local population with the rich historical heritage of the city.

It is sad and unfortunate that

the public in Agra hardly feel a sense of pride or emotional connect with some of the world's best architectural properties. Rather, the heritage is seen as an impediment in the economic development of the city, largely due to a series of restrictions imposed by the Supreme Court to control pollution, said Sonal Mittal Singh of the Braj Mandal Heritage Conservation Society. This perhaps explains the general apathy towards history and heritage in Agra, she added.

Local conservationists say, "The mandarins in ASI, mostly passionless babus, have little idea about history, culture or modern-day conservational practices."

Percentage of working women higher in J&K than nat'l average

Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) report states the rate of working women in Jammu and Kashmir was 26.5 per cent in 2018-19, which has now increased to 32.8 per cent in 2021, while the rate at the national level is 25.1 per cent

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, Nov 26: In Jammu and Kashmir, women are no longer behind men in terms of employment, as the women are also taking advantage of the available employment opportunities.

According to a recent report by the government, the participation of women in the labour force has increased in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) report states the rate of working women in Jammu and Kashmir was 26.5 per cent in 2018-19, which has now increased to 32.8 per cent in 2021, while the rate at the national level is 25.1 per cent.

According to the report, the LFPR of women in the villages of Jammu and Kashmir is higher than in the towns.

At least 35.3 per cent of women in villages and 22.3 per cent of women in towns work as labourers. The number of working women between 15 and 59 years has increased to 46.8 per cent, which was 36.3 per cent in 2018-19.

The most interesting thing is that more and more women are

joining business to support their families and become financially independent. One of the reasons for this is that the government has also started many schemes to make women employable. Last year, women established 3,933 micro small medium enterprise units.

Among the schemes run by the government is 'Hosla', a comprehensive programme encouraging women in Jammu and Kashmir to start their own businesses, under which financial support of up to Rs 50,000 is given.

The Jammu and Kashmir government is also helping women under the Tejaswani scheme. Lt. Governor Manoj Sinha introduced the programme in June 2021.

The main objective of this start-up funding programme is to empower and establish young women and girls in Jammu and Kashmir as independent company owners. The programme allows women business owners to avail financial assistance of up to Rs 5 lakh from J&K Bank under the Mudra programme.

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of the day quote

I do not need to show my palm to any astrologer. There has to be strength in your wrists to change the lines on the palm, and that strength was given to us by Balasaheb Thackeray and Anand Dighe

Security personnel who sacrificed everything to protect India are the pride of our country. My humble tributes to the brave soldiers and common people who were martyred in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack

The farmers were upbeat for advance sowing of rabi crops due to good rainfall this year but this has been adversely affected by the shortage of fertilizers in several districts of the state

SHORT TAKES

Tigress found dead

Bhopal: A tigress was found dead with injury marks in a forest of Madhya Pradesh's Raisen district, a forest official said Saturday. According to the forest department, the carcass of a tigress, aged around five years, was found in Garhi forest range on Thursday. Madhya Pradesh principal chief conservator of forest (Wildlife) J S Chauhan confirmed the feline's death and said a photograph of the carcass showed injury marks. The post-mortem report will reveal the exact cause of death, he said.

Cop thrashed, robbed in Raj

Jaipur: Three unidentified miscreants allegedly thrashed and robbed a 34-year-old police constable posted in the anti-terrorist squad here on Friday, officials said Saturday. Sunil Kumar took an e-rickshaw near Gurudwara mod to go to Adarsh Nagar. The accused were already sitting in the e-rickshaw and threatened the constable with a knife, Station House Officer, Adarsh Nagar, Sajjan Kaviya said. The accused hit the constable and snatched his mobile phone, wallet which had Rs 5,000 cash and ATM card, and left him at Jagatpura, police said. Kaviya said an FIR has been registered in this connection.

Priest burnt by miscreants dies

Jaipur: An elderly priest, who after being burnt by a group of miscreants was undergoing treatment at a hospital in Udaipur, succumbed to his injuries Saturday, police said. According to police, Navratan Prajapat (72) and his wife sustained burn injuries when a group of around 10 people allegedly hurled a petrol bomb at him in the Rajsamand district last Sunday. The attack took place in the Heera ki Basti area where Prajapat was having dinner in a small accommodation he shares with his wife and son, they said.

Balloon from Pak recovered

Ferozpur: BSF troops Saturday recovered a cartoon character-shaped balloon which entered the Indian territory from Pakistan's side, officials said. The balloon was found near Bahadur Ke border outpost in Guruharsahai by troops of the Border Security Force's 160 battalion, they said. According to the officials, a Pakistani currency note of rupees 10 and a piece of paper with a mobile number written on it were found attached to the balloon.



Those who planned and oversaw the 26/11 terror strikes in Mumbai must be brought to justice. Terrorism threatens humanity

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

MAMATA TO BE HONOURED

St Xavier's University in Kolkata will confer an honorary DLitt on West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for her contribution towards higher education in the state



Owaisi slams Shah for 2002 remark

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, Nov 26: All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) chief Asaduddin Owaisi has hit out at Union Home Minister Amit Shah over his "BJP taught perpetrators of violence a lesson in 2002" remark, saying nobody stays in power forever.

Owaisi also accused Shah of being intoxicated with power. Addressing an election rally in Gujarat on Friday, Shah had said that anti-social elements stopped indulging in violence after they were "taught a lesson" in 2002 and that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) established "permanent peace" in the state. Parts of Gujarat had witnessed large-scale violence in 2002 following the train burning incident at Godhra railway station in February that year.

Owaisi, who was speaking at a rally in Muslim-dominated Juhapura area in Ahmedabad on Friday evening, hours after Shah's remarks, said the lessons that the BJP leader taught was that "rapists of Bilkis Bano will be freed".

"I would like to tell you that the lesson that you taught in 2002 was that you will acquit those who murdered the three-year-old baby of Bilkis Bano; you taught the lesson that you will acquit those who murdered the three-year-old baby of Bilkis Bano in front of her," the



I would like to tell you that the lesson that you taught in 2002 was that you will acquit the rapists of Bilkis Bano; you taught the lesson that you will acquit those who murdered the three-year-old baby of Bilkis Bano in front of her

ASADUDDIN OWAISI | AIMIM CHIEF

AIMIM chief said.

"Along with this lesson, you taught that Ehsan Jafri will be murdered. You taught the lesson of Gulberg Society and Best Bakery," he said, invoking the post-Godhra riots cases in which several Muslims, including Jafri who was then a Congress MP, were killed.

All 11 convicts sentenced to life imprisonment in the 2002 post-Godhra Bilkis Bano gang-rape case walked out of the Godhra sub-jail

on Augusts 15 this year after the Gujarat government allowed their release under its remission policy.

In 2008, a special court in Mumbai had sentenced the 11 accused to life imprisonment on charges of Bilkis Bano's gang-rape and murder of seven of her family members during the communal riots triggered by the torching of a coach of Sabarmati Express by a mob near Godhra station on February 27, 2002.

Owaisi further said that one

should not forget that power does not stay with one forever. "You talk about teaching a lesson, but people in power forget that power never remains with anyone forever...It will not stay with anyone forever, it will be snatched some day. Drunk to power, the home minister talks about teaching a lesson," the Hyderabad MP said.

"What lesson did you teach that brought disrepute to the entire country? Amit Shah, what kind of lesson did you teach that caused riots in Delhi?" he further asked. He said peace becomes stronger when justice is meted out to those who are wronged.

"During the Congress rule in Gujarat (before 1995), communal riots were rampant. Congress used to incite people of different communities and castes to fight against each other. Through such riots, Congress had strengthened its vote bank and did injustice to a large section of the society," Shah had said in his election rally at Mahuda in Kheda district.

"But after they were taught a lesson in 2002, these elements left that path (of violence). They refrained from indulging in violence from 2002 till 2022. BJP has established permanent peace in Gujarat by taking strict action against those who used to indulge in communal violence," the Union minister had said.

Stopped from smoking, man shoots worker

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gurugram, Nov 26: An unidentified man allegedly fired a shot at a worker after he was not allowed to smoke a cigarette inside a convenience store in Gurugram, police said Saturday.

The man entered the 24-hour convenience store in Sector 22 with a cigarette in his hand around 4 am on Friday. When the security guard requested him not to smoke inside, he abused the staff, according to a complaint.

The man scolded the staff and demanded that someone come with him to place the purchased goods in his vehicle, which was parked outside the store, security manager Rupendra Singh said. When the goods were being placed in the vehicle, the man started loading his pistol suddenly and fired at store associate Ashish, who managed to narrowly escape.



The man claimed that the store workers insulted him by stopping from smoking inside and fled from the spot in his vehicle, the complaint stated. An FIR has been registered at the Palam Vihar police station under Section 307 (attempt to murder) of the Indian Penal Code.

The entire act was captured in the CCTV footage and police are trying to identify the suspect with the help of the vehicle's registration number; investigating officer Ashok Kumar said. "The suspect will be arrested as soon as possible," Kumar added.



Sikh devotees show their 'Gatka' martial art skills during a 'nagar kirtan' ahead of martyrdom day of Guru Tegh Bahadur, in Amritsar

Teacher uses power drill to punish student

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kanpur, Nov 26: In a shocking incident, a school teacher of a government school in the Prem Nagar area in Kanpur allegedly used a power drill to "punish" a nine-year-old student and ended up injuring the minor boy.

The teacher was irked because the boy was unable to recite a mathematics table. Reports said that the accused instructor was over-seeing some repair work at the library when he found a student passing by and asked him to recite the table of 2. When the boy failed to do so, the instructor picked up the power-operated hand drill and ended up injuring the minor boy.

The incident took place on Thursday and came to light on

Friday, when the parents of the student staged a protest outside the school.

The Basic Shiksha Adhikari (Education officer) reached the spot and removed the instructor, identified as Anuj Pandey.

He formed a three-member committee to probe the incident. The student told reporters that Anuj asked him to recite the table of two, and when he could not recite it, he operated a drill machine in his left hand. A fellow student standing nearby, removed the plug of the drill machine but by then, the students had been injured.

After the student suffered injuries, the school teachers gave him minor treatment and sent him home. The teachers, however, did not bring the incident to the knowledge of seniors.

Aaftab sent to 13-day judicial custody

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 26: A Delhi Court Saturday sent Aaftab Amin Poonawala, accused of killing his live-in partner and chopping her body into 35 pieces in south Delhi's Mehrauli, to judicial custody for 13 days, police said.

Police have initiated the legal process for production of the accused for further proceedings in the polygraph test. Special Commissioner of Police (Law and Order, Zone II) Sagar Preet Hooda said.

Poonawala allegedly strangled his live-in partner Shraddha Walkar, 27, and sawed her body into 35 pieces, which he kept in a 300-litre fridge for almost three weeks at his Mehrauli residence, before dumping those across the city over several days.

The polygraph test on Poonawala went on for nearly three hours on

India moving ahead with force, says PM



President Droupadi Murmu with Chief Justice of India Justice D.Y. Chandrachud during the Constitution Day celebrations organised by the Supreme Court, in New Delhi, Saturday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 26: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday said that be it people or institutions "our responsibilities" should be "our first priority" to take the nation to greater heights as it marches ahead towards the centenary of its independence.

In his inaugural address at the Constitution Day celebrations in the Supreme Court premises, Modi also said that defying initial apprehensions about its stability, India is moving ahead with full force and taking pride in its diversity. He also launched new initiatives under the e-court project, which provide services to litigants, lawyers and the judiciary through information and communication technology enabled courts.

The initiatives included 'virtual justice clock', 'JustIS' mobile app 2.0, digital court and 'S3WaaS' websites. The Constitution Day celebrations also saw President Droupadi Murmu stressing that the legislature, the executive and the judiciary need to have "one thinking" for the country and its people.

Quoting Mahatma Gandhi, Modi said the fundamental rights are those responsibilities that should be fulfilled by citizens with utmost dedication and true integrity. The Constitution Day celebrations were attended by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud, Law Minister Kiren Rijiju, judges of the Supreme Court, Attorney General R Venkataramani, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta and president of the Supreme Court Bar Association Vikas Singh.

Rijiju said the government is

doing everything possible to strengthen the judicial system and has a "very close, cordial relationship" with the judiciary. The remarks come close on the heels of the minister attacking the Collegium system of appointment of judges and describing it as something "alien" to the Constitution.

CJ Chandrachud asserted that technology must be augmented with institutional reforms to resolve issues of access to justice, and it is essential to simplify the litigation process and make it "citizen centric".

He said the judiciary has been adopting technology to improve the working of courts and it is of "supreme importance" that courts are remodelled to reach out to citizens instead of them reaching out to courts in their quest for justice.

Justice Chandrachud said the legislature and the executive "must enable" the practice of democratic ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity besides the courts sustaining these values by "foregrounding" them in their judicial decisions.

Venkataramani stressed on the need to decongest the Supreme Court and said it is important that the government stops overloading it with endless statutory appeals and huge flow of cases from high courts. He said there is a need to have a litigation policy for the government so that every matter does not become a matter of litigation.

Meanwhile, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge hit out at the government alleging that the Constitution faces an existential crisis and India is no longer a collaborative federal nation.



Police have initiated the legal process for production of the accused for further proceedings in the polygraph test, Special Commissioner of Police (Law and Order, Zone II) Sagar Preet Hooda said

Friday at the Forensic Science Laboratory here. Poonawala reached the FSL at Rohini here for his third session of the polygraph test at 4 pm and left after 6:30 pm, police said.

Poonawala's four-day police remand expired on Saturday. The accused was arrested on November

12 and sent to five-day police custody which was further extended for another five days on November 17. On Tuesday, he was sent to four more days of police custody. The Delhi Police had seized five knives from Poonawala's flat and sent them to FSL to ascertain if they were used in the crime.

Double standards of nations block justice for 26/11 victims

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Nov 26: Fourteen years after a series of terror attacks claimed 160 lives and left over 300 injured in Mumbai, 'complete justice' still eludes the victims as many conspirators of the three-day onslaught still remain unpunished.

There are some countries which often try to cover up the nefarious activities of Pakistan. After the attack on November 26, 2008, India provided Pakistan with sufficient evidence on accused Ajmal Kasab and David Coleman Headley, which revealed how Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) were closely linked.

India also provided documents of dialogue exchanged between LeT and ISI, but Pakistan did not take cognisance of the same. India played an audio clip of Pakistan-based terrorist Sajid Mir at a UN counter-terrorism meeting in October, detailing Pakistan's role in the terror attacks.

In the audio clip, Mir can be heard giving instructions to the terrorists during the onslaught. All the elaborate meetings have borne no fruits, since all steps taken to control it seem like a facade put up by the authorities. An example of this is the recent removal of Pakistan from Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) grey list, following which



Students pay tribute to 26/11 Mumbai terror attack victims on its 14th anniversary in Jammu

an increase was recorded in the activities of Pakistani terrorists.

The country has been accused of money laundering and terror financing. Pakistan was given a big relief despite India opposing its removal from the list. A recent statement by India's Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar at the United Nations meeting also portrays that a lot remains to be done at the global level regarding terrorism.

Jaishankar said that the main conspirators and planners of the 26/11 terror attacks were safe and had not been punished. He said that when it came to banning certain terrorists, the UN Security Council (UNSC) was regrettably

unable to act for political reasons.

China has often been seen leaving no chance to save terrorists dedicated to Pakistan from global forums. Recently, China vetoed the joint proposal by India-US to include LeT terrorist Hafiz Talha Saeed, in the UNSC's 1267 global terrorists' list.

Talha Saeed is the son of LeT Chief and Mumbai attacks mastermind, Hafiz Saeed. Earlier, China had vetoed India-US proposal to include LeT terrorist Shahid Mehmood, in the UN's list of global terrorists.

China has obstructed India's efforts to stop terrorism several times.

international



China would be willing to work together with North Korea for regional and global peace, stability and prosperity
XI JINPING | PRESIDENT, CHINA

HEART SURGERY IN DARK

A dramatic video showing a team of Ukrainian surgeons performing heart surgery on a child in a dark Kyiv hospital after Russian missiles knocked out power in the capital city is going viral on social media. The nearly 2-minute-long video received over 15,000 views on Twitter



of the day quote

The Russians will pay for all of the victims of the Holodomor and answer for today's crimes
ANDRIY YERMAK | HEAD OF PRESIDENTIAL ADMINISTRATION, UKRAINE

We will not be part of this system. We have decided to quit all the assemblies and get out of this corrupt system
IMRAN KHAN | FORMER PREMIER, PAKISTAN

I remember vividly the courage of India and of the people of Mumbai and there is not one minute in which we do not benefit from the strategic partnership that was forged between us, among other things, on that horrible day
ALON USHPIZ | FOREIGN MINISTRY'S DIRECTOR GENERAL, ISRAEL

UKRAINE MARKS STALIN-ERA FAMINE

In November 1932, Soviet leader Stalin dispatched police to seize all grain and livestock from newly collectivised Ukrainian farms, including the seed needed to plant the next crop. Millions of Ukrainian peasants starved to death in the following months from what Yale University historian Timothy Snyder calls "clearly premeditated mass murder"

REUTERS

Kyiv, Nov 26: Ukraine accused the Kremlin Saturday of using the same "genocidal" tactics that it used against it in the 1930s under Josef Stalin as Kyiv commemorated a Soviet-era famine that left millions of Ukrainians dead during the winter of 1932-33.

Ukraine this year holds its memorial day for the victims of the "Holodomor" famine as it grapples to repel invading Russian forces and deals with massive power outages across the country after waves of Russian air strikes on vital infrastructure. Russia has targeted critical infrastructure across Ukraine in recent weeks through waves of massive air strikes that have sparked widespread power outages and killed civilians.

The Kremlin has denied that its attacks, which have only galvanized Ukrainian public anger, were aimed at civilians but said Thursday Kyiv could "end the suffering" by meeting Russia's demands to resolve the war. In a statement Saturday, Ukraine's

WAR RAGES ON

POWER CUTS

Ukrainian authorities are gradually restoring power, aided by the reconnection of the country's four nuclear plants, but millions of people are still without heat or electricity after the most devastating Russian air strikes of the war.

CONFLICT

Russia is likely removing nuclear warheads from ageing nuclear cruise missiles and firing unarmed munitions at Ukraine, Britain's military intelligence said. Whatever Russia's intent, this improvisation highlights the level of depletion in Russia's stock of long range missiles, the Defence Ministry said.

OIL

A meeting of European Union government representatives, scheduled for Friday evening to discuss a Group of Seven proposal to cap Russian seaborne oil prices, was cancelled, diplomats said. EU governments were split on the level at which to cap Russian oil prices to curb Moscow's ability to pay for its war in Ukraine without causing a global oil supply shock.

foreign ministry accused Moscow of reviving the tactics of the 1930s.

"On the 90th anniversary of the 1932-1933 Holodomor in Ukraine, Russia's genocidal war of aggression pursues the same goal as during the 1932-1933 genocide: the elimination of the Ukrainian nation and its statehood," it said. "The political and ideological narratives of the Stalinist era, in

particular presenting the image of the so-called 'hostile West' and the denial of the existence of Ukraine as an independent state, are actively reproduced today," the statement added.

Ukraine was a part of the Soviet Union until it declared independence in 1991. Part of Russian President Vladimir Putin's justification for the invasion he launched



ONCE THEY WANTED TO DESTROY US WITH HUNGER, NOW - WITH DARKNESS AND COLD. WE CANNOT BE BROKEN

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYI | PRESIDENT, UKRAINE

February 24 was what he portrayed as the West's efforts to bring Ukraine into its fold, which he presented as a threat to Russia.

The ministry also slammed what it said were Russia's current at-

tempts to weaponize food by undermining a UN-brokered deal to unblock Ukrainian grain exports through the Black Sea.

Russia's ambassador to Turkey said Friday that Moscow sends its

representatives to more ship inspections in Istanbul per day than mandated under the Black Sea grain deal, rejecting a Ukrainian accusation that Russia is slowing down the process.

SHORT TAKES

Energy crisis plan

Berlin: Germany and France have pledged to provide each other mutual support in preventing a possible energy crisis after supplies from Russia dried up amid the war in Ukraine. As part of a joint agreement signed by German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and French Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne Friday, Germany will provide France with electricity while getting much-needed natural gas in return. "Friends help each other in need," Scholz said after the signing ceremony in Berlin.

China ignores India

Beijing: China held a meeting this week with 19 countries from the Indian Ocean region in which India was conspicuously absent. The China International Development Cooperation Agency, an organisation connected with the Chinese Foreign Ministry held a meeting of the China-Indian Ocean Region Forum on Development Cooperation November 21, in which 19 countries took part, according to a press release issued by the organisation.

Pak's new warship

Islamabad: Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan have jointly inaugurated a corvette warship built by Turkey for the Pakistani Navy under a strategic cooperation project, a media report said Saturday. Sharif, who along with a delegation of ministers and officials is on a two-day visit to Turkey at the invitation of the Turkish President, during the inauguration Friday said that the launch of PNS Khyber represents the deepening of defence cooperation between the two nations.

RARE STIRS ERUPT DECRYING LOCKDOWNS

Covid shadow blankets China

Videos showed people in a plaza singing China's national anthem with its lyric, "Rise up, those who refuse to be slaves!" while others shouted that they wanted to be released from lockdowns

REUTERS

Beijing, Nov 26: Public anger in China towards widening Covid-19 lockdowns across the country erupted into rare protests in China's far western Xinjiang region and the country's capital of Beijing, as nationwide infections set another record.

Crowds took to the streets Friday night in Xinjiang's capital of Urumqi, chanting "End the lockdown!" and pumping their fists in the air, after a deadly fire Thursday triggered anger over their prolonged Covid-19 lockdown according to videos circulated on Chinese social media.

Reuters verified that the footage was published from Urumqi, where many of its 4 million residents have been under some of the country's longest lockdowns, barred from leaving their homes for as long as 100 days.

In the capital of Beijing 2,700 km (1,678 miles) away, some residents under lockdown staged small-scale protests or confronted their local officials over movement restrictions placed on them, with some successfully pressuring them into lifting them ahead of a schedule.

A crucial spark for the public anger was a fire in a high-rise building in Urumqi that killed 10 Thursday night, whose case went viral on social media as many internet users surmised that residents could not escape in time because the building was partially locked down.

Urumqi officials abruptly held a news conference in the early



CHINA REPORTED 35,183 CASES, MOSTLY THAT OF THE OMICRON VARIANT OF THE CORONAVIRUS

BEIJING CONTINUES TO BEAR THE BRUNT OF THE LOCKDOWN AS CASES HIT A RECORD HIGH OF OVER 2,600

SIX DEATHS REPORTED - FOUR IN BEIJING, ONE IN HENAN AND ANOTHER IN SICHUAN - THIS MONTH, ITS FIRST FATALITIES FROM THE VIRUS IN SIX MONTHS

hours of Saturday to deny Covid measures had hampered escape and rescue, but internet users continued to question the official narrative.

A planned lockdown for his compound "Berlin Aiyue" was called off Friday after residents protested to their local leader and convinced him to cancel it, negotiations that were captured by a video posted on social media.

The residents had caught wind of the plan after seeing workers putting barriers on their gates. "That tragedy could have happened to any of us," he said.

Shanghai, China's most populous city and financial hub which endured a two month lockdown earlier this year, tightened testing requirements on Saturday for entering cultural venues such as museums and libraries, requiring people to present a negative Covid test taken within 48 hours, down from 72 hours earlier.

Xinjiang is home to 10 million Uyghurs. Rights groups and Western governments have long accused Beijing of abuses against the mainly Muslim ethnic minority, including forced labour in internment camps. China strongly re-

THIRD DAILY HIGH IN A ROW

China reported 35,183 new Covid-19 infections, of which 3,474 were symptomatic and 31,709 were asymptomatic, the National Health Commission said Saturday, setting a new high for the third consecutive day. That compared with 32,943 new cases a day earlier - 3,103 symptomatic and 29,840 asymptomatic infections, which China counts separately. Excluding imported cases, China reported 34,909 new local cases Friday, of which 3,405 were symptomatic and 31,504 were asymptomatic, up from 32,695 a day earlier. There were no deaths, keeping fatalities at 5,232. As of Friday, mainland China had confirmed 304,093 cases with symptoms. There are Covid outbreaks in almost all Chinese provinces, with Hebei, Sichuan, Shanxi and Qinghai provinces each registering more than a thousand new cases Saturday.

jects such claims.

China defends President Xi Jinping's signature zero-Covid policy as life-saving and necessary to prevent overwhelming the health-care system. Officials have vowed to continue with it despite the growing public pushback and its mounting toll on the world's second-biggest economy.

Nepal PM Deuba, Prachanda agree to form new govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, Nov 26: Nepal's Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and CPN-Maoist Centre chairman Pushpakamal Dahal Prachanda held a meeting here Saturday and they agreed to continue their ruling five-party alliance as part of a new majority government in the country.

As the results of Nepal's parliamentary elections under direct voting come closer to an end, top political parties have intensified efforts for the formation of the new government to end the political instability that has plagued the Himalayan nation for more than a decade.

Elections to the House of Representatives and seven provincial assemblies were held Sunday. The counting of votes started Monday. Prime Minister Deuba and CPN-Maoist Centre chairman Prachanda met at the Prime Minister's residence in Baluwatar, Kathmandu, according to party sources.

During the meeting, the two leaders discussed the current political developments and explored possibilities for the formation of the new government, said Ganesh Shah, Standing Committee member of the CPN-Maoist Centre.

"The two leaders have reached an understanding to continue the present ruling alliance," he said, exuding confidence that the five-party alliance will have enough strength in parliament to form a majority government. "Janata Samajwadi Party led by Upendra Yadav will also join the ruling alliance led by the Nepali Congress and, with the support from both the Madhesi parties, we will have a comfortable majority to form the government," Shah said.

In a first, self-driving bus trial begins in SK

THE BUS USES CAMERAS AND RADAR TO NAVIGATE THE WAY INSTEAD OF EXPENSIVE SENSORS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Seoul, Nov 26: South Korea's capital launched its first self-driving bus route Friday, part of an experiment that engineers said aims to make people feel more comfortable with driverless vehicles on the roads.

The new vehicle does not look like a regular bus and has rounded edges as well as large windows that make it appear more like a toy than a technological breakthrough.

This design is intentional, said Jeong Seong-gyun, head of autonomous driving at 42 Dot, the start-up responsible for the self-driving technology that is now owned by auto giant Hyundai.

"This is the future," he told AFP, adding that the bus required "a considerable new type of design". The bus looks a bit "like Lego"



and is made of composite parts to help keep costs down and make it easy to replicate, he said. It uses cameras and radar to

navigate the way instead of expensive sensors, Seong-gyun added. The company's goal was to make the technology low-cost, safe and

easily transferable to many types of vehicles in the future, for example, delivery trucks.

For now -- with a safety driver monitoring closely -- the bus will drive itself around a small 3.4-kilometre (2.1-mile) circuit in downtown Seoul that takes around 20 minutes.

The public can board at two designated stops after booking a free seat through an app.

"I feel like I've just hopped into a time machine to visit the future," said Kim Yi hae-ran, 68, after her 20-minute ride during the launch of the bus Friday. "I thought it might make me dizzy from a sudden acceleration but I didn't feel any of it."

The ride felt "very smooth and safe", which she said made her feel proud of the technological progress the South Korean company has made.



FOR A CAUSE

People stand naked as part of artist Spencer Tunick's art installation to raise awareness of skin cancer and encourage people to have their skin checked, at Bondi Beach in Sydney, Australia
REUTERS PHOTO

of the day quote

In the recent quarterly results, the bank's profits are the highest ever. SBI crossed the highest ever profits recorded by any corporate and analysts and broking houses are praising this

DINESH KHARA | CHAIRMAN, SBI

India's commercial real estate market has for long been dominated by high net-worth individuals and institutions. Fractional investing aims to break this status quo by making commercial property investing affordable for the average Indian

TANU SHORI | FOUNDER AND CEO, SQUARE YARDS

The government expects good production of agriculture crops in the ongoing rabi (winter-sown) season on the back of higher sowing area and favourable soil moisture condition

NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR | AGRICULTURE MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Oyo sees smaller loss in July-Sept

Mumbai: Softbank-backed Indian hotel aggregator Oyo Hotels and Homes Pvt Ltd reported a smaller loss for the July-September period compared with the previous quarter, in an update to its initial public offering prospectus released Saturday. The company reported a net loss of ₹3.33 billion (\$40.77 million) in the second quarter of the financial year compared with a loss of ₹4.14 billion in the first quarter. The company's financial year runs from April 1 to March 31. Adjusted earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) for the second quarter rose to ₹560 million from ₹70 million in the first quarter. The company reported a 24% increase in revenue during the first half of the year, to ₹29.05 billion. The monthly revenue per hotel, or gross booking value, rose 69% year-on-year to ₹348,000. Oyo Hotels first filed to go public in October 2021 but it has delayed the share sale due to market conditions.

US bans Huawei, ZTE parts sales

Washington: The Biden administration has banned approvals of new telecommunications equipment from China's Huawei Technologies and ZTE because they pose "an unacceptable risk" to US national security. The US Federal Communications Commission said Friday it had adopted the final rules, which also bar the sale or import of equipment made by Chinese surveillance equipment maker Dahua Technology Co, video surveillance firm Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Co Ltd and telecoms firm Hytera Communications Corp Ltd. The move represents Washington's latest crackdown on the Chinese tech giants amid fears that Beijing could use them to spy on Americans.

Hero MotoCorp to up prices from Dec

New Delhi: The country's largest two-wheeler maker Hero MotoCorp said it will increase the prices of its motorcycles and scooters by up to ₹1,500, with effect from December 1. The price will increase up to ₹1,500, and the exact quantum of the hike will vary by specific models and markets, the company said in a statement. "The upward revision of the prices of our motorcycles and scooters has been necessitated due to overall inflationary costs," Hero MotoCorp Chief Financial Officer Niranjan Gupta said.



“We have a 5G-ready ecosystem. We have 10 per cent of smartphones in India which are 5G ready. India is going to witness the fastest rollout of 5G which will be at least three times faster than what we have seen in 4G”

AMIT MARWAH | HEAD OF MARKETING AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS, NOKIA

ZOMATO GOES MULTILINGUAL

Online food delivery platform Zomato announced it is now available in Hindi and other widely spoken regional languages including Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Punjabi, Marathi, Tamil and Telugu. The company said it is delivering more than 150,000 orders a month via the regional language versions of the Zomato app



Global effects of Russian oil cap, ban

THE CAP IS SET TO TAKE EFFECT DECEMBER 5, THE SAME DAY THE EUROPEAN UNION WILL IMPOSE A BOYCOTT ON MOST RUSSIAN OIL – ITS CRUDE THAT IS SHIPPED BY SEA

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Frankfurt, Nov 26: Western governments are aiming to cap the price of Russia's oil exports in an attempt to limit the fossil fuel earnings that support Moscow's budget, its military and the invasion of Ukraine.

The cap is set to take effect December 5, the same day the European Union will impose a boycott on most Russian oil — its crude that is shipped by sea. The EU was still negotiating what the price ceiling should be.

The twin measures could have an uncertain effect on the price of oil as worries over lost supply through the boycott compete with fears about lower demand from a slowing global economy.

Here are basic facts about the price cap, the EU embargo and what they could mean for consumers and the global economy:

WHAT IS THE PRICE CAP AND HOW WOULD IT WORK?

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has proposed the cap with other Group of 7 allies as a way to limit Russia's earnings while keeping Russian oil flowing to the global economy. The aim is to hurt Moscow's finances while avoiding a sharp oil price spike if Russia's oil is suddenly taken off the global market.

Insurance companies and other firms needed to ship oil would only be able to deal with Russian crude if the oil is priced at or below the



It is essential for the global crude markets that Russian oil still finds markets to be sold, after the EU ban is operative. In the absence of that, global oil prices would skyrocket

CLAUDIO GALIMBERTI | SENIOR VP, RYSTAD ENERGY

cap. Most of the insurers are located in the EU or the United Kingdom and could be required to participate in the cap. Without insurance, tanker owners may be reluctant to take on Russian oil and face obstacles in delivering it.

HOW WOULD OIL KEEP FLOWING TO THE GLOBAL ECONOMY?

Universal enforcement of the insurance ban, imposed by the EU and UK. In earlier rounds of sanctions, could take so much Russian crude off the market that oil prices would spike, Western economies would suffer, and Russia would see increased earnings from whatever oil it can ship in defiance of the embargo.

One purpose of the cap is to provide a legal framework "to allow the flow of Russian oil to continue and to reduce the wind-fall revenue for Russia at the same time," said Claudio Galimberti, a senior vice president of analysis at Rystad Energy.

WHAT EFFECT WOULD DIFFERENT CAP LEVELS HAVE?

A cap of between \$65 and \$70 per barrel could let Russia keep selling oil and while keeping its earnings to current levels. Russian oil is trading at around \$63 per barrel, a considerable discount to international benchmark Brent.

A lower cap — at around \$50 per barrel — would make it diffi-

Russia, the world's No 2 oil producer, has already rerouted much of its supply to India, China and other Asian countries at discounted prices after Western customers shunned it even before the EU ban

cut for Russia to balance its state budget, with Moscow believed to require around \$60 to \$70 per barrel to do that, its so-called "fiscal break-even."

However, that \$50 cap would be still be above Russia's cost of production of between \$30 and \$40 per barrel, giving Moscow an incentive to keep selling oil simply to avoid having to cap wells that can be hard to restart.

WHAT IF RUSSIA AND OTHER NATIONS WON'T GO ALONG?

Russian has said it will not observe a cap and will halt deliveries to countries that do. A lower cap of around \$50 could be more likely to provoke that response, or Russia could halt the last of its remaining natural gas supplies to Europe.

China and India might not go along with the cap, while China could form its own insurance companies to replace those barred by US, UK and Europe.

Galimberti says China and India are already enjoying discounted oil and may not want to alienate Russia. "China and India get Russia's crude at a huge discount to Brent, therefore, they don't necessarily need a price cap to continue to enjoy a discount," he said. "By complying with the cap set by the G-7, they risk alienating Russia. As a result, we do believe that the compliance with the price cap would not be high."

Russia could also turn to schemes such as transferring oil from ship to ship to disguise its origins and mixing its oil with other types to skirt the ban. So it remains to be seen what effect the cap would have.

WHAT ABOUT THE EU EMBARGO?

The biggest impact from the EU embargo may come not December 5, as Europe finds new suppliers and Russian barrels are rerouted, but February 5, when Europe's additional ban on refinery products made from oil — such as diesel fuel — come into effect.

Europe will have to turn to alternative supplies from the US, Middle East and India. "There is going to be a shortfall, and this will result in very high prices," Galimberti said.

Europe still has many cars that run on diesel. The fuel also is used for truck transport to get a huge range of goods to consumers and to run agricultural machinery — so those higher costs will be spread throughout the economy.

RBI halts onboarding of online merchants by Paytm Payments

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 26: Banking regulator RBI has put a pause on onboarding of online merchants by Paytm Payments Services, even as the company said it will have no material impact on its business, according to a regulatory filing.

One97 Communications (OCL), which owns the Paytm brand, had proposed to transfer the payment aggregator services business undertaken by it to Paytm Payments Services (PPSL) in December 2020 to comply with payment aggregator (PA) guidelines of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) but the banking regulator had rejected its application.

The company had re-submitted the required documents in September 2021. Paytm said PPSL has now received a letter from RBI in response to an application for the authorisation to provide PA services for online merchants.

As per the letter, PPSL is required to "Seek necessary approval for past downward investment from the company into PPSL, to comply with FDI Guidelines" and "not onboard new online merchants".

Paytm, in the regulatory filing, said it can resubmit the PA application within 120 calendar days.

The company will not onboard new online merchants till the time approvals remain pending.

PA services are entities that facilitate e-commerce sites and merchants to accept various payment instruments from customers for completion of their payment obligations without the need for merchants to create a separate payment integration system of their own.

CRYPTO SLUMP

Don't fight crypto, regulate it, says Binance CEO Zhao

The opaque world of crypto came into the spotlight when FTX, a crypto exchange, filed for bankruptcy protection in the US Nov 11 after traders pulled \$6bn from the platform in three days. The collapse has left an estimated 1m creditors facing losses totalling billions of dollars



The opaque world of crypto came into the spotlight when FTX, a crypto exchange, filed for bankruptcy protection in the United States November 11 after traders pulled \$6 billion from the platform in three days. The collapse has left an estimated 1 million creditors facing losses totalling billions of dollars.

Nonetheless, Zhao said he expected the industry to recover. "This year was a very nasty year, the last two months too much has happened. I think now we see the industry is healthier... just because FTX happened it does not mean that every other business is bad," he said.

Asked whether he saw countries adding crypto currencies such as Bitcoin to their reserves in the future, Zhao said he expected countries to start, particularly those which did not have their own currency.

"The smaller countries will start first, I think," he said.

REUTERS

Athens, Nov 26: Binance Chief Executive Officer Changpeng Zhao said Friday regulation rather than opposition of the crypto sector is a better option for world governments as digital currencies become more mainstream.

Regulation of crypto currencies has come into sharp focus following the collapse of several platforms, culminating in the crash of the FTX currency exchange earlier this month.

"I think most governments now understand that adoption will happen regardless. It's better to regulate the industry instead of trying to fight against it," Zhao said, speaking at a Binance event in Athens.

Skyroot looks to slash satellite costs

Thousands of small satellite launches are planned in coming years as companies build out networks to deliver broadband services like SpaceX's Starlink and to power applications like tracking supply chains or monitoring offshore oil rigs

REUTERS

Bangalore, Nov 26: The startup behind India's first private space launch plans to put a satellite into orbit in 2023 and expects to be able to do so at half of the cost of established launch companies, the founders of Skyroot Aerospace told Reuters in an interview.

The Hyderabad-based company, backed by Singapore's sovereign wealth fund, GIC, says the \$68 million it has raised will fund its next two launches. Skyroot has been in contact with more than 400 potential customers, it says.

Skyroot faces both established and up-and-coming rocket launch rivals that also promise to bring down costs. In China, startup Galactic Energy put five satellites into orbit last week in its fourth successful launch.

In Japan, Space One, backed by Canon Electronics and IHI Corp, plans to launch 20 small rockets per year by the middle of the decade. But Skyroot, which launched a test rocket last week, expects to cut the cost of a launch by 50% compared with current pricing for established competitors like Richard Branson's Virgin Orbit and California-based Rocket Lab USA Inc.

Pawan Chandana, one of Skyroot's two co-founders, told Reuters he expected a surge in de-



mand for the company's launch services if it proves itself with launches set for next year.

"Most of these customers have been building constellations and will be launching them in the next five years," he said.

The Modi government's push to increase India's share of the global space launch market from just 1% has given investors confidence that Skyroot and other startups have government backing for their efforts, Skyroot says.

"Three or four months back when we were talking to investors, one of the biggest questions they asked was if the government was supporting us," Skyroot co-founder Bharath Daka told Reuters.

India opened the door to private space companies in 2020 with a reg-

India opened the door to private space companies in 2020 with a regulatory overhaul and a new agency to boost private-sector launches

ulatory overhaul and a new agency to boost private-sector launches. Before that, companies could only act as contractors to the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), a government space agency with a reputation of its own for frugal engineering. The country's Mars mission in 2014 cost only \$74 million, less than the budget of the Hollywood space movie "Gravity". Building on India's record for

cost efficiency will be key, said Chandana. Skyroot, founded in 2018 when Chandana and Daka quit jobs at ISRO, has set a target to develop rockets for one-fifth of the current industry costs.

The Skyroot rocket that reached 89.5 kilometers altitude in last week's test launch used carbon-fibre components and 3D-printed parts, including the thrusters. That boosted efficiency by 30%, the company says, cutting weight and procurement costs, although it meant Skyroot engineers had to write the machine code for vendors who fabricated the rocket because few had experience working with carbon fibre.

With 3D printing, Skyroot believes it can build a new rocket in just two days as it works towards reusable rockets, a technology pioneered by SpaceX.

Chandana and Daka believe the per-kilogram launch cost for a satellite can be brought down to nearly \$10, from thousands of dollars currently, a stretch target that could upend the economics of space commerce and one that draws inspiration from their idol: Elon Musk.

"SpaceX is a symbol of great innovation and great market validation," said Chandana, who added they have not had the chance to speak to Musk. "Right now, we think he's probably busy running Twitter."

Will make phones if Apple, Google boycott Twitter: Musk

Twitter is now facing a close scrutiny by both Apple and Google app stores and Musk is worried that the micro-blogging platform can get removed from the app stores

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

San Francisco, Nov 26: Alarmed at Apple and Google app store teams reviewing Twitter under him, Twitter CEO Elon Musk Saturday said that he will produce "alternative" smartphones to compete with Apple and Android devices.

Twitter is now facing a close scrutiny by both Apple and Google app stores and Musk is worried that the micro-blogging platform can get removed from the app stores. It all started when a user

tweeted, "If Apple & Google boot Twitter from their app stores, @elonmusk should produce his own smartphone. Half the country would happily ditch the biased, snooping iPhone & Android. The man builds rockets to Mars, a silly little smartphone should be easy, right?"

Musk replied: "I certainly hope it does not come to that, but, yes, if there is no other choice, I will make an alternative phone."

Several users expressed their thoughts on Musk's post. While one commented, "I bet



he will revolutionise the smartphones," another said, "I feel somehow like this plan is already in the works."

Last week, Yoel Roth, who quit Twitter as Head of Trust and Safety, said as Musk perpetuates lack of legitimacy through his impulsive changes and tweet-

length pronouncements about platform rules, Twitter is now facing a close scrutiny by both Apple and Google app stores.

In a New York Times article amid the #RIPTwitter trending on social media, Roth said that "Twitter will have to balance its new owner's goals against the

Gold, grey checks besides blue tick

Elon Musk Friday said Twitter will tentatively relaunch 'Verified' service Friday next week and all verified accounts will be "manually authenticated before check activates". The new Twitter owner had earlier paused its \$8 Blue subscription service with verification after it faced chaos on the platform as fake accounts with blue badge impersonated real accounts after paying \$8, saying it will relaunch it from November 29 -- this time more "rock solid". "Gold check for companies, grey check for government, blue for individuals (celebrity or not) and all verified accounts will be manually authenticated before check activates. Painful, but necessary," he added. Musk said that all verified individual humans will have the same blue check, as the boundary of what constitutes "notable" is otherwise too subjective.

practical realities of life on Apple and Google's internet, no easy task for the employees who have chosen to remain".

"And as I departed the company, the calls from the app review teams had already begun," Roth wrote.

The instances of racial slurs on Twitter have increased since Musk bought the influential plat-

form, despite assurances from the platform that it has reduced hate activity.

Roth said that "the moderating influences of advertisers, regulators and -- most critically of all -- app stores may be welcome for those of us hoping to avoid an escalation in the volume of dangerous speech online".

Series on the line for India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hamilton, Nov 26: India would expect a better approach from skipper Shikhar Dhawan and young Shubman Gill in the Powerplay overs when the team clashes with New Zealand in the do-or-die second ODI here Sunday.

The Seddon Park is a three-way open ground but is known for being one of the batting friendly tracks in New Zealand where willow wielders would get value for their shots. Moeen Ali in a recent interview to PTI spoke how in earlier times, teams followed Australian template in white ball cricket and now it is the English way that is being aped by the teams. And that is where India is lagging behind as it could score only 40 runs in the first Powerplay overs in Auckland.

Sample another piece of statistic which will give an idea that the problem lies in the general outlook of Indian top-order batters across limited overs formats (not just Rohit Sharma, KL Rahul or Virat Kohli).

Dhawan hit 72 off 77 balls that had 13 fours. So effectively, he scored 52 runs in boundaries in 13 deliveries. He scored another 20 runs in 64 deliveries and out of which 44 were dot balls as he was unable to get going in the Powerplay.

As the skipper struggled, at the other end, Gill didn't do his overall averages any harm by stacking up another half century, but the pace of his innings was also a debatable one.

His 50 was scored in 65 balls with three sixes and a boundary. This means 22 runs were scored from four deliveries. He scored the remaining 28 runs from 61 deliveries.

The same approach of just building the foundation and leaving the heavy-lifting for the back-end has cost India a T20 World Cup but strangely even as personnel changed in ODIs for this series, the approach has remained archaic.

With so many players jostling for opening slots, it is imperative



that the players score heavily so that the numbers can't be ignored when the new selectors prune the pool to around 20, at least three to four months before the 50-over marquee event.

While Dhawan will certainly open with Rohit in Bangladesh next month, there aren't any guarantees that Shubman will be able to retain his place in the playing XI as Rohit will comeback as an opener. KL Rahul might take Suryakumar Yadav's (rested for next series) middle-order slot.

Rishabh Pant has a way better ODI strike-rate and average compared to T20Is but the vice-captain of this series needs to be more consistent in order to keep the big gloves away from Sanju Samson and Ishan Kishan, who are definitely close on his heels.

As Virender Sehwag, few weeks earlier had said that Pant needs to decide first what will be his style of batsmanship. At the moment, the marauder from Rourkee seems to be in a state of limbo: whether to

attack or defend. Sooner he gets his bearing, better it will be for the ODI core team.

Bowlers' approach
At Eden Park which has short and weird dimensions, Indian pacers bowled way too short. They will need to find a way to counter Tom Latham and Kane Williamson, who have both been consistent against India over the years in this format.

While Umran Malik was impressive bowling northwards of 145 clicks, Arshdeep Singh despite his ability to get the swing struggled for pace and Shardul Thakur was generally erratic.

Toss will be an important factor as batting becomes easier at the Seddon Park as the evening wears on. If India can chase, it will do them a world of good as spinners won't have to encounter the dew factor during the evening hours.

Whether Kuldeep Yadav is tried out instead of Yuzvendra Chahal is there to be seen as the ground is slightly bigger for his comfort.

Suresh, Vanshaj, Devika bag golds at Youth Worlds

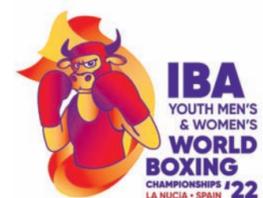
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Nov 26: Indian boxers Vishwanath Suresh, Vanshaj and Devika Ghorpade lived up to their favourites tag, registering commanding victories to clinch gold medals at the IBA Youth Men's and Women's World Championships 2022 in La Nucia, Spain.

Chennai-born Vishwanath handed India their first gold at the prestigious championships after thrashing Ronel Suyom of Philippines without breaking a sweat in the men's 48kg final.

This came after Bhawna Sharma bagged a silver medal in the women's 48kg category, losing 0-5 loss against Uzbekistan's Gulsevar Ganieva in the opening match of the day. Ashish (54kg) was the other Indian to finish with a silver medal. He went down 1-4 against Japanese pugilist Yuta Sakai in a thrilling final.

Devika, who hails from Pune, added a second gold to India's tally, beating England's Lauren Mackie in the women's 52kg final.



Youth Asian champion Vanshaj wrapped up the day in style for India by winning the third gold. The confident Sonipat-based boxer made light work of Demur Kajaia of Georgia in the men's 63.5kg summit clash.

With 11 medals, India topped in the on-going edition of the event, followed by Uzbekistan (10), Ireland (7) and Kazakhstan (7).

India's eight medals in the women's section is also the highest for any country. Having already won three gold medals, Ravina (63kg) and Kirti (+81kg) will look to add two more yellow metals to India's kitty when they fight in the women's final on the last day of the competition.

Ravina and Kirti will be up against Megan deCler of Netherlands and Ireland's Elizabeth D'Arcy respectively. Besides three gold and two silver on the penultimate day, India's tally also includes four bronze medals coming from Tamanna (50kg), Kunjarani Devi Thongam (60kg), Muskan (75kg) and Lashu Yadav (70kg), who lost in the semifinals.



Akashdeep hat-trick in vain

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Adelaide, Nov 26: Akashdeep Singh's hat-trick went in vain as India conceded two late goals to lose 4-5 against Australia in the high-scoring first hockey Test of the five-match series here Saturday.

Akashdeep Singh (10th, 27th & 59th minutes) scored thrice while skipper Harmanpreet Singh (31st) converted a penalty corner for India.

Australia's goals were scored by Lachlan Sharp (5th), Nathan Ephraums (21st), Tom Craig (41st) and Blake Govers (57th, 60th) who found the back of the Indian net twice from penalty corners towards the fag end of the match.

India's chief coach Graham Reid was expectedly disappointed with his team's performance in the final stages of the match.

"It was a disappointing finish to what was probably a pretty good

performance. We let ourselves down at certain stages specifically in two quarters but I think we came back well only to unfortunately hand it back to them (Australia) at the end. That's something we have to get better at now," Reid said.

"The challenge now is to put a good performance together. One of the objectives of this tour is consistency, and that's the challenge for us tomorrow."

Australia started on an attacking note and took the lead as early as in the fifth minute with Sharp slotting home past India custodian PR Sreejesh with his very first touch of the match.

The Indians responded within minutes with Amit Rohidas creating a great move from the left flank but his ball was intercepted inside the circle by the Australian defence. Akashdeep equalised for India in the 11th minute after

Hardik Singh made a wonderful interception to create the opportunity. Six minutes into the second quarter, Australia restored their lead, courtesy poor defending from the Indians as they failed to clear a cross and Ephraums got a smart deflection to put the ball into the net.

Akashdeep once again came to India's rescue and scored with a fierce reverse hit in the 27th minute to level the scores. Just at the stroke of halftime, Australia got a penalty corner but India's second goalkeeper Krishan Bahadur Pathak was alert to avert the danger.

A minute after the change of ends, Harmanpreet gave India the lead for the first time in the match, scoring from a penalty corner. The Indians then secured back-to-back penalty corners but wasted both. In the 41st minute, the Kookaburras secured another penalty corner and Craig scored from a rebound after Sreejesh saved the initial

drag-flick.

The home team continued to press hard and secured a handful of penalty corners but failed to cash in on the opportunities. India were sloppy on the turf in the last five minutes of the game as Jarmanpreet Singh got an unnecessary green card, leaving his side a man down for the rest of the game.

Australia took full advantage of the situation and secured another penalty corner which was converted by Govers with a powerful flick. But Akashdeep levelled the scores a minute from the final hooter, scoring from a goalmouth melee.

But poor defending from the Indians inside their own circle cost them as Australia earned two more penalty corners and Govers once again found the net with the second attempt to hand the home team a 1-0 lead in the series.

Mbappe brace guides France into knockouts



IMPRESSIVE OUTING: Kylian Mbappe reacts after a goal against Denmark

AGENCIES

Doha, Nov 26: Kylian Mbappe's brace helped defending champions France claim a narrow 2-1 win over Denmark Saturday and became the first team to advance to the World Cup round of 16 in Qatar.

Mbappe sent France ahead in the Group D clash just after the hour mark with a prodded finish after playing a clever on-two with teammate Theo Hernandez, but Denmark roared back with a thumping header from defender Andreas Christensen to level the scores seven minutes later.

The PSG striker then converted a cross from Antoine Griezmann late in the game (86th minute) and ensure France remain flawless as they continue their World Cup title defence. Mbappe has now scored 31 goals for France - moving him level with legend Zinedine Zidane on the country's all-time scoring list.

Saturday's result leaves France at the top of Group D on six points, three ahead of second-place Australia, while Denmark are yet to find their first win with just a point after two games.

AUSTRALIA BEAT TUNISIA

Australia only needed to avoid defeat to stay in the World Cup. The Socceroos did more than that in a 1-0 win over Tunisia Saturday. Mitchell Duke gave Australia the lead midway through the first half with a header and Australia went on to register its first win at football's biggest event since a victory over Serbia back in 2010.

USA FRUSTRATE ENGLAND

Loud jeers rang around the stadium. England's fans were not happy. The United States had frustrated them yet again at a World Cup. That's three times and counting that the teams have met on football's biggest stage and England is still waiting for its first win against the Americans after a 0-0 draw Saturday.

Coach Gareth Southgate had reminded his players of that record beforehand, with the US famously winning 1-0 in 1950 and playing out a 1-1 draw in 2010. They didn't seem to heed his warning and didn't respond to Gregg Berhalter's young and energetic team.

The draw sets up a match for the US against Iran Tuesday for a spot in the round of 16. Iran beat Wales 2-0 earlier and sits second in Group B with three points, one more than the Americans.

FIRE BREAKS OUT

Qatari authorities say a fire broke out Saturday at an under-construction building in newly built city where a World Cup match was set to be played later in the evening, but caused no injuries.

Qatar's Interior Ministry said the fire started just after noon local time on an island that's part of city of Lusail, which is hosting several games during the tournament, including a match between Argentina and Mexico late Saturday.

The blaze was about 3.5 kilometers (2 miles) from Lusail Stadium. It sent thick black smoke into the sky, which was visible from a marketplace in central Doha as World Cup fans milled among its shops and restaurants.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Doha, Nov 26: When the World Cup draw came out in April, one of the highlights of the group stage was Sunday's Spain vs Germany at Al Bayt Stadium.

Eight months later, the game between the two former world champions and pre-tournament favorites gained even more prominence thanks to Germany's surprising loss to Japan in its opener in Qatar.

Another setback against Spain this weekend and Germany may be heading home early for the second straight World Cup. A loss - coupled with at least a draw by Japan against Costa Rica earlier Sunday - will mean elimination for the four-time champions.

Spain, meanwhile, will be looking to secure its spot in the next stage and reinforce its status as one of the top title contenders following an impressive 7-0 rout of Costa Rica in its opener.

The signs are not encouraging for Germany. Its most recent match against Spain was an embarrassing 6-0 defeat in the Nations League two years ago. Its last win against 'La Roja' came in a friendly eight years ago.

Germany won its fourth World Cup title in 2014 in Brazil but didn't make it out of the group stage in 2018 after losses to South Korea and Mexico. It would be the first time it fails to advance past the group stage in back-to-back tournaments.



Germany head coach Hansi Flick speaks to his players during a practice session

Spain won its lone World Cup in 2010 in South Africa and was eliminated in the round of 16 in 2018 in Russia. A win against Germany will allow Spain to reach the last 16 if Costa Rica doesn't defeat Japan.

Expectations around Spain's young squad were raised after its outstanding performance against Costa Rica, when the team reintroduced 'tiki-taka' ball-possession

style and 18-year-old Gavi became the youngest World Cup scorer since Pelé in 1958. The seven goals it scored against Costa Rica matched Spain's tournament total from Russia in 2018.

It will be the fifth meeting between the powerhouses at World Cups, with Spain winning the most recent one 1-0 in the semifinals of the 2010 tournament.

Spain hasn't lost to Germany

in official competitions since the 1988 European Championship, with two draws and three wins since then. The Germans have lost three of their last four World Cup matches dating to the tournament in Russia.

They made headlines even before kickoff against Japan by covering their mouths to protest FIFA's clampdown on the 'One Love' armbands. It was not clear if they would repeat the gesture before the Spain match.

ALL SET TO GO



The captains of six participating teams (not in particular order) - Sports Odisha, Odisha Police, Odisha FC, East Coast Railway, Rising Student Club & OGP Club - of the Odisha Women's League (OWL) pose with their jerseys alongside Tusharkanti Behera, Minister of Sports & Youth Services, Govt of Odisha and Football Association of Odisha (FAO) secretary Asirbad Behera during the official jersey launch ceremony at Kalinga Stadium, Saturday. The OWL, organised and to be conducted by FAO and the Sports & Youth Services Dept., Govt. of Odisha, will begin November 27. The champions of OWL will represent Odisha at the Indian Women's League

PHOTO: BIKASH NAYAK